

Stand Out, Until Taken Out

1 Thessalonians Chapter 4

1 Thessalonians Outlined

Chapters 1-3 Reflections on the Thessalonians (Looking Back)

Ch.1 – A young Church, in a short time, becomes an “Example to All Believers”

Ch.2 – The Church and the apostle Paul share the same “Boldness Amid Opposition”

Ch. 3– Five admonitions for “Strengthening and Encouraging Believers”

Chapters 4-5 Instructions to the Thessalonians (Looking Forward)

Ch.4 – Encouraging the Church to “Stand Out, Until Taken Out”

1Th 4:1

1) Stand Out in Purity vs 1-8

Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us {instruction} as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you **excel still more**.

- Finally - end of sermon? No, simply saying, with that said and in understanding that Now I come to the point.
- This is about pleasing Him. (The believer today seems to be focused on how Christianity benefits all consuming ME! A change needs to happen in our purpose as a Christian.)
- How should you walk? - to please God
- How do we please God? Excel Still More
- Excel Still More - God isn't expecting us to arrive and sit back. We are to Strive to Press for More. This is a verb, and action. Our Christian goal isn't to find contentment but to be pressing for more and more of Jesus in our lives.

Philippians 3:12-13 "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but [this] one thing [I do], forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

- Excel = shine, stand out, outshine, surpass, outclass, outrival.

1Th 4:2

For you know what commandments we gave you by {the authority of} the Lord Jesus.

- Paul ties our walk, pleasing God and God's commandments together
- **John 15:10** "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."
- **John 14:15** "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
- **Mark 12:29-31** "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments [is], Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this [is] the first commandment. And the second [is] like, [namely] this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

1Th 4:3

For this is the will of God, your sanctification;

- What is Sanctification? It's the will of God. I better know what this is.
- Sancti = Latin "holy" Facere = Latin "to make"
 - **Positional Sanctification** - In Christ we are set apart. Upon salvation we are His Bride. We will not be any more set apart, any more His or any more His bride than at that moment we accept His sacrifice for our sins.
 - **Practical Sanctification** - In the Holy Spirit we are working out our salvation. As long as we are in this body of flesh we will be pressing and striving to be more like Christ as the Holy Spirit reveals Him to us.
 - **Perfect Sanctification** - In the Father our future holds for us a perfect and complete sanctification. Upon leaving this earth we will apprehend forever a perfect freedom from sin and a perfect sanctification.

{that is,} that you abstain from sexual immorality;

The Negative Aspect of Sanctification (What not to do)

- First of 2 Examples of the Negative Aspect of Sanctification (Negative as in a DO NOT command)
- Abstain - refrain, with hold, go without
- Sexual Immorality (*pornea*) a broad term for sexual relationship outside of marriage.
 - (KJV = fornication) - Consensual intercourse between two unmarried persons. But the word *pornia* is a broader term than the KJV uses.
 - In the culture of the day sexual behavior and religion were tied together. We are familiar with the business of temple prostitutes that was an acceptable practice of that day.
 - Demosthenes expressed the generally amoral view of sex in the ancient Roman Empire: "We keep prostitutes for pleasure; we keep mistresses for the day to day needs of the body; we keep wives for the faithful guardianship of our homes."

1Th 4:4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,

1Th 4:5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

- "Each Of You" - Who? Every Believer
- There are two opinions on this verse:
 1. YOUR WIFE AS A MAN'S VESSEL - to possess means to find and wed.
 2. YOUR OWN BODY AS THE VESSEL - to possess or to control your self
- Either way the principal is still true.
 1. To be self controlled in SANCTIFICATION and HONOR
2 Timothy 2:21 "Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work."
 2. To court (date) and engage in SANCTIFICATION and HONOR
1 Peter 3:7 "You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered."
- Implied that someone uncontrolled in lustful passions are like the Gentiles - Do Not Know God.

1Th 4:6 {and} that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter

- Second of 2 Examples of the Negative Aspect of Sanctification (Negative as in a DO NOT command)
- Do not Transgress & Defraud others.
 - A person who is sexually immoral is also capable of breaking other commandments.
 - a. Adultery - defrauds (lies) to spouse and children. Steals what belongs to another.
 - b. Fornication - defrauds and steals from future wife and children.

because the Lord is {the} avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned {you.}

4 Reasons for Sexual Purity

1. God avenges these things.

1Th 4:7 For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.

