

A Pre-Trib Rapture?

Many believers think that Matthew 24:40-41 describes the rapture. I often wondered what that verse was about. It always troubled me since it didn't really say it was the rapture; therefore, does Matt 24:40-41 really pertain to the rapture?

1. Context--The context of Matt 24:40-41 does not suggest Yeshua is talking about a "rapture". The context is one in which we find Yeshua talking about the judgment of the ungodly. See verse 37-39, which establishes the context of verses 40-41. Note, Yeshua says that the flood "**TOOK** them all **AWAY**" meaning that they were TAKEN/killed in judgment/destruction. Verses 40-41 use the same wording, "one will be TAKEN".
2. Parallel Passage--Luke also records the same utterances from Yeshua, albeit with extra insight. In Luke 17:34-37 the disciples ask where will those who are TAKEN, be TAKEN to? In verse 37, those who are TAKEN are TAKEN to a place of judgment/destruction (a place of carcasses and vultures). Note how both passages give the same message. People TAKEN as in the day of Noah, into judgment/destruction. Clearly the place is not one someone wants to be "raptured" to.
3. The Parable of the weeds--In the parable of the weeds Yeshua also talks about the end of the age when He returns (Matt 13:40-43). Note, when He comes He will send forth the angels to TAKE all the unsaved into judgment/destruction. Again, this passage matches up perfectly with the two referenced above. When He returns, He will first destroy the unsaved by taking them to a place of judgment/destruction.
4. A question of timing--Both the Matthew passage and the Luke passage give the timing of the TAKING AWAY. It's AFTER the "tribulation of those days". So even if it did refer to the rapture (which it obviously doesn't) it wouldn't occur until after the tribulation, not before. Both of those passages clearly describe an event after the tribulation.
5. Note, Revelation 19:17 When Yeshua returns, an angel calls the birds/vultures of the earth to prepare for a feast on the flesh of people. Verse 21 states that when Yeshua returns, the remnant (of evil doers, i.e., the tares of Mt 13) will be killed by Yeshua and that the fowl will eat their flesh. These scriptures match perfectly with those found in Mt 13, 24 and Lk 17.

6. It is a mistake to apply the Scriptures above to the rapture 1) because NONE of them say anything about BELIEVERS being RAPTURED to MEET YESHUA in the AIR to be with HIM FOREVER, and 2) because none of the parallel passages teach anything about BELIEVERS being RAPTURED to MEET YESHUA in the AIR to be with HIM FOREVER. As you can see, the parallel passages do not support (in any stretch of the imagination) a secret pre-trib rapture of the church. This is very important. Please read the passages again. They don't state any of the above statements concerning a pre-trib rapture as is so popularly taught.

7. Last but not least: The Biblical understanding of Being "Taken Away"

The current interpretation by many believers is that those taken away in Matthew 24 and Luke 17 are taken away in the rapture.

Torah Foundation--Although most believers would mentally agree that the Tanakh ("Old Testament") is the foundation for understanding the New Covenant ("New Testament"), few hardly ever build the foundation of their faith on the Tanakh, which is the only true biblical source for a foundation.

As with most non-Jewish believers who were saved and disciplined in the traditional Church institution, the foundations of my faith were established using only the Renewed Covenant (New Testament) as their basis. Although the Renewed Covenant scriptures are God-breathed they are not the complete revelation. Similarly, the Tanakh (Old Covenant Scriptures) is not a complete revelation. They are intimately and inseparably related. The Tanakh is the foundational revelation about the nature of God and His redemptive dealings with mankind; however, it is not a full revelation of those subjects. The Renewed Covenant Scriptures are a continuation of the Tanakh in that they complete the revelation of the Tanakh. It is impossible to fully understand and properly interpret the Tanakh apart from the Renewed Covenant Scriptures. This is not to imply that the Tanakh cannot be understood at all. Many (all) concepts and doctrines developed in the Renewed Covenant Scriptures are already revealed in the Tanakh, albeit only in an "seed" form. For example, the Tanakh goes into great detail to explain the significance of substitutionary blood atonement by using the Levitical sacrificial system as a teaching tool; however, it's not until reading the Renewed Covenant Scriptures that we understand that the fullest manifestation of substitutionary blood atonement is found in the sacrifice of Yeshua the sinless Son of God. In a similar manner, the Renewed Covenant Scriptures alone should not and cannot form the foundation of our

trusting faithfulness. The foundation of our trusting faithfulness must be the Tanakh (as illuminated by the Renewed Covenant Scriptures). Why? Because the Tanakh came first. It provides the proper Hebraic mindset and principles to properly interpret itself and the Renewed Covenant Scriptures. This may seem unimportant, unbalanced or extreme until you realize that in the early congregations of Yeshua, the Tanakh was used to train every new believer. That's right. The Renewed Covenant Scriptures hadn't been penned.

Your foundation as a new believer must be built upon the foundation of Yeshua's life (see the gospels), the testimony of Moses (Pentateuch), and the prophets. If your foundation is only built upon Scriptures from the Renewed Covenant then you will have a less than ideal understanding of YHWH's word and thus His will for your life. This less than ideal understanding will exist because you will lack the proper foundational understanding to interpret Renewed Covenant passages properly. This should be self-evident.

Earlier I stated that the Tanakh couldn't be fully understood without the illumination of the Renewed Covenant Scriptures. Now we see that the reverse is true also. It will be impossible to fully comprehend the Renewed Covenant Scriptures without the foundation from the Tanakh. They are two witnesses that go hand in hand.

Understanding that Torah is a FOUNDATION for understanding the New Covenant Scriptures, we can go to the Torah and quickly learn that the phrase "take away" was a Hebrew idiom which meant to destroy/kill something/someone. When Yeshua spoke of some people being taken and some left, He was simply using this idiom to say that those taken were taken for destruction. Here are only a few verses (from the Tanakh) of the many, that clearly teach--to be TAKEN AWAY is to be taken to destruction:

· Isaiah 57:13 When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall *carry them all away*; vanity *shall take them*: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain;

· Isaiah 57:1 The righteous *perisheth*, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men *are taken away*, none considering that the righteous *is taken away* from the evil to come.

· Isaiah 40:24 Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown:

yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and *they shall wither*, and the whirlwind shall *take them away* as stubble.

· Isaiah 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have *taken us away*.

· Ezekiel 30:4 And the sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when *the slain shall fall* in Egypt, and they shall *take away* her multitude, and her foundations shall be broken down.

· Ezekiel 33:4 Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the *sword come, and take him away*, his blood shall be upon his own head.

· Daniel 11:12 And when he hath *taken away the multitude*, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall *cast down many ten thousands*: but he shall not be strengthened by it.

· Hosea 1:6 And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And God said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for *I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel*; but I will utterly *take them away*.

· Matthew 22:13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, *and take him away*, and *cast him into outer darkness*, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

· 2 Kings 12:3 2 But the high places were not *taken away*: the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places.

In light of 1) the proper analysis of Yeshua's statements in their context and 2) understanding "**TAKEN AWAY**" as a Hebrew idiom for destruction, I don't think the passage in Matthew 24 is a proof text for the "rapture".

In the context of Matthew 24, I think I'd rather be

LEFT BEHIND