

The Pre-Tribulational Rapture

By Dr. Andy Bloom

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:8-11
Preached on: Sunday, January 21, 2007

Central Baptist Church
1714 SE 36th Avenue
Ocala, FL 34471

Website: www.centralbaptistocala.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/centralbaptist

Ok, take your Bibles and turn to 1 Thessalonians chapter five verses nine through 11.

I really enjoy seeing Mrs. Harrison carry 230 pound men, 235. Oh, ok. I am sorry. I was giving you the benefit of the doubt. All right.

Ok. We are looking at the pre-tribulational Rapture tonight. So let me just say kind of lay it out the pre-tribulational Rapture, should I say. The Rapture is the next thing to happen on God's calendar. The pre-tribulational Rapture could happen at any time. Once that happens, that is when all the saved, both those that are in the grave and those that are alive on the earth are caught up to be with the Lord. The Bible says, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,"¹ and they are caught up to be with the Lord.

Following that there will be a world leader with a coalition of nations out of the old Roman Empire—there is questions as to which nations those would be—and that is what we are not... we are not trying to establish that this evening. However, we find that with that coalition that they will sign a peace pact with Israel. The signing of that peace pact which Daniel nine verses 24 through 27 speaks about is a peace pact that will mark the beginning of the Tribulation period.

The Tribulation period is divided into two periods of three and a half years, three and a half years of tribulation and then three and a half of years of great tribulation. That is followed with the return of Christ and then the set up of his millennial kingdom.

Now I know there is a lot of things that we could say and place in there, but right now we are looking at the next step, the pre-tribulational Rapture, the saved taken out before the tribulation comes.

Now as we read verse nine:

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.

¹ 1 Corinthians 15:52.

Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.²

Now shall we pray?

Father, I know what I believe about this. I believe exactly what your Bible is teaching and yet, Lord, there are so many things going out there today, so I just pray that thy Holy Spirit will be able to take this message and clarify any misunderstanding that may be in a believer's heart, any misunderstanding that would take away the joy of the hope that lies within us. And we ask for your blessings on the rest of this message in Jesus' name. Amen.

Will the Christian go through the Tribulation or some part of it? There are those who teach that we do go through the Tribulation. There are others who have taught that you go through part of it. They are called the Mid-tribulation Rapturists. And somewhere at the midpoint we are caught up to be with the Lord. Then there are those who teach a pre-wrath. Now the pre-wrath movement is popular today. It is very similar... to me, after reading about it I believe that it is just dressing up, changing a thing here or there and trying to represent the mid-tribulation Rapture. But basically it says the first part of the Tribulation is the devil pouring out his wrath, but then when God begins to pour out his wrath, then we are saved from that. And so they call it a pre-wrath rapture, meaning that the Christians can go through part of the Tribulation.

Ok, now that is going around today and there are some... I could name some names that you would know, but that hold to that position.

And so there are various teachings on this thing. Now verse eight this morning and before we looked at the soldier's dress. Now we are going to look at the soldier's destination, his deliverance and his delight in these next three verses, realizing all of this is written in a prophetic context.

So we look first at the soldier's destination in verse nine.

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.”³

The day of wrath as spoken of here is speaking of the day of the Lord. In Jeremiah the day of the Lord is referred to as the time of Jacob's trouble. In the book of Daniel chapter nine it is referred to as Daniel's 70th week. Some believe that the first half or part of the Tribulation, as we have already stated, is the devil's wrath or the devil's judging the earth. He is causing all the problems because he knows that he has but a short time. But let me say this. He is already the god of this world, 2 Corinthians 4:4. Whether we realize it or not, he has been pouring out his wrath because he knows he is defeated.

² 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11.

³ 1 Thessalonians 5:9.

You see in Isaiah when he tries to exalt himself above the throne of god he was cast down and cast out. His wrath has ever since been against God. We see his wrath first exhibited in the garden when Eve is deceived.

