

# 7 Pre trib (rapture) problems

## Part 3

### The Olivet discourse problem

#### Intro

Comparison of Pre-Trib and Pre-Wrath teaching.

Not necessarily about proving one view right and the other wrong, but being good Bereans.

#### Recap

Pre-Wrath position based upon the 'triple lock'.

- That Joel 2:31, Matthew 24:30-31, and Rev 6:12-14 describe the same cosmic event.
- Thereby, chronologically linking these passages together (and placing their contextual information into a specific chronological sequence).

Last session – unlocked the idea the cosmic sign of Joel necessarily precedes the day of The Lord and the rapture.

#### Premise of this video segment

Christians throughout the ages have believed the Olivet Discourse; which is the name for the teaching about the end times that Jesus gave on the Mount of Olives recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21; to be speaking of the signs leading up to the rapture, which is pictured in Matthew 24:30-31.

If the rapture is what is being referred to in verses 30 and 31 of Matthew 24. Then, it would mean that...

- There *are things* that will happen first, like the great tribulation.
- The rapture *can't occur at any moment*. Invalidating the Pretribbers doctrine of imminence (that no sign precedes the rapture).

More significantly, it would mean that the Church *will face* the Antichrist's persecution of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week, *before* the rapture.

#### The Pre-Wrath evidence to support Mt. 24:30-31 depicting the rapture.

##### 1) The parallels that exist between, 1st Thessalonians 4:16-17, which definitely describes the rapture, and Mt 24:30-31.

- a. Both passages describe the '*Parousia*' of Christ.
- b. Christ's coming is announced by a trumpet in both passages.
- c. Both passages have Christ coming 'in the clouds'.
- d. Mt 24 has angels gathering Christ's elect, 1<sup>st</sup> Thess 4 has the saints being 'caught up together'.

Therefore, according to the Prewrath view, a straightforward reading of these two passages means that *before* the rapture can take place, the following events will happen first:

- A number of smaller signs Jesus calls birth pains (correlations between Mt 24 and the seals of Rev 5-6).

- Antichrist will have set up The Abomination of Desolation, at the midpoint of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week, and declared himself to be God in the temple.
- A great persecution like none that has ever been seen in history
- A "falling away" or an apostasy from the faith
- And an ominous sign in the sun, moon, and stars followed *immediately* by the rapture

#### **Pretrib response:**

The focus of 1<sup>st</sup> Thess is the air, the focus of Mt 24 (+ Luke 17) is the earth.

The term 'elect' is not used exclusively for Church saints (see Romans 11).

The mention of the 4 winds refers to the 4 directions/cardinal points.

- This invokes Rev 7:1-4, which exclusively concerns national Israel.
- This turn of phrase is linked with Israel in Scripture, but never the Church
  - Ezekiel 5:10-12, 17:21, 37:9, Zech 2:6, Isaiah 43:5-7, Jer 49:36.

Israel's return will occur when a 'great trumpet' sounds Isaiah 27:13 (11:11-12).

The context of Jesus's statement is the disciple's question concerning the end of the age and setting up the kingdom (they had no idea of the Church age)

- This involved regathering (dispersed) Israel, ridding Jerusalem of gentile control, and judging the nations, (compare the disciple's question in Acts 1).

Mt 24 concerns the regathering of repentant Israel for blessing, Mt 25 concerns the gathering of gentile nations for judgement (good and bad).

Dissimilarities between Mt 24 and 1 Thess 4.

- Thess mentions Christ coming with saints – Mt 24, no mention.
- Thess Christ's coming accompanied by a 'shout' – Mt 24 no mention.
- In Thess an archangel is involved – Mt 24 no mention.
- In Thess there is an emphasis upon the **resurrection** of dead saints – Mt 24 no mention.
  - (This is the resurrection [translation] and rapture of the saints, the hope of Israel [Acts 26:6-8] but no mention in Mt 24)
- In Thess believers are 'caught up' – Mt 24 elect 'gathered' no hint of leaving the earth.
- In Thess believers meet Christ in the air – Mt 24 no mention
- Thess refers to Jesus as 'Jesus and Lord' – Mt 24 refers to Jesus as 'Son of Man'
  - This links Mt 24 with Daniel 7 and the kingdom promises that exclusively concern Israel.
- In Thess no 'sign' is mentioned – In Mt 24 the 'sign' is centrally relevant.
- Mt 24 – all tribes mourn – Thess no mention of tribes or mourning.
- Mt 24 tribes (not Israel) suggest an ethnic context – Thess, no tribes, no ethnic context.
- Mt 24 elect gathered by angels – Thess '*paralembano*' suggests gathered by Christ Himself.
- Mt 24 emphasises Jesus comes with 'power' over the nations – Thess absent
  - This is far more in keeping with Dan 7 + Christ's return to govern the millennial kingdom, Rev 19.

Conclusion – dissimilarities (structural) outweigh any similarities.

## 2) This is the rapture not the return of Christ (say Prewrathers).

Prewrathers deny the Pretribbers claim –

That Matthew 24: 31 is not the rapture, but the return of Christ, with the Church saints, to rescue repentant Israel, at the end of the 7-year period (a precursor to the battle of Armageddon).

Because...

- In Matthew, there is a rescue of God's people from the earth to heaven (?).
- At Armageddon, Jesus returns *from heaven to destroy* the wicked people on the earth.

