**One Taken, Another Left**

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*Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left.*

*Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.*

*Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.*

*But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.*

*Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.* ([Matthew 24:40-44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.40-44&t=NKJV))

It was Philip Mauro who, during the first part of the last century, said,

“We greatly fear the consequences of the tendency observable in certain quarters to treat the millennial kingdom of the Son as a thing of little interest to the saints of God.”

The coming reign of Christ is the climactic event of the ages pertaining to man in relation to this present earth. *All Scripture, after some fashion, moves toward this event*; and to ignore this fact can only prove detrimental to any sound method of biblical study.

In the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse ([Matthew 24:4-39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.4-39&t=NKJV)), the kingdom of Christ follows God’s dealings with Israel during and after the Tribulation; in *the Christian section* of this discourse ([Matthew 24:40-25:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.40-25.30&t=NKJV)), the kingdom of Christ likewise follows God’s dealings with Christians during and at the end of the present dispensation; and exactly the same thing is seen concerning God’s dealings with the Gentiles at the end of the Tribulation in *the Gentile section* of this discourse ([Matthew 25:31-46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.31-46&t=NKJV)).

The reign of Christ over the earth is *the consummative event in view throughout the Olivet Discourse*. God’s dealings with the Jews during and following the Tribulation, His dealings with Christians during and at the end of the present dispensation, and His dealings with the Gentiles at the end of the Tribulation are *ALL intimately related to the kingdom that follows these dealings.*

The Christian section of the Olivet Discourse centers on events during and at the end of that time that God has set aside (the present dispensation) in order to accomplish a dual purpose regarding His Son’s coming reign over the earth:

*1) To call out the many sons (the Son’s co-heirs) of* [*Hebrews 2:10*](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.10&t=NKJV)*.*

*2) To acquire a bride for God’s Son (*[*Genesis 24*](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24&t=NKJV)*).*

(*Israel* and *the Church* are dealt with in Scripture in both *masculine* and *feminine* respects. Both are dealt with in relation to *sonship* [firstborn sons], and both are dealt with in relation to *marriage* [as a bride, a wife].

Both are dealt with in the former respect [*sonship*] *because only sons can rule in God’s kingdom* [only firstborn sons in the human realm]; and both are dealt with in the latter respect [a bride, a wife] *because, as God Himself established the matter in the opening two chapters of Genesis, the King cannot reign without a consort queen* [God and Israel; Christ and the Church].)

Israel has been set aside for a period of time that will last for one dispensation, 2,000 years, and during this time God is calling out the “*companions*” [KJV: “partakers”] who will occupy the throne as “*joint heirs*” with His Son during the coming age (*cf.* [Romans 8:17-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.17-23&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+1.9&t=NKJV); [3:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+3.1&t=NKJV), [14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+3.14&t=NKJV)) — as both *the many sons* who will reign with His Son, and as *the consort queen* who will ascend the throne and reign alongside His Son.

And these individuals *must* be dealt with at the end of this present dispensation, with their calling in view. *This is what the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse is about.*

**Responsibility, Accountability, the Goal**

The Lord’s reference to one taken and another left opens the first of four parallel parables in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse. And each parable actually has to do with *the same thing*, though each parable presents matters from a different perspective.

Each parable has to do with *the Lord’s dealings with His servants* (Christians) *during present and future times, with the coming kingdom in view*. And, with each parable presenting matters from a different perspective, all four parables viewed together present *a complete, composite picture in a threefold fashion*:

1) The Christians’ present responsibility.

2) The Christians’ future accountability.

3) The relationship of both to the coming kingdom of Christ.

Christians have *a responsibility* to live their lives in a manner that reflects their high calling. “Salvation” is for *a purpose*, and this purpose has to do with *the coming kingdom*. Christians have been called “*unto His own kingdom and glory*” ([1 Thessalonians 2:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+2.12&t=NKJV); *cf*. [1 Peter 5:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+5.1&t=NKJV), [10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+5.10&t=NKJV); [2 Peter 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+1.3&t=NKJV)). And the biblical picture of one’s salvation is not so much *saved from* (“from hell”) as it is *saved into* (“*unto His own kingdom and glory*”).

