

## GATHER HIS ELECT – EPISODE NOTES

This episode covers three important scriptures describing the return of Jesus Christ. All three of these involve spectacular, direct, visible revealing of the Lord from heaven like no humans in history have ever seen. *Apocalypse* means revealing. How do these spectacular aspects of the second coming relate? When does each of these events happen?

### 1. Heavens open and King of Kings comes with armies

'And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. ' Revelation 19:11-14 (KJV)

It is easy to understand when this occurs. Not all of Rev is chronological. Some sections are sort of parenthetical meaning they provide or description and detail of something mentioned before. But this part of chapter 19 is placed chronologically near the end of the final 7 years of this age, after the 7<sup>th</sup> seal has been opened and the 7 trumpet judgements and 7 bowl judgements have been poured out. God's wrath is poured out in the 7<sup>th</sup> seal on the armies of the antichrist and all the wicked who have received the mark of the beast. Many people call that final 7 years described in Daniel and Revelation "the tribulation". We will call it the 70th Week, referring to the 70 "sevens" or "weeks" of years described in Daniel 9:24-27. If the 70th Week is not familiar to you, I'd encourage you to watch the FF End Times course and particularly FF E 4 & 5.

### 2. Living and dead saints meet the Lord in the air

'For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming [parousia] of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up [from Latin rapio] together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.' 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 (KJV)

I Thess 4 is not telling us when this gathering together or rapture happens. You are probably familiar with some scriptures that tell believers to watch and be ready or say this will come like a thief in the night. These are three main views held by futurist, pre-millennial believers. All three views have many godly and knowledgeable adherents. It should be ok for believers to have dialogue about this important question. All believe in the same Lord, the same salvation and the same Word of God. The reason there are these varying views is because we cannot tell from I Th 4 or I Cor. 15 exactly when this occurs. It requires piecing together information from other scriptures and other theological assumptions affect how people piece that information together.

- Pre-tribulation rapture teaches this is around the beginning of the “tribulation” or 70th Week of Daniel 9. This view believes the rapture could occur at any time with no prior signs.
- Pre-wrath rapture teaches this is before the 7th Seal, which is The Day of the LORD and also the prophesied Wrath of God.
- Post-tribulation rapture teaches this happens at the end of the 70th Week, “at the last trump”.

Now, on to our 3<sup>rd</sup> scripture.

### **3. Coming on the clouds of heaven and gathers his elect**

'For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming [*parousia*] of the Son of man be. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. ' Matthew 24:27,29-31 (KJV)

It is important to understand the Greek word, *parousia*, often translated “coming”. *Parousia* is an arrival with the idea of remaining and is sometimes connected in Greek literature with the arrival of a king or other important person. As it pertains to Christ, it is the series of events that begins with the rapture or gathering-together and includes his destruction of the antichrist and his establishment of his kingdom on earth.

Matthew 24 and 25 are often called the “Olivet Discourse” because Jesus is with his disciples on the Mt. of Olives telling them about his return. It is also covered in parallel passages in Mark and Luke. He is answering the question posed by the disciples in 24:3, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming [*parousia*] and of the end of the age?”

Jesus explains a series of events in order leading up to the gathering of the elect: wars rumors of wars, nation against nation, which he calls ‘the beginning of birth pains.’ FF episode 11 explains those correspond to the first 4 seals in Rev. chapter 6: 1) a conqueror, 2) take peace from the earth, 3)shortage, famine and pestilence resulting from war, and 4) widespread death in the wake of war.

Continuing in chronological order, Jesus describes to his disciples, events leading up to his *parousia*, which his followers will face. He says “you, you, you” and number of times, contrasted with “they” when he refers to unbelievers. The disciples listening to this would have surely thought he was talking to them.

24:15 says when YOU see the abomination of desolation. **This is a very important time marker because Daniel 9:27 tells us this is in the middle of the 70th Week.**

24:21-22 tells us that after this comes the great tribulation. Would wipe out all Jews and “the elect” if not cut short.