Satan's wrath has been against this world. It is just that it has been withheld. It has been that the tempter who has tried to bring us down into hell. He is restrained by the restrainer, the Holy Spirit of God. And when the Holy Spirit removes that restraint, then he will do all the more with his world leader that rises up and his false prophet. But just understand that he is the god of this world. The day of the Lord is God's day, not Satan. It is a period of time that includes the seven year period of Tribulation. As a matter of fact, it includes the entire seven year period of Tribulation. It includes the thousand year millennial reign. All of that is called the day of the Lord.

Satan's wrath is always manifested in opposition to God. And so as we see God begins to pour out his wrath. If we are saved, if we name the name of Jesus Christ, we try to say, "Oh, yes, there are Christians here," then we see that God is pouring out his wrath on his own people.

In verses two through four we have studied his early. And they refer to the Rapture. Look again at those verses where he says:

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 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.⁴

And where as the thief is in verse two, it is the Rapture verse three is looking at the Tribulation.

He says, "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."⁵

In other words, those that are in the darkness, are those that are unsaved. The rapture is thievery in a sense. It is stealing the saved from this world. Those in the grave that the earth believes it is holding down, those who were burned at the stake, those that were buried in the depths of the sea are suddenly by the power and miracle work of God raised in a moment.

"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."⁶

⁴ 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3.

⁵ 1 Thessalonians 5:4.

⁶ 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

And it will be so quick, so fast their cameras will not capture it. All the security cameras in the world working together will not be able to see it. God's appointments are God's guarantees. He tells us that he has not appointed us, the saved, those that are not of [?] those that are not of the darkness, he has not appointed us unto wrath.

This world within the framework of history has rejected his law. This world has rejected his gospel.

Before eternal judgment comes on this earth God will manifest first his wrath.

In Revelation chapter three verse 10 it says, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."⁷

There is God's promise that he is going to keep us from that hour of temptation that tries them.

Now we will see later that when he is trying them that actually is giving them an opportunity for salvation. Some people will be saved in the Tribulation. It may mean losing their head, great persecution, dying horrible, painful deaths, but they can be saved.

Is it not interesting how God lays things out in his Word? And then he uses them later to speak of the last days.

For an example, Jesus spoke of the last days as being as the days of Noah. Do you realize not one drop of water fell until Noah's family was completely in the ark and God closed the door? And isn't interesting that God closed the door? It wasn't man saying, "Oh, I have decided when I am going to close the door. I am going to determine the time. I am going to determine the date."

No, God closes the door. He loves his bride and he is not going to leave her back here to face the outpouring of his wrath.

But then there is Lot. Lot is an example of somebody here that is not really what we call a Christian. As a matter of fact, if you read in Genesis 19 you read that the account of Lot in the book of Genesis, if you are like me you say, "This is not a saved man."

If that is all we knew about Lot is what we read in Genesis we would say Lot was burning in hell. However, we get the book of 2 Peter and we find out that Lot was a righteous man that vexed his soul every day.

And Lot and his family are taken outside the city before one spark of fire or brimstone ever falls on Sodom and Gomorrah.

Now Noah shows us a Christian who will not be ashamed at his appearing. Things will

⁷ Revelation 3:10.

be right. Lot on the other hand is a person that has to be taken by the hand and set outside the city. Judgment cannot come until he is out. Lot shows us a man who is saved so as by fire.

That is why we preach, "Flee the wrath to come."

Jesus Christ our Lord is coming again. But he is coming not as a babe, not as a man that rode in on the foal. He is coming as the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the God of gods. And he is coming in wrath. He is going to set up his kingdom. But he is coming.

Flee the wrath of God.

Jesus wants to save. Jesus loves the lost soul. He wants to save the lost soul. He is going to pour out his wrath, but he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. He still wants you to be saved.

You remember the story of Jesus feeding the 5000. Remember how that came about that there is a little boy with a two fish and five loaves of bread. Now we think of loaves like that, probably just little, small, little thing like that. But they would take the two fish and the five loaves of bread and they feed 5000 men besides women and children.

