

2) The alleged “Olivet Discourse Problem”

The essence of what is contended by Dr. Kurschner and company under the “problem” at hand is that the Olivet Discourse—as delivered by the Lord Jesus and recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21—portrays the Church looking for signs, enduring the Great Tribulation, and being raptured at the end thereof, as seen in Matt. 24:30-31.

As will be shown, the only true Olivet Discourse problems pertain to all *non*-Pretribulation rapture systems, including the contrived Pre-Wrath Rapture scheme.

- a) No sound Dispensationalist claims, as is alleged, that "because of the Jewish focus of the book of Matthew, this section [the Olivet Discourse] was not meant for the Church." (Though the “Jewishness” of Matt. 24 can hardly be disputed as will be seen further on below.)

"To say that it is given to us to know [the Olivet Discourse, for example,] . . . proves nothing. All scripture is given *to* us and is good *for* us, but it is certainly not all *about* us; and we are most profited, not by the fancy that God is always thinking *of* us, but by really understanding its objects, scope, and end. Had Abraham imagined that he was to be involved in the impending catastrophe of Sodom because the Lord graciously revealed it to him before it came to pass, such a delusion would have done him harm. It was not to Lot who was there, but to Abraham who was not, that the fullest communication was made. And so it will be, I doubt not." (R.A. Huebner)

Indeed, Enoch was a type of the Church. and *testified of the second advent and the coming judgment (Jude 14, 15), but did not go through any of it.* Rather he was translated, caught up, raptured, removed from this world altogether before the world-wide judgment of the Flood—the outpouring of God's wrath—arrived (Gen. 5:21-24; Heb. 11:5)!

“Our business is to gather of what God speaks; and though all scripture is given for our profit, it is in no way necessary that all should be about ourselves. The glory of God in dealing with Jews is, in its place, as much the object of our faith as His dealings with Christians. And the apprehension of the distinctions in His ways, that is, real understanding of His word, depends on our knowing to whom it applies. Is not this taking away scripture from the church? Quite the reverse. There is no instruction in the past or future history of Israel, as revealed in the Bible, which is not *for* the church, but it is not *about* the church.” (W. Kelly)

- b) The fact is, there is no reference to the Church or its Rapture in the Olivet Discourse. Indeed, there is nothing akin to being taken up in the air or to heaven, no gathering together unto Him from the earth to heaven of any group at all! Nor is there even the slightest hint of glorification of living bodies taking place, let alone a resurrection and

catching up of the believing dead. That is, NO RAPTURE. *There is thus no “Olivet Discourse Problem”—not, at least, for Pre-Tribulational Truth!*

- c) The reference to angels and trumpet in Matt. 24 does not make it the same as the reference to an angel (archangel) and trump of God in 1 Thess. 4. Again, Noah was in an “ark” and the infant Moses was in an “ark” (same word in Gen. 6-9 and Exod. 2:3). Were Noah and Moses in the same ark?

The time of the sounding of the “last trumpet,” the “trump of God” (1 Thess. 4:16 and 1 Cor. 15:52) is **at** the Rapture WHEN Christ descends into the air. The sounding of this trumpet has its application in connection with something entirely *for Heaven*—NOT in connection with any prophetic earthly events: It means simply the final summons when we heavenly saints leave our earthly sojourn to join the Lord.

“For this we say to you in the word of the Lord, that we, the living, who remain to the coming of the Lord, are in no way to precede those who have fallen asleep; for the Lord himself, with an assembling shout, with archangel's voice and **with trump of God**, shall descend from heaven; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we, the living who remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we shall be always with the Lord. So encourage one another with these words.” (1 Thess. 4:13-18)

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed, in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound**, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” (1 Cor. 15:51-52)

The time of the sounding of the trumpet of Matt. 24:31 and Isa. 27:13 is sometime **after** the Appearing—which itself occurs sometime **after** the sounding of the 7th trumpet of Rev. 11:15-18. The sounding of the trumpet of Matt. 24:31 and Isa. 27:13 (for the gathering of the elect Jewish remnant to their Land), along with the *preceding* sounding of the 7th trumpet of Rev. 11:15-18 (especially for judgment on Gentiles), have their application entirely in connection with prophetic *earthly* events.

