

Biblical Forensics©

“Deliverance before Judgment” Part 19

The critical teachings on the Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Bride (Church) are 1st Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 14:1-3; and 1st Corinthians 15:50-58.

Paul did not want these new Christians to be ignorant [uninformed] concerning the Rapture phase of the Second Coming. Likewise, we still can find great comfort in Paul’s words despite the disinformation chatter, static, and confusion out there in the world today. There are many young novice voices in the wilderness today seeking to lead the Christian world astray while proclaiming their own message of **“Yea, hath God said?”** They think they are wise, but really they are foolishly believing their own vain, overused and general platitudes which are geared towards presenting shallow, wisdom over difficult and complex topics. They offer nothing more than undirected teachings with little meaningful guidance for deeper Scriptural understanding.

Time and again critics and antagonists of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture base their beliefs upon Jesus’ words found in the Olivet Discourse, particularly the portion of Matthew 24:29-31. Opponents of the Pre-Tribulation are quick to point out Jesus’ words, **“Immediately after the Tribulation....”** as if it was some sort of slam-dunk to support their argument that the Tribulation precedes or comes before the Rapture. But there is much more to the message of Matthew 24:29-31 than most challengers realize! Keep these points in mind:

- Matthew 24:29-31 has absolutely nothing to do with 2nd Thessalonians 14:13-18. It is an issue of ignorance (lack of understanding) and an erroneous comparison of one Scripture to an unrelated Scripture. The larger issue concerns hermeneutics (theory and methodology of interpretation) and the importance of correctly comparing the different books of the Bible.
- Matthew was written before Thessalonians. The best existing scholarship today recognizes that from several years to as much as two decades elapsed between the writing of Matthew and Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians. Paul was in Asia Minor, a distance of 700-800 hundred miles northwest of Jerusalem. He was not even in the area at the time of his missionary trips to Asia Minor in what is now known as the nation of Turkey.

- The Gospel of Matthew (or Jesus' words) never quotes from the Apostle Paul's letters to the Thessalonians, or for that matter, from any of his other epistles. **Not Once!** Then who does Matthew's Gospel quote from? And, why is that important to all? It is very important!
- The "Church" is not mentioned in the Bible until Matthew 16:18. Furthermore, the "Church" was not birthed until Acts 2:47 after the Holy Spirit appeared as tongues of fire at the Feast of Pentecost. **The Church at Thessalonica was not established until after Pentecost.** Jesus was speaking to the Jews and not to the Church.
- The only Scriptures available to the disciples was the Old Testament, which would have been the Bible of their day. The religious leaders had the Torah, the Psalms, and the Writings of the prophets, and that was all. The disciples who first heard Jesus' Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24 & 25), would have only known these documents, which were read by their rabbis. At this point in time, **neither the Gospels of the New Testament nor the letters to the Thessalonians had been written.** Since the Old Testament was the only Bible they had, the answer is really pretty obvious.

Of the four Gospels, Matthew is the one who quotes the most from the Old Testament, and he did so frequently. In fact, there are at least 40 direct quotes, and some 60 references total noting these writings. So, it makes sense and would be a natural conclusion to expect any references or quotes to have come from the Old Testament.

It may come as a surprise, but **Jesus quoted from Isaiah twenty times**, more than any Old Testament book. If we look at the particular passages used by those rejecting the Pre-Tribulation Rapture by using Matthew 24:29-31, we find that Jesus quoted from Isaiah four **4X** times and referenced Isaiah six **6X times** in just the three verse portion of Matthew 24:29-31.

- Matthew 24:29 references or quotes specifically from Isaiah 13:10; 24:23.
- Matthew 24:31 references or quotes specifically from Isaiah 27:13; 11:12; 49:18; 60:4; 13:5; 42:10; 43:6; and 45:22.

Note something else about this observation: sandwiched around these three verses we find there are references to Isaiah before Matthew 24:29 and immediately following Matthew 24:31 for an additional **total of six quotes plus an additional four references.** The point is that Matthew records that Jesus directly quotes Isaiah specifically, and NOT a New Testament epistle by Paul or anyone else.

This is very important to consider because in no way whatsoever does Matthew 24:29-31 **support a solid argument refuting the Pre-**

Tribulation Rapture for the reasons previously noted. Two principles of hermeneutical studies to remember are as follows:

- The **closest context of a Biblical passage** best determines the meaning of the passage.
- **Scripture should interpret Scripture** within the context of the narrative.