Now he only started with five loaves and two fish. Doesn't it sound a little bit greedy to take up 12 baskets and he says, "Take it up so that nothing is lost"?

You think, well, as long as you get back the five loaves and the two fish, that ought to be enough.

No. He says, "Take up the 12 baskets."

You see, just like Noah according to Jesus Christ is a sign, just like Lot according to Jesus Christ is a sign, this is also a sign. Jesus wants us as a church to bring the lost to Christ. And he is not willing that any should perish. Every little fragment is important. Every soul is important to him.

It must be understood that the tribulation will be missed by the Christian because the Christian is raptured before it starts. You see, it is not a time of judgment and purification of the believer. It is a time of judgment and the tribulation of the ungodly, those without God.

And, again, this is before the millennium.

You say, "Well, preacher, if God is going to rapture all the saved out, why have this seven year period? Why have this seven year period of judgment after judgment being poured out upon this earth? Why not just as soon as the Christians are caught up, come back and judge them and take care of it all right then?"

I believe we find an answer in Revelation chapter nine verse 21. We find that in the book of Revelation God has been pouring out his judgment. He has poured out his seal judgments. We find out that as he has poured out his judgments he has had the seals and he has had the trumpets and these judgments are poured out. We find that one place that men are stung and they are... the pain is so great they are paralyzed. They want to kill themselves, but they can't kill themselves because they are paralyzed. And then we find that there is a great company of the kings of the East that are obviously a coalition of the Chinese army, 200 million, and they come by destroying everything in their way. And during this seven year tribulation period, by the way, over half of the earth's population dies. Often times it is through wild animals, through hunger, through various types of persecutions and horrible death.

And so we wonder looking at all that, how does this God be good?

And Revelation nine verse 21 says, "Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries."⁸

Now sorceries from the Greek word φαρμακεια (far-mak-i'-ah). We get our English word pharmacy. It is the idea of black magic with the use of drugs.

Isn't it interesting that you look around today even in your cartoons with boys and girls the emphasis on magic and then the emphasis on drugs throughout our culture? And not just our culture, but around the world.

And it says, "Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."⁹

So after great trials and great violent deaths and after the paralyzing afflictions, seeing all that, they don't repent. But in that he says, "They repented not," we find that since they would not repent during the age of grace, God is pouring out these things giving them one more opportunity to repent.

The Scripture show that when God appoints a time of great judgment, he prepares a door of deliverance for that minority who will repent and seek him.

In Noah's Day, God said, "This world is wicked, it is terrible. I need to destroy it."

"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."¹⁰

And eight people were saved.

However, there did come a point in which God closed the door to the ark. There is a point in which God closes the door.

⁸ Revelation 9:21.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Genesis 6:8.

In 2 Peter chapter three verse nine, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”¹¹

It is a great verse. But then verse 10 says, “But the day of the Lord will come.”¹²

That day comes when he is going to shut the door. He is going to shut the door.

Jesus said in Matthew 24 it will be as the days of Noah. Things are prosperous. Things are going on, eating, drinking, giving in marriage, building. And it turns suddenly.

Revelation chapter three verse eight says there is a door which no man can shut and that door when God has opened the door, no man can shut it. But the day comes when God is going to shut that door and no man can open it.

Jesus states in John 10 that he is that door.

If that day of Rapture, that eventful day, if that were today, would you be prepared? If you are saved, would you be more like Noah or would you be more like Lot?

Luke 13:25 Jesus said, “When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are.”¹³

Perhaps there are people who are going to say, “Hey, this thing about the Rapture was true.” But it will be too late. It will just be too late.

You see, God has the seven year tribulation holding out, hoping that more people will exercise the free will to come to him for their salvation.

Now, see he doesn't work that way with Christians. He is pouring out this judgment on the earth and as he pours out this judgment on the earth he is hoping that these unsaved people will see that and be saved. With Christians it is different.

