

Biblical Forensics ©

“Deliverance before Judgment” Part 30

The last segment ended with the Apostle Paul’s expression **“In the twinkling of an eye”** quoted from 1st Corinthians 15:52. My Jewish colleague who is also a rabbi and a mathematician defines this term explaining that there is a difference between a wink, a blink, and a twink. His reply was two pages long, and more than readers really care or need to know. But, getting to the point, the short answer for a “twinkling of an eye” is 1/6th billionth of a second. At that speed, we are not going to have time to even think about what has happened to us at the Rapture.

Studying the Apostle Paul’s life extensively in a 2-semester course has afforded me with an in-depth understanding on the life and ministry of Paul that often is simply glossed over. The Apostle describes the Rapture as an event that is almost an instantaneous disappearance. Others will not recognize it or see it when it happens unless they are specifically watching or looking directly at someone and personally witness their disappearance at the exact moment it occurs.

In reading Romans 15:4, we discover that Paul wasn’t just writing to the Thessalonian believers. He was writing to all believers not only in his specific time, but future believers as well. Paul’s letters were circulated among the churches he helped to found and establish. If Paul had taught them to expect a Pre-Wrath or Post Tribulation Rapture, would they have been troubled or frightened by thinking they had received fraudulent information? Not at all! Chances are they would have thought the Second Coming was only a few years away and that many of them would live to see it occur.

The reason the Thessalonians had become distraught or overly concerned and confused was caused by the thought that Paul was telling them the Day of the Lord had already come and gone and that they had missed the Rapture altogether. This led them to conclude that they weren’t saved. With this thought in play, we can see how they would have been upset, angered, and scared. Imagine what that might feel like if we were in the same situation and drawing a conclusion along these lines.

From his instructions in 2nd Thessalonians 2:1-3, we can reconstruct Paul’s teaching on the chronology of events leading up to the Day of the Lord. We also have an abundance of proof from his other letters showing that **Paul taught this “doctrine of eternal security”**.

Some of the most obvious references are:

- **Romans 8:38-39: “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall**

be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” We are secure in Christ—Paul was convinced of this, and so should we be. Nothing can ever separate us from God’s love for us - (Romans 8:39). In both death and the trials of life in this evil world, we will be in God’s presence. No spiritual forces, such as angels or demons, are powerful enough to undo what God has done for us. Nothing in the sphere of time itself (fears and worries) can threaten us; **nothing that can happen in the present and nothing that can happen in the future**, such as persecution and hardship, would cause God to leave us. No powers that exist (Satan, human governments, etc.) are more powerful than God; they can have no effect on our relationship with him. Nothing in space, from high above or in the deepest ocean, can take us away from God’s love. **Nothing in all of creation can take us away from God’s love or thwart his purposes for us.**

Paul’s point is simple and compelling: **once in his care, it is impossible to be separated from Christ Jesus.** His death for us is proof of his unconquerable love. Nothing can stop His constant presence with us. God tells us how great His love is so that we will feel totally secure in Him.^(a)

- **2nd Corinthians 1:21-22:** *“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”* In these two verses, Paul described how he, his coworkers—Timothy and Silas—and the Corinthians themselves were **all tied together**. They had all received the Holy Spirit, an indication they all belonged to God through Christ.

These verses use **four key terms** to describe how God made them all part of his family.

1. **The first, stand firm, is derived from legal terminology.** In the first-century Mediterranean world, this was a technical word for a legal guarantee that would confirm a sale as valid. Paul used the word to express that it is God himself who guarantees the salvation of those who believe in Jesus. Having the guarantee or confirmation of God Almighty would be the best security a person could ask for—especially since the Lord God had already proven his faithfulness to his promises in the life of Jesus Christ.
2. **The second** refers to all the believers being commissioned (literally, “anointed”). In the Old Testament, prophets, priests, and kings were anointed to signify their commission to be representatives of God to the Israelites -(see Exodus 28:41; 1st Samuel 15:1; 1st Kings 19:16). The Holy Spirit comes upon believers making them God’s representatives to the world.
3. **Third,** God identifies his people **by placing the Holy Spirit in believers’ hearts.** God himself has given us **His mark of ownership**

when He gave his Spirit to live in us -(see Paul's use of this word in Ephesians 1:13; Ephesians 4:30).

4. **Finally**, Paul described the Spirit as the **first installment of everything God will give us**. This "installment" is like a down payment that a buyer will give a seller to declare the intent of paying the full amount. God gives His Spirit to His children as a down payment. It is **only a foretaste of the glorious joy they will experience in heaven** —the full payment that God has promised.