1Th 4:8 So, he who rejects {this} is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

2. God Called Us to Purity
3. Sexual Immorality is a form of Rejecting God
4. God has given us the Holy Spirit who empowers us to abstain from sin.

1Th 4:9 2) Stand Out in Love vs 9-12

Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for {anyone} to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

The Positive Aspect of Sanctification (What to do)

- Paul knows the LOVE that the brethren share with each other
- The Church is a remarkable collection of people that in secular settings would not hang out together. This is the LOVE found only in Christ.
- God teaches (imparts) this Love

1Th 4:10 for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to **excel still more**,

1Th 4:11

• Even though you practice this LOVE you still have room to grow in it. "EXCEL STILL MORE"
and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you,

- Our LOVE is displayed to others in what we aspire to.
- Even our ambitions are sanctified (holy - different than the world)
 - Lead a quiet life (restful in spirit) vs. Anxious, Stressed Out
 - Attend to own business (mind your own) vs. Gossip, Meddling, Comparing
 - Work vs. Welfare, Mooch

- Re affirmed in Paul's second letter
2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread."

1Th 4:12

so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.

- The Church should behave well in these things. How are we doing?
 - Is the church's image in the world

Restful	or	Anxious (Politics)
Minding own business	or	Gossips, Meddling
Work w/ own hands	or	Moochers
- Without need.
 - Our first thought is financial (this is such small limited thinking)
 - The reality is that we would be without need in Sanctification / Maturity

1Th 4:13

3) Until We Are Taken Out vs 13-18 Coming For the church not with the church
But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

Comfort concerning loved one who have passed away

- Paul wants believers to be informed. (KJV = not ignorant)
- Paul wrote some things that we should not be IGNORANT about:
 - Don't be ignorant about God's plan for Israel (Romans 11:25).
 - Don't be ignorant about spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1).
 - Don't be ignorant about suffering and trials in the Christian life (2 Corinthians 1:8).
 - Don't be ignorant about the rapture and the second coming of Jesus (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

AMAZINGLY THE CHURCH IS STILL IGNORANT CONCERNING THESE THINGS
- The Thessalonians may be concerned that those who have died will missed the coming of the Lord
- "Those who are asleep" - Physical Death and Soul Sleep:
 - PHYSICAL DEATH is when our consciousness leaves our physical body. Our soul will live on. But this container we have now will cease its current usefulness and stop functioning.

2 Corinthians 2:8 "we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord."

Philippians 1:23-24 "But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for {that} is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake."

1 Kings 17:21-22 A widow's son had died and Elijah spread himself over the boy's body and prayed 3 times "And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived."

Luke 16:19-31 Jesus told the story of Lazarus and the rich man.

Matthew 17:1-8 Moses, though he died, was in a body on the Mount of Transfiguration with Elijah and Jesus.

Luke 23:39-43 "Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (comma issue)

2 Corinthians 12:2-4 "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago--whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows--such a man was caught up to the third heaven. And I know how such a man--whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows-- was caught up into Paradise"

- SOUL SLEEP is the belief that your soul will sleep in the ground with your body until Christ return and calls the dead forth.

Ancient cultures believed that when a person dies that he would be buried and there be in eternal sleep.

Psalms 13:3 "Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;"

Daniel 12:2 "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

John 5:28-29 "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

John 14:1-3 "Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in me. 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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

1 Corinthians 15:12-23 "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

1 Corinthians 15:51-54 "Behold, I show 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

Acts 2:29 + 34 "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day.For David is not ascended into the heavens"

Problem with:

Soul Sleep: Moses, Lazarus and Rich man, Elijah and dead boy, Paul caught up 3rd Heaven, Paul desired to be with the Lord not sleep in the grave, Jesus didn't sleep, To be absent from the body is present with the Lord.

Physical Death: David, timing: last trumpet, timing when Christ comes again, both believer and wicked risen together, If righteous is in heaven what about the wicked (because both are raised together), why come back for a body?

The Most Important Note:

Paul, in this passage, is not making a case for soul sleep, physical death or even addressing what happens to a soul at death. What Paul is addressing is the HOPE we have in Christ. Whether alive or dead, the Christian has HOPE of the resurrection.