“Responsibility,” in turn, demands *accountability*. Every Christian will one day appear before the judgment seat of Christ to render an account concerning *how he carried out his responsibility*. All things will be revealed in the presence of a righteous, omnipotent, omniscient Judge ([Revelation 1:12-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1.12-20&t=NKJV)). The previous works of the ones being judged will come under review, and the results will have a direct bearing on the Christians’ position in the kingdom that follows.

The purpose for the judgment seat, in this respect, is in keeping with the purpose for the entire present dispensation. God is today *calling out the rulers who are to reign as co-heirs with His Son during the coming age*, and the decisions and determinations rendered at the judgment seat concerning these individuals will have to do with their being placed in or being denied one of the numerous proffered positions that the co-heirs will occupy with Christ.

Accordingly, *the end or goal toward which everything moves in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse is the coming kingdom*. It is the kingdom with its glory to which Christians have been called, and any Christian failing to realize his calling therein will have failed to realize the very purpose for his salvation.

*The coming kingdom* is not only the end or goal toward which everything moves in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse but in the other two sections as well. God’s dealings with the Jewish people in the first section ([Matthew 24:4-39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.4-39&t=NKJV)) occur during and immediately following the Tribulation and lead *into the kingdom*, and God’s dealings with the Gentiles in the third section as well ([Matthew 25:31-46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.31-46&t=NKJV)) occur at the end of the Tribulation (following God’s dealings with the other two divisions of mankind) and also lead into *the kingdom*.

And, as evident, in a broader respect, *the kingdom* is the end or goal toward which everything in Scripture moves, save events in the few references describing conditions during the eternal ages beyond the Millennium (*e.g*., [1 Corinthians 15:24-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.24-28&t=NKJV); parts of [Revelation 21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21&t=NKJV); [22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22&t=NKJV)). Beginning with the opening chapters of Genesis, the emphasis is upon *man holding the scepter, ruling over a restored earth; and this emphasis never changes throughout Scripture*.

Christ’s discourse on the Mount of Olives moves more to the end of the matter and presents summary information relative to concluding events in God’s dealings with the three groups of mankind (Jew, Christian, and Gentile), with *the kingdom, as throughout Scripture, the objective or goal in view.*

It is clearly shown in the parable of the Householder and His servant and in the parable of the talents ([Matthew 24:45-51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.45-51&t=NKJV); [25:14-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.14-30&t=NKJV)) that man ultimately placed in the position of “ruler” is the focal point (*cf.* [Matthew 24:47](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.47&t=NKJV); [25:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.21&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.23&t=NKJV)). And it is no different in the other two parallel parables in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse ([Matthew 24:40-44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.40-44&t=NKJV); [25:1-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.1-13&t=NKJV)).

Note that each parable begins in a similar fashion: “*Then* . . . .” ([Matthew 24:40-44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.40-44&t=NKJV)); “*Who then* . . . .” ([Matthew 24:45-51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.45-51&t=NKJV)); “*Then* . . . .” ([Matthew 25:1-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.1-13&t=NKJV)); “*For it is just as a man* . . . [literal rendering, referring back to the parable of the ten virgins in vv. 1-13, and consequently back to the previous two parables in this section, in [Matthew 24:40-51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.40-51&t=NKJV)]” ([Matthew 25:14-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.14-30&t=NKJV)).

Then note that each parable has been given to provide additional information that will help explain another parable. In this respect, the words “*Who then*” and “*Then*,” opening the second and third parables, refer back to the previous parable/parables.

