

A Biblical View OF THE END TIMES

INTRODUCTION TO THE RAPTURE, PART 2

Week #16; April 12, 2026, 6PM

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Review:

- The last time we were together for this study was two weeks ago – between then and now we celebrated Easter, and so – as we had announced - we took last weekend off.
- Let's do a quick review of where we are. We've just begun a foray into the doctrine of the Rapture, and we covered some basic points about it last time:
 - **FIRST**, we learned what the Biblical doctrine of the Rapture is.
 - ✓ The Rapture is that supernatural occasion which pertains to the greater church. It is an event FOR the church.
 - ✓ The church is that corporate body of believers that began on the original Day of Pentecost in **Acts Ch. 2**, and which continues to the present.
 - ✓ This 'greater church' is comprised of ALL those who **were**, and **are**, TRULY SAVED.
 - ✓ There is coming a time when this group will be suddenly and visibly removed from this planet to be with Jesus Christ in heaven where He **now** is.
 - **SECOND**, we learned the Rapture is a topic that is much debated in Christian circles today.
 - ✓ There is no lack of dispute and doubt concerning the Biblical doctrine of the Rapture.
 - ✓ Some of this pushback even descends into 'mockery.' Those who believe in the Rapture, and who teach it properly, are often ridiculed.
 - ✓ This specific dynamic, as **2 Peter 3:1** puts it, is one of the prophetic signs of 'the last days.'
 - ✓ God's Word tells us the Biblical doctrine of the Rapture will be attacked, even from INSIDE the church.
 - **THIRD**, we learned the English word 'rapture' originates from the original Latin translation of the Bible known as The Vulgate, and from terms found in that translation like 'rapturo,' or 'rapere.'
 - ✓ When the Bible was first translated from Greek to Latin, the Greek word *harpazó* – meaning, "to pluck up, to seize, to be caught away" – was translated into these Latin terms.
 - ✓ From there, it became 'Rapture' in our lexicon. It is most commonly mentioned by the phrase 'caught up' in our English Bibles.

- **FOURTH**, we learned the Bible teaches that the Rapture is an **imminent** event. That means it is **CERTAIN** to happen - - - but its timing is **UNCERTAIN**.
 - ✓ This position of 'imminence' is well-documented in church history, starting with the apostles. It is also clear from Paul's own writings that he anticipated the Rapture in his own time.
 - ✓ This 'imminent' Rapture view was the position of the early church fathers. This position is also mentioned in the various writings of those who studied directly under the Apostles.
 - ✓ Key to understanding the Rapture's 'imminence' is the fact that **NO** prophetic event is required to take place **before** the Rapture.
 - ✓ Any requirement that something else must take place **first** for the Rapture to happen (like the War of Gog and Magog, or the Tribulation, for example) is inconsistent with the Biblical concept of imminency.
 - ✓ Therefore, by this definition, the 'imminency' of the Rapture supports a 'pre-tribulational' view. That means the Rapture will occur **BEFORE** the onset of the seven-year Tribulation.
- **FIFTH**, we reviewed multiple passages in Scripture that support the basic definition and conditions of the 'Rapture,' as well as its 'imminency.'
 - ✓ We even looked at Jesus' own words which reinforce these things.
 - ✓ From that exercise, we learned the faithful believer is called to be expectant, hopeful, alert, comforted, sober-minded, disciplined, and watchful.

NOTE: I want to make a few comments as we look ahead to the balance of this study on the doctrine of the Rapture.

- I will, after the conclusion of this part of our series, produce a physical handout which outlines the various arguments or 'proofs' of a 'pre-tribulational' Rapture.
- It will be **comprehensive**, but I won't claim it will be **exhaustive**. I'll give you a great foundation, but if you study more on your own, you'll add to that knowledge.
- In that handout, I will also provide a review of the alternate positions concerning the timing of the Rapture, including the 'mid-tribulational' and 'post-tribulational' views.
- However, I will not **TEACH** those alternate views the same way I will teach the 'pre-tribulational' view. That may frustrate some of you - - but 'it is what it is.'
- As I have stated before, and as you can read in the brochure about this series, my emphasis is to teach what I believe the Bible is saying - - I have no personal agenda except to disclose the truth, as best as I am equipped to understand it.
- It's why I hold myself accountable to the three rules of proper Biblical interpretation. I arrive at my own positions by maintaining this standard.
- For similar reasons and convictions, I will not teach that America is found in Bible prophecy, or that the church has replaced Israel, or that Trump (or any other US President) is the antichrist, or that '10 lost tribes of Israel' are in Kentucky, and so on.

