

## **The Rapture and the Olivet Discourse** **Matthew 24**

### **Introduction**

Many Christians find themselves confused when studying the Gospel of Matthew. This is often because of its connection to a Jewish background unsurpassed in any New Testament book except for the Book of Hebrews. This is seen in the first major discourse, the Sermon on the Mount, and in its last, the Olivet Discourse. Both have provided fodder for theological dialogue and debate for exegete and theologian alike.

One of the most hotly debated issues concerns the rapture, most specifically the identity and timing of the second coming. It is in the Olivet Discourse that both Pre Tribulational and Post Tribulational rapture views are vigorously defended. The most able Post Trib author has been George Eldon Ladd, of Fuller Seminary, in his work *The Blessed Hope*, first published in 1956.<sup>1</sup> The Pre Trib defense has been marshaled by John Walvoord, of Dallas Seminary, in *The Rapture Question*, first issued in 1957. Both books have been reprinted numerous times as testimony to their seminal contribution to the issue. These two writers provide both the historical and biblical defense concerning the timing of the rapture: however, is it possible there is a third way? I do not mean a Partial Rapture, founded by Robert Govett in 1850's and refined by G.H. Lang who died in the 1950's. Nor do I mean the Mid Tribulation view, either in its original version championed by Gleason Archer or its modern spin-off, the Pre Wrath Rapture theory by Marv Rosenthal. But, a different understanding of the second coming event that encompasses both rapture and second coming together.

The following is a summary and review of both traditional Pre and Post tribulation rapture views found in the Olivet Discourse, followed by a different approach that is Pre Tribulation rapture in timing but also understands the event to include the second coming, called in its combined state--The Second Advent.

### **Post Tribulational Rapture**

#### **Definition**

There are a variety of Post Tribulational views--Classic Post Tribulational articulated by J.B. Payne; Semi Classic Post Tribulational by A. Reese; and Futuristic Post Tribulational held by Robert Gundry. However, the consistent aspect of all Post Tribulational views is that the rapture is after the tribulation, hence Post Tribulational. Although the time or duration of the tribulation may be in question the time of the rapture

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<sup>1</sup> I admire that Dr. Ladd admits "that neither does the NT clearly teach a post tribulational rapture." *The Blessed Hope*, p.165 Ladd confesses that a posttrib view is based upon "logic" and inference from the scripture and that no text clearly nor directly teaches a post tribulation rapture.

is after (Post) the tribulation. The argument from Matt. 24 is direct and exegetically derived.<sup>2</sup>

### **Description**

Jesus is answering a question from His apostles. They seek to understand the time of his coming and the end of the age. Jesus responds by telling them exactly what will take place during the tribulation (Matt. 24, i.e. Rev. 6-19, Dan 9) and how the church is to respond. He then informs them when the church will be taken away. It is after the tribulation at the second coming. Hence the two events are actually one event. The end of the tribulation for the church is the start of the second coming. The church will be caught up (In Greek Harpazo, in Latin- Rapture) at the second coming to meet Christ in the air and then return to the earth to enjoy the Millennial Kingdom. This millennium is not an actual 1000 years but simply represents a long period of time. The nature of this millennium is simply a continuation of the church at its most spiritual expression with Jesus Himself ruling as its head. The tribulation is also not 7 years in duration which is simply a symbolic reference for a short period of time.<sup>3</sup>

### **Defense**

Jesus is answering His disciples who are seen as the apostles of the near but future church. Although some feel that the church was begun under Adam or Abraham and simply represent the people of God, some Post Tribulationists would hold that the church began at Pentecost. Jesus is simply telling the leaders of the church what they are to expect. As to the Rapture, in 24:40 Jesus gives the dual illustration of one person being taken and another being left. Under the Post Trib model, the one that is taken is the Christian that is taken in the rapture that occurs at the end of the tribulation. The other one is left for judgment. (Either many of these people must actually become regenerated since they need to enter the “Millennial Kingdom”, or, many un-regenerated people enter the kingdom at its beginning). Christ then descends with His church to begin the Millennial Kingdom, i.e. the final phase of the church.<sup>4</sup>

### **Deficiency**

There are a number of questions which seem to be problematic to this view.