- The purpose of this verse was not to create a controversy that would be argued throughout Church History but was to comfort believers about their loved ones who have died.
- That they would not grieve like those who have no hope.
Ancient writings are full of this pessimism regarding death:
"Of a man once dead there is no resurrection." (Aeschylus)
"Hopes are among the living, the dead are without hope." (Theocritus)
"Suns may set and rise again but we, when once our brief light goes down, must sleep an endless night." (Catullus)

Jesus Himself is the assurance for the hope for our departed loved ones.

1Th 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

- Emphatic Statement: "WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS DIED AND ROSE AGAIN" This is the foundation stone of our hope.
- 1 Corinthians 15:16-19 *"For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."*
- The comfort for the Thessalonians and all believers is that when Christ returns He will bring the believers who have previously died with Him.

1Th 4:15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

1Th 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of {the} archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

- This information is given not by Paul but by an authoritative "Word of the Lord" Paul is not allowing any opportunity for the reader to think this is simply an opinion. This is authoritative truth directly from the Lord.
- Those who are alive will not precede those who have died.
 - "WE WHO ARE ALIVE" - Paul had an expectation of the imminent return of Christ. We too should hold the same hope and expectancy.
- Again the Thessalonians and all believers and be comforted that their loved ones who have died will not miss a thing. In fact they will have precedence. A front row seat.
- The Lord Himself will descend. He doesn't send angels. He comes Himself, personally.
- He will come with a shout, voice of the archangel and a trumpet. No doubt that this will be without notice. It may be sudden, some will be caught off guard or unprepared, but when it happens it will be heard by the entire universe.
 - Trumpets in Revelation 8+9 are not God's trumpet. The trumpets in Revelation are blown by angels.
 - Numbers 10:2 speaks of the trumpets in the camp of Israel. They were used for either an alarm or to gather the congregation. This trumpet of God is blown to gather the Church.

1Th 4:17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

Comfort for
believers who
are still alive

- After the dead in Christ are resurrected, those who are alive at that time will then be CAUGHT UP! Caught up to meet Jesus in the air.
- Caught Up = Greek "*harpazo*" means to seize to carry off by force.
 - Matthew 11:12 *"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. "harpazo"*

- John 6:15 "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, "harpazo" to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone."
- Acts 23:10 "And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force "harpazo" from among them, and to bring [him] into the castle."
- This is the verse where Christians get the term RAPTURE. It is not in the original Greek. The word RAPTURE comes from the Latin Vulgate RAPTURUS.
- This is a powerful picture that is straight forward and is clear in understanding. Jesus Christ will come again with a loud call and around the entire world, those Christians who are in the grave will rise first and then Christians who are alive will rise and meet Jesus in the air.
- If it were not in the Bible it would be unbelievable
- **TIMING OF THE RAPTURE:**
 = 70th week of Daniel 9:1-4 + 24-27
 Rapture is Latin for being "caught up"
 The Great Tribulation is the 70th week / Last 7 year period
 Bulk of wrath is in the last 3.5 years
 But the entire 7 year period is the Great Tribulation

- **PRE-TREB (Before Great Tribulation)**

4 Reasons for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture

1. **Scripture DOES NOT Contradict Itself**

- a. 2 phases of His Return Jesus seems to come to earth 2 times
 Matthew 24:37-42 - World Conditions -business as usual
 Matt 24:16-22 Rev 6 - World Conditions -business NOT as usual
 Which will it be?
- b. 2 Approaches to Earth
 1 Thessalonians 4:17 - The Saints Meet in Jesus in the Air
 Revelation 19:11-21 - Jesus Comes to Earth on a Horse
 Which is it?
- c. 2 Positions of the Saints
 1 Thessalonians 4:17 - Saints Come from Earth Rises to the Air
 Revelation 19:11-21 - Saints Come with Lord on Horse
 Which is it? (A Great U-Turn)
- d. 2 Predictabilities of Jesus Return
 Matthew 24:36 No man knows the day/hour But knows seasons
 Daniel 12:11 (1290 days) 3.5 years after abomination of desolation
 Which is it? Knowable or Not

2. **Purpose of the Great Tribulation**

Luke 21:22 Jesus describing the tribulation days He says, "these are the days of VENGEANCE"

Matthew 24 "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

Revelation describes a great wrath poured out on the Earth

Trumpets, Bowls, plagues, disasters

1/3 people, creatures, nature destroyed.

- i. If purpose is to demonstrate His wrath on a disbelieving earth it is not for believers to be recipients of this wrath.
- ii. 1 Thessalonians 5:9 "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,"

3. **Scriptural Exhortation to be Watchful / Ready for the Lord**

Matthew 24:44 "For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will."