The first parable ([Matthew 24:40-44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.40-44&t=NKJV)), for example, closes with the exhortation to *Watch, Be Ready,* “*for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect*” ([Matthew 24:42](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.42&t=NKJV), [44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.44&t=NKJV)). The second parable immediately following ([Matthew 24:45-51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.45-51&t=NKJV)) opens with the words, “*Who then is a faithful and wise servant .* . . .” The allusion is back to the preceding parable (vv. 40-44).

The parable of the Householder and His servant [vv. 45-51] has been given to provide additional information, helping to explain the preceding parable dealing with one taken and the other left [vv. 40-44]. Both parables concern *the same thing* — faithfulness or unfaithfulness on the part of the Lord’s servants, resulting in their being accorded or being denied positions *as rulers with Christ in the kingdom*. And so it is with the following two parables.

This connection between the four parables can possibly be seen slightly clearer in the opening verse of the fourth parable. Note that the words, “*the kingdom of heaven is*” ([Matthew 25:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.14&t=NKJV)), are in italics, indicating that they are not in the Greek text. The word “as” is a translation of the Greek word *hosper*, which is a connecting particle meaning “just as” or “even as.”

This is the same word translated “as” earlier in the Olivet Discourse ([Matthew 24:37-38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.37-38&t=NKJV)), comparing the days of Noah with the days of the coming of the Son of Man. And the word is used in the same sense beginning the parable of the talents.

This word, beginning the parable of the talents, is used as a connective to show that the parable about to follow is *exactly like* the parable that has preceded, giving rise to the translation, “*For it is just as a man* . . . .”

The parable of the talents was given to help explain the previous parable, the parable of the ten virgins (or, for that matter, the two parables preceding the parable of the ten virgins as well). This parable concerns *exactly the same thing — faithfulness or unfaithfulness of the Lord’s servants, resulting in their being accorded or being denied entrance into the marriage festivities and subsequent positions as rulers with Christ in the kingdom.*

**RECEIVED OR TURNED AWAY**

The words in the text, “*one will be taken and the other left*,” are often misunderstood by expositors. And through this misunderstanding, some mistakenly teach that these verses refer to *the rapture*, with one removed from the earth and another left behind on the earth. This though is *not* at all what is in view.

The mistake comes from thinking that *the ones left remain in the field or at the mill*, while the others *are removed from these places*. Reference to the Greek text, the context, and parallel Scripture though will show that *this cannot possibly be the case*. These verses reveal the Lord’s dealings with two Christians who will be in the field and two other Christians who will be grinding at the mill (representative individuals, places, and occupations) when He returns to reckon with His servants; and this reckoning will occur, not in the field or at the mill, *but before the judgment seat of Christ in heaven following the rapture*. *The time* and *place* of this reckoning are always the same in Scripture.

The word “taken” ([Matthew 24:40-41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.40-41&t=NKJV)) is a translation of the Greek word *paralambano*. This is a compound word comprised of *para* (“beside,” or “alongside”) and *lambano* (“to take,” or “to receive”). Thus, the word goes a step beyond just simply *taking* or *receiving*. It is *taking or receiving the person alongside or to oneself* (*cf.* [Matthew 17:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+17.1&t=NKJV); [20:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+20.17&t=NKJV) where *paralambano* is used). This would be the word used referring to the reception of an individual as an “associate” or a “companion,” which is actually what is involved in this passage.

Then, the word “left” ([Matthew 24:40-41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.40-41&t=NKJV)) is a translation of the Greek word *aphiemi*, which is used in an antithetical respect to *paralambano*. In the light of the way *paralambano* is used, *aphiemi* could possibly best be understood by translating the word, “turn away.”

That which is involved in this passage has to do with *Christians before the judgment seat either being received in an intimate sense or being turned away in an opposite sense.*

And the parable of the Householder and His servant, which immediately follows, is given to help explain these things. These verses are not referring to the rapture at all, but *to faithful and unfaithful Christians in different walks of life as they appear before the judgment seat in heaven.*

Reference to the parallel passage in Luke’s account of the Olivet Discourse shows this same thing:

*Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man*. ([Luke 21:36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+21.36&t=NKJV)).

