

A Biblical View OF THE END TIMES

INTRODUCTION TO THE RAPTURE, PART 4

Week #18; April 26, 2026, 6PM

www.solidbreadcommunity.com

REVIEW:

- We're in a part of our study where we are focused on the doctrine of the Rapture. We've learned the Rapture is CERTAIN to happen, but its timing is UNCERTAIN.
- However, there is nothing that NEEDS to precede it. That means it could occur at any time. It's an imminent event. The Bible is plain about this.
- So, it makes sense to give the Rapture some attention **now** – not only because it IS imminent, but I also want to reinforce the natural 'chronology' of Bible prophecy: "A" happens before "B," "B" before "C," and so on.
- While some things in this whole prophetic sequence are not as clear in their order, most of them are. The Bible lays out a clear schedule of events.
- The other thing I want to say is this: at various points in this larger study series, '**A Biblical View of the End Times,**' we will be giving certain topics a more necessary degree of attention.
 - We did that with the Nephilim issue. That subject forms a framework for much of Bible prophecy - - past, present, and future.
 - We're also doing that here with the Rapture. This is a topic that is greatly attacked and misunderstood – sadly, even within the church.
 - We will be doing the same thing with the subjects of the antichrist and the seven-year Tribulation – there is SO much to properly understand with these key issues, and we'll be giving them the proper attention that they are due.
- Last week, we returned to our key text in **2 Thessalonians 2:1-12**. It is in this passage that God divinely placed information which affirms several things:
 - **#1**, church-age believers should not expect to find themselves in the future 'day of the Lord.'
 - **#2**, the future 'day of the Lord' begins at the Rapture. This is its starting point.
 - **#3**, the antichrist cannot be revealed UNTIL the Rapture takes place and the 'day of the Lord' subsequently begins.
 - **#4**, the antichrist's rise to political power will be a supernatural process which first requires the supernatural removal of the church-age saints.

NOTE: We also learned that Paul taught these new Thessalonian believers FOUR basic points from this passage. We got through the first TWO of those last time:

1. They were taught to expect a certain situation –
2. They were taught to understand a specific sequence –

NOTE: With the first point, we learned that Paul had taught an ‘apostasy’ or ‘falling away’ needed to happen BEFORE *‘the day of the Lord’* could come about.

- In view of Paul’s intentions to elaborate on *‘our being gathered to Him’* in **verse 1**, I feel this *‘apostasy’* is likely another reference to the ‘Rapture.’
- We noted that this Greek term – *‘apostasia’* - was used elsewhere to describe a ‘physical’ departure - or a ‘spatial moving away’ - like moving from earth to heaven, for example.
- However, Paul might also be describing a singular GREAT spiritual departure away from true faith. He may be saying that this element is the kickoff for the *‘day of the Lord’* to begin.
- This theory is a bit harder to land on – in my opinion – because spiritual ‘apostasy’ or a ‘departure away from truth faith’ has **always** characterized the church. There have been times of great ‘apostasy’ in this respect. Our present time is one such example.
- But in either case, the same basic point is underscored: TRUE believers will not find themselves in *‘the day of the Lord.’* This is Paul’s LARGER point.
- The *‘day of the Lord’* is a specific period of God’s wrath and judgment on the entire world, and it is not intended for the church - - which is ‘the BRIDE of Christ.’

NOTE: With the second point, we learned Paul had taught that a specific sequence of events will characterize the Rapture.

