

# *Building A Case For The Pre-Trib Rapture*

Lesson #29 Not Destined For The Wrath August 17, 2022

Purpose: To show that Church Age believers will be kept from [ek=out of] the eschatological [end times] wrath of God.

The means of deliverance from that wrath is the coming of Jesus Christ for His Church.

M. Hitchcock: Exemption from eschatological [end times] wrath is promised.

1<sup>st</sup> Mention & Promise of the Rapture:

John 14:1-4 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup> In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; (promise to believers) that where I am, there you may be also. (purpose of His coming >Take Believers To Heaven) <sup>4</sup> And where I go you know, and the way you know."

Note: There is NO mention of Jesus coming to earth as He will do at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming.

The Bible clearly promises in at least 3 places, that God's people in this age are exempt from the wrath to come during The Tribulation Period. I Thess. 1:9-10; I Thess. 5:9-11; Rev. 3:10-11 In I & II Thessalonians, Paul describes how the Church is going to be removed from the planet. Its departure from the earth is completely different from anything written by the Old Testament prophets. Its departure is different from anything we read about in the four gospels because it is a separate coming of Christ that has nothing to do with the return of Christ to Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives at the close of the 7 year Tribulation Period.

Paul's writings provide strong clues as to why the end church will be weak, vacillating.

The Character of The Church At Thessalonica BEFORE False Teaching

I Thess. 1:2-10 We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; <sup>3</sup> constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, <sup>4</sup> knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you; <sup>5</sup> for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. <sup>6</sup> You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, <sup>7</sup> so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. <sup>8</sup> For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.

<sup>9</sup> For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, <sup>10</sup> and

- to wait for His Son from [ek] heaven,
- whom He raised from [ek] the dead, that is
- Jesus, who rescues [delivers] us from [ek] The Wrath To Come.

Greek preposition "ek" = from, from out of, denotes origin

- Believers were waiting for Jesus to come FROM [ek = #1537] heaven
- The One who was raised FROM [ek = #1537] the dead
- This same person would deliver them FROM [ek = #1537] the Wrath To Come.
  - ❖ Completeness of our rescue by Christ; we are rescued out of the time of distress.
  - ❖ Hide the church safely out of the way before God visits His wrath on the earth

Paul portrays Jesus as coming for His Church, to deliver believers from The Wrath That Is To Come. The deliverance from the wrath is linked to the coming of Jesus from heaven. [v. 9]

- The verse says believers will be delivered from this wrath by the Lord's coming.
- His coming is not what delivers believers from the wrath of hell.
- It is the coming of the Son from heaven that delivers us from the wrath.
- The only way His coming from heaven can deliver us from the wrath is if He removes us from it.

Deliver = rhuomai = strong word that carries the meaning of rescuing from danger or destruction by a forcible act

Hitchcock: The word places the "emphasis on the greatness of the peril from which deliverance is given by a mighty act of power.

Deliver is a present-tense participle which stresses that the church's deliverance from the future wrath was already a present reality when Paul wrote this. Because our deliverance or separation from wrath is already a present reality, we can rest assured that we will be separated from the wrath of the Lamb."

I Thess. 4:1-18: Paul urges the believers to live to please God, watch for the Lord and remember the Hope of Christ's coming for us.

I Thess. 4:3, 7 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.

For God has called us to holiness.

I Thess. 4:13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren,

- This passage begins the first clear teaching of the Doctrine of the Rapture

I Cor. 15:51-52 "Behold, I shew you a MYSTERY: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." *The Rapture*

- Mystery: new truth given for the 1<sup>st</sup> time; not before given in the past
- No one knew of the doctrine of the rapture of the church until it was revealed by the Lord to Paul. The Rapture was a "mystery" revealed by God to him alone. He was then charged with teaching the Church.
- Its existence was kept secret until then just as its exact timing is secret to this day.

Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians was written in 51 AD and contains the very first clear mention of the Rapture ever given. [Note: The Gospel writers did not teach it.]

- Paul's letter in I Corinthians around 55 AD. [twinkling of an eye; changed, etc.]

Nearly every Bible chronology places the date of the writing of Matthew at around 35 AD, Why is this important? Because if no one knew of the doctrine of the Rapture of the Church until Paul, then Matthew 24 and 25 cannot be, under any circumstances, referring to the Church and the Rapture because no one knew of any Rapture. At the time of Matthew, the Church itself was not even formed. If Matthew knew and wrote about the Rapture of the Church, then Paul was lying when he said it was a MYSTERY that he was revealing for the first time in Corinthians. Important: Many of the mistakes made about the timing of the rapture come from futile attempts to find Gospel passages that teach it.