Some expositors have also taken this verse as a reference to the rapture (usually those attempting selective rapture); but, again, such is not correct. This verse is actually the parallel in Luke’s gospel for not only [Matthew 24:40-44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.40-44&t=NKJV) but also for the three parables that follow, covering the remainder of the Christian section of the discourse (the parable of the Householder and His servant [[Matthew 24:45-51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.45-51&t=NKJV)], the parable of the ten virgins [[Matthew 25:1-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.1-13&t=NKJV)], and the parable of the talents [[Matthew 25:14-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.14-30&t=NKJV)]).

Again, reference to the Greek text, the context, and related Scripture will show exactly how this verse is to be understood. The main problems in translation and interpretation lie in the words “*that you may be counted worthy” and “escape all these things*.”

The words, “*that you may be counted worthy*,” could be better translated, “*that you may prevail over* [in the sense of being strong and winning a victory]”; and the words, “*escape* [*lit.*, ‘escape out of’] *all these things*,” refer back to the immediate context, dealing with “surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life” ([Luke 21:34-35](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+21.34-35&t=NKJV)). This verse is, thus, exhorting Christians to watch and pray relative to deliverance from involvement in the ways and practices of the world ([Ephesians 6:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+6.18&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Ephesians 6:10-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+6.10-17&t=NKJV)).

Weymouth, in his translation of the New Testament, captures the correct thought from the Greek text about as well as any English version presently available (also see the NASB):

*Beware of slumbering; at all times pray that you may be fully strengthened to escape from all these coming evils, and to take your stand in the presence of the Son of Man.*

Note also Wuest’s “Expanded Translation”:

*But be circumspect, attentive, ready, in every season being in prayer, in order that you may have sufficient strength to be escaping all these things which are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.*

The words “watch” and “pray” are in a present tense showing linear (continuous) action in the Greek text. The thought is that of Christians *continually watching* (always being alert, on guard) and *continually praying* for the strength necessary *to escape out of the ways and practices of the world*.

“Escape out of” is the translation of an aorist infinitive in the Greek text, showing deliverance viewed as *eventual* (*i.e*., viewed as the result of Christians continually watching and praying). And, viewed as *a whole* (as in Weymouth’s translation), this deliverance would occur on particular occasions at different times.

Contextually, this deliverance is not a one-time event (as the rapture), but repeated occurrences (as in Wuest’s translation). And the goal of the entire process is Christians ultimately being privileged to “*stand before the Son of Man.*”

(*Aorist* and *present tenses* in the Greek text are often misunderstood and misused. In fact, a lot of false doctrine has resulted from a misunderstanding and misuse of these tenses.

The word “aorist” is simply an anglicized Greek word, *aoratos*, which means “unseen,” “invisible” [*aoratos* is the word *horatos*, meaning “to see,” negated by the prefix “a,” making the word *aoratos* mean just the opposite — “not to see”]. And this word, used relative to “tense” in Greek grammar, refers to the “action” of the verb [unseen action].

Action in the aorist tense is presented simply as occurring, without reference to its progress [which, from the verb itself, cannot be seen]. And this action, seen contextually, can be very linear [continuous, occurring over time] or punctiliar [occurring at one or more points in time].

[A misunderstanding and misuse of the aorist tense usually occurs by attempting *to see what the meaning of the name of the tense itself clearly states can’t be seen — action occurring, which is invariably and erroneously viewed as punctiliar.*

This action is represented on paper [in grammar books] by *a dot*, simply because it can’t be seen to describe the type of action (whether linear or punctiliar). And *this dot* is what often misleads people, thinking that punctiliar action is being described by *the dot*, which isn’t the case at all].

On the other hand, *the present tense*, where action is seen, serves *to show both linear and punctiliar action*. The general rule is that if punctiliar action is not shown by the context, then linear action is to be understood.