- We unpacked seven steps that occur in a specific order. These are listed clearly in **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** and in **1 Corinthians 15:51-54**.
- One of the biggest takeaways from these two passages is there will be some KEY junctures which are very different from one to the next:
 - Jesus Christ **descends** from Heaven into our atmosphere. He does not come down to this physical earth, but He remains ‘in the clouds.’
 - I believe He will be concealed from the **unsaved** world’s view. This contrasts with the events of His Second Coming when EVERYBODY sees Him.
 - The dead in Christ will rise FIRST and they will receive their glorified bodies in that process. Their souls – which have been in heaven before this point - are reunited with these new glorified bodies and THEN they ascend into the clouds to gather with Jesus Christ.
 - AFTER that, true believers which are alive on earth ALSO receive their glorified bodies. This glorification process for both groups – where their bodies go from mortal to immortal - takes place in a *‘flash’* - *‘in the twinkling of an eye.’*
 - THEN - believers who are alive and who have also been glorified this same way will ALSO ascend as the first group did.
 - They will meet the first group – **and** Jesus Himself - in the clouds. The unsaved world will watch both groups go up like this. It will be a powerful visual.
 - We do not know the duration of time BETWEEN each of these various stages. It could be seconds, it could be minutes, it could even be longer.

- There are arguments for each. Regardless, this is all a sequential situation.

NOTE: Now, I want to look at the remaining two points that Paul emphasized to this group of new believers in Thessalonica.

A. THEY WERE TAUGHT TO BE ASSURED OF A CERTAIN DESTINY - (Cf. 1 Thess. 5:1-8)

NOTE: It should make sense to us **WHY** these Thessalonians were confused.

1. We should not be surprised that they were wondering if they were IN the Day of the Lord. This was not what they'd previously been taught by Paul.
 - This is a basic reason Paul writes them again and why he asks them in **2 Thessalonians 2:5**, “Don’t you remember that when I was with you I taught you these things?”
 - Paul knew he’d taught them the RIGHT views when he was **first** with them.
 - But others had come along **after** Paul – probably pretending to BE Paul in some letter that was received - and these other charlatans had pushed the **WRONG** views onto these new believers.
2. So now, Paul reminds them that they had **already learned** the RIGHT views – and they needed to stick with those things.
 - Paul had **already** assured them of a certain destiny. That destiny was NOT finding themselves IN ‘*the day of the Lord.*’
 - But now, he realizes that he needs to remind them once more of that. He needs to provide them comfort and hope again.
 - I believe this is a matter of divine intent in God’s Word. It’s a key truth of Scripture which God **repeats**. As I say from time to time, what God repeats, we should respect.
 - Here, we see God looking down the long hallway of church history. He knew each of us would **NEED** these reminders in **OUR** time.
 - We see God **knowing** that the Biblical doctrine of the pre-Tribulation Rapture would continue to face assault – it would continue to suffer all sorts of critiques and misunderstandings.
 - And so, Scripture sets up a real-life example for the benefit of you and me in the lives and responses of these Thessalonian believers.
 - It’s an example for us to learn from. They are like us, and so this repetition and reminder is there for us **TOO**.
3. I want you to see the various contrasts Paul sets up as he assures these new Thessalonian believers of their certain destiny (**Cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8**).
 - The ‘*day of the Lord*’ will come like a thief in the night - - - - but this day should not surprise **YOU** like a thief.
 - They will not escape - - - - but **YOU** are not as they are.

- They belong to the night and darkness - - - - but you are all sons of the light and sons of the day.
 - They are asleep - - - - you need to stay awake.
 - It is as though they are drunk - - - - but you need to be sober.
1. He told them, “You're NOT in the day of the Lord because you are not of the darkness and you are not of the night. Because you are children of the day, the day of the Lord is not something you're a part of. That is darkness, that is night, that is judgment - - - but it's not for you.”
 2. (In other words - - - and said even more simply): “...*you didn't miss the Rapture, and the Rapture is before the day of the Lord, you're not in the day of the Lord because it never WAS for you.*”

NOTE: One of the prevailing criticisms that pre-Tribulation Rapture adherents (like myself) hear is, “*You just want to be an escapist. You don't have the spiritual maturity to hang in there during the tough times. You haven't prepared yourself to face God's judgment.*”

