

Session 9

Let us take a moment to discuss the theological perspective of this study. If you hear enthusiasm in this study - it is not arrogance to suggest that the pre-wrath view is correct and anyone who disagrees is wrong. On the contrary, the enthusiasm I feel in this study is because for the first time for me - the pre-wrath view allowed all the prophecies to naturally fit together, it gave me a truly scriptural perspective on the end of time, and it was a watershed issue that caused me to change my own theology - from what I had been taught to what I believe the scripture teaches.

Could the pre-wrath view be wrong? Absolutely! I don't believe anyone has God totally figured out! We are trying to understand the infinite with our small finite minds. However, because of the harmony of the scriptures in the pre-wrath view - I feel closer to the truth than I have ever been. But you, the student of the scriptures, must decide for yourself what the scriptures teach.

When we ended the last session, we decided that the rapture would occur sometime during the second 3½ years of Daniel's 70th Week (The Tribulation Period).



Jesus told us that no one knows the day and the hour except the Father. But, He said that we will be able to tell by the things that are happening that the time is near - "even at the door." Jesus gave us two clues dealing with the distress that would occur at the mid-point of the 70th Week when the Antichrist will demand the world worship him. First, He said that the days will be shortened for the sake of the elect, and then He said that "immediately after the distress of those days" the rapture would occur.

Now if the pre-wrath view is correct, then all the problems we encountered with the other views should be taken care of. We saw that the post-tribulation and mid-tribulation views shared a common set of problems.

Post & Mid Tribulation Problems



Conflicts in Timing

The book of Revelation records...

Rev 11:15 (NIV) The *seventh* angel sounded his trumpet... **{18}** The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. *The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants...* (emphasis added)

We have seen that the seventh trumpet blows at the end of the 70th Week. At this point the saints have already been in heaven for at least a little time. Now the 30 day restoration period begins. These 30 days give God ample time to deal with the judgment of the saints. When must recognize that God is omni-present - which means He can be anywhere and everywhere at the same time.

Therefore, He could judge each person all at once.

Scriptural Basis for Timing

We have already seen that there are various scriptures that support a pre-wrath timing of the rapture.



Predictability About the Day and Hour

Jesus warned...

Matt 24:36 (NIV) No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

Matt 25:13 (NIV) Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

But Jesus also said...

Matt 24:15 (NIV) So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel-let the reader understand...

Matt 24:32 (NIV) Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. 33 Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door.

The Apostle Paul wrote...

1 Thess 5:1 (NIV) Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 ***But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.*** (emphasis added)

Therefore...

- We may not know the day or the hour, BUT...
- We may know that it is near “***even at the door!***”
- Those ***NOT*** living in darkness will ***NOT*** be surprised like a thief in the night
- We do not know when the rapture will occur but ***we will know the signs that it is very near***

God’s People Endure His Wrath



Do you remember that we said in a post-tribulation view God’s people endure the wrath of God, yet the scriptures clearly tell us that God’s people will be delivered from God’s wrath. This would seem to be a problem for the pre-wrath view also.

Is the second half of the 70th Week, also called the “great tribulation” God’s wrath?



Do you remember the scriptures about God’s people being rescued from God’s wrath?

Rom 5:9 (NIV) Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!

1 Thess 1:10 (NIV) and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead-Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

1 Thess 5:9 (NIV) For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rev 3:10 (NIV) Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

We know that the Day of the Lord is an outpouring of God's wrath, but is God's wrath poured out **before** the Day of the Lord begins?



Rev 6:16-17 (NIV) They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! **{17}** For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

- First Mention of God's Wrath!
- After 6th Seal & the Sign
- Is there "Wrath" before this?

The Bible tells us in Revelation chapter 12...