First: “The second woe has passed; behold, the **third woe comes quickly. And the seventh angel sounded his trumpet**: and there were great voices in the heaven, saying, The world-kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ is come, and he shall reign to the ages of ages. . . And the nations have been full of wrath, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead to be judged, and to give the recompense to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to those who fear thy name, small and great; and to destroy those that destroy the earth. . . And I saw another sign in the heaven, great and wonderful: *seven angels having*

seven plagues, the last ones; for in them the fury of God is completed.” (Rev. 11:14-15, 18; 15:1)

Then: **“Immediately after the tribulation of those days . . . shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the land lament, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect [godly Jewish elect] from the four winds, from the one extremity of the heavens to the other extremity of them.” (Matt. 24:29-31)**

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that **the great trumpet shall be blown;** and they shall come that were perishing in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and they shall worship Jehovah in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.” (Isa. 27:13)

“The last trumpet” is a “trump of God,” *sounded directly by God*, not the trump of an angel, *sounded by angels!*

“The ‘last trump’ of 1 Cor. 15 is an allusion to the final signal of the break up of a Roman camp for its march. It has nothing whatever to do with the loud sound of trumpet in Matt. 24 (with which cp. Isa. 27:13), any more than with the seven trumpets of Rev. 7-11. . . 1 Cor. 15 presents (and so I may add 1 Thess. 4) our last trump, because the question is of the risen saints; Matt. 24: 31, presents, if you will, the last trump of the Jewish saints then scattered over the earth. How does this identify the two, even if the trumpet in Matt. 24 had been styled the last trump, or “his elect,” were called “all the elect,” neither of which is the fact? Is it a contradiction if the historian speaks of the last trump sounding for the tenth legion in Gaul, and of the trumpet gathering the twelfth legion in Syria?” (William Kelly)

" 'The last trump' of 1 Corinthians 15 means simply the final summons when the heavenly saints leave their earthly sojourn to join the Lord – a figure, like others in the chapter, taken from familiar military matters. The trumpet in the gospel [of Matthew, Ch. 24] is rather connected with the divine call to gather Israel from all lands according to the prophets." [With respect to the significance of “the last trump” of 1 Cor. 15:] “In the Roman army, when it was about to move, the trumpet sounded three times: at the first trumpet they pulled down their tents; at the second trumpet they put themselves in order; and when the last sounded they started.” (J.N. Darby)

"In the military signals, the last trumpet was the one that actually set them in motion. Josephus says, in the breaking up of the Roman camp, at the first trumpet the tents were struck and all made ready for moving. At the second

trumpet, the beasts were laden, and fire was set to the abandoned camp. With the last trumpet to start them, it was demanded if all were ready, and the shout arose, 'we are ready,' and with uplifted hands they marched. (Wars iii. 5, 4.) Cf. 1 Thess. iv. 16, where there are three signals: the Lord with a shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God." (W. Scott)

- d) **Now let us take up the matter of *who the disciples represent* as the Lord spoke to them in the Olivet Discourse, and the indisputable “Jewishness” thereof (which shows that there is no “Olivet Discourse Problem,” except to those holding non-Pretribulation Rapture notions):**

"The normal course of things for us of a certainty is that we hear the gospel, we believe it and come into its blessings, we are brought into the church of God and begin to learn its character, its privileges, its destiny. Then, when instructed in Christian truth, we are put into a position to appreciate and properly understand things that were made known in earlier ages. If this be done there is not much difficulty in seeing the point of view taken in the Gospel of Matthew, for instance, to which Mr. Reese makes so many references. The idea of it being "Jewish" he abominates, and we grant at once that things of an extreme sort have been written on those lines which go beyond what is right. When all allowance for this has been made however, the internal evidence is clear that it was written for Jewish believers, and that it specially exhibits the *dispensational* changes that were impending, while treating the disciples as being just what they then were, representatives of the believing remnant, though soon to be incorporated into the church . . . **Hence also we do not see a rapture to heaven in verse 31 of chapter 24, but a gathering together of the elect upon earth by angelic power.**" (F.B. Hole)

"The disciples, though subsequently forming part of the church when it began, were nevertheless not of it during our Lord's ministry on earth. They believed in Christ, they followed Him in His temptations, they were instructed by Him, but were not yet of the church, nor could they be till Jesus was glorified on high, {Acts 2: 33} and the Holy Spirit baptized them here below {1 Cor. 12: 13}. **Their position was thus a peculiar one during that transitional order of things which began with John Baptist, and terminated with the cross,** the proclamation going out meanwhile that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. If Matt. 10 be examined, it will be seen that the Lord gave them directions, some of which suited them only in their then state, as in Matt. 10: 5, 6, some of which might well apply when the Spirit was given, as Matt. 10: 16, 20, 24, 42, and others, which evidently look on to a future resumption of the testimony among the cities of Israel before the Son of man comes. Compare especially verse 23. **Throughout this chapter — and it is not the only one of the kind — the disciples**

are addressed as having a peculiar connection with Israel, and in no way as being the church, or as representing it. No one denies that much of the chapter was fulfilled after the descent of the Holy Ghost to form the church. It was then, and in Judea, that persecution fell upon them. Still **the chapter does not contemplate them as the church, but as Jewish disciples carrying out a Jewish mission, and awaiting, in the difficulties and sorrows of their testimony in that land, the coming of the Son of man.** In Matt. 17 we find Peter, James, and John, the evident types of the spared and converted Jews in the millennium, and in the same scene Moses and Elias, the types of the glorified saints."