With these four key terms, Paul reiterates again and again to whom he, along with the Corinthians, belongs. **These four assurances are the basis for a believer's certainty that he or she is saved and will live with God forever in heaven**. It is the Spirit of God, not a Christian's works that guarantees a believer's salvation.^(a)

- **2nd Corinthians 5:5:** ***"Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, Who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit."*** Paul's yearning for his heavenly body was not a desperate hope. God had determined long ago that believers in His Son would inherit eternal glory. This picks up the idea expressed in 2nd Corinthians 4:17 that the Lord God had planned not only to justify believers through His Son's sacrificial death, but He also had planned to glorify them with heavenly bodies.

Part of God's wonderful plan to save those who believe in his Son **includes the Holy Spirit as proof of his and their eternal destiny with God the Father**. The Spirit is a guarantee that He will one day pay up in full. Paul envisioned Christ, on one glorious day, coming to complete the process that had already begun, with the help of the Holy Spirit, within the Corinthians' lives -(see 2nd Corinthians 4:16; see also Romans 8:23; Ephesians 1:13-14). Through His death, Jesus will not only save believers, He will also clothe them in heavenly glory so that they can celebrate their salvation in God's presence -(Romans 8:30; Romans 9:23). The Holy Spirit within believers is a **trustworthy guarantee that God will give Christians everlasting bodies at the resurrection** -(2nd Corinthians 1:22). **Christians have eternity within them now!**^(a)

- **Ephesians 1:13-14:** ***"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."***
- **Ephesians 4:30:** ***"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."*** If this is taken in connection with the preceding verse, it means that worthless talk grieves the Spirit. It may also be linked to verses 25-28 to indicate that lying, unrighteous anger,

and stealing also hurt Him. Or in a still wider sense, it may be saying that we should abstain from anything and everything that grieves Him.

Three powerful reasons are suggested:

1. He is the Holy Spirit. Anything that is not holy is distasteful to Him.
2. He is the Holy Spirit of God, a member of the blessed Trinity.
3. We were **sealed by Him for the day of redemption**. As mentioned previously, a seal speaks of ownership and security. He is the seal that guarantees our preservation until Christ returns for us and our salvation is complete. Interestingly so, **Paul here uses the eternal security of the believer as one of the strongest reasons why we should not sin.**

The fact that He can be grieved shows that the Holy Spirit is a Person, not a mere influence. It also means He loves us, because only a person who loves can be grieved. The favorite ministry of God's Spirit is to glorify Christ and to change the believer into His likeness -(2nd Corinthians 3:18). When a Christian sins He has to turn from this ministry to one of restoration. It grieves Him to see the believer's spiritual progress interrupted by sin. He must then lead the Christian to the place of repentance and confession of sin.^(b)

The **“doctrine of eternal security”** is controversial for some denominations, but Paul makes a powerful case to the contrary. There are other Scriptures supporting this teaching other than the more obvious ones listed here. These passages tend to anger Methodist and Presbyterian professors, church leaders, and for that matter, a lot of the Reformation denominations.

Long ago, I was a United Methodist pastor, and was being interviewed by a U.M.C. superintendent, for consideration of an appointment in his district. In the interview, he asked if I preached from the *‘Common Lectionary’*. He wanted to know what my preaching style was. My answer to the first part was: “Sometimes”; to the second part, I stated that I was a “Pauline” preacher and that I used an expository preaching style - a form of preaching that details the meaning of the text or passage of Scripture. It explains what the Bible means by what it says. Exegesis is technical and grammatical exposition, a careful drawing out of the exact meaning of a passage in its original context.⁽¹⁾ The interview ended on a short note. It registered with me almost as quickly that he was liberal in his views. Liberal’s cherry-pick Scripture by choosing what they want to stress from the Word of God. Liberals say such things as the Bible “contains” the Word of God, rather than the Bible “is” the Word of God, as held by conservative preachers.

In his letters to the Thessalonians, Paul didn’t reveal the actual timing of the Rapture, except as it related to other events that happen in the future. The specifics and details are sketchy, and thus Paul referred to the Pre-Tribulation

Rapture as a “Mystery” in 1st Corinthians 15:51, and couched his language about the Rapture elsewhere. We can presume he had good reason to be guarded in saying too much more about the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. All we know, is that for reasons of His own, the Lord has never given us a specific date for the Rapture. Keeping in mind that **the Bible cannot contradict itself**; and **carefully studying the passages describing it**, the **astute Bible student can know the times and seasons and construct, with some degree of assurance, the correct sequence of events.**

Paul even scoffed at the Thessalonians for not figuring this out on their own all the way back in 2nd Thessalonians 2:5: **“Remember ye not, that, when I was with you, I told you these things”.** It is understandable why the specifics are masked, but the knowing of the times and seasons are distinct. The word “seasons” is not what we commonly think of as winter, spring, summer or fall. Instead the more specific meaning is all about God’s “appointed times”. The word “seasons” is used **12X** times and the Hebrew word is **“Moed”** and means **“appointed times”**. It does not mean what most would think. 1st Thessalonians 5:1 reads: **“But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.”** From these two verses – 1st Thessalonians 5:1 and 2nd Thessalonians 2:5, along with others, we can conclude that Paul had taught or explained the prophetic aspects of the “Feasts of the Lord” and how they pictured prophetic future events.

