

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God*

**IN CHRIST JESUS.**

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

#02-0854

AUGUST 19, 2008

## ONE TAKEN, ONE LEFT

**“For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took (*airo*) them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken (*paralambano*) and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left. Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.”** (Matthew 24.37-42 NASB)

It is probably safe to state that most who believe in a pre-tribulation “rapture” of the body of Christ see the one taken as a believer snatched away as recorded in Paul’s first epistle to the Thessalonians (4.3-17), and the one left is the unbeliever. However, this view cannot be correct. Actually, the more I study the so-called “rapture,” the more I have moved away from the conventional view held by many today that has taken on a Hollywood tone. I plan to write on this later.

The word *taken* comes from the Greek word *paralambano*, which means “to take along, take aside, accept.” For a time, I accepted the thought, as proposed by others, that this word refers to a personal, friendly encounter, and therefore, it has to refer to believers being raptured. However, upon examination of its use in Scripture, it is not always used in this fashion. Joseph took Mary to be his wife (Matthew 1.20). Joseph took Jesus and left for Egypt (Matthew 2.14). The devil took Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple in a failed attempt to tempt Him (Matthew 4.5). Jesus took three disciples with Him as He entered into the anguish of His soul (Matthew 26.37). The soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium to mock and beat Him (Matthew 27.27). Obviously, these examples represent both good and bad encounters, and as such, it is difficult to determine whether the taking of the one or the taking aside is for a good or bad (evil) purpose.

Notice that the emphasis in the above verses is on the one who is taken. Thus, the key to understanding this matter is not in who is left but in who is taken. If we know who is taken away, then we will know who is left. There are several clues that will lead us to the correct understanding.

*First*, the subject of the sentence is *they* who lived before the days of the flood, that is, the ones who were eating, drinking, and marrying while Noah was building the ark. They did not know until the flood came, which means that they had no clue that their demise was upon them.

*Second*, the use of *all* in the phrase *took them all away* seems to indicate that *all* refers to the mass of people and not to Noah and his small family. The word *all* seems inappropriate to describe eight people compared to the entire population of the world at that time. Besides, *them* must refer back to the ones that did not know until the deluge came. Surely, Noah and his family knew.

*Third*, the Greek word for *took (takes) away* in verse 39 is different from the word *taken* used in the next verse. The Greek word is not *paralambano* but *airo*, which has several meanings, such as “lift, take away, pick up, away, hoist a sail.” At first glance, we might be tempted to conclude that hoisting a sail refers to the ark, but this is not the common use of this word in Greek Scripture. The key to answering the question lies in what other verses *airo* is translated as *takes away*. The following are some examples.

**“For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away [*airo*] from him.”** (Matthew 13.12 NASB)

**“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away [*airo*] from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it.”** (Matthew 21.43 NASB)

**“Therefore take away [*airo*] the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.”** (Matthew 25.28 NASB)

**“For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away [*airo*].”** (Matthew 25.29 NASB; also Mark 4.25; Luke 8.18)

**“These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away [*airo*] the word which has been sown in them.”** (Mark 4.15 NASB)

**His disciples came and took away [*airo*] the body [i.e., John the baptist’s body] and buried it; and they went and reported to Jesus.** (Matthew 14.12 NASB)

Take note that the first five verses refer to an unfavorable outcome in relation to entrance into or exclusion from the coming kingdom of Christ on earth. Even the death of John the baptist is a kingdom matter, for he proclaimed the kingdom in the spirit of Elijah, and he died for his testimony. Thus, his dead body was taken away.

Finally, there is one other clue discovered through the Hebrew prophet Zechariah, who prophesied of the second coming of Christ and the days preceding His arrival. Notice that ones will be cut off, die, and a third will be *left* and *will not die*. The third will come through the fire of persecution and refinement and be like gold as His people.

**And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith Jehovah, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part into the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, Jehovah is my God.** (Zechariah 13.8-9 ASV)

Given these clues, it seems clear that being taken away is not a good thing, for it will lead to death as death through the flood of Noah’s day and through the wrath as described through Zechariah. Being taken away during a time of judgment is unto death, not unto life and not unto leaving this earth.

Who is taken away? The unfaithful, the unrighteous, the apostates, the lawless, the snares, the darnel, the harlots, and the wicked! They are taken away to death in the wrath of God. Those who are taken away will not enter the coming kingdom of Christ on earth, for they will be taken away in death. It is a personal encounter with death. Thus, it is a bad thing to be taken away!

Who is left? The faithful conquerors! They are left and safely brought through the wrath of God, protected by His Sovereign hand. Saved for the kingdom of Christ in accord with the purpose of the oncoming eons! They will be left to enter eonian life and to be enjoyers of an inheritance or allotment in the millennial kingdom. Thus, it is a good thing to be left

**Being left is Life!**