

7. The Imminent Posttribulationai view

This views holds that there are two periods of Tribulation mentioned in Matthew 24: the Jewish Tribulation (24:21), which occurred in A.D. 67-70, and the Great Tribulation (24:29) which is uncertain as to its time. After the Jewish Tribulation and some time during the Great Tribulation Christ will descend from heaven, the saints will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and the Lord will immediately return with the glorified saints to the earth. The Rapture and the Return (or Revelation) will be one event with two aspects. Since there is no discernible sign with which to connect the Great Tribulation, we don't know when it will begin; in fact, we may be in it now. Since we don't know when it will begin or how long it will be (it could be a few days long, or a few years, or even as long as 70 years), we need to be ready for Christ's imminent Return at all times. In this view the Second Coming is post-tribulationai with respect to the Jewish Tribulation and imminent with respect to the Great Tribulation.

8. The Imminent Pretribulationai view

This view holds that prior to the Tribulation Christ will descend from heaven, the saints will be caught up to meet Him in the air, and He together with them will return to heaven for the duration of the Tribulation period. Then after the Tribulation and prior to the Millennium Christ will return in power and glory with His glorified saints to the earth. The Rapture and the Return (or Revelation) will be two events or two phases of Christ's Second Advent. In this view there is a time interval between the first and second phases of the Second Coming. There are no distinct, identifiable signs preceding the Rapture.

The following diagram are intended to promote understanding of these eight views. In each diagram, downward arrows represent descent and upward arrows ascent. In each one, a descending arrow connected to a cloud numbered "1" represents Christ's First Coming; a descending arrow connected to a cloud numbered "2" represents Christ's Second Coming; and an ascending arrow connected to an unnumbered cloud represents Christ's Ascension to heaven, following His crucifixion, resurrection, and post-resurrection appearances. An ascending arrow connected to a cloud numbered "2" or "2(1)" represents believers' ascent to Christ at the Rapture, and a second descending arrow connected to a cloud numbered "2" or "2(2)" represents believers' descent with Christ at the Return (or Revelation).