"It is upon similar Jewish ground that our Lord speaks in Matt. 24. His disciples had heard Him pronounce desolation in the preceding chapter. But it was a judgment mingled with mercy; for He distinctly intimated that if the Jews should not see Him henceforth, it was not unlimited; it was till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Vengeance must fall upon the unbelieving generation, such as the mass then were and are. But the time is coming when the nation, or at least a remnant of it, shall bless and curse not; wise ones who understand shall at length with joy welcome Him whom they crucified on the tree."

" 'And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily, I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?' (Matt. 24: 1-3). **Now it is not doubted that the church may have used, and may still use, the general principles of this chapter. All belongs to the church, for profit, instruction, reproof, or comfort; but most decidedly Matt. 24 is occupied not with the church, as such, but with Jerusalem and the temple, the consummation of the age, the clash of nations and kingdoms, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, persecutions, and trials, similar to Matt. 10, and a preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to all the Gentiles throughout the habitable world. Such is the general picture to verse 14. After that, the scene becomes more specific, both as to time, place, and circumstances. Precise interpretation must confine verses 15-31 to a period still future, though Jerusalem is still the foreground. 'When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth let him understand); then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains' (Matt. 24: 15, 16). Now what has this to do with the church as the church? What has she to do with that holy place? (Compare Acts 6:13; Acts 21:28). And how could the setting up of the abomination in the Jewish temple be**

a sign to the church to flee? But no! the passage refutes the idea. 'Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.' Accordingly they are directed to pray that their flight be not on **the Sabbath-day [what, indeed, has the church to do with the sabbath?!]**, nor in the winter, for either might impede their flight and expose them to imminent peril. It is to be a brief though terrible trial: 'except those days should be shortened [*i.e., 'limited' in extent*], there should no flesh be saved' {Matt. 24: 22}."

"That these elect are Jewish elect (see Isa. 65:9, 15, 22) is confirmed by the Lord's warning the disciples about false Christs who shall arise. Could the church, who knows that she is to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air — could she, I say, be in danger from the cries, Lo! here is Christ, or there; behold, He is in the desert, or in the secret chambers? But a perplexed Jewish remnant, whose hope is a Messiah on earth, might well need such monitions as the Lord here supplies. The coming of the Son of man (for it is Christ coming judicially which the chapter contemplates) shall not be secret, but as the lightning shining from east to west. They were not to be enticed by a 'Lo, here or there.' Other unmistakable signs should be granted. "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" (Matt. 24: 29). Here again it is manifest that the Lord is not describing the translation of the elect church, but the gathering of His elect Israel, and for a plain reason: "When Christ our life shall appear," says the apostle addressing the heavenly saints, "then shall ye also appear with him in glory" {Col. 3: 4}. Christ will not be manifested first, and the church be caught up subsequently; both are to appear together and at the same time in glory. But with the elect Jews the case widely differs. "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' (Matt. 24: 30, 31). They are delivered and gathered after the Son of man has already appeared. The church had not only been caught up before, but had come out of heaven along with Christ preparatory to His appearing (Rev. 19: 11-14). This prophecy, then, in any full sense, for I do not deny a partial historic accomplishment, looks to a future state of things, and **directly concerns a believing Jewish remnant, quite distinct from the church."**

"Is it in Matthew, and other Gospels only, where we read of such a converted remnant? By no means. Matt. 24:15, 21 evidently refers us to Daniel for other particulars of the same scenes and times. **If therefore it be clear that Matt. 24:15-31 concerns a future converted body of Jews, and not the church, have**

we not here also a divine help for interpreting Dan. 9: 27; 11: 31; 12: 1, 7, 11, and the connected parts of the same? That is, the saints spoken of in Daniel are Jewish, saints, and not the church, properly so called. Daniel's people, or at least the understanding ones (compare Matt. 24: 15) of that prophet, are those whom the Lord further instructs in the prophetic discourse of our evangelist. Again, it is admitted very generally that Daniel and the Revelation are so linked that, when you have determined the bearing of the one, you necessarily therein involve the general interpretation of the other. The beast of Dan. 7 is the beast of Rev. 11; 13; 17; and the time, times and a half, in that same chapter answer to the same period in Rev. 12, Compare the image in Rev. 13 with the abomination of desolation in the Gospel. Plainly therefore, while the Apocalypse has many subjects besides those treated of in Daniel or Matt. 24, while it admits of a far closer application than either to the providential history of the empire, etc., since the days of John, the grand final accomplishment of the book cannot be dissociated from the prophecies of Daniel and of the Lord Jesus Himself, which, we have seen, **specially regard Jerusalem and the Jews at the end of the age."**

