

²⁹ ^c“Immediately after the tribulation of those days ^dthe sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ ^eThen the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, ^fand then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ ^gAnd He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His ⁴elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Whoever the elect are before (as seen in Matthew 20 and Matthew 22 parables), they must be here. To say he meant something different separated by four chapters (chapter 20) and/or occurring on the same day (Tuesday of Passion Week, Matthew 22) is ridiculous. There is nothing secret here and the elect are being removed. Jesus is talking to His disciples (24:3) and using the 2nd person plural as if to say that they are going to see much of what He has described here. Now, the disciples are the recipient of church discipline (Matthew 18:15-20), and it is hard to fathom that these disciples are merely “Israel.” Why would “Israel” be given church discipline and managing church membership? What about chapter 26 where the disciples are getting the Lord’s Supper? This is only 12 hours before His death and 48 hours after this passage in chapter 24. Are we going to say that “Israel” was given the Lord’s Supper? If so, why does the church practice it? If the disciples are the church in chapter 26 on Thursday, why would they be “Israel” 48 hours earlier on Tuesday? The elect cannot change identities in the same week. What about chapter 28? Did “Israel” get the Great Commission—including baptism? How does it make you feel to hear that “God didn’t give His Great Commission to the church?” or “The church doesn’t have authority to baptize from Jesus?” If that’s hard to believe, then imagine saying that the disciples are “the church” in chapters 18, 26, 28, but in chapter 24 they are “Israel.”

24:30 sounds much like Revelation 1:7 so this is definitely not the “secret rapture” or which we hear in today’s popular eschatology. Given the similarities between Paul and the Olivet Discourse (1 Thessalonians 4, 5 & 2 Thessalonians 2), we see not only is this what Paul would call the coming of Christ for His believers, but it is still future from Paul’s perspective.

This coming of Christ is sooner than expected (24:36; 24:43 24:50, 25:6-11;), but it is not without signs. The building of an “ark” is hardly invisible or private or secret. Animals in groups of as many as seven and the wrath of God coming in a flood was not signless (24:37). So there must be a way for this coming to be “after the tribulation” (24:29) and still unexpected. 24:21 tells us how we can find this coming both “after the tribulation” and yet, unexpected. Perhaps this means that though the “tribulation” is on the calendar for seven years, it can be shortened. Also, 24:15 may be more private than we think (that’s a much weaker possibility for why this can still be somewhat imminent).

The purpose of this coming is to divide the wicked from the godly [Noah from those outside; those in the field; those at the mill; the five from the five (25:1-11); the “Good and

^c [Dan. 7:11]

^d Is. 13:10; 24:23; Ezek. 32:7; Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15; Amos 5:20; 8:9; Zeph. 1:15; Matt. 24:29–35; Acts 2:20; Rev. 6:12–17; 8:12

^e [Dan. 7:13, 14; Matt. 16:27; 24:3, 37, 39]

^f Zech. 12:12

^g Ex. 19:16; Deut. 30:4; Is. 27:13; Zech. 9:14; [1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16]; Heb. 12:19; Rev. 8:2; 11:15

⁴ chosen ones

Faithful Servant” from the slothful servant (25:14-30); the sheep from the goats (25:31-46)]. This should tell us that Christ wasn’t trying to teach all kinds of little elements of end-times doctrine: He was simply preaching the suddenness of His coming.