*Paul uses some of the same language in I Thess. 4:13-18 & I Thess. 5:1-11*

I Thess. 4:13-18 But I would not have you to be IGNORANT, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

<sup>15</sup> For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

<sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

I Thess. 5:1-11 But Of The Times And The Seasons [Now as to the periods and times; change of subject], brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

<sup>2</sup> For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

<sup>3</sup> For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. <sup>4</sup> But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

<sup>5</sup> Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. <sup>6</sup> Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

<sup>8</sup> But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

<sup>9</sup> For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. Who died for us, that, whether we Wake Or Sleep, we should live together with Him.

<sup>11</sup> Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

Question: What wrath is in view? THE WRATH to come - not just any wrath

Context: I Thess. contains frequent references to the Lord's coming.

➤ This wrath is eschatological [end-times] wrath.

Blue Letter Bible: The passage makes clear that the wrath signifies the calamities to be visited by God upon men when the present period of grace is closed. As to whether the *ek* here denotes "out of the midst of" or "preservation from," this is determined by the statement in I Th. 5:9, that "God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation."

The context there shows that the salvation is from the wrath just referred to.

- The wrath to come associated with the Day Of The Lord

This passage supports the pre-trib rapture belief:

1. It comes immediately after the rapture text of I Thess. 4:13-18 which deals with the resurrection of dead believers and the rapture of living saints to meet the Lord in the air at His coming.
2. I Thess. 5:1 introduces a new topic which is started by the words: Now as to [peri de] which signals a change of subject.

I Thess. 5:1-2 Now as to the periods and times, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. <sup>2</sup> For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord is coming just like a thief in the night.

Consider: The introduction of a new but related subject because of the order of events.

- The rapture is described in I Thess. 4:13-18
- The Day of the Lord or Tribulation is discussed in I Thess. 5:1-9
- Sequence indicates the rapture is followed by the Day of The Lord. Not simultaneous
- The believers in I Thess. 4:13 were uninformed concerning the truth of the rapture.
- The believers in I Thess. 5:1 were well aware of the truth regarding the Day of the Lord.

Consider: They should be informed about the Day of the Lord. Prophets talked about it.

- These are 2 separate but related topics.

Question: Why didn't they learn about the Rapture from the prophets?

Periods & Times; Seasons [Mark Hitchcock]

- Phrase is found only 3x in the Bible; refers primarily to God's plan for Israel
- This is the phrase Daniel used when God gave him understanding of the king's dream.

Dan. 2:21a And he changes the times and the seasons...

- Our Lord's use of the phrase in Acts 1:7 indicates that times and season relate primarily to Israel.

Acts 1:6-7 When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? <sup>7</sup> And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power.

Consider: God has a definite plan for the nations of the world. [Acts 17:26]. Israel is the key. God has ordained times and seasons for the nations on earth, particularly Israel, and of this will culminate in a terrible time called "The Day of the Lord."

- That time when God will judge the world and punish the nations.
- God will prepare Israel for the return of Jesus Christ to the earth to establish His kingdom. [Amos 5:18ff; Joel 2:1ff; Zeph. 1:14-18; Isaiah 2:12-21]

I Thess. 5:3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

➤ Isaiah used this picture when he described the coming "Day of the Lord. [Isa. 13:6-13] Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt:

<sup>8</sup> And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames.

<sup>9</sup> Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

<sup>10</sup> For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

<sup>11</sup> And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

<sup>12</sup> I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.

<sup>13</sup> Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.

➤ The early part of this Day of the Lord was called "the beginning of sorrows" by Jesus in Matt. 24:8. The Greek word translated "sorrows" means birth pangs.

Isaiah, Jesus and Paul teach this truth: Out of the Day of the Lord will come the birth of His Kingdom. When God's judgments are finished, Jesus Christ will return "with power and great glory. [Matt. 24:30]

I Thess. 5:1-10 notice the shift in pronouns = interplay between 2 audiences

But of the times and the seasons [Now as to the periods and times; change of subject], brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

<sup>2</sup> For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

<sup>3</sup> For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

<sup>4</sup> But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

<sup>5</sup> Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. <sup>6</sup> Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

<sup>8</sup> But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

<sup>9</sup> For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>10</sup> Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

Please note: The context is not hell. The entire context of I Thess. 5:1-8 is the Day of the Lord's wrath, not eternal wrath in hell.

- Indicates when the tribulation period arrives, there will be 2 distinct groups
- One group, the saved, will be rescued.
- Other group, the unsaved, will face divine retribution
- The Day of the Lord will come upon them and they will not escape. [I Thess. 5:3]

I Thess. 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

- Believers have an appointment with salvation [deliverance] not wrath.