The Prewrath position then seeks to back up this assertion with the next point

### 3) The rapture, not retribution, parables of Mt 24 – 25.

The Prewrath position is that...

- The 'taken' of all the Mt 24 – 25 parables (Noah, Lot [Luke 17], workers + servants, Virgins, and stewards) are taken in the rapture for reward.

They disagree with the Pretrib claim – that those who are 'taken' are being 'taken' to/for judgement.

According to - **Ryan Habbena**: "...the Greek actually precludes this from being a possibility."

- Also, if Mt 24:31 is Jesus's coming at Armageddon, after God has poured out His bowls of wrath, how do we reconcile Jesus's statement that people will obviously be, "marrying and being given in marriage, and eating and drinking *up until the very day* of His coming."

Surely, people *will have noticed that the Wrath of God has started*.

#### Pretrib response:

Firstly, if Mt 24 is the rapture (as Prewrathers assert) Jesus's statement, about people carrying on as normal, is just as much a problem; because, the Prewrath rapture occurs after all the 'birth pangs' of Mt 24, and the first 4 seals of Revelation, bringing war, pestilence, and death, to a 1/4 of the earth.

Secondly, Mt 24-25 can be divided as follows.

- Mt 24:1-25 – Jesus answers the disciple's question.
- Mt 24:36-51 – Parable about those not ready for Jesus's coming (believers varied readiness).
- Mt 25:1-30 – Parable about those not ready to enter the millennium (Jew + gentile)

Regarding Mt 24:1-25 – Jesus answers the disciple's question.

- In Greek, the disciple's question is 'one' question, so Jesus's answer is also one unit.
- All the content of Mt 24:1-25 constitute 'when Jesus will return and the end of the age'.
- Prewrathers would acknowledge the content of Mt 24:1-25 involves the entire period of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week.
- Therefore, the entire period of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week can be referred to as 'when Jesus will come and the end of the age'.
  - Clearly, according to the context Jesus will be coming to Israel who will be in distress.

Regarding Mt 24:36 Mt 24:36-51 – Parable about those not ready for Jesus's coming.

- According to Mt 24:1-25, the 'coming' of Jesus begins with the beginning of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week, (Mt 24:2) not the physical return of Jesus in Mt 24:30-31, a precursor to Armageddon.
  - So, the people oblivious to Jesus's coming are all those upon the earth prior to Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week.
- This interpretation actually aids both the Pretrib and Prewrath positions.
  - As said, this passage does not dovetail with the Prewrath timing of the rapture, or that Pretrib assertion Mt 24:30-31 is the return of Messiah preceding Armageddon.
- This interpretation upholds the Pretrib timing of the rapture (prior to Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week) because, although Noah is ready, and Lot is not ready; examples of the different spiritual state of believers at the rapture; neither know the hour of their redemption, before the wrath of God is unleashed.

Regarding Mt 25:1-30 – The Parable's concern the worthiness of people entering 'the kingdom' (Mt 25:1) not being raptured and avoiding God's wrath.

(Recap, firstly...secondly...)

Thirdly, in Mt 24's parables...

- The focus is upon the attitude of the unprepared.
- It is the unsaved who are 'taken' v39, 'the flood came and took them all away'
  - Noah's family wasn't 'taken' from the earth but 'left'.
  - This interpretation agrees with Christ's parables of the field and dragnet.
- Mt 24 uses two Greek words in this parable '*airo*' v39, and '*paralambano*' v40-41.
  - John uses '*paralambano*' in John 14:3 to describe Jesus personally coming to receive believers in the rapture ('*airo*' impersonal 'taking').
    - This is why Prewrathers say Mt 24 cannot be about the 'taking' of unbelievers, if he is doing this personally.
  - What this passage means is that those 'taken' by the flood were taken impersonally, by God using the agency of the flood, but that the act of judgement was personally initiated by Him.
    - See also 2 Kings 2 (Elijah's rapture) where 2 different words are used.
    - John 19:15-16 uses both '*airo*' and '*paralambano*' for the same event.

#### 4) The cutting short of the Great Tribulation controversy

Prewrathers claim that the Great Tribulation (2<sup>nd</sup> half of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week) is the 'wrath' of Antichrist; particularly directed at the Jews (but involving the Church).

They argue that this pre-determined 'time' of persecution (1260 days, 42 months, 3 ½ years) is 'cut short', according to Jesus's words in Mt 24:22, (to approximately 21 months) so that there is still a Church, the 'elect' of Mt 24:22, to be raptured.

And, what event could 'cut short' the Great Tribulation other than the rapture, recorded in Mt 24:30-31 (which occurs approximately half way into the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week)?

#### Pretrib response:

Daniel 7:25; 12:5-6; Rev 11:2; 12:6,14; 13:5. No.

The 'cut short' statement refers to an event in eternity past where God decided to limit the Antichrist's persecution of Israel to 1260 days.

## **Conclusion**

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the tripe lock is 'picked' or unlocked because Jesus's return, recorded in Mt 24:30-31, is not when He will rapture the saints, prematurely cutting short the Great Tribulation to approx. 21 months.**

**This means that whenever the 'cosmic sign' of Joel takes place it does not precede the rapture. If it is the same sign as recorded in Mt 24:30-31, then it is a cosmic event that heralds the return of Messiah to redeem Israel and begin the Armageddon campaign.**

**This also means that the Great Trib, and the day of The Lord, are not two mutually exclusive periods of time separated by the rapture that cuts short the Great Trib.**