

The Day and Hour Unknown

Matthew 24:36-42 and Luke 21:34-36

Late in the afternoon on Wednesday the thirteenth of Nisan

DIG: Why is the Greek word *peri de* important here? Who is the only **One** who knows **the hour or the day of the Rapture**? What will life be like before **the Rapture**? How does **it** differ from the Second Coming? What will the result of **the Rapture** be?

REFLECT: What does it mean to be ready for **that Day** if we do not know when **Jesus** will come? How can you “prepare” for **the Rapture**? How would you explain **the Rapture** to a person seeking **God**?

While no one knows the specific day or hour in which **the Meshiach** will return, **Yeshua** warned **His** apostles to be ready at all times. **Be careful, He** said, **or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life and that Day will close on you suddenly like a trap (Luke 21:34)**. We might suppose that this consciousness would deliver people from complacency and indifference, but such will not be the case. **Jesus** likened those future days in which the signs will unfold to **the days of Noah**.

Mattityahu 24:36 begins with the word, **But**, which is the Greek word *peri de*. The *peri de* construction in Greek introduces a new subject, and is often translated: **But concerning** (**First Corinthians 7:1; 8:1, 12:1, 16:1 and First Thessalonians 5:1 NASB**). Yes, **Christ** had been discussing the Second Coming up to this point. However the *peri de* means that **the Lord** is now introducing a new subject, and that is **the Rapture** (see my commentary on **Revelation By - The Rapture of the Church**). In addition, the word **taking away** in **Matthew 24:40-41** (Greek: *paralambanetai*) is a different term than the one used in **Matthew 24:39** (Greek: *haren*) and so being **taken away** in judgment by **the Flood** can be interpreted as being different than being **taken away** in righteousness by **the Rapture**. **Concerning the issue of the Rapture, Jesus makes three main points.**

First, as to the question of when it will happen, only **God the Father** knows: **But no one knows the hour or the day that Jesus will come, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father (Matthew 24:36)**. Although **the** righteous **angels** enjoy intimacy with **ADONAI**, hovering around **His** throne to do **His** bidding (**Isaiah 6:2-7**) and **continually see the face of [the] Father in heaven (Mattityahu 18:10)**, **they** are not aware of this secret. Still more amazing, **not even the Son** knew at the time **He** spoke these words or at any other time during **His** First Coming. Although **He** was fully **God** as well as

fully **man** (John 1:1 and 14), **Messiah** voluntarily restricted **His** use of certain divine attributes when **He** became flesh. It was not that **Jesus** lost any divine attributes but that **He** voluntarily laid aside the use of some of them and would not reveal those attributes except as directed by **His Father** (Yochanan 4:34, 5:30 and 6:38).¹³⁴⁰

If the timing of the rapture has been hidden from both **the angels** in heaven and the humanity of **Jesus**, how much more so is it hidden from mankind in general! For that reason, the only clue given concerning the timing of **the Rapture** is that it will occur sometime before the signing of the covenant between Isra'el and the antichrist (see my commentary on **Revelation Bz - The Signing of the Seven Year Covenant with the Antichrist**). **The Rapture** might easily occur ten or twenty years before that time. So as to the question of when **the Rapture** will occur, the answer is simple. No one knows. This, however, is not true of the Second Coming of **the Messiah**, which will occur exactly seven years after signing the covenant with Isra'el and 42 months or 1,260 days after the abomination of desolation.

Secondly, there will not be any signs preceding the Rapture as there will be preceding the Second Coming. When **the Rapture** occurs, it will happen while there are normal conditions on the earth. **As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man, to all those who live on the face of the whole earth. For in the days before the Flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark.** None of these things are sinful, but are necessary for human survival and propagation. While normal conditions existed on the earth, **they knew nothing about what would happen until the Flood came and took [swept] them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man (Matthew 24:37-39).** In the same way, while there will be normal conditions on **the earth, the Rapture** will happen suddenly and without notice. This will not be true of the Second Coming. When it occurs, conditions on the earth will be far from normal, as earlier sections of the Olivet Discourse and the book of **Revelation** clearly show. **For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth (Luke 21:35).** In other words, no one living on **the earth** can escape the effects of the Great Tribulation. It will fall upon **all earth-dwellers**.¹³⁴¹

Compare **Daniel 12:8-10; Acts 1:6-7** and these citations from **Tractate Sanhedrin in the Talmud: Rabbi Shmu'el bar-Nachmani said the name of Rabbi Yochanan, "May the bones of those who calculate the end [that is, the time of the Messiah's coming] be blasted away! As soon as the time [which they have determined] arrives and the Meshiach has not come, they say, 'He will never come!.' Rather, wait for Him, as it is written: Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay (Habakkuk 2:3b)."** (Sanhedrin 97b; the same phrase from Habakkuk is echoed in Article XII of the Maimonides' creed).

Whenever Rabbi Zera came upon scholars trying [to calculate when **the Messiah** would arrive], he would say to them, "It has been taught that three things come when the mind is diverted: **the Messiah**, finding a lost article, and a scorpion. So don't postpone His coming by thinking about it" (Sanhedrin 97a).

According to the Zohar, Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Y'udah were in a cave, where they found a supernatural book and began to study it, but it disappeared in a flame and a gust of wind. When they came and told Rabbi Shim about what happened, he said to them, "Perhaps you were examining the letters that deal with the coming of **the Messiah**? . . . It is not the will of **the Holy One**, blessed be **He**, to reveal too much to the world. But when the days of **the Messiah** approach, even children will be able to discover secrets of wisdom, and through them be able to calculate the time of the end; then it will be revealed to all" (Zohar 1:117b-188a).¹³⁴²

Third, **when it does come, it will mean a separation**. According to the key passages on **the Rapture** (John 14:1-3 and First Corinthians 15:50-58), there will be a separation of the believer from the unbeliever. **Two men will be in the field; one will be taken away and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken away and the other left.** Unbelievers will be left behind. **Therefore, always be on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen.** How can you **escape**? You need to be off **the earth** by being caught up in **the Rapture** (First Thessalonians 4:13-18). **Pray that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man** (as a result of **the Rapture**) and **escape** the judgment of the Tribulation. **Therefore, be on the alert because you do not know on what day your Lord will come** (Mattityahu 24:40-42; Luke 21:36).