In Hebrews chapter 12 verse five through eight he says:

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father

¹¹ 2 Peter 3:9.

¹² 2 Peter 3:10.

¹³ Luke 13:25.

chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.¹⁴

You see, God works individually with each believer. Some he has to chasten, scourge which means to flog with a whip. All to try to conform you to the image of Christ. And he does the work, not an angel pouring out a vial. He does the work in the individual Christian's life. He is trying to purify his people, to conform them and to his image. But the Tribulation is working collectively to judge the world and at the same hope that sinners will repent.

As soldiers we do face our tribulations on this side of heaven, but the tribulation to come is not our destination.

Now there are some people that look at this verse, verse nine, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath,"¹⁵ they say, "Well, that means God has not appointed us to go to hell."

"...but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,"¹⁶ so they say, "Well, the second half of that verse then refers to our salvation from hell."

Sounds pretty good, but it doesn't fit within the context of chapter four verse 13 through chapter five verse 11. You can't take one verse out of the context and say, "Well, if I take this verse by itself, then it will support what I am trying to believe."

No, you don't establish your belief and then try to find the Bible verse to support it. You let the Bible establish your beliefs.

Is it not interesting that God clearly designates us as ambassadors. If you are saved, 2 Corinthians five. We are ambassadors for Christ.

Now when you use that analogy of an ambassador, that says that we are not citizens of earth, we are citizens of heaven. That is where our citizenship lies.

When a country has an ambassador and another country and they are about to declare war on that country, what do they do? They call their ambassador home, because they don't want their weaponry falling on their ambassadors. And that is what God does. Before he pours out his wrath, he is going to call his people home. He is going to call the ambassadors back to his home.

And, friend, I believe that he is getting ready to call us home soon. Our destination is to meet him in the clouds "and so shall we ever be with the Lord."¹⁷

¹⁴ Hebrews 12:5-8.

¹⁵ 1 Thessalonians 5:9.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

In verse nine the Greek word for “salvation” is the same word that is also used when speaking of the salvation of our soul. It basically has the meaning of deliverance. In salvation we are delivered from hell. In this context of this passage we are delivered from the wrath to come. But our deliverance is the same way as our salvation. It is through the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Thessalonica people were trying to mislead others about the Rapture, the Tribulation, the return of Christ, the millennium. And they are still doing it today.

You see, the god of this world is still active and alive and he is trying to change the Word of God.

Did you notice in there, in verse nine, the word “God has not appointed us,”¹⁸ the word “appointed”? It is like a commission for a soldier. Our commission is from whom? Well, it is from God. It comes from God.

We are not to be delivered to the earth when God is pouring out his wrath. Rather, we are to be delivered into the presence of the Lord.

That brings us to the point of the soldier’s deliverance in verse 10 where he says, “Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.”¹⁹

How do we live together with him? Well, by our Lord Jesus Christ. Lord in verse nine refers to his deity. Jesus speaks of his humanity and his perfect sacrifice and then Christ speaks of his anointing, being our substitute.

And so he says, “Who died for us.”²⁰

Why would he die for us? Why would somebody need to die for us? Well, Romans 3:23, “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”²¹ And “the wages of sin [not sins] the wages of sin is death,”²² final, complete, separation from God forever in the lake of fire.

My friend, we need a Savior. We cannot save ourselves. Both as Americans and as just simply human beings we are a needy people.

“Whether we wake or sleep...”²³

¹⁸ 1 Thessalonians 5:9.

¹⁹ 1 Thessalonians 5:10.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Romans 3:23.

²² Romans 6:23.

²³ 1 Thessalonians 5:10.

You see, the continuity of this passage in verses 13 through 18 speaking of, hey, don't sorrow for those who have died. Whether you wake or sleep we are going to be caught up together, not at separate times, together with him in the clouds.

“And so shall we ever be with the Lord.”²⁴

It is interesting to me. The Bible says that God is angry with the wicked every day in Psalms chapter seven verse 11.