For example, “*believes*” in [John 3:15-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.15-16&t=NKJV) is the translation of a present participle in the Greek text; and, except for the context [[John 3:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.14&t=NKJV)], the word in both verses would be understood in *a linear respect*. The context though shows that both words are to be understood as *punctiliar* — *i.e.*, simply believe at a point in time, not keep on believing [it was *look and live* *in the type* (v. 14), and it is, as well (it cannot be any other way) *look and live in the antitype* (vv. 15-16)].

Then note “*believes*” in [Romans 1:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+1.16&t=NKJV), also the translation of a present participle in the Greek text. But this time the context doesn’t show that the present tense is *to be understood any way other than linear*. Thus, the thought presented in the verse would be to keep on believing, keep on exercising faith [note, contextually, that this verse has nothing to do with eternal salvation; rather, it has to do with belief, faith, exercised by those who are already saved].)

*Standing before, or in the presence of, the Son of Man* in the passage from Luke’s account of the Olivet Discourse ([Luke 21:34-36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+21.34-36&t=NKJV)) is synonymous with *being received in an intimate manner by the Lord* in the parallel section in Matthew’s account of the Olivet Discourse ([Matthew 24:40-44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.40-44&t=NKJV)).

The thought is presented another way in [Psalms 24:3-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalms+24.3-4&t=NKJV):

*Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully.*

Psalm chapter twenty-four is a Messianic Psalm; and the expression, “to stand before the Son of Man” in [Luke 21:36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+21.36&t=NKJV), is Messianic as well. *Ascending* “*the hill* [referring to the ‘kingdom’; note [Psalms 2:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalms+2.6&t=NKJV)] of the Lord” or *standing “before the Son of Man”* are reserved for “associates” or “companions” who will rule as *co-heirs with Christ* (*cf.* [Hebrews 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+1.9&t=NKJV); [3:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+3.1&t=NKJV), [14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+3.14&t=NKJV); “fellows” [1:9, KJV] and “partakers” [3:1, 14] are translations of the same Greek word [*metochoi*], which could be better rendered, “associates” or “*companions*”).

(A similar statement to that which is seen in [Luke 21:36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+21.36&t=NKJV) is seen in God’s promise to those in the Church in Philadelphia, in [Revelation 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.10&t=NKJV) — “*I also will keep you from the hour of trial.*”

For information on this verse, refer to Chapter 10, “A Pillar, A City,” in the author’s book, Judgment Seat of Christ [[Bible One - A Pillar, A City from The Judgment Seat of Christ by Arlen Chitwood](http://bibleone.net/JSC10.htm)].)

**SAVING OF THE LIFE**

The account in [Matthew 24:40-44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.40-44&t=NKJV) of individuals either being received in an intimate respect or being turned away in an opposite respect was repeated on another occasion by the Lord in a slightly different setting. [Luke 17:34-36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+17.34-36&t=NKJV) records this same sequence of events following an exhortation to remember Lot’s wife and a statement pertaining *to saving or losing one’s* “*life* [‘*soul*’]” (vv. 32-33).

The Greek words *paralambano* and *aphiemi*, used in [Matthew 24:40-41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.40-41&t=NKJV) to show the manner of reception and the opposite manner of rejection, are also used in [Luke 17:34-36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+17.34-36&t=NKJV).

Reception in Matthew is associated with being prepared for the Lord’s return through faithfulness and watchfulness (vv. 42-46). A correct teaching drawn from the overall passage in Luke ([Luke 17:22-37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+17.22-37&t=NKJV)) shows the same thing, with the end result of proper preparation through faithfulness and watchfulness being the salvation of one’s “*life* [‘*soul*’]” (v. 33).

The inverse of this would, of course, be true concerning those turned away by the Lord. That is, being unprepared because of unfaithfulness and not watching will result in the loss of one’s “life [‘soul’]” (*cf.* [Matthew 16:24-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.24-28&t=NKJV); [24:48-51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.48-51&t=NKJV); [Luke 17:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+17.33&t=NKJV)).