- I feel these views are incongruent with responsible Biblical study, and it's why – again! - I always encourage YOU to 'be as the Bereans' (**Cf. Acts 17:11**). You need to personally and **responsibly** study and explore these matters for yourself.
- I am also saying these things because I need some patience from you. Based on some of the questions I have been receiving, it's helpful if you FIRST let me get through the things I need to teach.
- Some of your questions will naturally be answered if you let me do that.

NOTE: Now, as I shared at the conclusion of our last time together, I want to **apply** a real case example of some of the things we've already learned about the Rapture.

This will take us two lessons, but I want to unpack a historical NT situation that ties this imminence and pre-tribulation stuff together.

A. Let's look at the Thessalonian church (Cf. 2 Thess. 2:1-9)

1. I've touched on this portion of Scripture before for other reasons – and I will again - but it's important we look at it **now** with the things we've just learned in view.
 - **2 Thessalonians** was written in direct follow-up to **1 Thessalonians**. Both were written around 51 AD - roughly 20 years after Jesus ascended to heaven.
 - Most scholars believe that only a few weeks to a few months passed between the writing of **1 Thessalonians** and **2 Thessalonians**.

NOTE: Paul had originally been with this early church only about a month or less (**Cf. Acts 17:2** – "...three Sabbath days" [3-4 weeks]). We need to pay attention to the details here:

- A significant proportion of **1 Thessalonians** deals with eschatological issues (things concerning events of the end times).
- These elements are mentioned in every chapter, proving they are vitally important to Christian growth (even for new believers!).
- Paul felt teaching about the Rapture, the day of the Lord, the antichrist, (etc.) was essential to providing a strong faith foundation - - they were NOT things we should diminish or challenge.
- Keep in mind, Paul's position here is **opposite** to the position of many pastors and churches today who ignore these same issues, and who refuse to teach these things.

2. Paul was divinely inspired to write **2 Thessalonians**, the follow-up book, to accomplish TWO main goals:

- (a.) **to address confusion**, and...
- (b.) **to provide correction**.

(SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND): These two goals of Paul concern "*the Day of the Lord,*" and "*our being gathered to Him*" (AKA, the rapture).

NOTE: I want you to FOCUS on the proximity and usage of ‘our being gathered to Him’ (in **2 Thess. 2:1**), and the subsequent ‘day of the Lord’ in the very next verse (**2 Thess. 2:2**).

- The context shows Paul establishes a direct relationship between these two important matters.
- Specifically, we see Paul responding to a state of alarm that has arisen within this new body of Thessalonian believers (via ‘some prophecy, report, or letter’).
- As a result of this incoming information, they have become concerned that they’ve MISSED the Rapture and they are already IN ‘the day of the Lord.’
- This is NOT what Paul had taught them earlier. This is a wrong view that had come into this new church.
- Some folks had (apparently) chosen to take issue with Paul’s views, and so they had circulated their own opinions. Paul wrote **2 Thessalonians** to address this problem.
- This is a VERY important dynamic we cannot overlook. This new body of believers was **confused** by what others had told them, and Paul **corrects** their concerns.

B. NOTE: I want to take a ‘rabbit trail’ here concerning the ‘day of the Lord.’ It is important to properly understand this phrase (put your thinking caps on tight).

1. The ‘day of the Lord’ is a Biblical term, but even within Bible prophecy circles, it is generally not well-defined.
 - It is usually referred to in a way that tends to limit its fuller definition or usage in Scripture.
2. The day of the Lord is a term that is **most** associated with the 7-year Tribulation as a whole.
3. It is sometimes used to refer to the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation – that half known as The Great Tribulation, and even to the very last day of the Tribulation when Jesus Christ returns.
 - There is Biblical latitude for those two uses as well.
4. But now, I want to look at several ways the term or phrase ‘day of the Lord’ is used in the Bible. This will help us understand how Paul uses this term in this passage.
 - **FIRST, and most broadly speaking, the term ‘day of the Lord’ points to times when God directly intervenes in the affairs of human history.**
 - ✓ When mankind’s sin strives against the sovereign plan of God, there are points He may intervene to accomplish His purposes.
 - ✓ With THIS definition in view, Bible scholar and theologian, Renald Showers, describes the ‘day of the Lord’ as follows. He says:

“In the Scriptures the expression “the Day of the Lord” (together with other synonymous expressions, such as “that day,” “the day of God,” etc.) is strongly related to God’s rule of the earth and, therefore, to His sovereign purpose for world history and specific events within that history.