24:27 describes the coming [*parousia*] as being visible across the entire sky, like lightning lighting up the sky. Often, proponents of the “pre-trib rapture”, teach that it will be a secret appearing, seen only by the believers, who will just disappear to the world. If you ever read the “Left Behind” books or saw the movie—that was the scenario. The world does not know what happened. This does not agree with what Jesus Christ is describing here in the Bible where everyone sees it and knows what it is. The pre-trib position is supposing that this secret rapture happens before the events that Jesus is describing here.

24:27-31 is a *parousia* and gathering of the elect at the time of the great cosmic signs which are the 6th seal (see Rev. 6:12-17). A basic element of the pre-trib teaching is that the 1 Thess 4 *parousia* could occur any day or any time with no prior signs. So that would mean there is a *parousia* before the *parousia* that Jesus is talking about here. How do they explain what is happening here?

The Lord Jesus has given a chronology of signs or events that will happen in order before this gathering of the elect. They correspond to the first six seals in Revelation 6, and other prophecies.

<b>Matthew 24</b>	<b>Revelation 6 and other prophecies</b>
24:5 false christs	1 <sup>st</sup> Seal – a conqueror. 2 Thess 2 deception from the antichrist.
24:6-7 wars and rumors of wars	2 <sup>nd</sup> Seal – take peace from the earth
24:7b famine	3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Seal – famine and death from war
24:8 these are beginning of birth pains	The full birth pains come after the rapture when the wrath of God is poured out in the 7 <sup>th</sup> seal. 1 Thess 5:3, Isaiah 13:8.
24:9 they deliver you to death	5 <sup>th</sup> Seal – martyred saints
24:10-12 many turn away from the faith, betrayal, false prophets, love grow cold	2 Thess 2:3 falling away or apostacy before the gathering together, also 1 Tim 4:1.
24:14 the gospel preached in this time of persecutions	Rev 12:11 And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.
24:15 abomination of desolation Notice “then” used a number of times after this for events that unfold in order.	Dan 9:27 This is the midpoint of the final 7 years and is when the antichrist is revealed and he openly wars against the saints. See also 2 Thess 2:4-12.

24:16-22 THEN... “the great tribulation”, centered in Judea, worse than any time before. “Cut short” for the sake of the elect.	More description of the 5 <sup>th</sup> seal. Rev 12:17 dragon making war on offspring of Israel and those <b>who hold the testimony of Jesus</b> . Rev 13:10 many martyrs at this time.
24:24-25 false messiahs and false prophets attempt to deceive the elect who are still on earth. “See, I have told YOU ahead of time.	Rev 13:12-15 antichrist and false prophet are dominating much of humanity, but not all. They face wars and opposition all along.
24:27-30 the <i>parousia</i> of the Lord, sun, moon and stars go dark and the sign of the sun of man lights up the sky. The wicked (and/or the tribes of Israel) mourn.	Rev 6:12-17 the 6 <sup>th</sup> seal has these cosmic signs of the sun, moon and stars and the wicked terrified and hiding from the Lamb.
24:31 cloud, angels, trumpet and the elect gathered	1 Thess 4:15-17 <i>parousia</i> , clouds, archangel, trumpet, caught up in the air.

### The word “gather”

This is another point of evidence that the Matt 24:31 gathering is the Thessalonians gathering together or rapture.

- Verb form “he (the Son of Man) will send forth his angels with a loud trumpet call and they will gather (*episunagō*) his elect...” in Matthew 24:31
- Noun form *episunagōgē* “Now concerning the coming (*parousia*) of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him” 2 Thessalonians 2:1

That’s because Matt 24:31 is the gathering together or rapture at the *parousia*.

### Who are “the elect”?

Born again believers in the body of Christ are called the elect.

- 'Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; ' Colossians 3:12
- 'Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. ' 2 Timothy 2:10
- 'Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; ' Titus 1:1

“His elect” in Matthew are the same elect.