I hear this a lot. So do others who hold a pre-Tribulation Rapture view. In fact, I've found many forums **attacking** those who hold a pre-Tribulation Rapture view. I don't find many that **attack** a mid-Tribulation or post-Tribulation Rapture view. **That is quite revealing to me.**

That leads to the fourth (and last) point Paul emphasized to these new believers:

B. THEY WERE TAUGHT THEY WERE PRESERVED AGAINST JUDGMENT -

NOTE: Paul had clearly taught them this! But somebody else had come along and had told them instead, “*No, that's not right, you're not going to be raptured out of this. You're going to go into the day of the Lord. In fact, you're in it right now. You are facing God's judgment.*”

1. Concerning God's judgment, we're talking about God's 'wrath' here (what is it?)
 - **First**, there is 'general wrath.' **Romans 1:18** says, “*The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness.*”
 - If you study **Romans 1:18-32**, that passage reads like it was lifted out of today's headlines. Every point it makes applies to what we see happening around us today.
 - But this passage from **Romans 1:18-32** is about God's 'general wrath' against sin. It is a PRESENT reality. It has been applicable in all ages - - from the time Paul wrote it to now.
 - This kind of 'general wrath' is discussed many times in Scripture, and it has always been an ongoing issue.
 - It is more 'soteriological' in its intent (present salvation-focused) than it is 'eschatological' in its intent (future prophecy-focused).

- For example, **Romans 5:9** says, “*Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!*”
 - Here, we can clearly see the phrase ‘*justified by His blood*’ being associated with the phrase ‘*saved from God’s wrath through Him.*’
 - This ‘general wrath’ that we are saved from is Hell. We are saved from Hell as a direct result of placing our faith and trust in Jesus Christ who paid the penalty for our sin on the cross.
 - Again, this is a ‘soteriological’ issue. It’s a PRESENT truth.
- **Second**, there is the “*wrath to come*” or the “*coming wrath.*” This is something different.

(Cf. 1 Thessalonians 1:10) - “*....and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.*”

- This is a specific FUTURE wrath (**Cf. Rev. 6:17, 14:19, etc.**) – it is associated with events and processes which have YET TO COME.

(Cf. Revelation 6:17) – Those who are left behind in the Rapture will say during the sixth seal judgment, “*For the great day of His wrath has come; and who shall be able to stand?*”

- This future wrath has a start time. As I said, this is not referring to ‘soteriological’ wrath. It’s not about our SPIRITUAL salvation.
- It cannot mean ‘Hell.’ It’s not about that – the true believer is **already** redeemed from Hell; that was accomplished on the cross.
- This wrath has a timestamp. It is something FUTURE that is coming. It is ‘eschatological’ - it pertains to Bible prophecy and the end times.

(Cf. Revelation 14:19) – Between the trumpet judgments and the bowl judgments, we read, “*The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God’s wrath.*”

- This ‘*winepress of God’s wrath*’ operates for a specified period of time. God has scheduled part of future history for this FUTURE wrath.

(Cf. Revelation 15:1) – At the start of the seven bowl judgments, John writes, “*I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God’s wrath is completed.*”

- In this second passage in **Revelation**, we see that this FUTURE specific wrath not only has a start time, but also a finish time.
- It is not ongoing and eternal such as general wrath (or Hell) is concerned. Rather, it is prescriptive and limited in its time duration.

2. Now, put on your thinking cap and let's go methodically through this.

NOTE: God's judgment (His FUTURE 'wrath') is identified as being the same as the first part of the day of the Lord - we learned that a couple of lessons ago.

NOTE: (Cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-10) – look at the antecedent issue in vs. 2: ('the day of the Lord'). Paul is going to say more about this 'day of the Lord;' this is his focus here.

