

Dear Simon,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You wanted to know the meaning of the scripture, "Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures [eagles] will gather." (Matthew 24:28) Again, in Luke 17:37, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures [eagles] will gather."

Before we reply specifically to your question, we will give a little background for Jesus' reply to his disciples' question regarding where some would be taken who were "in bed," "in the field," or "grinding at the mill."

In Matthew 24 and Luke 17:20-36 Jesus tells his disciples what the signs would be of his second presence. He tells them that the end times would be similar to the days of Noah when people were eating, drinking and marrying up until Noah entered the ark (Luke 17: 26-27). In verse 34 of Luke 17 Jesus in parabolic language tells his disciples that two people will be in one bed and one will be taken and one left. In Matthew 24:40-41 he says, "Then two shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left." In Luke 17:34 we believe the use of the word "bed" is in harmony with the Prophet Isaiah's use of the word. "The bed is too short to stretch out on, the blanket too narrow to wrap around you." (Isaiah 28:20) Since the bed is a place of rest, it symbolizes faith, or a faith in a creed. However, as the Prophet indicates the creed bed is not big enough for a mature person. This same principle can be applied to Jesus' parable and may be interpreted to symbolize human creeds that are long enough for "babes" in Christ, but too short for the developed "man" to stretch himself. Therefore, one will be taken (taken to a more profound understanding) while one is left because he is satisfied or comfortable with the little crib because he is still a "babe" in Christ.

In the next parable (Matthew 24:40) the "field" refers to the world (Matthew 13:38). Those laboring represent two classes of Christians who have come out of or left the world. However, some are still in nominal Christendom (Babylon, or organized Christianity with its false doctrines), while others have separated as they diligently search for the truth. Therefore, Jesus says that not all of those who "come out" of the world will be "gathered" to be part of his bride, to be joint-heirs in his Kingdom. Only those who diligently seek Him will be sifted during the "harvest" of the Gospel Age so that they may be gathered up as His "elect."

In Matthew 24:41, the mill is a place where food is prepared. The spiritual "food" that Christendom (Catholicism as well as the many various Protestant Churches) had prepared for the flock was poor. Consequently, each "grinder" was obliged to prepare what is given him by his own denomination. The food he prepared was lacking in light of the present truth now available since our Lord's return. Hence, "present truth" gathers some of the grinders and leaves others—one is taken and another left.

In Luke 17:37 Jesus' disciples ask where these people would be taken. It is then that Jesus answers them saying, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures [eagles] will gather." The lesson is that in that day (our day), when the returned Lord is gathering his "elect" he will attract them as eagles [vultures] are attracted to food. "Where there is a dead body [spiritual food to feed upon during the time of our Lord's presence], there the vultures [true Christians seeking to be members of the spiritual body of Christ] will be gathered together." The food of "present truth" now provided by our Lord, and the gathering of his saints by and to it, fit the description of Jesus' prophecy. The present call is not out of one "mill" into another "mill" (denomination), nor out of one "bed" (limiting creed of partial truth) into another of about the same size. Instead it is a gathering together into Christ himself. The gathering ones come together because they "hunger and thirst after righteousness" and truth and each is eating thereof. To the seventh and last Church of Laodicea our Lord gave this admonition, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20)

We hope we have answered your question. Be sure to sign up for CQ Rewind at www.christianquestions.net. The service is free without obligation and will provide you with scriptural perspective on many questions and topics.

Sincerely,

Christian Questions Radio