

# ↑ *“One Taken and the Other Left”* ↓

*John Ecob*

**W**hen Jesus spoke to His disciples about His second advent and kingdom in Luke chapter 17 and again in Matthew chapters 24-25, He said:

*“In that night there shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken and the other shall be left. Two shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left” (Luke17:34-36).*

This statement has long been seen as a description of the Rapture of the Church occurring before the Tribulation when the Church will be “taken” to heaven in resurrection bodies and the rest of mankind will be left for the great Tribulation. However, some teach that those taken are “taken” in judgment when the nations that survive the Tribulation stand before the “throne of His glory” while those left, are “left” to enter the millennial kingdom.

If the passage refers to the Rapture then it occurs BEFORE the Tribulation but if it refers to

the separation of the surviving nations then it will occur 75 days AFTER the second Advent.

The second view is based on the fact that the Church did not exist when Jesus spoke these words and the truth of the Church was a mystery until revealed to Paul (Eph.3:1-9; Col.1:25-27; Rom.16:25-26). It is argued that it therefore could not refer to the Rapture of the Church. But is that what the Bible teaches?

There can be no disagreement that these Scriptures are spoken to Israel and that the Jewish disciples would not know what the Lord was talking about if He had spoken of the Church. It is also true that Jesus did not call it the Rapture. He simply said: *“One shall be taken and the other left”*. Multitudes would disappear at one instant from all over the world. It does not automatically follow however, that the words do not refer to the Rapture. Jesus said this extraordinary event would be a **sign to Israel** that the *“end of the age”* (Tribulation) had come.

## *“Taken” and “Left”*

The Greek word translated “taken” is paralambano which is a compound of lambano which means “to receive” and

the preposition para meaning “near”. Without exception in more than fifty occurrences in the New Testament, it always means to “receive near”. It is actually translated “receive or received” 15 times. The context in each case determines the purpose for which the person is “received to one’s self”. It could be anybody that took someone or some thing to themselves for any purpose but paralambano always means to “take to one’s self”. It is used of Joseph taking Mary to himself to wife, of Satan taking the Lord to himself into a high mountain, Jesus taking the disciples into the mount of transfiguration or a believer receiving Christ and the Word of God.

Only twice out of 54 instances is paralambano used of someone taken for judgment. The purpose is determined by the context.

Next, the word for “left” is a compound word, afeymee, meaning “to send away”. The preposition apo meaning “away” is joined to eimi which means “to go”, or, “to go away”. It is used in 1Cor.7:11-12 of a husband “putting away” a wife in divorce. In 1Cor.7:13 it is translated “leave” speaking of a wife leaving her husband.

The Holy Spirit chose the words of Scripture and He was careful to use the right words in Matt.24 and Luke 17.

Both words are linked in the context and must be understood together. They cannot be read in isolation for they are in contrast. Some are “received near” in contrast with others who “go away”.

The purpose for which those taken are “received near” puzzled the disciples and they asked, “Where Lord?” i.e. where will they be “received near”? (Luke 17:37). Jesus replied that they would rise like eagles to the whole, living body in the sky. The NIV translates “body” as carcass which is a wrong translation. The Greek word for body in Luke 17:37 is soma; a whole living body; whereas in Matt.24:28 which speaks of Armageddon, it is ptoma; a rotting carcass. Those taken in Luke 17 rise as free as the eagles.

### *Location of the Event*

Furthermore, the sudden “receiving near” of some, and the “sending away” of others, happens simultaneously and globally. Luke states:

*“In that night there shall be two*

*in one bed...grinding together...  
in the field"* (Luke 17:34-36).

The judgment of the unsaved nations however, will occur when all nations have been gathered in one place at Jerusalem; to the *"throne of his glory"* (Matt.25:31).

Furthermore, those judged will not be going about their normal pursuits. They will not be asleep, grinding, or working in the field. This event is totally unexpected and not anticipated by the world and is compatible with the Rapture but not compatible with the concept of people standing before the Lord at the judgment of living nations when the unsaved are cast into *"everlasting fire"* and the righteous are blessed to enter the kingdom on earth.

After the Rapture, the world will acknowledge that *"the day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand"* (Rev.6:17) and after Christ returns, all men will be gathered to Jerusalem. However, before the Rapture men are eating, drinking, marrying, building, planting until suddenly, unexpectedly, the Church is removed and they are left.

One of the signs of the end of the age would be days like the

days of Noah. They *"knew not until the flood came"* (Matt.24:39).