Of the four Gospels, Matthew quotes from the Old Testament more than Mark, Luke, or John. Of the Old Testament writings, Jesus quotes from Isaiah most. With **40** direct quotes and **60** additional references specifically taken from Isaiah, the book the disciples would definitely have knowledge of would be Isaiah. Deuteronomy with **13** quotes and Psalms with **9** quotes fill out the top three Old Testament books. Daniel was the **4th** most quoted in Matthew's Gospel.

Furthermore, Jesus had no reason to reveal the Rapture to the disciples or anyone else for that matter in the "Olivet Discourse". That task was left primarily to the apostle Paul for later revelation in Paul's ministry. Keep in mind that God discloses truth one step at a time, planting the first seeds in Genesis and leading to the ultimate display of the full floral bloom in Revelation. As a metaphor, this image of the progression of growth from the seed to the flower is **essential in understanding God's overall unfolding of revelation in general.**

The New Testament really **does not begin with the physical birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.** It begins with the Cross when the temple veil was "rent in twain from the top to the bottom" -(Mark 15:38). This is important to remember. The preceding verse reads, ***"And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost"*** -(Mark 15:37). The New Testament traditionally begins with the birth of the Christ child; however, technically speaking, it actually begins with the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross when the temple veil torn from top to bottom. Hebrews 9:1-9 tells us that in the temple a veil separated the Holy of Holies—the earthly dwelling place of God's presence—from the rest of the temple where men dwelt. This signified that man was separated from God by sin (Isaiah 59:1-2). Only the high priest was permitted to pass beyond this veil once each year (Exodus 30:10; Hebrews 9:7) to enter into God's presence for all of Israel and make atonement for their sins (Leviticus 16). An early Jewish tradition says that the veil was about four inches thick, but the Bible does not confirm that measurement. The book of Exodus teaches that this thick veil was fashioned from blue, purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen.

The size and thickness of the veil makes the events occurring at the moment of Jesus' death on the cross so much more momentous. "And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that

moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom” (Matthew 27:50-51a).

What significance does this torn veil have for us today? Above all, the tearing of the veil at the moment of Jesus' death **dramatically symbolized that His sacrifice, the shedding of His own blood, was a sufficient atonement for sins.** It signified that now the way into the Holy of Holies was open for all people, for all time, both Jew and Gentile.⁽¹⁾

Because Jesus never said a great deal about the Church's mission, purpose, plans, objectives, duration, or ending of the Church, why would it come as any big surprise that He offers little for us to ponder over the Rapture issue? The Pre-Tribulation Rapture was a **“Mystery”** as the Apostle Paul explains in 1st Corinthians 15:51-52. That **“mystery”** remains veiled behind “Biblical Typology”. Its thematic patterns are overlaid within the context of the Feasts of the Lord described in Leviticus 23 - all for us to discover just as Proverbs 25:2 exhorts. The full extent of that event remains to be experienced by born-again believers. As we discover in the words of Paul, we begin to see how the **“mystery”** becomes more tangible. When we delve into a study of the nuances of the apostle's words written to the new churches at Thessalonica and Corinth, we learn what the meaning and purpose of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture is for the Church.

When Paul said to be comforted by these words, he really meant it. God does not lie, deceive or mislead us. We can truly comfort one another with the words of 1st Thessalonians 4:18, **“Wherefore comfort one another with these words”**. The Greek word for “comfort one another” here is **“parakaleo”**, and it is found **23X** as such. It is found **114X in 104** verses of the New Testament in the King James Bible, and it is translated as following:

43X Beseech	23X Comfort	21X Exhort	8X Desire
6X Pray	3X Entreat	4X Miscellaneous	1X Besought

There is no greater comfort, encouragement, or exhortation that can be given to another than the fact that whether Christians live or die they will be caught up to be with the Lord Jesus Christ when He comes. The use of **“parakaleo”** to mean **“comforter”** or **“consolation”** is also present in the New Testament. Jesus promised comfort for the mourners in Matthew 5:4, and the apostles responded to slander from unbelievers with the conciliatory words in 1st Corinthians 4:13; Romans 15:4; 2nd Thessalonians 2:17; Hebrews 6:18; and 12:5. One finds the word **“parakaleo”** used in the context where Jesus' power to save and authority are recognized over sickness and over demonic activity in more than a dozen passages. The word is simply identified with the coming of salvation in which the use of the word definitely shapes the New Testament's language. On the day of Pentecost, in Acts

2:40, Peter “exhorted” or urged the Jews to turn to Jesus Christ. There is so much more on the Pre-Tribulation Rapture as we explore “Biblical Typology” and the nuances of the theme of “Deliverance before Judgment”.

Pastor Bob

Notes:

1. <https://gotquestions.org/temple-veil-torn.html>