

FAQ 46

Matthew 24 Includes The Rapture Gathering Event

Q #46 Are there really biblical grounds for believing the *rapture* event is explicitly stated in Matthew 24:31?

Yes there are and we'd like to share some warrants at this time.

We believe the presumption - that Matthew 24 is only addressing Israel - is incorrect. While the text does indeed address an event taking place in Israel - namely Jerusalem (vv. 15-20) - we remind the reading audience that this does not mean the passage is only describing Israel. The gathering together of His elect, as explicitly described in verse 31, is a global event.

Allow us, please, to use a story to make our point ...

Francis Crick: "Biologists must constantly keep in mind that what they see was not designed, but rather evolved." (See full quote in *What Mad Pursuit*, 1988 - pg. 138; 1990 edition)

This is a perfect example of closed mindedness to the extent of no longer *listening* to the facts. I think we all discern the problem with Crick's perspective. (By the way, he no longer holds to his quote above.)

BUT ...

With all due respect, is it possible we do the same when **we** dogmatically hold certain doctrines that are not sufficiently evidenced?

Let me cite a recent example:

While in dialogue with a Sister in Christ, I discerned the need to agree with her as to the teaching of II Thes. 2:1 - this passage addresses "the coming of our Lord Jesus and our gathering together to Him."

"I totally affirm this passage!" I said.

I went on to say the same Greek word - επισυναγωγή ("gathering together"), only in verb form: επισυναγω - is **also** used to describe the global gathering of God's elect in Matthew 24:31.

"Couldn't this Matthew 24:31 passage also possibly be speaking of the final trumpet rapture gathering of His Church?" I asked.

"Absolutely not!" was her response.

When I appealed to Francis Crick's example (of dogmatism without sufficient grounds) as a possible analogy - to her rejection of this possibility (that the two passages above actually do address the same event) - my friend became offended.

"But **you** can't say dogmatically that these two passages are addressing the same event."

I agreed with her.

Sharon then gave me a look communicating confusion ... that she did not understand my response.

I went on to say that we don't offer this Bible-affirming position as dogma. Yes, we offer it as a "proposal" to be prayerfully and exegetically considered but never as the Truth concerning end times (though we believe this position does faithfully outline explicit biblical Truth). (See responses dealing with this concern in the work, *The Final Trumpet Rapture Gathering: An Introduction*; pp. vi, vii; available through this link: <https://vimeo.com/521078459>.)

"But Sharon, please don't rule out possible alternatives just because they may run contrary to popular majority. It really is **God's Word** that is our authority for faith and practice."

In light of this sound appeal, let me put these two NKJV passages side by side:

Matthew 24:31

And He will send His angels with
a great sound of a trumpet, and
they will gather together
[επισυναγω - lexicon form]
His elect from the four winds, from
one end of heaven to the other.

II Thes. 2:1

Now, brethren, concerning the
coming of our Lord Jesus Christ
and our gathering together
[επισυναγωγη]
to Him, we ask you ...

In conclusion, there are grounds - not all mentioned here - for accepting the appeal that the gathering together of His elect (of Matthew 24:31) is the gathering together event of II Thes. 2:1.

Will we follow Crick's example and be closed-minded to viable alternatives or will we honor Scripture and allow for all of the sound interpretive options to be fairly considered? Because this is a crucial contemporary concern, we pray His people in Jesus Christ will be open to other options which are explicitly stated in His Word of Truth.