The Day of the Lord refers to God's special interventions into the course of world events to judge His enemies, accomplish His purpose for history, and thereby demonstrate who He is – the sovereign God of the universe.”

- ✓ Sometimes, Scripture mentions ‘*the Day of the Lord*’ with a near-term or local application, **as well** as a future ultimate eschatological sense.
 - ✓ This is not unlike some other prophetic matters mentioned in the Bible that have this same dual or near-far dynamic.
 - ✓ You find this kind of usage in the OT books of the minor prophets where the term “*day of the Lord*” appears – (for example: **Joel, Amos, Isaiah, Zephaniah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, Et al**).
 - ✓ In various passages of these books, it mentions the ‘*day of the Lord*’ in both a **near-term historical regional** sense (i.e. concerning the conquests of Assyria and Babylon) - - but also in reference to a **far-term future eschatological** sense (when Jesus returns to earth to conquer His enemies and impose His wrath and judgement).
 - ✓ The NT writers routinely interpret these OT prophetic “*day of the Lord*” texts in view of their ultimate future application, and they connect them with the events of the Tribulation.
 - ✓ It is also important to recognize that these historically fulfilled “*days of the Lord*” were not literal, 24-hour days – but rather, they were *periods* of judgment.
 - ✓ So also, the future and ultimate eschatological ‘*day of the Lord*’ should not be limited to a 24-hour day.
- **SECOND, we need to recognize the FUTURE ‘*day of the Lord*’ has a two-part nature to it as well...**
 - ✓ The Bible indicates this future ‘*day of the Lord*’ includes a period of darkness and judgment as well as a period of light and blessing.
 - ✓ This basic understanding is often overlooked, even by solid Bible prophecy scholars. But we need to properly see and understand what Scripture communicates to us in the NT.
 - ✓ The darkness and judgment phase of this future ‘*day of the Lord*’ will occur first. It is followed by a phase of light and blessing.
 - ✓ But – what’s important to understand is this: **from the perspective of God’s enemies**, this darkness and judgement phase will characterize the ENTIRETY of the ‘*day of the Lord*.’
 - ✓ These enemies of God will not enjoy the subsequent phase that is all about light and blessing. We’ll look at that in a moment.
 - ✓ This dark phase of the ‘*day of the Lord*’ is LARGELY that seven-year timeframe called the Tribulation. It culminates with the second coming of Jesus Christ where He defeats His enemies.
 - ✓ Let’s look at several passages that speak about this darkness or judgment part of the ‘*day of the Lord*.’ Here are three of those:

(Cf. Isaiah 13:9) – “Behold, **the Day of the LORD is coming**—cruel, **with fury and burning anger**—to make the earth a desolation and to destroy the sinners within it.”

(Cf. Joel 2:1-2) – “Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for **the day of the Lord is coming**. It is close at hand - **a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness....**”

(Cf. Zephaniah 1:14-15) – “The great **day of the Lord is near**, - it is near, and coming quickly, the mighty man shall **cry there bitterly**. **That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness,**”

NOTE: These passages show this judgment phase of the ‘*day of the Lord*.’

- This first part is described as a day of fury, trouble, distress, desolation, darkness, gloominess, clouds, thick darkness, and fierce anger.
- It’s that part where even mighty men will cry bitterly. It is a phase of ‘*the day of the Lord*’ where God pours out His judgement, and all those who are FAITHLESS on the earth **will recognize that is happening**.
- This recognition is shown in the sixth Seal Judgement in **Rev. 6:17** where the ‘*kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty (etc.)*’ all say, “*For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?*”
- The same thing is true in **Rev. 16:9** during the Bowl Judgments where “*....men cursed the name of God who had control over these plagues.*”
- In these passages, and others like them, the ‘*day of the Lord*’ is described as a period of time when God’s wrath will destroy sinners on the earth, and they will KNOW this.

NOTE: But now, we also need to see that the Bible describes a second part to ‘*the day of the Lord*,’ and it is very different than this first part.