I wonder. Is God angry with this last generation of Christians and therefore determines that we should face his wrath?

No, my friend, I am not looking for the Tribulation. I am looking for the Rapture.

If this last generation of Christians be so wicked that he is going to allow us to go through the wrath, then that eliminates grace through faith and it makes the words, the bottom line for deliverance for the soldiers of God. Listen. You are saved by grace and your Christian life is by grace.

His love is he wants us with him and that is far better. Our destination is to meet him in the clouds. Our deliverance is through Jesus Christ our Lord. And then our delight is seen in verse 11.

“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.”²⁵

Now to use common sense, how could these words comfort us if we knew that we were going to go through the Tribulation or any part of it? It wouldn't be a comfort for me. This passage is written to people who have received Christ as Savior. It is a comfort for them, but if you are not saved, this passage is not a comfort for you, knowing that the day of the Lord is going to come and take out those that are saved as the thief and that sudden destruction prevails is going to come upon them. That is not a comfort for the unsaved.

He says, “Comfort one another.”

How?

Because we know the Rapture is coming before he pours out his wrath.

It is interesting. Many commentaries I have read finish at verse 10 and they start a new section verse 11 through 28. When you go into the Greek text you find that verses one through 11 are one paragraph. Verse 11 is not a part of the paragraph in verses 12 through 28.

²⁴ 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

²⁵ 1 Thessalonians 5:11.

And God wanted this paragraph to finish with this thought that we comfort ourselves together and we edify one another. Why is that? Well, in verse eight orders are given to get battle ready. . Then in verses 12 through 28 there will be 21 commandments that are given, somewhat like military orders for the soldier of God, commandments given he expects carried out. Brief, to the point.

You say, “Well, what does that have to do with the context, then, in verses one through 11?”

Simply this. You can be like Noah or you can be like Lot, one of the two. You following these things in verses 12 through 28. You could be like Noah.

See, those 21 commands in those verses are written so you will know how to order your life in the Holy Spirit of God until that Rapture takes place.

See, it is not enough to know that the Rapture could happen at any moment. What is important is that we know how to live, not occupied with his coming, but rather occupying till he comes.

The word “comfort” has it in the idea of the word “encourage.” There is a resurrection for those who are dead in Christ and there is a Rapture for those who are alive at his return. But if you are not saved tonight, this outpoured wrath on the earth is not a comfort for you. And you need a Savior. I trust you will receive him tonight.

Christian, encourage one another. Why do you need to encourage one another? Because you know that there are those who sleep. By that I mean they are asleep spiritually, not dead, but asleep spiritually. They are tolerating this world. They are going along with this world. They are acting like the world. They are living in this world, but they are saved. And when you live like a Christian ought to live, those are people that are going to oppose you.

And then the world itself is going to oppose you. They are going to oppose a biblical standard. They are going to oppose the witness. They are going to oppose holiness. So encourage one another to keep on. Edify one another as you see the day approach.

Yes, the onslaught comes from every side. Satan, even some of God’s people whether knowingly or unknowingly will seek to bring defeat even in your own life, whether they use your past or something else. Understand. There are people who name the name of Christ who are not sensitive to the Holy Spirit. They are not walking with God.

So you need to encourage one another and edify one another “so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”²⁶

Well, let’s bow our heads.

²⁶ Hebrews 10:25.

Father, I have not asked tonight for a show of hands. I have not asked that people stand up or raise their hands or anything. Instead, I trust that thy Holy Spirit to speak to hearts. If there is someone here tonight that is not sure that if they died tonight that heaven is their home, knowing the Rapture could be at any moment and they would be left behind to face the outpoured wrath of God. I pray, I pray that they might be saved. I pray for Christians, Lord, Christians who are far away from you. I pray tonight that they might come back. And then for those people that are walking with you, I pray that they will just be encouraged to edify one another and encourage one another and comfort one another knowing Jesus is coming again. And I would ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.