### *Timing of the Event*

If those *"taken"* are taken in judgment then the event occurs AFTER the Tribulation at the judgment of the surviving nations but Noah and Lot are rescued BEFORE the judgment fell on the earth for Jesus said:

*"The day that Noah ENTERED into the ark, the flood came", and "the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire"* (Luke17:27,29).

### *The Disappearance is a Sign to Israel of the End of the Age*

First, Luke's Gospel records the Lord's words on a different occasion to that described by Matthew. Luke records the Lord's answer to the Pharisees who asked, *"when the kingdom of God should come"* (Luke17:20) but Matthew records the answer to three questions:

- 1) What is the SIGN that the Temple will be destroyed?
- 2) What is the SIGN of the Lord's 2nd advent to reign?
- 3) What is the SIGN of the end of the age (the Great Tribulation)?

**FIRST SIGN** - The sign of Jerusalem's destruction was

that Jerusalem would be surrounded by armies. This was fulfilled in AD70 and the Christians remembered the SIGN and left the city when they saw the armies gathering. It is recorded in Luke's Gospel chapter 21:20-21).

**THE SECOND SIGN** - The sign of His coming is the visible appearance of Christ in the heavens like lightning in the sky. His coming would be visible for all to see.

**THE THIRD SIGN** - The third sign was when the "end of the age" would come. The end of the age is the short period of time that precedes the coming of the Lord for He comes "immediately after the tribulation of those days" (Matt.24:29).

Having described the events of the first half of the Tribulation (Matt.24:7-14), Jesus spoke of the "abomination of desolation" which occurs at the mid-point of the Tribulation (Matt.24:15-20), and finally, He described the second half of the Tribulation (Matt.24:21-28).

This event will be followed by the glorious appearing of Christ, the regathering of Israel, and the judgment of the living nations.

Having described the awful events of the end of the age Jesus gave the three SIGNS that would indicate WHEN the "end of the age" would come (Matt.24:31-44):

a) The fig tree would put forth leaves. Fig trees have fruit BEFORE leaves. Israel is God's fig tree and her conversion and testimony after the Rapture would be a sign that the end of the age had come. That generation would see the Lord come and the kingdom established.

b) There would be abounding wickedness as it was in the days of Noah and Lot. But BEFORE the judgment of the Tribulation begins, the righteous would be removed. The day that Noe entered the ark the flood came. Luke 17:27-29 is very explicit.

c) IN THAT DAY there would be the sudden, global disappearance of righteous people. When people disappear, the Tribulation will begin:

*"And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man...They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, UNTIL THE DAY that Noe ENTERED into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.*

*Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But THE SAME DAY that Lot WENT OUT of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even THUS shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.*

*IN THAT DAY, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: ...I tell you, IN THAT NIGHT there shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left..." (Luke 17:27-34).*

The word "day" can be used of a specific solar day OR of a period of time. Both usages are in this passage. We have a period of time ,

- a) *"the days (time) of Noah" (Luke17:26).*
- b) *"the days (time) of Lot" (Luke17:28).*
- c) *"the day (time) when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke17:30).*

However, a specific solar day is meant when Noah went into the ark and Lot departed from Sodom. Even the time of the day is specified for we read:

- i) *"in THAT NIGHT there shall be two in one bed..."*

- ii) *"Until THE DAY..."*
- iii) *"the SAME DAY..."*

The context, rightly understood, determines whether the day is a period of time or a specific solar day.

Those who remained outside the ark or inside the city of Sodom, were destroyed by flood or fire!

Jesus did not say it was the Rapture. He couldn't because the Church was still a mystery (unrevealed, hidden). But He could say that millions would disappear as a SIGN TO ISRAEL of the end of the age (Tribulation).

In Noah's day and in the time of Lot ALL those "left" perished, and in the Tribulation both Jew and Gentile will suffer. Jesus said:

*"THEN let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains... pray that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For THEN shall be great tribulation..." (Matt.24:16-21).*

Halfway through the Tribulation, after the "abomination of desolation" is set up in the Temple (Matt.24:15), the Russian/Islamic invasion will have passed and "all Israel" will be saved (Ezek.39:22).

## *One Taken and the Other Left*

The 144,000 Jewish servants of God will have finished their 1,260-day testimony (Rev.11:3), been martyred, and gathered around the throne of heaven (Rev.14:1-4).