Rev 12:7-9 (NIV) And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. **{8}** But he was not strong enough, and they **lost their place in heaven**. **{9}** The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. **He was hurled to the earth**, and his angels with him. (emphasis added)

Rev 12:12 (NIV) Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with **fury (KJV = great wrath)**, because he knows that his time is short. (emphasis added)

Revelation 12 flashes back to the war in heaven between Satan and the angels. The scripture declares that the Devil has come down to earth having great wrath. God's wrath is not mentioned in the book of Revelation before the 6th seal and the Day of the Lord. But,

the seals do tell us the tragic events that will take place on earth under the reign of Antichrist. Therefore, it is evident that God's wrath is poured out after the Day of the Lord begins, but it is the wrath of Satan that takes place before the Day of the Lord.



The Bible teaches...

- **We will suffer persecution (Matt 24)**

- **We will NOT suffer God's wrath**

There is one other passage that seems to interfere with this idea.

Luke 21:36 (NIV) 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. (emphasis added)

This verse tells us that we may escape ALL that is about to happen. Does this mean persecution too? Let us go back to the scripture...

Luke 21:25-28 (NIV) There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars... **{27}** At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. **{28}** When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

Luke 21:34-36 (NIV) Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and ***that day*** will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. **{35}** ***For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth.*** **{36}** Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape ***all that is about to happen, [referring to "that day"]*** and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man. (emphasis added)

Now we see that in verse 34 we are talking about "that day" and that day IS the Day of the Lord. Those who love Jesus WILL escape all that is about to happen on "that day" - we will have already been raptured!

Pre Tribulation Problems



Unmistakable Return of Christ

According to the pre-wrath view, when Jesus raptures the church it will not be a secret appearance. When He comes in the clouds it WILL be like the lightning flashes from east to west. People WILL disappear as they are “caught up” to be with the Lord, but everyone will know what is happening. We are told this in the book of Revelation...

Rev 6:14 (NIV) The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. **{15}** Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. **{16}** They called to the mountains and the rocks, **“Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! {17}** For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?” (emphasis added)

Absence of Holy Spirit/Multitude Saved

The rapture will take place on the Day of the Lord, rather than at the beginning of the 70th Week. Also, the restrainer is not necessarily seen as the Holy Spirit. The multitude saved are those raptured souls from all generations who have followed Jesus.

2 Thess 2:6-8 (NIV) And now you know what is holding him back, **so that he may be revealed at the proper time. {7}** For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back **will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. {8}** **And then** the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. (emphasis added)

The pre-tribulation view teaches that the restrainer IS the Holy Spirit and that He will be removed with the church at the rapture.

- The One Who Holds Back = “The Restrainer” = Holy Spirit

- At the Rapture, the Holy Spirit is removed from the world **with the church** allowing the Antichrist the freedom to reveal himself to the world

2 Thess 2:1,3 (NIV) Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and **our being gathered to him... {3}** Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for **that day will not come until** the rebellion occurs and the **man of lawlessness is revealed**, the man doomed to destruction. (emphasis added)



There is a scriptural problem here because we are told "our being gathered to Him" will not happen until the Antichrist (Man of Lawlessness) is revealed. But, we are also told that the Antichrist cannot be revealed until the restrainer is taken out of the way. The logic of the restrainer being the Holy Spirit and being removed at the rapture is an impossibility. The scriptural order is 1) restrainer taken out of the way, 2) Antichrist revealed, and 3) the church raptured.

This also answers the pre-tribulation problem of "What Comes First?"

So, there is still a nagging question - who, then, is this restrainer?



In Daniel there is a verse that identifies this particular episode of the end of time as "a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of the nations until then." This same phrase is also in Matthew 24...

Matt 24:21 (NIV) For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now-and never to be equaled again.

At this time, Michael the archangel is identified as the one who protects "your people." He will "arise." That word is "to stand" or "to cease." Whatever else it means, when Michael "stands" it initiates this time of distress. Could Michael be the "one who holds back?"

There are three points we must understand...

1. The Scripture DOES NOT identify the restrainer

2. **There is NO OTHER indication that the Holy Spirit is removed during this time**
3. **2 Thessalonians 2 makes identifying the restrainer as the Holy Spirit impossible**

Rapture Missing in End Time Passages

This problem no longer exists when we identify the Biblical name for the rapture as “The Day of the Lord.” It is then found in the Old Testament, the New Testament and the book of Revelation.