First, if the one that is left in 24:40-42 is the nonbeliever who has survived the tribulation, then it is only nonbelievers that are left alive in mortal bodies to go into the kingdom to be ruled by Jesus and the raptured church. Hence, there are believing Christians in glorified bodies ruling in the church of nonbelieving mortals in the kingdom / church.

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<sup>2</sup> The latest scholarly contribution of essays defending the historic premillennial post tribulation view is from a group of professors from Denver Seminary. See *A Case for Historic Premillennialism* edited by Craig Blomberg Baker 2009. Many others follow the Post Trib view: Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 129-39; Douglas J. Moo, —The Case for the Posttribulation Rapture Position, in Gleason L. Archer et al., *Three Views on the Rapture: Pre-, Mid-, or Post-Tribulation?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 190-96.

<sup>3</sup> Most Post trib scholars understand the numbers as guidelines or representative but not actual. Some however do understand the numerical reference to years to be literal.

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However, the kingdom in the OT seems to be a place that is not dominated by unrighteousness and unbelievers.

Second, it seems that when Jesus comes to destroy the wicked and rapture the church in the Post Tribulational view, there is a question as to who are those in His army at His side as described in Rev. 19:14. It could be angels but they do not normally ride horses.

Third, if at the second coming Jesus is to destroy all the unrighteous, which is what appears to be described in Revelation 19:17-21, who are those that are left?

<sup>17</sup> Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God,

<sup>18</sup> to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great."

<sup>19</sup> And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.

<sup>20</sup> And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.

<sup>21</sup> And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.  
(Rev 19:17-1 ESV)

It seems that John, recording the Revelation in chapter 19, goes out of his way to declare that all types (leadership) and all of the people (the rest) are killed at this second coming event that occurs right after the rapture. It is possible that after the rapture of the Christians the non-Christians convert before Jesus destroys them. However, why would only some convert under these circumstances? It would seem that all would. But even if only some did, that could provide believers in the church after the rapture event to be those in flesh and blood bodies during the kingdom / church.

Fourth, the parallel passage in Luke 17:37 describes the event of Matt 24:40-42. In this account the disciples ask concerning the whereabouts of the one that is taken. "And answering they said to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "Where the body *is*, there also the vultures will be gathered." If the one that is taken is taken to where the vultures are gathered the question is, does this sound like heaven or at the right hand of Jesus to return to the kingdom, or does it sound more like Hell, the lake of fire or at least death? This supposed objection could be challenged by asserting that in the Lukian account Jesus said, "one is taken and one is left."<sup>5</sup> The disciples ask, "Where Lord?" It could be that the obvious reference is "Where Lord, are they left?" Hence the people in mind are those that are left on earth where death and devastation is all around them after

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<sup>5</sup> The fact that the Maj text does not cite one of the statements does no harm to the question or the answer.

the last battle. Certainly there will be vultures. But then who will go into the kingdom if those who are left are to be fed to the vultures?

## **Pre Tribulational Rapture (Traditional Dispensational)**

### **Definition**

The text of Matthew 24 does not speak of a rapture.

### **Description**

There is no mention of a “rapture” for there is no mention of the church.

### **Defense**

Jesus is speaking to His disciples after He has just judged the Jewish nation (Matt 23:37-39). God has turned his back on the nation. This is seen in both the destruction of the temple only a few years away, 66-70 AD, as well as in the theology of Paul in Romans 9-10. (However, there is a glorious future in Romans 11) The Jewish nature of the text is clearly dominating the meaning as it speaks to the future of the Nation. This is seen especially in the issue of law keeping and the reference to Daniel and the abomination (24:13). While numerous references to Judaism are mentioned, there is no mention of the Church or Christians, only the elect, which does not need to be loaded with Pauline or Calvinistic meaning. The disciples are concerned for their Nation in light of the prophetic statement of Jesus in 23:37-39, and ask Jesus what is the future of the Nation of Israel. (Paul himself is concerned for the Nation and could almost wish himself accursed Rom 9.) Jesus responds and concludes with the illustration in 24:40. The one that is taken is taken into judgment and death. This is similar to those who are killed in the flood at the time of Noah and the judgment of God. Those who are left alive are those redeemed individuals that are a product of the Jewish evangelists and are believers but not part of the church (Rev. 7). They who are left alive (the rest are killed, Rev 19:17-21) are the ones who have survived the judgment by fire and who go into the Millennial Kingdom, just as the 8 described in I Peter 3:20 who survived the flood to enter into the new land to be fruitful and multiply. Hence, those that are “taken” are taken in judgment and those that are alive are the mortal men and women who go into the kingdom with Jesus as king. Hence there is no rapture in the text.<sup>6</sup> (They are the ones who endured to the end-saved.24:13)