- 'And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. ' Matthew 24:22
- 'For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. 'Matthew 24:24-25
- 'And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. 'Matthew 24:31

These “elect” are on earth for the great tribulation and cosmic signs (Seals 5 & 6). Look how appropriate these verses from Romans are for the time of the great tribulation!

'Who shall bring any charge against **God's elect**? It is God who justifies. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Romans 8:33,35-39

What about the elect Jewish remnant spoken of in Romans 11? You can see there is nothing in these verses that contradicts my assertion that the elect in Matt 24 are born-again believers in the body of Christ. They are either Jews who have come to faith before Christ returns and are in the rapture or survivors who come to believe when they see him come to earth. The Zechariah passage occurs either when Jesus Christ appears in the sky at the 6<sup>th</sup> seal, or sometime during or after the 7<sup>th</sup> seal, which is after the rapture of the church.

- Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, And shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: Romans 11:5,25-26
- 'And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. ' Zechariah 12:10

### **Could Matt 24:31 refer to the regathering of Israel?**

In a word—no. This is one of the ideas some pre-trib teachers expound to find some explanation to say why this gathering is not the rapture of the church. As we have seen, the Matt 24:31 gathering occurs in conjunction with the 6<sup>th</sup> seal cosmic signs. The regathering of Israel occurs after the judgements of the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal. The antichrist will successfully invade Israel with tremendous destruction (Zech. 14:1, 2) and commit the abomination of desolation, and carry away many Jews into exile. Ezek. 38-39 describe the invasion of Gog of Magog, another name for the antichrist (FF episode 25). Ezek. 39:25-29 is very clear that the LORD God will "gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind" when "I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel". That is clearly at the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week after the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal. See also Ezek. 36:24-26. All Israelites will be regathered into the Millennial Kingdom.

### **Revelation Chapter 7**

The Matt 24:31 gathering occurs around the time of the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal, which is described at the end of Rev 6. Right after the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal (which is the time of the rapture), Rev 7 begins by describing 144,000 from Israel who are sealed on earth. The timing fits precisely if this is right after the rapture. If the rapture had been 4 or 5 years before, at the beginning of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week, why

would this be happening now? Next, we see an innumerable multitude from every nation before the throne. This is a perfect description of the church, who has just been raptured at the end of chapter 6. Then, chapter 8 begins the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal, which is the Day of the LORD and the pouring out of His Wrath. The church has been “saved from wrath”, as promised in Rom 5:9, 1 Thess 1:10 & 5:9, by being raptured after the 6<sup>th</sup> seal before the 7<sup>th</sup> seal. Rev 7 is inconsistent with the idea of a pre-trib rapture but 100% consistent with the pre-wrath rapture view.

### **Similarities of Matt 24 and 1 Thessalonians**

We are saying that the Matt 24:31 gathering **is the same event** as 1 Thess 4:15-17. Here is a list of similarities that tie them together.

- Lord Jesus coming from heaven (the sky) in both passages
- He shall send forth his angels = cry of command and voice of archangel
- Clouds in both passages
- Sound of trumpet in both passages
- Survivors who endure to the end shall be saved = those who remain
- Gather his elect = meet the Lord in the air
- Similar words for “gather”: verb form *episunagō* in Matt 24:31 and noun form *episunagōgē* in 2 Thess 2:1
- Both events are called the *parousia* in Matt 24:27 and 1 Thess 4:15.

### **Conclusion**

This episode focused on three great events in scripture. Christians who are familiar with the concepts of the rapture and the defeat of the antichrist understand that 1 Thess 4:15-17 describes the rapture, or gathering together, and Rev 19:11-14 is a later event where Jesus Christ comes as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This episode draws attention to the events of Matt 24:27-31, where the Lord spectacularly appears with great cosmic signs and gathers his elect from the four winds. We have attempted to demonstrate from the scriptures that this is the same *parousia* event as the rapture and that the elect who are gathered is the Church.