“ ‘For all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.’ [Matt. 24:7] Mark the difference in the language of scripture. **Do we ever find the apostles saying, *The end is not yet, for us [heavenly saints]*? On the contrary,** it is said of us (1 Cor. 10), ‘upon whom the ends of the world [ends of the ages] are come.’ So again, speaking about the cross of Christ, it is written (Heb. 9:26), ‘Now once, in the end of the world [end of the ages]’; [Again, it is said as to us, the heavenly people of God: ‘Little children, *it is the last time*’ (1 John 2:18), and ‘*The end of all things is at hand*’ (1 Peter 4:7)]; **whereas, when the Lord is predicting about the Jewish remnant, ‘*the end is not yet.*’ And this, because many things must yet be accomplished before the Jews can come into their blessing. But for Christians, all things are ours in Christ even now; *the blessing is never put off, though we await the crown at His coming.*” (W. Kelly)**

- e) **Note the important observation made by William Kelly above regarding Col. 3:4 and Matt. 24:30-31.** Col. 3:4 gives an additional, inescapable reason why Matt. 24:30-31 cannot possibly be a reference to the Rapture of the Church:

When He appears, we all appear WITH HIM in glory (Col. 3:4). Christ does NOT Appear (is not Manifested) WITHOUT us or BEFORE us or TO us while we are yet on earth (as is true of those, e.g., in Matt. 24:30-31); rather, when He Appears, *He Appears TOGETHER WITH us*. For His heavenly saints, the scenario is NOT: He appears in glory *alone, without us*, and *then* He catches us up from the earth to be with Him, and *then* we too appear in glory. It is altogether the contrary: at the “*manifestation* of His coming,” “when Christ appears,” we are ALREADY WITH Him, *for we all APPEAR WITH Him* in glory (Col. 3:4).

Thus the Rapture and the Appearing *must be* separate and distinct phases of His coming, with the former *necessarily preceding and facilitating* the latter.

Col. 3:4 implicitly demands a rapture previous to His public "manifestation" (how much time previous is gleaned elsewhere). When Christ "appears" in glory, *we will appear together with Him in glory . . . at the very same time*. It is not: He appears in glory *and then* He catches us up *and then* we appear with Him in glory. No, *precisely when He appears, we appear with Him in manifested glory*. That means we are **already** with Him when He appears. Thus we had to have been **previously caught up** unto Him (when He does not yet "appear") and then *subsequently* we all *together with Him* "appear in glory" to the world (i.e., first He comes without "appearing" or being publicly "manifested" or "revealed," catches us up unto Himself, and then subsequently we "appear" *together with Him in glory* at the "manifestation" or "revelation" of His coming. He will *never* appear in glory at His manifestation *without us with Him*.) Such is quite unlike the situation outlined in the Olivet Discourse with respect to the waiting and watching godly Jewish remnant: *They are delivered and gathered after the Son of man has already appeared in glory. That is, He appears in glory without them with Him. He does not appear with them when He appears in glory, but appears first and then gathers them afterwards (which gathering is to their land (see below), not to the Father's House in Heaven).*

"That **the removal of the saints from earth** to meet the Lord does not synchronize with **their appearing in glory along with Him**, is, to my mind, certain from a variety of scriptures. First, Col. 3 declares that when Christ, our life, appears, 'then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.' The context would convince any fair mind that rigorous precision is here intended. *The basis is the identification of the Christian with Christ. Is He dead and risen? So are they. Is He now hid with God? So are they now with Him. But this will not be always. He is about to be manifested in glory: when He is, then shall they too be manifested in the same glory with Him. This is decisive against the hypothesis of Christ first appearing, then translating the risen and changed saints, and bringing then and thus His day on the world.* For in this case, Scripture must be broken, as Christ would have appeared in glory **without** His saints and **before** them. Their rapture . . . cannot then be **when** He is manifested; for they are all, Christ and the saints, **manifested together**. Besides, the same result follows from the scriptures which speak of His coming with [all] the saints. They must have been, then, caught up before in order to come with Him." (W. Kelly)

Thus, again, there is no "Olivet Discourse Problem," except for those who imagine that Matt. 24:30-31 is the Rapture of the Church! (See more on the "manifestation of His coming" under the alleged "2 Thessalonians Problem.")

- f) **On the future Regathering of Israel, or the gathering of the godly Jewish remnant of Matt. 24:30-31**, We include the following excellent summary of the facts and scriptures on this subject (extracted from R.A. Huebner's *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, Vol. 2):

“That the 10 tribes, i.e., Ephraim, will be regathered is asserted by several of the later prophets:

Isa. 11:12, 13; Jer. 31:7-9; Ezek. 20:33-38; 34:11-16; 37:16; Hos. 14:8; Zech. 9:13; 10:6; Obad. 18.

There are also passages that speaks of the 10 tribes and Judah:

Isa. 11:13; Jer. 3:18; 30:3; 31:27, 31; 33:7; Ezek. 37; Zech. 9:13; 10:6.

Besides these, many passages speak of the regathering of Israel generally.