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<sup>6</sup> Louis A. Barbieri Jr., —Matthew, || *Bible Knowledge Commentary, NT*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983), 76-79; Paul N. Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy: A Comprehensive Approach* (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 209; Ron J. Bigalke Jr., —The Olivet Discourse: A Resolution of Time, ” *Conservative Theological Seminary Journal* 9 (spring 2003): 106-40; Thomas R. Edgar, —An Exegesis of Rapture Passages, || in *Issues in Dispensationalism*, ed. Wesley R. Willis, John R. Master, and Charles C. Ryrie (Chicago: Moody, 1994), 217, 221; Paul D. Feinberg, —Dispensational Theology and the Rapture, || in *Issues in Dispensationalism*, ed. Wesley R. Willis, John R. Master, and Charles C. Ryrie (Chicago: Moody, 1994), 242-43; Feinberg, —The Case for the Pretribulation Rapture, || *Three Views*, 80, 225, 229-31; E. Schuyler English, *Rethinking the Rapture* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1954), 41-55; Ed Glasscock, *Matthew*, Moody Gospel Commentary (Chicago: Moody, 1997), 476; William K. Harrison, —The Time of the Rapture as Indicated by Certain Passages: Part III: The Time of the Rapture in the Light of Matthew 24, || *Bibliotheca Sacra* 115 (April-June 1958): 109-19; John MacArthur Jr., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Matthew 24–28* (Chicago):

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Deficiency

See the following alternative view of Pre Tribulation rapture

### **Pre Tribulational Rapture (Non-Traditional Dispensational)**

I first heard of this view in 1980 through a professor of mine, Dr. Craig Glickman, who got it from his and my professor, Zane Hodges in the 1970's. Hodges, evidently was taught it by J. Strombeck (Chairman of the Board of DTS) in the early 1950's in a book entitled First the Rapture (1951).

#### **Definition**

The rapture is seen in 24:40-42 but it is referring to the beginning of the tribulation.

#### **Description**

Unlike most Dispensational Pre Tribulational rapture theology, this view does understand there to be a rapture in the Olivet Discourse. One would expect there to be since it is Jesus, God's prophet, speaking both to the Church and to the Jewish nation of future events. The key to this view is to understand that both the rapture and the second coming are involved in these events but that the rapture is still Pre Tribulational. How is that?

#### **Defense**

1. Having been told of the destruction of the temple and the turning away from the nation (Matt. 23:37-39), the disciples ask two questions: 1) When will these things be?, and 2) What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?<sup>7</sup> (Matt. 24:3)

2. Jesus in Matthew's account does not tell when the events of the destruction of the temple will occur (AD 66-70) but He does in Luke 21:12-14. Notice these events will happen before the great signs of the tribulation occur (see Lk. 21:12 "But before all these things..."). But we are not told how long it will be, between these two events. Many feel that these two events could have been close together if Israel were to have accepted the

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Moody, 1989), 70-72; Russell L. Penney, —Why the Church Is Not Referenced in the Olivet Discourse, || *Conservative Theological Journal* 1 (April 1997): 47-60; J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study of Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1964), 162, 275-85; James F. Rand, —The Eschatology of the Olivet Discourse || (Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1954), 126, 162; Charles C. Ryrie, *Come Quickly, Lord Jesus: What You Need to Know about the Rapture* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1996), 94-97; Ryrie, *What You Should Know about the Rapture* (Chicago: Moody, 1981), 82-84; Renald Showers, *Maranatha: Our Lord Comes!* (Bellmawr, NJ: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1995), 178-84; John A. Sproule, —An Exegetical Defense of Pretribulationism || (Th.D. dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, 1981), 56, 60; Gerald B. Stanton, *Kept from the Hour* (Miami Springs, FL: Schoettle, 1991), 57-65; David L. Turner, —The Structure and Sequence of Matt 24:1-41: Interaction with Evangelical Treatments, || *Grace Theological Journal* 10 (spring 1989): 21-22; Stanley D. Toussaint, —Are the Church and the Rapture in Matthew 24? || in *When the Trumpet Sounds*, ed. Thomas Ice and Timothy Demy (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1995), 235-50; Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King* (Portland: Multnomah, 1980), 280-82; John F. Walvoord, *The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 85-90; John Hart editor, *Evidence for the Rapture* (Chicago, Moody: 2015); David Allen & Steve Lemke editors, *The Return of Christ*, Nashville, B&H Academic 2011)

