

Matthew 24:40–41 (NKJV)

40 Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left.

41 Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.

The question here is who is taken and who is left? The view that doesn't see the rapture in view here claims that "taken" here corresponds to "took them all away" in judgment as seen in verse 39. This view says the one taken in verses 40 and 41 are taken in judgment while those left are the saved who are left to go into the kingdom.

The problem with that view is that the wording is different. The word "**took**" (Gk. airo) in verse 39 has the sense of being taken in violence. If Christ wanted to communicate the same nuance in verses 40 and 41 we would expect that He would have used this same word, but He didn't! Instead, He used a different Greek word for "**taken**" (Gk. paralambano) in verses 40 and 41 that in some contexts can be used in a negative sense (cf. Mt. 27:27; Jn. 19:16), but most often it is used in a very positive sense.

The Greek word *paralambano* means "*to take to or with oneself*".

"The thought is always one of accompaniment, and almost always in a positive sense, i.e., for close fellowship. The word is overwhelmingly used in a positive sense." – **John F. Hart**

Paralambano is used of taking a bride in Matthew 1:20. It is used of Jesus taking Peter, James, and John up to the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew 17:1. And it is used by the Lord in John 14:3 where He promises to come again and receive His people unto Himself. When He says there, "***I will come again and receive you***" – the word "**receive**" is the Greek word paralambano. The use of this very same word in Matthew 24:40-41 is therefore very significant.

Also note the word "**left**" used in Matt. 24:40-41 is the Greek word "**aphiemi**" which consistently has a negative connotation meaning "**to abandon**" (cf. Mt. 4:11, 22; 8:15; 13:36; 19:29; 22:22, 25; 26:56). For example, in John 14:18 Christ says, "I will not leave [Gk. aphiemi] you orphans".

So note the break down of Matthew 24:39-41.

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39 and did not know until the flood came and **took** [*airo-* took violently] them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

40 Then two men will be in the field: one will be **taken** [*paralambano* -to take with] and the other **left** [*aphiemi* - abandoned].

41 Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be **taken** [*paralambano* - to take with] and the other **left** [*aphiemi* - abandoned].

Therefore, I understand the “**taken**” in Matt. 24:40-41 to refer to those taken in the pretribulation Rapture, while those “**left**” refers to those abandoned to the Day of the Lord judgment. In my mind this is the most straightforward and consistent view in light of both the overall usage of the terms and the context.

The sense of being taken in the rapture fits perfectly with the parallel language describing the rapture in John 14:1-3 where Christ promises to come again and receive us to Himself. And it fits perfectly with the idea that the coming of Jesus at the rapture means deliverance for God’s people but also surprise judgment for the lost world.

It is ironic that dispensationalism is known for dealing with prophecy in a literal/normal fashion but here in Matthew 24 some want to claim that the “**normal life pattern**” being described should perhaps be taken figuratively. Thus, they end up allegorizing the text at that point instead of taking it in the normal straightforward sense.

One of the arguments that those who claim the rapture is not found in Matthew 24 use is this: They claim that the book of Matthew is Jewish in orientation and does not deal with Church truth. However, in response it is to be pointed out that it is the gospel of Matthew that specifically introduces Church truth as seen in Matt. 16:18 and also Matt. 18:17. Certainly, the great commission in Matt. 28:19-20 is given to the Church and not to Israel.

And I would point out that after the transition of “peri de” in Matthew 24:36 Israel is no longer mentioned at all in this immediate context of Matt. 24:36-44. Matthew 24:4-35 is thoroughly Jewish in orientation but not Matthew 24:36-44. This argues for complete consistency in seeing Matthew 24:36-

44 as dealing with the rapture instead of dealing with the Second Coming of Christ to the earth.

Matthew 24:42 (NKJV)

42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

This is where we get the idea of “imminency”.

“Since in most contexts and especially prophetic contexts, ‘to watch’ (gregoreo) stresses imminence, the use of ‘to watch’ is most appropriate for the pretribulational rapture of the church, not a posttribulational return of Christ.” – *John Hart*

When we say the coming of Christ is “imminent” we are saying the rapture could happen at any time. All the way through the NT the coming of Christ for the Church is consistently presented as being imminent (cf. 1 Cor 1:7; 16:22; Phil. 3:20; 4:5; 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:6; 1 Tim. 6:14; Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28; James 5:7-9; 1 Pet. 1:13; Jude 21; Rev. 3:10-11; 22:7, 12, 20; etc.).

“Perhaps Today!”

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NKJV)

10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

We as believers are not waiting to be delivered from the wrath of hell. In salvation that is already a reality (cf. Jn. 3:36; Rom. 5:8-9). Rather as God’s people (the Church) we are waiting for Jesus to come and deliver us from the time of wrath (the tribulation period) that is about to come upon the earth (cf. Rev. 3:10-11; 6:17). We are not waiting for the Antichrist. We are not waiting for the tribulation period. We are waiting for Christ. We are “looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

Once the signposts of the Tribulation Period begin then Israel (and all Bible students) will be able to know very precisely when the Lord is coming. But the Church does not know - which is why we are told to be ever vigilant in watching. The coming of Christ for the Church is imminent.

Perhaps Today!

Live Ready!
Maranatha!