Isa. 1:24-31; 4:2-4; 6:8-13; 10:21, 22; 14:1-3; 18:7; 25:6-12; 26:19; 27:6, 12, 13; 33:20-24; 35:10; 49:12, 22; 51:11; 60:1-15; Jer. 16:15; 23:3-8; 30:10; 31:8-10; 32:37-44; 33:25, 26 (cp. Neh. 9:36, 37); Ezek. 11:17; 28:25; 36:24; 37; Dan. 12:2; Hos. 1:9, 10; 2:14-23; 3:4, 5; Amos 9:14-15; Micah 2:12; 4:6-8; 5:8; Zeph. 3:12; Zech. 8:7, 8. See also Joel 3:1-21; 1 Chron 17:9; Psa. 14:7.

Jer. 3:18 is a passage whose force is similar to that of Ezek. 37 [*which passage will be considered shortly under the alleged “Church and Israel Problem”*] . . .

Concerning it, someone said:

But God has given His own marks; He has linked circumstances together which have never yet had their fulfillment, as in this passage, “All the nations shall be gathered unto it.” [Jer. 3:17] It is certain that this did not take place at the return from Babylon. But you will reply, It is the church. No; for “in those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together . . . to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.” [Jer. 3:18] We see, in a word, three things happening together, which most surely have not had as yet a simultaneous accomplishment; namely, Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; Judah and Israel united; and the nation assembled to the throne of God. When the church was founded, Israel was dispersed, when Israel returned from Babylon, there was neither church nor assemblage of nations.

It will not do to try to apply these Scriptures to the remnant that returned under Jerubbabab and Ezra since Haggai and Zechariah were among the returned remnant and spoke of the regathering of Israel as *still future*:

Haggai 2:6-9, 21-23; Zech. 2:12; 8:7, 8; 9:13; 10:6, 10; 12:2; 14:1.

Malachi, who wrote *after* the return from Babylon, also shows that Israel will be regathered: Mal. 3:3, 4, 17; 4:2. There can be no fair or right question about it. The nation of Israel will be restored to supremacy and that under Messiah. It is difficult to understand the cloud that is over the mind that attempts to find the church in the above Scriptures. Consistent with all these predictions was the faith and expectation of the little remnant when our Lord was here.

The Purging of the Rebels

So it is a great mistake to think that every Jew living at the time of the regathering of Israel will enjoy the blessedness of the kingdom. It is true, because God says it, that those in the bond under Messiah shall all be righteous (Isa 60:21). It is most true that “all Israel shall be saved”:

. . . and so all Israel shall be saved. According as it is written, the deliverer will come from Sion; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Rom. 11:26; see Isa. 59:20),

but the ungodly of the 10 tribes will not be brought into the land. They will first be brought into the wilderness, and the rebels will be purged out (Ezek. 20:33-38). “They shall not enter into the land of Israel.”

As to those already in the land (chiefly Judah), two thirds shall die and of the third part Jehovah will say, “It is my people” (Zech. 13:8, 9).

So one way that the Deliverer will turn away ungodliness from Jacob is by destroying the ungodly. **All left will compose the nation -- all born of God, and all under the new covenant.** See also Isa. 1:27 and 4:2-6.

The Agencies of The Regathering

There will be a partial regathering . . . by purely human agency (Isa. 18) [in unbelief].

The final regathering, however, will utilize a number of agencies:

Jehovah: Jer 16:15.

Christ: Isa 49:6.

The peoples: Isa 14:2; 49:22.

Vehicles: Isa 66:20.

Fishers and hunters: Jer 16:16.

Ships of Tarshish: Isa 60:9.

The great trumpet: Isa 27:13.

His angels, with a great sound of trumpet: Matt 24:31.

From Where Will They Be Regathered?

The agencies used in regathering Israel indicate that Israel will be found widely dispersed. But, when countries are named out of which Israel will be regathered, the countries are generally located near Palestine (Micah 7:12; Zech. 10:10). An interesting exception is found in Isa 49:12, where Sinim probably means China, and in Zeph. 3:10. No doubt every one of them no matter where scattered will be regathered for in Isa. 11:11, 12 we read:

And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the Lord shall set his hand the second time to acquire the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the isles of the seas.

g) "No one knows the day or the hour"

Scripture *nowhere indicates* that the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (which is not the Rapture) will take place on the very day on which the 70th week expires or on any other revealed day, e.g., 30 days after the end of the 70th Week or otherwise. It is true that Dan. 9:24 declares that 70 weeks must be completed before the 6-fold blessing can come to Israel as a nation. But, again, this does not mean, nor does any scripture state, that the appearing of Christ in glory takes place on the very day on which the 70th week terminates. It is a mistake to assume this. His appearing in kingdom glory may take place up to several days later or several days earlier. This is key, and, as such, clears away all difficulty on the matter.

The manifestation of His presence may take place anywhere from shortly *before* to shortly *after* the termination of the 70th week. He will come executing judgment over the course of several days, not merely on the very day of His appearing in power and great glory (nor is the Beast and his false prophet disposed of on the very day of His appearing).