Matthew 25:13 "Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour."

Mark 13:35-37 "Therefore, be on the alert—for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—in

case he should come suddenly and find you asleep. "What I say to you I say to all, 'Be on the alert!'"

Condemned - master delays in his coming (who are asleep)

Matthew 24:48 "that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming;"

Matthew 24:50-51 "The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

- i. If believe mid tribulation of post tribulation you cannot or need not be looking or be alert for Jesus coming.
- ii. The only reason to be alert is that it can happen at any time.
- iii. Mid Tribulation or Post Tribulation has the next event is the emergence tendency to look for the Antichrist rather than Jesus Christ.

4. Removal of Church before Redemption of Israel

Romans 11:25-26 "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved"

Luke 21:24 "they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

- i. God will take this unique entity "the Church" out before focusing back on Israel.
- ii. Scripture doesn't show that Israel will join the Church. But that God fulfills His covenant with Israel.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 "Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,"

- i. Paul's response to a letter we do not have.
- ii. Implies 2 events Coming and the Gathering.
- iii. Day of Lord vs. Day of Christ (KJV = Day of Christ)

Day of Lord - Great Tribulation

Isaiah 13:9 "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."

Joel 1:15 "Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come."

Joel 2:11 "And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?"

Day of Christ - The Coming

Phil 2:16 "Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain."

- iv. The only reason the Thessalonians were disturbed about this Day of the Lord is because they feared a Pre-Tribulation rapture was missed and they were in the Great Tribulation.
- v. A Mid or Post Tribulation would cause a sense of rejoicing because the Great Tribulation is the sign of the Lords Coming.

5. Arguments Against the Pre-Tribulation Rapture

- i. Just Teaching Escapism
 - a. "We" (the Church) are not better than Israel or Saints of Old.
 - b. Simply, God doesn't appoint us to wrath. It's His Plan.
 - c. Luke 21:36 "worthy to escape" An Escape is offered.
 - d. Revelation 3:10 "I will keep you FROM the hour of trial"
 - e. By the way, we do suffer trials and persecution.

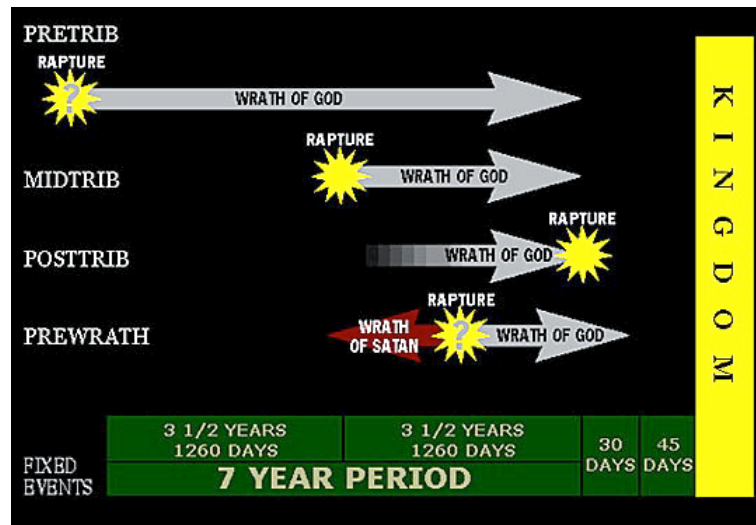
- ii. Pre-Trib Rapture is a Deception that will be Exploited by the Antichrist
 - a. The Church is set up to be discouraged and will fall away.
 - b. Allow possibility that Pre-Trib rapture. But I am certain that I will not fall away in either case. The understanding of the timing of Jesus return does not affect the redeeming work of His sacrifice and my response or commitment to it.
 - c. When the Saints are anticipating His return, the saints are more consistent, more dedicated to a walk of righteousness, and more excited about the things of God.