- This subsequent aspect of the ‘*day of the Lord*’ is a phase of light and blessing. It’s very different, but it’s also part of the ‘*day of the Lord*.’
 - ✓ This is the phase which describes the rule and reign of Jesus Christ during the Millennial Kingdom.
 - ✓ This phase is very UNLIKE the first phase, and it directly follows Christ’s return to defeat His enemies.
 - ✓ Jesus Christ’s conquest of His enemies at the end of the Tribulation concludes the darkness / judgment phase of ‘*the day of the Lord*.’
 - ✓ So, the **entirety** of ‘*day of the Lord*’ takes place in a pattern **just like** an actual Hebrew-based 24-hour day.
 - ✓ It’s a period of darkness that is followed by a period of light (**EXAMPLE:** ‘*And there was evening, and there was morning – the first day.*’ **Genesis 1:5, Et al.**)

- In various eschatological passages describing ‘*the day of the Lord*’ (including several we’ve just looked at) the Biblical writer FIRST describes the ‘*day of the Lord*’ **by that precise name or term.**
- He foretells the first phase of darkness and judgment, but then those same passages continue, and they subsequently describe the light and blessing phase that follows.
 - ✓ We know it’s part of the same eschatological period because the writers then use the phrase “*in that day.*”
 - ✓ In other words, the phrase “*in that day*” continues the previous narrative. It’s part of what’s already been discussed, and it refers to its antecedent term – ‘*the day of the Lord.*’
- So then, according to the context, the ‘*day of the Lord*’ does not end with the climax of the darkness and judgment phase. It continues onward into the light and blessing phase, as indicated by the continuing usage of the phrase “in that day.”
- It is not describing a different day, but rather a different phase of the same day (remember that Hebrew ‘day’ structure).

NOTE: Let’s now look at several Scriptures which clearly depict this second part of ‘*the day of the Lord.*’

1. We looked at **Joel 2:1-2.** And **Chapter 3 of Joel** continues to discuss this darkness phase, which involves the gathering of the enemies of God against Jerusalem. It foretells the fierce judgment that will come upon them at the time of the Second Coming of Christ.
 - But in **vss. 16-21 of Ch. 3,** we see a transition as **Joel** then begins to foretell the subsequent Millennial Kingdom.
 - This period of great divine blessings will occur following the judgment phase – but this second part is still being referred to as “*in that day.*”
2. Similarly, in **Zechariah Chapter 14,** there is foretold the darkness and judgment phase when the nations will gather for war against Jerusalem (**Cf. Zech. 14:6-9, 20**).
 - This is the end of the Tribulation which culminates in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to destroy these enemies.
 - But then Zechariah begins to detail a subsequent phase **where** the darkness will turn into light.
 - He tells us of great blessings that will be poured out “*in that day*” as God establishes His reign over the earth in His Millennial Kingdom.
 - As we saw before, the first part of “*that day*” will be darkness, but the latter part will be light – just like an actual Hebrew 24-hour day.

NOTE: Multiple Bible passages describe this two-fold nature of the ‘*day of the Lord,*’ and this has been noted by various Bible scholars, including:

(John Walvoord): “...the Day of the Lord is used in the sense of an extended period of time, but having the characteristics of a twenty-four hour day....The Day of the Lord, according to the Old Testament, is a time of God’s judgment and a time of God’s dealing with the world in its sin. ... The Millennium – the whole kingdom reign of Christ on earth – in which Christ personally directs the government of the world, is also included in the Day of the Lord.”

(Renald Showers): “The Day of the Lord in the future will be at least twofold in nature. Just as each day of creation and the Jewish day consisted of two phases – a time of darkness (“evening”) followed by a time of light (“day”) [Gen. 1:4-6] – so the future Day of the Lord will consist of two phases, a period of darkness (judgment) followed by a period of light (divine rule and blessing).”

(IN REVIEW): The ‘day of the Lord,’ is generally assumed to be confined to the time of the Tribulation. That’s not the most accurate way to see it. We have seen it includes a two-part structure: first a darkness and judgement phase, followed by a light and blessing phase.

The Bible teaches that the ‘day of the Lord’ ends with the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom (and probably MOST technically – it ends with The Great White Throne judgment in **Rev. Ch. 20**).

But now, let’s look at a THIRD issue by asking a question: ‘When does ‘the day of the Lord’ officially begin?’ That’s the burning question here.