Walvoord: In this passage he is expressly saying that our appointment is to be caught up to be with Christ. The appointment for the world [unbelievers] is for the Day of the Lord, the day of wrath. One cannot keep both appointments. We made our appointment for salvation and rescue when we trusted Christ as our personal Savior from sin. He is the One who bore our judgment and God's wrath on the cross. Jesus Christ bore for us all the divine judgment necessary for our salvation. He has promised that we shall never taste any of God's wrath.

Paul wrote II Thessalonians [51-52 AD] to correct some of the errors concerning the end times that the believers had heard from false teachers.

The return of Christ, about which Paul had written, was not His Second Coming but the Rapture. While the day of the Lord would arrive unexpectedly it would be unexpected only by unbelievers. Several predicted events would precede its commencement.

### The Character Of This Church AFTER False Teaching

The Falling Away, Apostasy, in the latter days.

II Thess. 2:1-3 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ AND our gathering together to Him [rapture; I Thess. 4], THAT ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the Day of the Lord is at hand [had come.] Let No Man Deceive You by any means; for that Day [The Tribulation] will not come except there come a falling away [departure] first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition...

Interesting Side Note: The cognate verb of apostasy is "aphistaymi." It is translated in several places in the NT as, "departing from one place to another." The earlier translation before the 1611 King James, such as the Tyndale, and Geneva, used the word *departure* instead of *falling away*. "That this day of the Lord cannot come until there is the departure comes first." The Greek word 'aphistaymi' has the little Greek letter ahead of it that indicates the article "the." So the Greek implies "The Departure."

#### A. Source of False Teaching

1. The cause of the disturbance was evidently made on the basis of 3 distinct sources.
  - a. The false teaching could have come through a "different spirit."
    - Refers to the claim of some to a prophetic utterance made in the power of the Spirit of God.

- There were evidently those in the church with the gift of prophecy, but the church and the leaders were to carefully examine and accept ONLY what was from God. Was it in keeping with both the OT and what they heard from Paul the apostle?
- b. The false teaching could have come through a word [statement, speech]
  - Distinguished from the claim to be a spirit of prophecy or divine revelation
- c. It was further enhanced by a letter claiming to come from Paul.

False teachers had presented a fake letter as if it were from Paul that claimed:

- Christ had already come and had already gathered out the church to Himself.
  - We missed the rapture [II Thess. 2:3]
- This would have been especially troubling because Paul had encouraged them in I Thess. [~50 AD] that they would be raptured BEFORE the day of wrath came upon the earth.
- The false report indicated the world was now living in the judgments of the "Day of the Lord." Their present persecutions confirmed this false report.

It is clear from the first epistle, the apostle had taught these believers about the nature of the day of the Lord [I Thess. 5:2].

*Problem: Seeds Of False Doctrine Had Been Sown*

- A. The false teaching that they were THEN in the Day of the Lord [Tribulation Period] was undermining the meaning and significance of the coming of the Lord for the body of Christ.
- Deceived by false teachers who confused them about the Lord's return.
  - Their suffering had already been so severe that someone tried to convince them that the period was already in progress, even though the Lord had not yet come to gather them to heaven.
  - They would first have to undergo the severe persecution of The Tribulation and possibly even suffer martyrdom before Christ's coming, according to these false teachings.
  - They had been led to believe, however, that His coming for them would spare them the anguish of that hour [I Thess. 5:9]. But people were now telling them, with Paul's apparent backing, that such a deliverance was not to be.
  - Discouraged by persecution and needed incentive to persevere
  - Therefore, they were in great need of an authentic word from Paul assuring them that they had understood him correctly in his first epistle.

B. Paul writes to his beloved flock who were instantly shaken by the false teaching and continued to be deeply troubled.

- The Day of the Lord is a time of worldwide judgment. [Isa. 13:6; Obad. 1:15]
- They were NOT in the Day of the Lord because THAT DAY could not arrive until certain other events had taken place.

1. Apostasy, Rebellion or falling away must come first

Apostasia does not mean merely disbelieving but rather an aggressive and positive revolt.

- It refers to a special departure and rebellion against the true God.
- It will become a worldwide movement and will provide the seed bed for the great system of revolt which will be headed up in the person of the Beast who will be the very personification of Satan himself.

Consider: The departure of the true believers at "our gathering together unto Him" makes the apostasy in the professing church 100%.

## 2. Revealing of the man of lawlessness [son of perdition]

- Antichrist would not be revealed until the restrainer is taken out of the way

II Thess. 2:6-7 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. <sup>7</sup> For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains *will do so until he is taken out of the way.*

- Out of the way = out of the midst = #3319 mesos = in the midst of

Consider: The Holy Spirit is in the "midst" of God's program today, working through the church to accomplish God's purposes. When the church is raptured, the Holy Spirit will not be taken "out of the world;" otherwise nobody could be saved during the Tribulation.