Several verses in Luke chapter seventeen are very similar to verses in the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse in Matthew (*cf.* [Luke 17:23-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+17.23-27&t=NKJV), [31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+17.31&t=NKJV), [37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+17.37&t=NKJV); [Matthew 24:17-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.17-18&t=NKJV), [23-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.23-28&t=NKJV), [37-39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.37-39&t=NKJV)), leading some expositors to believe that this complete section in Luke is “Jewish.”

This though *cannot* be the case, for the verses comprising this section are set in a context which, as in [Matthew 24:4-25:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.4-25.30&t=NKJV), have both Jewish and Christian parts (with the Jewish part seen first in both passages [[Matthew 24:4-39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.4-39&t=NKJV) and [Luke 17:23-31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+17.23-31&t=NKJV)]; then, the Christian part follows in both passages [[Matthew 24:40-25:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.40-25.30&t=NKJV) and [Luke 17:32-37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+17.32-37&t=NKJV)]).

(Types in Scripture such as *the days of Noah*, seen in both Matthew’s and Luke’s accounts, and *the days of Lot*, seen in Luke’s account, often lend themselves to more than one central understanding in the antitype [*e.g.*, *Jonah*, in his experiences, typifies future events in the lives of *both of God’s firstborn Sons*, *both Christ and Israel* ([Matthew 12:40](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12.40&t=NKJV) relative to *Christ*, and it is evident from the book of Jonah that the overall type has to do with *Israe*l); or note a verse such as [Hosea 11:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hosea+11.1&t=NKJV), which, contextually, is a reference to Israel (both past under Moses and future under Christ), but the verse is used relative to *Christ* in [Matthew 2:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+2.15&t=NKJV)].

And the account of the destruction of the cities of the plain during Lot’s day is used in *a dual manner in Scripture as well — relative to both Israel and Christians*. In [Luke 17:28-29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+17.28-29&t=NKJV), the account appears in *the Jewish* part of the discourse. But it is evident from the account in Genesis that Lot’s experiences can be applied to *Christians* as well.

Also note that the thoughts derived from the symbolism of eagles hovering over a dead carcass is used relative to *Israel and the nations* in [Matthew 24:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.28&t=NKJV), *near the end of the Jewish section of the discourse*; but in [Luke 17:37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+17.37&t=NKJV), this same statement appears at the end of *the Christian section of the discourse* [*ref*. [Bible One - The Lord’s Return by Arlen Chitwood](http://bibleone.net/POMO_07.htm)].)

1) REMEMBER LOT’S WIFE

The thought drawn from the account in Genesis chapter nineteen concerning Lot’s wife is to keep one’s eyes fixed on the goal out ahead, with the implied warning, “*Do not look behind you!*” *The ways and practices of the world lie behind, with the things of the mountain lying out ahead* (“a mountain” signifying *a kingdom*), and, with all of this in view, Lot and his family were told, “. . . *Escape to the mountain, lest you be destroyed*” ([Genesis 19:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.17&t=NKJV)).

The overall thought has to do with *moving away from the things of the world toward the goal of one’s calling*. A Christian, with his eyes fixed on the goal, is not to look back to the things of the world. Rather, he is to keep his eyes fixed out ahead, on the things of *the mountain, on things relating to the goal of his calling*.

Two significant things stand out concerning Lot’s wife:

1) *She was delivered from Sodom before judgment fell*, along with her husband and two virgin daughters.

2) *She looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt* ([Genesis 19:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.16&t=NKJV), [26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.26&t=NKJV)).

And, in Luke chapter seventeen, Christ drew spiritual lessons from this account in order to teach His disciples great spiritual truths concerning the saving or the losing one’s “*life* [‘*soul*’]” ([Luke 17:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+17.33&t=NKJV)), which is associated contextually with either being received alongside the Lord in an intimate manner or being turned away by the Lord in an opposite manner ([Luke 17:34-36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+17.34-36&t=NKJV)).