"The appearing of the Son of man (Matt. 24:30) will be [immediately] after the tribulation (Matt. 24:29) but just how soon after, we do not know. The approximate time may be gauged but the day cannot be fixed." (RAH)

With respect to the Beast/Antichrist, the Lord may be manifested, e.g., days before the actual close of the 70th week, and then destroy the Beast a few days later. Nothing requires that the Lord Himself appear on day 2,520 of the 70th Week (no one knows the day or hour!). It may be true (or it may not be) that the Beast's satanic power is taken away and he be destroyed on day 2,520 . . . yet that does not prevent the Son of Man

coming in great power and glory a short while before that (for example), and the Beast still end up being verily destroyed by the manifestation of His coming. Though we believe the Lord may just as well Appear a few days *after* day 2,520 of the 70th Week, creating no difficulties in my mind either.

Some, by the way, believe that the two witnesses of Rev. 11 prophesy during the 2nd half of the 70th week (not during the 1st half), for the 1260 days, at the end of which they are killed, and lie in the street for 3 ½ days, and then are resurrected and taken up to heaven. Thus, according to this understanding, 3 ½ days beyond the expiration of the 70th week, Christ is still not seen as having returned to the earth yet! (See further comments below.)

In the Olivet Discourse our Lord states, "Thus also ye, when ye see all these things, know that it [or He] is near, at the doors" (Matt. 24:33) -- *not* "now you will be able to know or calculate the exact day on which I will appear in power and great glory." Rather, a few verses later He says exactly the opposite! (Matt. 24:42, 44, 25:13).

** "**Watch** therefore, **for** ye know not on what day your Lord doth come." (Matt. 24:42)

** "Therefore, be ye also **ready, for** in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh." (Matt. 24:44)

** "**Watch** therefore, **for** ye know neither the day nor the hour." (Matt. 25:13)

Their need to "watch" and make sure that they are "ready" are explicitly grounded, in these exhortations, on the fact that they "know neither the day nor the hour." If they were at some point able to compute and "know" the exact day or hour of His Revelation, then would it not be true that, at that point, they have no more need to "watch" or be "ready"--*according to these passages?* Why should they continue to ensure that they "watch," *according to these exhortations*, if they do in fact come to know the day or the hour?

The "uncertainty" in these passages clearly apply, and will still apply, to those living during the Tribulation Period / 70th week.

And not knowing the day or the hour ("uncertainty") does not necessarily imply *imminency*. The former may be true without the latter, though not vice versa. The Rapture is imminent (may occur at any moment), thus it is obviously true that we know neither its day or its hour. The Manifestation of His Coming will not occur till very close to the end of the accomplishment of the 70th week, thus it is NOT imminent during the whole of the 70th week, though the day and the hour are, nonetheless, *uncertain* to any man.

Thus there is no reason why the Manifestation of His Coming in great power and glory may not actually occur shortly before or after the end of the 70th Week. As such, there is indeed uncertainty, with no man knowing the day or the hour of the Son of Man's Coming. It may take place a number of days prior to the expiration of the 70th Week or it may take place a number of days after the expiration of the 70th Week. There is certainly no scriptural reason to assume that the King of kings will or must return on the exact day on which the 70th Week expires, or on the 30th day thereafter. (One may possibly and accurately compute when the 70th Week will reach its end but such is not inherently coterminous with the Appearing of the Son of Man.) Thus there is no contradiction of Matt. 24:36, 42, 44 or 25:13. The inspired truth that they convey in regards to the uncertainty of the day and hour of His Appearing is preserved perfectly. And no Rapture of the Church is required to be read into them as a result.

Supplemental Note related to the unknown day or hour of the Son of Man's Appearing:

Some believe that the Two Witnesses of Rev. 11 prophesy during the *first* half of the 70th week. That may be the case. If so, then it is equally possible that the Manifestation of His Coming in great power and glory may actually occur shortly *before* the end of the 70th Week. Or it may occur shortly thereafter. Both are possibilities, if the ministry of the Two Witnesses occurs during the first half of the 70th Week. Thus there is uncertainty, with no man knowing the day or the hour of the Son of Man's Coming. It may take place somewhat prior to the expiration of the 70th Week or it may take place somewhat after the expiration of the 70th Week. If the ministry of the Two Witnesses turns out to be during the *second* half of the 70th Week, then those living at the time may be able to ascertain that His Appearing will not occur *before* the end of the 70th Week but sometime soon *after*, but still without knowing the day or the hour.

The following is taken from R.A. Huebner's *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, Vol. 2, which assumes the 2nd half week for the ministry of Two Witnesses of Rev. 11 (a position held also by some, if not all, Pre-Wrath Rapturists, e.g., Marvin Rosenthal). Some important points are brought out in that connection.

"The 70th week remains to run its course. It will commence after the rapture of the saints, when Christ comes to take His own to the Father's house (John 14:1-3). There may be a space of time following the rapture before the 70th week commences. There may not be. I am not aware that Scripture states either case."