<sup>7</sup> Some see three questions in these verses. The end of the age being the third.

king, in that a second offer of the kingdom was made in Acts 1:6-7, 3:19-26.<sup>8</sup> But since the nation did not accept, the series of events are separated now by many centuries.

3. The coming of the Son of man will be similar to the days of Noah. Then, as in the future, people did not think that anything was going to happen. They were in party mode. (Matt 24:37-39) Hence the coming of the Son of man was to be totally unexpected. But when it does come “it will take them all away” (24:39). This seems to be referring to judgment as it did in the Noah story. Those that were saved were brought through the time of the waters of judgment. See this theology articulated in 2 Peter 3:4-10.

The tribulation, or time of Jacob’s trouble, starts with labor pains (24:6-7) but then they increase (:15-31). This is a time of trouble which the world has not seen up to and including the present time (see I Thess. 5:2-3). When it looks as if the world will come to an end, then and only then is the SIGN of the SON of Man to appear. The disciples asked when the sign would be (24:3). Jesus told them what the sign would be: The appearance of the Son of man (24:30).

Jesus provides a physical sign to guide them: It is the lesson of the fig tree (:32). Then He declares that the people who are alive at that time will see it come to fruition (:34 “This generation”). This does not mean that the people of the 1st century listening to Jesus speak are the recipients of the promise as the Preterists demand.<sup>9</sup> The term “generation” could refer to the Jewish people or the generation that is alive when the event occurs. However, he seems to be speaking as the prophets often did when making a prediction, by placing themselves in the time of the event. (“This generation...”)

The “coming” of the Son of man, “*Parousia*”, is to be sudden and unexpected.<sup>10</sup> But this would not be true if His coming was at the end of the tribulation. In fact, the OT and the NT tells us of the order of events and, hence, we could know when he would come. This assumes that there is some plain-literal rhetorical meaning to prophecies like Dan 7, 9 and Matt 24. We are not allowed to allegorize or spiritualize, as the Alexandrian school of hermeneutics did, to reach vague, uncontrolled and meaningless interpretations. We do allow and, of necessity, must allow for literary rhetorical devices to operate but within the bounds of literalness in their literary usage.

Hence the coming cannot be at the end of the tribulation since that would be expected, marked off, and indicated by numerous events specifically spelled out in Matt. 24.

Therefore, if it is a literal coming, then when is it or when does it take place?

4. The coming begins when the judgment begins. The coming is unexpected as in the days of Noah (:37-39). Hence, that is its terminus quo--start time. Therefore, the coming of the Son of man will start before the events of the Tribulation and will in fact mark the beginning of the Tribulation. Therefore, the coming of the Son of man begins without a sign as in the days of Noah. After the tribulation of those days there will be a sign of the

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<sup>8</sup> See *Issues in Dispensationalism* edited by John Masters. Also *Behold Your King* by Stanley Toussaint

<sup>9</sup> See the seminal work of *The Parousia* James Stuart Russell orig. edition 1887 reprinted 1999 by the International Preterits Association. Also see R.C Sproul and John Noe for modern Preterism.

<sup>10</sup> Some would limit those who are not expecting the event to be only unbelievers. See Andy Woods, *Is the Rapture in the Olivet Discourse Pt 2*, Grace Family Journal, Sept 2017, p.17-19.

Son of man, which will appear in heaven (24:30), hence, the *parousia* is referring not to a single event but to a span of time.

The standard Greek lexicon for the NT, BDAG states it this way:

1. *parousia* **the state of being present at a place, presence** (Aeschyl. et al.; Herm. Wr. 1, 22; OGI 640, 7, SIG 730, 14; Did.; cp. Hippol., Ref. 7, 32, 8 'existence') **1 Cor 16:17; Phil 2:12** (opp. *απουσια*). **Π** **δ.** του σωματοδ ασθενηδ *his bodily presence is weak* i.e. when he is present in person, he appears to be weak **2 Cor 10:10**.—Of God (Jos., Ant. 3, 80; 203; 9, 55) τηδ παρουσιαδ αυτου δειγματα *proofs of his presence* Dg 7:9 (cp. Diod. S. 3, 66, 3 σημεια τηδ παρουσιαδ του θεου; 4, 24, 1).