Lot, his wife, and his two virgin daughters were told,

*Escape for your life* [‘soul’]*!* *Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountain, lest you be destroyed* [consumed ‘in the iniquity of the city’]” ([Genesis 19:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.17&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Genesis 19:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.15&t=NKJV)).

However, *Lot’s wife looked back toward Sodom*. She looked back toward the things of “*the plain*” (signifying the world, which was about to be destroyed) rather than ahead to “*the mountain*” (signifying the kingdom, which would endure beyond the destruction of the cities of the plain).

Christ stated during His earthly ministry,

*No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.* ([Luke 9:62](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+9.62&t=NKJV))

The word “*looking*” in the Greek text, as the words “*watch*” and “*pray*” in [Luke 21:36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+21.36&t=NKJV), is in a tense showing continuous action. A man beginning a task (putting his hand to the plough) and looking back after the fashion described by the Lord would be continually turning away from the task. He would be headed in one direction but continually looking in another direction. Rather than keeping his eyes fixed on the goal ahead, he would be continually turning away from this goal. Christ declared that *such a man would be unfit “for the kingdom”* (*cf.* [James 1:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.8&t=NKJV)).

The mention of Lot’s wife is drawn from Christ’s reference to the days of Noah and the days of Lot in preceding verses, though these verses are in the Jewish part of the discourse ([Genesis 19:26-31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.26-31&t=NKJV)). The thought, of course, has to do with the dangers inherent in Christians becoming involved in the ways and practices of the world. Such an involvement will gradually lead Christians away from the things of “*the mountain*” toward the things of “*the plain*.”

Over a period of time, Christians involved in the affairs of the world will gradually find their attitudes and interests changing. They will gradually become more and more interested in the things of the plain, while at the same time becoming less and less interested in the things of the mountain. The path that they have been called to travel will be in one direction, but their interests will lead them in a different direction. Rather than looking out ahead toward the goal of their calling, they will find themselves looking back toward a world diametrically opposed to this goal.

It is evident that such was the case with Lot’s wife. Lot and his family had dwelled in the cities of the plain for many years. In fact, *Lot who is seen seated in the gate of Sodom immediately preceding the destruction of the cities of the plain* reveals his involvement in the internal affairs of the city ([Genesis 19:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.1&t=NKJV)). The elders were the ones who usually sat in the gate of a city in that day, carrying on civil or legal matters; and it is evident that *Lot had taken his place among them*. Lot had settled down to this extent in Sodom, and related Scripture leaves little question concerning the fact that members of his family had settled down to a similar extent in Sodom.

Then, with his worldly mindset, acquired over several decades of living in the cities of the plain, Lot “*lingered*” in Sodom with his family after he had been warned concerning the impending destruction; and he, his wife, and his two virgin daughters had to be *physically removed* by the two angels who had been sent into Sodom ([Genesis 19:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.16&t=NKJV)). Then, even outside Sodom and headed away from the city, Lot’s wife, contrary to God’s command, *looked back.*

*She looked back toward a world* (“the plain”) *which was very familiar and away from a world* (“the mountain”) *which she apparently knew very little to nothing about.*

Her life had evidently been wrapped up in the affairs of Sodom; and when she looked back, that was the end of the matter so far as God was concerned. It was the climactic act in a life that had been lived involved in the affairs of the world.

Thus, the Lord’s warning to His disciples concerning Lot’s wife is simply *a warning concerning where involvement in the affairs of this world will ultimately lead*. Though delivered from Sodom, Lot’s wife *lost everything*; and many Christians, though delivered from the destruction awaiting the world in the coming Tribulation (the antitype of the destruction of the cities of the plain), will, in that coming day, in like manner to Lot’s wife, *lose everything because of their previous involvement with the world.*

2) WHOSOEVER SEEKS TO SAVE . . . LOSE . . . .