"But there *will* be a short space of time between the end of Daniel's 70th week and the appearing of Christ. The last half-week is described in the following way, beginning from the "middle" (Dan. 9:27):

1. Time, times and a half-time: Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14;
2. Forty-two months: Rev. 11:12; 13:5;
3. 1260 days: Rev. 11:3; 12:6.

Yet, Christ will not appear on the 1260th day. We know this for at least two reasons:

1. The two witnesses lie dead on the street in Jerusalem for 3-1/2 days *after* the 1260th day.
2. The 7 bowls are the seven *last* plagues and there must be a short time in which they are poured out following the sounding of the seventh trumpet.”

“The appearing of Christ, then, follows the seven bowls, or occurs with the pouring out of the seventh bowl. His appearing will be followed by a short period of time called ‘the war of [that] great day of God the Almighty.’ Armageddon is *symbolic*, not a literal place, and designates the awful slaughter that will occur during the war of the great day of God the Almighty, during which His Christ will deal with the chief enemies one by one.”

“Posttribulationists connect the raising of the two witnesses with the appearing, (incorrectly) claimed to be on the 1260th day from the middle of the 70th week. They don’t want saints raised before the appearing. But the two witnesses are killed right on the 1260th day (and therefore are not the souls under the altar (Rev. 6) or the martyrs during the tribulation) and are raised 3 ½ days later; i.e., on the 1263 ½ day. This *precedes* the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11). The two witnesses are certainly among the just. The time of their resurrection is *exactly* pinpointed. And they are raised and ascend in the sight of their enemies -- *after* [typo: the author means *before*] the seventh trumpet sounds. Thus they are raised and ascend before the appearing.”

“To have the appearing of Christ occur on the 1260th day from the middle of the week means that the two witnesses, who prophesy for 1260 days and then lie on the street for 3 ½ days, means that their testimony will have to occur during the first half-week. But the truth is that they prophesy during the last half-week, the time of the Satanic power of the beast, and the worship of the Triad. Another alternative is to begin their 1260 days of prophesying 3 ½ days before the middle of the week. That does sound artificial, does it not?”

“Scripture says that there will be times, time and a half time (3 ½ years) until the accomplishment (Dan 12:7). It also shows that there will be 1335 days from the placing of the abomination (in the middle of the 70th week) until the full blessing (Dan 12:11, 12). Shortly after the end of the 3 ½ years, the Lord will come.”

“Note that at the 1260h day, the 70th week is over, but the Lord has not yet come. The two witnesses are killed and lie dead on the street for 3 ½ days, corresponding to the 3 ½ years of refusal of their testimony, by the apostates. And then they are raised and ascend to heaven, upon which further intense calamities occur. So the appearing of the Lord will not occur on the 1260th day, nor on the 1263 ½ day (when the two witnesses rise). It is in the subsequent interval, but no man knows the day or the hour.

“The point here is to show that there is some time after the close of the 1260th day. This leaves room for the statement: *But immediately after the tribulation of those days...* [Matt. 24:29]”

“The proper view of this is to see that Armageddon refers to the war of the great day of God the Almighty, which involves a sequence of battles. Then, finally Gog and Magog will be judged, and thereafter the kingdom will commence on the 1335th day from the middle of Daniel’s 70th week.”

“Furthermore, the two witnesses are not raised at the appearing of Christ in glory. It is only resistance to the multi-part, first resurrection that requires bringing in the appearing here. The fact is that the first resurrection is a class of persons (the just) and not a single point in time. It seems that the two witnesses have part in this resurrection but in their own appointed time.”

“They are raised 3 ½ days after the end of the 1260 days (cp. Rev 11:3, 11). **They will lie dead in the street one day for each year of their testimony.** So Christ does not appear on the last day of the 1260 days of the last half-week, that is, on the last day of Daniel’s 70th week. **Furthermore, at the end of the 3 ½ days Christ does not yet appear. Jerusalem will not at that point in time have been taken by the King of the North** (cp. Dan. 11:40-45; Isa. 10:5, 6, 24-27, 28; Zech. 14:1; Psa. 79, 83). Christ comes after this first attack, and thus after the two witnesses are raised.” (R.A. Huebner)

And, interestingly, the same author makes the following observation based on Marvin Rosenthal’s “*The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church*”:

“He [Rosenthal] believes that the two witnesses minister during the second half-week (p. 157). He has a chart (p. 112) showing the rapture taking place about the middle of the second half-week, i.e., about the middle (or whatever) of the period of the ministry of the two witnesses (before the seventh seal). It follows that they are [strangely!] left behind at the rapture. They must have been ministering for part of the 1260 days while the Christians were still in the world, and another part of the 1260 days after they are gone. They must have, therefore, a non-Christian testimony.” [See more in this connection shortly!]

- h) Regarding those "taken" vs. those "left" in Matt. 24, observe Zephaniah 3:11-13 in this connection, which fit together perfectly, and is *the exact opposite* of what occurs at the Rapture of the Church!