Matthew 24 Only for the Jews

Two Raptures

When Matthew 24 is seen viewed as any other prophecy, and as it coincides with the other end time passages, these two problems are answered. There is only one rapture as it appears in Matthew 24. It is one and the same as the rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:18ff.

No Scriptural Basis

- Evangelists
- Greatest revival in history
- Timing of a pre-tribulation rapture

These problems are all solved when we understand that the rapture IS “The Day of the Lord.” There is no longer any need for evangelists or revivals to explain the multitude that appears in heaven. The most obvious answer for the multitude is the correct one - the raptured saints. There is no longer any need to justify a rapture or coming of Christ at the beginning of the 70th Week.

He will return for His people at the time outlined in Matthew 24, 2 Thessalonians 2, and Revelation 6 and 7.

No Scriptural Contradictions

The last test of validity is that no scriptural contradictions will be found that bring into question the order of events in the pre-wrath view. In the several years I have been studying the end times, I have yet to find a single verse of scripture that contradicts the teaching of the pre-wrath view.

Imminency

There is one other issue that needs to be addressed before we leave the pre-tribulational problems. Those who hold to a pre-tribulational rapture promote the teaching that the coming of Christ is an imminent event. Imminency is defined as follows:



Key Elements



Imminency is based upon scriptures such as these...

James 5:7-9 (NIV) Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. **{8}** You too, be patient and stand firm, because ***the Lord's coming is near.*** **{9}** Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. ***The Judge is standing at the door!*** (emphasis added)

Phil 4:5 (NIV) Let your gentleness be evident to all. ***The Lord is near.*** (emphasis added)

1 Cor 1:7 (NIV) Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you ***eagerly wait*** for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. (emphasis added)

1 Cor 16:22 (NIV) If anyone does not love the Lord—a curse be on him. ***Come, O Lord!*** [Marantha!] (emphasis added)

There are two main arguments for imminency.

1. The Lord is near - they were expecting Him at any time!
2. They were eagerly waiting - "Come, O Lord!" - if persecution or wrath were involved why "eagerly wait?"

We have already shown that the coming of the Lord is equated with the "Day of the Lord."

2 Thess 2:1 (NIV) Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him... **{3}** that day...

There is a passage in Zephaniah that states that the Day of the Lord is also near...

Zephaniah 1:14 (NIV) The great day of the LORD is near- near and coming quickly. Listen! ...

This passage was written 400 years before Jesus was born. Using the same reasoning we would have to say that the Day of the Lord is also imminent! But scriptures tell us that there are several things that must happen before the Day of the Lord.

Joel 2:31 (NIV) The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

Mal 4:5 (NIV) See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes.

2 Thess 2:3 (NIV) Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.



Jesus coming is near in the same way the prophets proclaimed the Day of the Lord is near. There are prophecies that have to take place before the Day of the Lord and so the Day of the Lord is NOT imminent.

The second argument is that the New Testament believers were "eagerly waiting" for the Lord to come. If persecution or wrath were involved - why would they eagerly wait?

Titus 2:13 (NIV) while we **wait** for the blessed hope-the **glorious appearing** of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ... (emphasis added)

- We don't eagerly await suffering

- We DO eagerly await HIS APPEARING!

The point is that we can eagerly await His Appearing even though it might include suffering. Is there anything that has to happen before Jesus comes - "yes!" If His coming is the Day of the Lord then there is a sign in the sun, moon, and stars, and the appearing of Antichrist and the coming of Elijah that must come first - so His coming is not imminent.

Could Jesus come now?

I also believe the answer is **yes**. Even though there are events that must come first, I believe these events could fall into place very quickly - maybe without notice. It is interesting that Jesus told us...

Matt 24:15 (NIV) So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel-let the reader understand...

What Jesus said to look for was the Abomination of Desolation. That does not happen until the mid-point of the 70th Week - 3½ years into the tribulation period. Is it possible that we may not know what is happening until we are already at the mid-point?