The Lord’s warning to remember Lot’s wife, His statement relative to saving or losing one’s “*life* [‘soul’],” and His statement relative to individuals either being received in an intimate respect or being turned away in an opposite respect are placed together in Luke chapter seventeen and refer to the same central truth ([Luke 17:32-36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+17.32-36&t=NKJV)).

The experience of Lot’s wife (v. 32) would parallel the loss of one’s life (v. 33) and being turned away by the Lord (vv. 34-36). And the inverse would be true for an individual keeping his eyes *fixed on the goal out ahead*, “*the mountain*,” rather than looking back toward “*the plain*.” His experience would parallel the saving of his life (v. 33) or being received in an intimate manner by the Lord (vv. 34-36).

Saving or losing one’s “*life* [‘soul’]” is, contextually, placed within events *following deliverance* from the destruction that befell the cities of the plain. The overall account foreshadows the deliverance that Christians (all Christians, faithful and unfaithful alike) will experience *before the destruction about to befall this present world system, the coming Tribulation*. And the saving or losing of one’s “*life* [‘soul’]” would have to occur at the same time as in the type — *following deliverance from the world.*

(Note that the events surrounding the judgment seat of Christ will occur in the heavens *after* the present dispensation has run its course, but *before* the Tribulation begins here on earth [[Revelation 1-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1-6&t=NKJV)]. There is a deliverance from one judgment to have a part in another judgment, exactly as seen in the type.)

Eternal verities are not in view at all in the account of Lot’s wife looking back. This account has to do with one’s outlook on *the things of the plain* as contrasted with one’s outlook on *the things of the mountain*.

Saving or losing one’s “*life* [‘soul’]” has to do with events at the judgment seat of Christ. It is here that Christians will either be received in an intimate respect or be turned away in an opposite respect. Or, as revealed in [Luke 21:36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+21.36&t=NKJV), it is here that Christians will either be granted the privilege to “*stand before the Son of Man*” or be denied this privilege.

(Note the contrasting positions occupied by both Abraham and Lot, in the final analysis, in Genesis chapter nineteen. *Both are seen on the mountain*, but the different positions occupied by each on the mountain are *markedly different.*

*Abraham is seen standing before the Lord, occupying the place where he had always stood* [[Genesis 19:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.27&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Genesis 18:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+18.22&t=NKJV)].

But Lot, even though on the mountain, *found himself in a place separate from the Lord, in a place where he had also always stood* [[Genesis 19:30-38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.30-38&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Genesis 13:10-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+13.10-12&t=NKJV))].)

Scripture elsewhere also teaches the same basic truths concerning saving or losing one’s “*life* [‘soul’].” *Eternal verities are never in view*, though many erroneously make such an association. Teaching that the salvation of the soul has to do with the eternal salvation that we presently possess (the salvation of the spirit) is foreign to any New Testament usage of the expression, and such an association will serve only to obscure that which Scripture actually teaches on the subject.

Notice three passages of Scripture by way of illustration: [Matthew 16:24-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.24-27&t=NKJV); [James 1:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.21&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+1.9&t=NKJV): In “*Matthew*,” the saving of the soul is *in connection with works that will be revealed and rewards that will be given at the time of Christ’s return* ([Matthew 16:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.27&t=NKJV)); in “*James*,” the saving of the soul is *in connection with a justification by works for those who have already been justified by grace through faith* (*cf.* [James 1:21-22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.21-22&t=NKJV); [2:14-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.14-26&t=NKJV)); and in “*1 Peter,*” the saving of the soul is *in connection with a person receiving the* “*end* [goal]” *of his faith* (works emanate out of faithfulness to one’s calling).

(For a more detailed discussion of this subject, see, in this site, the author’s book, [Salvation of the Soul](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/salvation-of-the-soul.php).)