"In that day thou shalt not be ashamed for all thy doings wherein thou hast transgressed against me; for then ***I will take away out of the midst of thee*** them that exult in thy pride, and thou shalt *no more* be haughty because of my holy mountain. And ***I will leave in the midst of thee*** an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of Jehovah. The remnant of Israel shall not work unrighteousness, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth." (Zeph. 3:11-13)

"Then an eternal separation for both men and women will take place. Zephaniah 3:11-13, will be fulfilled; the transgressors will be taken away in judgment; the afflicted and poor people who trust in the name of the Lord will be left for millennial blessings, and these are 'the remnant of Israel.' " (F.B. Hole)

Along the same lines, Isaiah tells us:

"It shall come to pass that he who remaineth in Zion, and he that is left in Jerusalem, shall be called holy,—every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem; when the Lord shall have **washed away** the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have scoured out the blood of Jerusalem **from its midst**, by the spirit of **judgment**, and by the spirit of burning." (Isa. 4:3-4)

Moreover, our Lord's coming to Rapture His Body & Bride is *never* presented as "the coming of the Son of Man" (which is always characterized by earthly judgment first).

The fact is, the Rapture is not found anywhere in the Synoptics (Matthew, Mark, Luke).

Now Luke 17:37 absolutely confirms the understanding of "taken" away in judgment:

"And answering they [the disciples] say to Him, Where, Lord [that is, where will they be taken, 17:34-36)? And He said to them, Where the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together [i.e., in *divine judgment* of that which is morally/spiritually dead, not *in blessing!*]."

But the context of Matt. 24 itself clearly tells us that all "taken" in the Flood were all taken in judgment, which **illustrates the fate of those "taken" by the coming of the Son of Man**, albeit a different word is used for "taken," which is not some technical phrase but one that may have a negative or positive connotation . . . context decides. (The two different words for "taken" in Matt. 24:39 and Matt. 24:40, 41 is accounted for by the fact that the former is used in connection with a world-wide **non-discriminate** judgment upon **all** involved, while the latter is used in connection with a world-wide **very discriminate** judgment of the **particular** individuals involved.)

Indeed, the same word for “taken” in Matt. 24:40, 41 is used, e.g., with a negative connotation of judgment, in Matt. 27:27:

“Then the soldiers of the governor, *having taken* Jesus with them to the praetorium, gathered against him the whole band.” (Matt. 27:27)

Not only that, but the same word for “left” in Matt. 24:40, 41 is actually used with a positive connotation of blessing or avoidance of judgment, in Mark 14:6 and Luke 13:8:

“And when he was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as He lay at table, there came a woman having an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly; and having broken the alabaster flask, she poured it out upon His head. And there were some indignant in themselves, and saying, Why has this waste been made of the ointment? for this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor. And they spoke very angrily at her. But Jesus said, *Let her alone*; why do ye trouble her? she has wrought a good work as to Me.” (Mark 14:3-6)

“And He spoke this parable: A certain [man] had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit upon it and did not find any. And he said to the vinedresser, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree and find none: cut it down; why does it also render the ground useless? But he answering says to him, Sir, *let it alone* for this year also, until I shall dig about it and put dung.” (Luke 13:6-8)

One more thought on those "taken" vs. those "left" in Matt. 24 . . .

If a rapture is seen in those "taken" and judgment seen in those "left," then this would entail two *impossibilities*:

1) There will be no one saved during the 70th Week, or during the remainder of the 70th Week for the Pre-Wrath Rapture view. For those who are "left" (after believers are "taken" in the rapture) are all "left" for divine judgment not for salvation (as depicted in the Noahic Flood illustration as well as in the Sodom destruction illustration of Luke 17). But such a notion contradicts the revelation of God in His word.

And if all are “left” for divine judgment, what becomes of the Two Witnesses of Rev. 11, who are left behind after the supposed Pre-Wrath rapture?! What, moreover, becomes of the Judgment of the *living Gentile Sheep* and Goats (i.e., in their natural bodies—*no death and resurrection* involved in their appearance there), *when* the Son of Man sits down upon His earthly kingdom throne of glory (Matt. 25:31ff)?

2) There will be no one to enter and populate the Millennial Kingdom, in their natural (unglorified) bodies, upon its initial establishment. All of the saved will have been "taken" and glorified in the rapture, leaving **all** of the rest for divine judgment and no salvation (as depicted in the Noahic Flood illustration as well as in the Sodomite destruction illustration of Luke 17). But such a notion also contradicts the revelation of God in His word (and runs up against the same unmovable obstacle of Post-Tribulationism). [Note: ONLY the saved will enter the Kingdom at its establishment on this earth (cf. 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Matt. 25:11-12, 30, 31-46; 24:13; 13:39-42, 49-50; 7:21-23; 18:3; Isa. 13:9; Ezek. 20:38; Zech. 13:8-9; Rom. 11:26-27); who will reproduce/have children during that blessed 1,000 Year Reign.]