The sign given to Israel of the end of the age, the sudden, global disappearance of righteous people from all walks of life, will be the trigger that will bring Israel to the Lord in the first half of the 7-year Tribulation. It must therefore occur at the beginning of the Tribulation which is when the Rapture occurs.

Signs must occur BEFORE the event or they are useless. It serves no good purpose putting a sign at the bottom of a cliff to warn people to keep away from the top of the cliff. The sign of missing persons must therefore be before the Tribulation.

### *Conclusion*

The view that those “taken” are taken in judgment after Christ returns and those left go into the millennial kingdom is therefore wrong because:

1) The Greek words for “taken” and “left” when used in contrast, do not allow for that interpretation. While *paralambano* is used twice of

soldiers taking Jesus, 96% of the occurrences of the word show that the word simply means “to receive near”. The word “left” cannot under any circumstances be construed, “left for blessing” in the kingdom.

2) The time when some are taken is clearly BEFORE the Tribulation because the examples of Noah and Lot demand it. It was only WHEN Noah and Lot departed that judgment fell. While Noah emerged into a new cleansed world after the flood, that cannot be said of Lot. In fact the story of Lot AFTER the destruction of Sodom is a sad tale of drunkenness and incest. His descendants, the Moabites and Ammonites, became a problem to God’s people Israel through the centuries that followed.

3) The event described as “one taken and the other left” is global whereas the judgment of the living nations at the end of the Tribulation is in one location: at Jerusalem.

4) The occupation of those living when this occurs indicates they are going about their normal pursuits (eating drinking, marrying, giving in marriage, building, planting etc). This will

not be the case at the judgment of the living nations. They will be gathered specifically to stand before the "throne of his glory" (Matt.25:31) to await sentence for how they treated the redeemed nation of Israel during the Tribulation.

5) The event will be totally unexpected and a surprise to those "left" whereas those entering the millennial kingdom will not be surprised at the outcome. Nor will the unsaved be surprised for they opposed the servants of God during the Tribulation. They will attempt to justify themselves, asking:

*"When saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?"* (Matt.25:44).

6) Those "taken" will rise like eagles to the living, saving body and will not be cast into everlasting fire.

While it is true that the Lord did not say it was the Rapture of the Church He gave the event as a SIGN of the sudden disappearance of millions all over the world so that Israel would know that the "end of the age" had come.

In Luke 17 the disciples asked, "Where Lord?" ie. Where

would they be taken? Jesus said, "*Wheresoever the (living) body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together*". Just as eagles circle higher and higher so the missing persons will rise to the living body of our risen Lord in the sky.

The Greek word for "body" in Luke 17 is soma and NOT ptoma as in Matthew 24:28 where it is rightly translated "carcase" and speaks of the dead bodies at Armageddon at the end of the Tribulation.

7) The SIGN of missing persons will no doubt bring 144,000 Jewish men to Christ to be God's witness at the beginning of the Tribulation. Jews already know about the Rapture.

It helps if we read Matthew 24 as though we lived at that time. Remembering that it was still the Old Testament era and Church truth was unknown at the time. That's why Jesus could only speak about the sign of MISSING PERSONS to the Jewish disciples.

8) If those "taken" are taken in judgment then they are taken at the judgment of the living nations (Matt.25:31-46) which occurs 75 days after the Tribulation is finished and that is too late to be a sign of the end

## *One Taken and the Other Left*

of the age. The end of the age will have passed at that stage. There will be three classes of people on earth when Christ returns:

- i) The Lord's brethren (Israel),
- ii) The Sheep (saved Gentiles)
- iii) The Goats (unsaved Gentiles)

The saved Gentiles (sheep) go into the kingdom 75 days after the end of the Tribulation:

*"Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days"* (Dan.12:12).

Antichrist and his armies will be destroyed at the coming of the Lord but the nations will be judged AFTER the Lord returns. *"One taken and the other left"* therefore **could not be a sign of the end of the age** OR of the Lord's return when both events will have passed.

The parables in Matthew Chs.24 and 25 follow the signs and are a warning to Israel to be ready. The parables of the faithful and wise servant, the 10 virgins, and the talents, are all warnings to Israel to "watch" and not to say, *"My Lord delayeth his coming"*. Israel is God's servant nation but the Church is the wife of the Lamb. In these parables

unfaithful (unsaved) servants are cast into outer darkness. This is possible for unsaved Jews but it is not possible for members of the Bride of Christ, the Church. Those "taken" are a sign to Israel but we know it as the Rapture.