- iii. Pre-Trib is a Late Teaching (1800's)

(Post-Trib is historically taught by church fathers)

 - a. Not to disparage great men in the Christian Heritage, but Christian are to hold the Word of God as a higher authority than the interpretations of men. The Bible Should Teach Us
 - b. Some in the Early Church, John Calvin and Martin Luther taught the Perpetual Virginity of Mary
the Veneration (worship) of Mary by the Church
Our belief should not be anchored in historic doctrine but on the Bible.
 - c. God develops Church doctrine through the centuries as God has chosen to allow us to look at these things.
 - 2nd - 4th Century - the Doctrine of Scripture
 - 4th Century - the Doctrine of God
 - 5th Century - Doctrine of Jesus
 - 5th - 7th Century - Doctrine of Man
 - 15th - 16th Century - Doctrine of Salvation
 - 17th Century - Doctrine of the Church
 - 19th - 20th Century - Doctrine of Last Things/Christ Return

There is a definite pattern of development of doctrines of the Church through the centuries.
Of late, the focus has been on Last things and the Return of Christ. So we would expect a clearer understanding (*just as we received a better understanding of grace in the 15-16 century*) as God adjusts our understanding of scripture.



- **MID-TREB (Middle of Great Tribulation)**

- i. Believers who hold to a Mid Tribulation rapture do so by making a distinction between the wrath of man and the wrath of God.
- ii. They believe 1 Thessalonians 5:9 that Christians are not appointed to wrath. But the wrath that we are removed from is God's wrath not man's (the Anti-Christ's)
- iii. They define the 2nd half of the 7 years is the Great Tribulation is when God will pour out His wrath and so they place the rapture at the 3 ½ year mark.
- iv. There are three main criticisms are
 - 1) Time is too Predictable - When the Abomination of Desolation in Holy Place and sacrifices end
 - 2) No Imminent Return of Christ - Too much has yet to happen for Christ to return.
 - 3) 70th week prophesied for Israel's redemption

- **POST-TREB (End of Great Tribulation)**

Supporting Scripture:

- i. **Matthew 24:29-31** *"But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. "And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other."*
 - a. If The Gathering in the Above Verse is the Rapture then no doubt that the rapture is after the Great Tribulation.
 - b. The Pre-Trib proponents view these elect at the saints that are saved through the Great Tribulation and they two will be gathered to the Lord as He comes in the final Battle.
- ii. **Luke 21:25-28** *"There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. "Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory. "But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."*
 - a. Again, trouble occurs and the Lord coming in the sky. And Christians seeing their redemption.
 - b. But again, this is explained as those saved during the time of Great Tribulation.
- iii. **2 Thessalonians 2:1-3** *"Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,"*
 - a. Post-Trib believers hold that the Anti-Christ must be revealed before the rapture.
 - b. As stated earlier, the only reason the Thessalonians were disturbed about this Day of the Lord is because they feared Pre-Tribulation rapture was missed and they were in the Great Tribulation.
 - c. A Mid or Post Tribulation would cause a sense of rejoicing because the Great Tribulation is the sign of the Lords Coming.

- **PRE-WRATH (Somewhere in 2nd Half of Great Tribulation)**

This theory, developing in recent years is in a way a combination of Mid Trib and Post Trib trying to solve the issues of both.

The Church will go through a Portion of the Great Tribulation

There is a distinction between the Wrath of Satan (man) and the Wrath of God
Christians are not appointed to Wrath (God's Wrath)

Pre Wrath makes a distinction between the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord is the wrath of God on an unbelieving world.

Supporting Scripture:

i. **Matthew 24:22** *"Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short."*

a. Pre-Wrath takes the message here that those days being "Cut Short" for the sake of the elect point to the Rapture.

b. The difficulty lies in the verse just before this one.

Matthew 24 :21 says *"For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will."*

c. With the separation between the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord, this verse that the Great Tribulation is more severe than the Wrath of God.

When Looking at the Rapture we have to realize:

- People are passionate concerning their view. (maybe too passionate)
- **1 Thessalonians 4:18** *"Comfort one another with these words"* not fight over these words.
- This is not an issue to break fellowship over
- All the views have a rapture. We can agree on this, Our Lord Jesus is coming again for us.
- The Most important Lesson - to be Watchful and Ready (expectant and holy)

- Verse 17 of 1 Thessalonians 4 ends with *"Shall Always be with the Lord"*
- It implies *continuation* because it assumes you are already **with the Lord**.
- It implies *hope for the dying* because in death we shall still be **with the Lord**.
- It implies *future confidence* because after death we are **with the Lord**.
- It implies *advancement* because we will one day **always** be with the Lord.
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1Th 4:18 **Therefore comfort one another with these words.**

- Paul doesn't desire that his words alone are the comfort for the Thessalonians.
- He desires that the Thessalonians and all believers comfort one another with these things.

- Maranatha! The Lord Comes! His return is Imminent!

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