- And that's why **vss. 2-8** elaborate further on this 'day of the Lord.' For example, we see...
 - **#1**, it comes 'like a thief in the night.' We learned last time that this refers to the Rapture.
 - The Rapture starts the 'day of the Lord.' It's unexpected. It catches unsaved folks unaware and unprepared.
 - **#2**, it comes at a time when people are saying "Peace and safety." The world is not going to be thinking about God sovereignly intervening on human affairs.
 - They will be preoccupied instead with earthly events. They will either be fixated on achieving 'peace and safety,' or they will be thinking they are IN a phase of 'peace and safety.'
 - Either way, the 'day of the Lord' is an unprecedented interruption to their routines and expectations.
 - **It's why #3**, the 'day of the Lord' amounts to 'sudden destruction coming upon them.'
 - They will be trapped – they will be unable to escape. God's wrath – this FUTURE, specific, prescriptive period of judgment – will have started.
 - It is their state of 'sleep,' and that they belong 'to the night' that will cause them to 'be surprised' by the sudden 'day of the Lord.'

NOTE: And that's why **vs. 9** then sets up an important contrast. It states, "For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath" (or THAT wrath)'but to receive salvation'

- **IMPORTANT: This is referred to in vs. 8 as 'the hope of salvation'** – again, this is not **soteriological** ("the Doctrine of Salvation" - which is a PRESENT reality), but **eschatological** (which is a FUTURE reality).
- It is a 'hope of salvation' as opposed to our **assurance of salvation**. 'Hope' here does not mean something like "I hope it rains today."
- It means this 'salvation' is something we can be certain of. It is a wonderful and indescribable moment that we can look forward to.
- That's why we see a contrast here. We see in **vs. 9** that we who are true believers – we who are 'sons of the light and sons of the day' (in **vs. 5**), we who 'do not belong to the night or the darkness' (in **vs. 5**), we who are 'alert and self-controlled' (in **vs. 6**), we who 'are not drunk, but sober instead' (in **vs. 7**), and we who have attired ourselves according to our secure position

in Jesus Christ (*in vs. 8*) – are not ‘appointed to suffer (THIS FUTURE SPECIFIC TIME OF) wrath.’

NOTE: The larger context in which this FUTURE wrath element is presented follows **1 Thess. 4:13-18** (the chapter just before) in which details of the Rapture are discussed.

- It is made clear in **Ch. 4** that we won’t be present for God’s wrath to come.
- That’s why the ‘comfort and encouragement’ mentioned in **4:18** and **5:11** underscore that believers won’t go through God’s wrath which is to come.
- This instruction to ‘comfort and encourage’ one another would mean very little if God intended for us to experience the full brunt of His wrath.

NOTE: Entire books have been written on these timing issues that I’ve just scratched the surface of. As I have said – and will say many more times yet – you need to be as the “Bereans” of **Acts 17:11**. You need to study these things for yourself.

NOTE: I want to start the downslope process of this lesson by coming back ‘full circle’ to the comments I made earlier. I want to revisit how those of us who hold a pre-Tribulation view are often attacked and looked down on for upholding the clear points that Scripture makes. I’d like to make a few comments based on things I’ve seen and learned:

1. I believe the Biblical position of the pre-Tribulation Rapture has become a dividing line – perhaps even a proverbial litmus test.
 - It is often mocked and ridiculed in Christian circles and by church leaders – which is a very grave matter – concerning THEM.
 - Some of these folks label this pre-Tribulation view as a ‘heresy’ even though the Bible clearly presents it, and it was the documented view of the apostles and the early church leaders.
 - The fact that **2 Peter 3:3-4** shows such mockery as being inconsistent with a Godly posture has not curtailed these attitudes. Instead, they are increasing, which is a mark of the ‘last days’ we are living in. **2 Peter 3:3-4** reads:

“Most importantly, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.”

2. With that said, and considering that a pre-Tribulation interpretation of the Rapture is STRONGLY supported in Scripture, then why are some Christians so opposed to it? Here are some reasons for that:
 - **First**, there is this tenacious and errant notion that a pre-Tribulation Rapture view is a relatively recent development in Christian theology.