Essentially, most Christians today reading the reference to the “Feasts of the Lord” and the “appointed times” or **“Moed”** inevitably are puzzled and ask: does this mean “fall” or “food”? The **seven “Feasts of the Lord”** were **“rehearsals”** for the **“Bride”**, i.e., **“the Church”**. They (the Feasts) can be likened or similar to a rehearsal or practice session of the wedding ceremony that a betrothed couple prepares for on the evening prior to their wedding nuptials. The **“Feasts of the Lord”** are found in Leviticus 23 and are like a riddle wrapped up in a puzzle as part of an enigma.

There are a several reasons why we can totally be confident in the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. Many of these points may be new and others may seem familiar. Nonetheless, we are entrusted with Paul’s message to **“Edify One Another”**. People hold their own view for various reasons, but in order that we arrive at the correct conclusion, one would need to carefully study the whole counsel of God’s Word. It demands that each of us be serious students of the Bible, and nothing less. That said, let’s begin with reasons for our confidence in the Pre-Tribulation Rapture.

1. Both Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, promised believers that they would be saved from the **“wrath to come”** – (Matthew 3:7, Luke 3:7; 1st Thessalonians 1:10). Furthermore, they would be **kept from** –(Greek word **“ek”**, which means “kept from or out of”) **“the hour of trial that shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth”** –(Revelation 3:10). Such a “trial” has not yet occurred, and we have Jesus’ unconditional promise to keep believers out of that trial mentioned in Revelation 3:10. These are the words of Christ

Jesus Himself! The Hebrew prophets referred to that future time of **“wrath”** or **“trouble”** for Israel over **50X**, and although Israel has suffered much throughout its history, these prophecies will not be fulfilled until or before the 70th Week of Daniel commences. It is also referred to as the “Beginning of Sorrows” in Matthew 24:8. All of the other various interpretations teach that at least a portion of the church will experience all or some of the Tribulation period. This contradicts Jesus’ words, noted above and elsewhere. The reason for the confusion and flawed thinking is directly related to the fact that such erroneous teachings **fail to see that God’s Word draws a clear distinction between Israel and the Church as being two separate and entirely different entities.** This is where the basic problem began.

The Roman Catholic Institution began teaching as early as the late third century A.D., charging that the “Church” replaced “Israel” in God’s plan for redemption. This is known as “Replacement Theology”, and in the theological world, it is referred to as “Supersessionism”.⁽²⁾ Whatever you wish to call it, **it is not of God!** **It is, in fact, the satanic roots of all Anti-Semitism.** Catholic theology continues to teach it inside the cloister of its Catholic ‘orders’. There is historical evidence suggesting the Jesuits are responsible for the forgeries known as the *‘Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion’*. The document is pure fiction, but among anti-Semites, it was a big hit, and this hoax was perpetrated by Jesuits seeking to destroy the Jewish people. Historical records assign the origin of the term “Zionists” to the Jesuits. The “Protocols” were written by a French Jesuit, Abbe Barruel.⁽³⁾ The Jesuits had been banned from some 80+ countries and cities of Europe and the world, and they needed a foothold in order to return to power from which they were expelled. The “Protocols” are **the foundation of the plan for the New World Order or the “Illuminati”.** The term “Illuminati” is a code word for the Jesuits, and it has been since Jesuit Adam Weishaupt founded it in 1776.⁽⁴⁾ The “Protocols” first came to light in the early 1900’s in Russia. They have been instrumental in fomenting the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and three world wars that followed.

All of this provides the background which ultimately led to the doctrine of “Replacement Theology”. It has caused and continues to cause mass confusion within the Church. Furthermore, it leads to a division over the issue of when the Rapture of the Church takes place. Failure to recognize God’s distinction in the Bible, between Israel and the Church has resulted in entirely missing the teaching of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. Those who fail to make this distinction erroneously conclude by believing the Church will go through the Tribulation!

Pastor Bob

Notes:

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expository_preaching
2. <https://gotquestions.org/replacement-theology.html>
3. <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/anti-semitism/protocols.html>

4. http://amazingdiscoveries.org/S-deception-Jesuits_French_Reformation_Hitler

Commentaries:

- a. Life Application New Testament Commentary
- b. Believer's Bible Commentary