- He will be taken "out of the midst" to allow Satan and his forces to go to work.
- The Holy Spirit will be present on the earth during the Tribulation, but He will not be restraining the forces of evil as He is today.
- When the believers leave the earth in the rapture, all who remain will experience God's wrath during the Tribulation.

## C. Effect of False Teaching > *THE SHAKEN CONDITION*

II Thess. 2:2a be not soon [easily] shaken in mind, or be troubled; quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed

### 1. Easily = quickly, hastily, soon

- The idea is ultimately that of "easily" in the sense of too quickly without due thought and study. [not being a Berean]
- They needed to carefully reflect on the teaching Paul had given them.

Consider: From the winds and currents of false doctrine: The unsettled condition that occurred among the believers in Thessalonica was the result of failing to remember and reflect on what they had been taught.

II Thess. 2:5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

- This should have protected their minds from such instability.

II Thess. 2:15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast [Do not move away from the TRUTH of the Gospel], and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

2. "SHAKEN" = saleuo, "to agitate, shake, unsettle, cause to waver." It was used of moving away from something, like a ship suddenly torn away from her moorings by strong winds and waves. may suggest a sudden shaking or move followed by a condition that continued.

3. From your Composure" is literally, "from your mind; understanding."



4. "And be disturbed," point us to the abiding results of what happened because they had been shaken in their understanding of God's truth.

➤ "Disturbed" is *throeo*, "to be inwardly disturbed, aroused, frightened."

Note: Through the study of God's Word, Christians are to KNOW and become ANCHORED in the Truth. The goal is to become transformed by that truth through the renewing of their minds [Rom. 12:1-2], not shaken from that truth and thus in a state of worry or disturbance by the many turbulent waves and winds of false doctrine promoted by the false teaching of men [Eph. 4:14].

Calm down and REMEMBER the TRUTH I taught you in my first letter.

I Thess. 4:13-18 The Lord would return and catch up His own to meet Him in the air.

❖ This is the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ AND our gathering together unto Him.

II Thess. 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren,

by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, The coming of the Lord and our gathering is a SINGLE subject. The coming of the Lord includes our gathering together to Him. The Greek has one article with both nouns.

Paul had promised them deliverance from The Tribulation. [I Thess. 1:10; 5:9]

I Thess. 5:9-10 For God has not destined [appointed] us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup> who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. <sup>11</sup> Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

• context = tribulation period; the Day of the Lord

Salvation = Strong's 4991 = *sótéria* = deliverance; preservation; *salvation*, i.e. God's rescue which delivers believers out of destruction *and into* His safety

➤ His coming for the body of Christ is the event that will keep them out of THAT DAY.

❖ Their hope in Christ's future return should serve as an encouragement to them in their suffering, motivating them to live responsibly for Him.

Wiersbe: The purpose of Bible prophecy is not for us to make a calendar, but to build character. Prophecy is designed to enlighten, comfort, and encourage, but one of the primary purposes should be to motivate us to godly living—living with a view to eternity and the marvelous things to come.

I John 3:2-3 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

<sup>3</sup> And every man that hath this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure.

### Concluding Remarks:

Paul made an important distinction about future events.

In I Thessalonians Paul had taught:

- The Lord's return could take place very soon I Thess. 4:13-18
  - He urged his readers to wait expectantly for the Lord.
- The Day of the Lord would come like a thief in the night. I Thess. 5:2

Paul distinguished these two truths in II Thessalonians 2:1-2.

The distinction is between:	Our gathering together to Him	2:1 and
	The day of the Lord	2:2

He wrote II Thess. 2:1-12 to show the difference between them. Paul also gave definite new revelation about the day of the Lord:

Paul revealed that in the future God will remove what is presently restraining lawlessness [II Thess. 2:7b]. The restrainer, the Holy Spirit, indwells the true church.

Lawlessness is presently working, but what keeps it from running wild is the Holy Spirit's ministry through the church, the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit will not leave the earth when the Rapture occurs, because He is always omnipresent.

But His ministry of restraining lawlessness through Christians in the church will end because the people whom He presently indwells will leave the earth.

Paul announced that in the future there will also be a crisis: "that lawless one" will be revealed [2:8a]. God will withdraw the Spirit's present restraining ministry from the world when He withdraws the church from the world. When will He withdraw the church from the world? He will do so at "our gathering together to Him" [II Thess. 2:1, i.e., the Rapture].

Then the human leader of lawlessness, the Antichrist, will appear. He will be entirely godless, but he will be such a remarkable character that he will convince most people that he is divine. Jesus will come at the end of the Tribulation, when the "lawless one" is the prominent character on the stage of history. However, when Christ comes to the earth, He will destroy the Antichrist and set up the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ. [II Thess. 2:8b].