- Because John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) was the one to popularize the ‘pre-Tribulation Rapture’ position, there is this persistent and mistaken belief by some that this is when this theological position started.
 - Such folks are simply showing their ignorance. As I’ve said, the pre-Tribulation Rapture view was the position of the apostles and the early church fathers. This is emphasized in their writings.
 - It’s also noted in Scripture which some of the apostles were divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit to write. We’ve been studying some of those things. So, it is baseless to suggest that the pre-Tribulation Rapture position is a recent one.
 - I would add that while the voice and record of church history warrant some consideration, this argument is not substantively convincing.
 - After all, until the Reformation which brought doctrinal truth back to the surface, it could be argued that no one had taught salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone for nearly 1500 years.
 - That didn’t mean a right view of the salvation process was a ‘recent’ theory that was pushed by Martin Luther. Instead, the right doctrine had been suppressed by the Catholic Church, and the Reformation returned it to the place it deserved.
 - In the end, ALL doctrine must stand OR fall with THIS question: “Is it Biblical?” It should not stand or fall by the question, “Has it been popular historically?”
- **Second**, some folks reject a pre-Tribulation Rapture position because they view it as ‘escapism.’
 - Some of these folks regard the pre-Tribulation Rapture view as one that does not care about this world, or as one that does not want to impact this world for Jesus Christ.
 - Basically, these critics think pre-Tribulation Rapture adherents are not active in sharing the Gospel or wanting to stand firm in their faith.
 - They assume folks who hold to a pre-Tribulation Rapture view are saying, “What does it matter? I’ll be out of here, so who cares?”
 - Let me get personal. I STRONGLY support a pre-Tribulation Rapture view, and I’m not remotely represented by such assertions. I am very passionate about sharing the Gospel and standing firm in my faith.
 - And for the record, I DO want to escape ‘*the day of the Lord*’ and God’s wrath and judgment.
 - I WANT to escape these things because I don’t want to be a part of them. Jesus said it’ll be the worst time in human history.
 - Furthermore, I’m instructed to pray to ESCAPE them. **Luke 21:35-36** is very clear. This passage is about the Tribulation, and it reads:

“For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of all the earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”

- This passage doesn’t mean we can be truly saved right now - but we’re just living a gamble here, and we are really hoping Jesus will be kind enough to keep us from these times. Maybe if we ask Him hard enough?
 - It’s not like that at all. This is a passage about truly EVALUATING your heart. It’s about making sure you are TRULY saved.
 - It REMINDS us to stay watchful. It tells us we should WANT to stand before Jesus Christ at the Bema Seat. It’s a reminder that we DON’T want to face Him instead at The Great White Throne judgment.
- **Third (and this is the last point I want to make about why some Christians are so opposed to the pre-Tribulation Rapture),** there has been a bunch of ‘bad apples in the basket’ who have made senseless predictions.
 - Yes, it’s true that numerous folks have predicted that the Rapture will occur on ‘this or that date and time.’
 - These are false teachers who have led many people astray. What they are doing is NOT supported in the Bible.
 - It is important to remember that those who predict the precise timing of the Rapture do so in violation of **Mark 13:32** which tells us, *“But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”*
 - The Biblical doctrine of the pre-Tribulation Rapture stands on its own merit. It should not be rejected due to some ‘bad apples’ who directly cross the grain of Scripture by making predictions about the Rapture.

NEXT WEEK: We’ll continue our study on the Rapture. We’ll look at some key differences the Bible lays out between the Rapture and Jesus Christ’s Second Coming.



**SOLID
BREAD**

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.

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.

Solid Bread Community, PO Box 431, Windsor, CO 80550

Website: www.solidbreadcommunity.com

Email: connect@solidbreadcommunity.com

Please follow Solid Bread Community on Facebook and subscribe to our YouTube channel.