C. The Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 5:2 ‘...that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.’ (Same concept is also in: **Rev. 16:15, Matt. 24:43, and 2 Peter 3:10**)

1. Paul then adds in **1 Thess. 5:4** (two verses later), “But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.”

- Here is that ‘darkness’ element again – we just learned about that first part of the ‘day of the Lord.’
- Paul then says we “...are all sons of the light and sons of the day.” He says, we ‘don’t belong to the night or to the darkness’ in **vs. 5**.

2. So, in context, Paul is clarifying several things here:

- ✓ The ‘day of the Lord’ will come ‘like a thief’ (unexpected, a surprise)
- ✓ It will catch unawares those who are spiritually asleep – but it will not catch unawares those who are ‘awake and alert’
- ✓ A contrast is set up between those who are in ‘darkness’ and those who are ‘of the light.’
- ✓ Paul says this is how the ‘day of the Lord’ comes. This is how it all starts.

SO, WHAT’S OUR CONCLUSION? The plain conclusion is the future ‘day of the Lord’ begins with the Rapture and ends with the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom.

- This is the broad definition of ‘the day of the Lord.’

- Various Bible passages refer to parts of this greater timeline (or specific events within a narrower portion) as also being *‘the day of the Lord,’* but that doesn’t take away from the fuller definition according to Scripture.

D. So, all said, let’s now go back to our operative text in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-9:

- **NOTE:** In **2 Thess. 2:1-3**, we are given some clear structure for properly understanding the Rapture as it is discussed alongside *‘the day of the Lord.’*
- Pay attention to Paul’s emphasis: **“Don’t let anyone deceive you in ANY way...” (Cf. vs. 3) WISE WORDS!**
- It could be argued that there has been more ‘deception’ about the Rapture than any element of prophecy, from:
 - (a.) **the overt** – (*setting dates / wearing pajamas / going on rooftops*), to
 - (b.) **the covert** – (*misrepresenting Scriptural intent, diminishing the importance of the Rapture doctrine, etc.*)

QUESTION: So - what’s going on here? Why is Paul writing the things here that he is?

- **FIRST, his readers had real confusion.** What about? About eschatology. About the end times.
 - Specifically, they had been told by others that they were already **IN** ‘the day of the Lord.’
 - This is analogous to a mid-trib or post-trib perspective.
- **SECOND, his readers had already received the proper instruction.** They already knew the Day of the Lord was a prescribed time of God’s final wrath and judgment.
 - But they took their focus off the Word of God. And so, they lost their mooring.
 - Instead, they put their focus on their circumstances and on things that were going on around them (persecution, hostility, trials), and so they wondered.
- **THIRD, his readers were reacting to deception (vs. 2).** They were wrestling with a misrepresentation of the truth (some translations mention a “spirit” or a “spiritual vision”).
 - As a result, they became vulnerable to wrong intentions and teachings.
 - We should be able to see ourselves in this part of the storyline here.
- **FOURTH, his readers were reminded of their foundation in God’s Word (vs. 5).** *“Don’t you remember that when I was with you, I used to tell you these things?”* (i.e. ‘Snap out of it. You know better.’)
 - This is the flow of **2 Thessalonians 2:1-9**: don’t be alarmed (**vs. 2**), don’t be deceived (**vs. 3**); and don’t be forgetful (**vs. 5**).
 - We would all be wiser to exhort each other the same way as Paul did.

Now, TO ME, a question begs to be asked here, **“What did Paul’s readers already know?”**

NEXT WEEK: WE'LL LOOK AT FOUR THINGS THEY WERE PREVIOUSLY TAUGHT: (Cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11) – study this passage for yourself before we get together again.

NOTE: What were they taught? (Here is the basic outline for you to consider):

1. They were taught to expect a certain situation –
2. They were taught to understand a specific sequence –
3. They were taught to be assured of certain destiny –
4. They were taught they were preserved against judgment –

NOTE: These are four points that are important for us to learn too. Just as it was clarifying information for Paul's readers - - so it should be clarifying for us too. We'll see next time why this is the case.



Solid Bread Community was started with a passion to teach the truth of God's Word – every part of it, as it was divinely inspired to be understood.

The rules are simple. First, teach what IS there. Don't pretend the Bible is not saying what it is saying.

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Second, don't teach what is NOT there. Don't force a passage to mean something it really doesn't.

And – number three, if the Bible states it plainly, we should too.

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