2. **arrival as the first stage in presence, coming, advent** (Soph., El. 1104; Eur., Alc. 209; Thu. 1, 128, 5. Elsewh. mostly in later wr.: Polyb. 22, 10, 14; Demetr.: 722 fgm. 11, 18 Jac.; Diod. S. 15, 32, 2; 19, 64, 6; Dionys. Hal. 1, 45, 4; ins, pap; [Jdth 10:18](#); [2 Macc 8:12](#); [15:21](#); [3 Macc 3:17](#); [TestAbr A 2 p. 78, 26 \[Stone p. 4\]](#); Jos., Bell. 4, 345, Vi. 90; Tat. 39, 3).

The word we use (and it fits) is Advent. It is not a single event but a span of time. Just as the first advent included both the coming and a time span of Jesus on earth, so too the Second Advent includes not simply His arrival but His presence. For those who are with Jesus on the clouds, the “time” element may be perceived differently than in mortal bodies. The “time” may be perceived as quick. This is similar to time “standing still” if you are able to move at the speed of light, according to the general and special theory of relativity.

5. How does this fit with a Pre Tribulational rapture of the Church?

a. We know there is a “catching up” called the rapture (I Thess. 4) but this says nothing concerning the time of the event.

b. We know from Paul that we/the church is not destined for “wrath” (I Thess. 1:9-10 and 5:9-10). Paul uses this form or enclisio to bracket off his letter. If this is tribulation wrath upon Israel as chapter 2 may indicate, then believers of the church are not destined to go through it although Israel is doomed (1 Thess. 2:16 see Matt. 24:1-3). This may be why Paul tells of this fact of prophecy to comfort the church I Thess. 4:18, 5:11. (A word study on the term *ORGE* “wrath” reveals that it is not often if ever used to represent eternal judgment or hell. It seems to refer to a physical and mortal experience that is often triggered by a person’s sin and inflicted by God. (See Romans 1:18, 13:4, Rev. 6:16, 17, 11:18 and I Thess. 2:16 and Rev 19:15 for Thumos.) But it does not seem to be a technical term for eternal damnation. It is also interesting that the word “church” is used 21 times in Rev. 1-3 but never in Rev. 4-21. (It is used one final time in Rev. 22:16 as a summary and conclusion to the book that was written to the Church.) Also, in Matt 24 the term for church is never used during the time of the tribulation that is being described. Perhaps it is because the church is not present? It is true that the term “elect” is used but that is not a technical term for the church especially in the Gospel of Matthew.

c. The Olivet discourse declares that the coming of the Son of man, or the second advent, will occur when people are happy and not thinking of any danger as in the days of Noah. Therefore, people will not know when the Son of man will come before the tribulation begins. Hence, the sign of the Son of man is after these events: Then, after these things, all will know about it for they will see Him. As the lightning flashes across the sky, all see it. (Zech. 12:10)

d. Paul talks of this in 2 Thess. 2:8 “Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay, with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming.”

The term that Paul uses for appearance can be translated “brightness”.

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“επιφανεῖα, As a t.t. relating to transcendence it refers to a visible and freq. sudden manifestation of a hidden divinity, either in the form of a personal appearance, or by some deed of power or oracular communication by which its presence is made known”

Also the other word that is used of the appearance or coming by Paul in 2 Thess, and by Jesus in Matt 24, is *Parousia* as we have seen earlier. But also note from BDAG p.780

The use of π. as a t.t. has developed in two directions. On the one hand the word served as a sacred expr. for the coming of a hidden divinity, who makes his presence felt by a revelation of his power, or whose presence is celebrated in the cult (Diod. S. 3, 65, 1 η του θεου π. of Dionysus upon earth; 4, 3, 3; Ael. Aristid. 48, 30; 31 K.=24 p. 473 D.; Porphyr., Philos. Ex Orac. Haur. II p. 148 Wolff; Iambli., Myst. 2, 8; 3, 11; 5, 21; Jos., Ant. 3, 80; 203; 9, 55; report of a healing fr. Epidaurus: SIG 1169, 34).—On the other hand, π. became the official term for a visit of a person of high rank, esp. of kings and emperors visiting a province

Hence it seems possible that the Second Advent will involve a two-part appearance. First Jesus will come unseen to take the church in the rapture. Then He will be seen (after the tribulation--Post Trib. Advent -- 7 years if we use Dan 9 and see this as the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel) by the sign of the coming of the Son of man, which will flash across the sky and consume the man of lawlessness in the brightness of His “appearing”. (Zech. 14, Rev 19, II Thess. 2:8)

e. Therefore the picture that Jesus describes of the two men and the two women in Matthew 24:40-41 does refer to “the rapture” as opposed to most dispensationalists and in agreement with most Post Trib. proponents concerning the nature of the event. But the time of the rapture event is Pre Trib. not Post Trib. The reason is in the text itself.

Matt 24:40-41 states

“Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left.

Two women *will be* grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one

will be left.”

Notice first that after the coming of the Son of Man (24:37,39), “**then**”<sup>11</sup> there will be two men and two women and one is taken. Hence, the actions to follow “*then*” in the text (:40-41) takes place after the *beginning* of the coming of the Son of man. (vs :37) If the coming of the Son of man is a sudden surprise to all the earth, and the people up to that point are playing and partying with no concerns, then it must be Pre Tribulational. The scene does not sound like those living in and through the tribulation- as Post Trib says- with all of the death and suffering that is upon the earth. (Rev 6-19) How could people feel safe and happy in the midst of all the death and near destruction on the earth? (Rev. 6-19 Seals, Trumpets, Bowls of judgment)

Second, the word for “taken” (:40-41) is *paralambano*. It is used for taking one into close association. In Matthew Joseph takes Mary as his wife (1:20-21) Joseph takes the baby Jesus to Egypt and back to Israel (2:13-14, 20-21), Jesus takes the three disciples to the transfiguration (17:1). This is a different word than in 24:39. There the term is *airo*- take away. The flood came and took them away in judgment. The two contexts demand two verbs that can convey different levels of comfort in the act of taking away.<sup>12</sup>

f. Hence, at Jesus’ coming He will take one in comfort (*paralombano*), i.e. the rapture, before the tribulation. Then (at the end of tribulation) the Sign of the Son of man will appear and the others will stay to be taken away (*airo*), as in Noah’s day, in judgment (Rev. 19).

## Summary

The coming of the Son of man or the Second Advent is a two-stage process. Many Post tribulational scholars object to the Pre-trib view because they feel that the Pre-trib view is postulating three comings- First, the incarnation, second, the secret rapture and third, the second coming which is actually a “third” coming which the bible does not speak of. However, if we view the second coming as an advent that has two phases- as the meaning of the word allows, then there is no problem with our mathematics or theology. We simply need to keep our terminology clear and our timetable accurate.

First, Jesus will descend unnoticed to take His church away in the pre-trib rapture, for we are not destined for wrath (I Thess. 1:9-10, 5:9-10). One is taken in rapture at the beginning of the tribulation, the other is left for the judgment of the tribulation as in Noah’s day. Then the Son of man will be manifest in brightness as the Sign of the Son of man is manifested- flashed across the sky like lightning- after the tribulation to bring judgment and death to the man of lawlessness and all who oppose the Lord Jesus. (2

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<sup>11</sup> A. McNeile, *Tóte* in St. Matthew: JTS 12, 1911, 127f) The term is used 90 times in Matthew.

<sup>12</sup> Some would argue that the use of two different words is not to be understood as revealing a technical distinction given that *paralambano* can be used in both a positive and negative manner. See Woods, p. 17. He explains that two different words can be used to explain the same event and hence the change in words is not to be taken as a technical distinction. See footnote 6 for those who follow the “normal” pre tribulation view of Matt 24 believing that there is no rapture in the passage.

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Thess. 2, Rev. 19). The church is delivered from wrath. The ungodly are destroyed by the wrath. Those who believe the preaching of the Israeli evangelists during the tribulation will be ushered into the kingdom to begin the Millennial Kingdom under the rulership of King Jesus, the Son of God, along with the raptured and glorified Church. (Rev. 2:26, I Cor. 6:2-3)

Come quickly Lord Jesus  
FC