

Biblical Forensics ©

“Deliverance before Judgment” Part 29

Critics of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture frequently challenge believers, stating that Jesus never mentioned anything about the Rapture. Instead they proceed to build a case declaring there will be no Rapture. But, this stance uses false logic. Anyone who has studied “logic” in college can refute this erroneous argument because it is based on deductive reasoning. In other words, it is a kind of logical argument that applies deductive reasoning to arrive at a conclusion based on two or more propositions that are **asserted or assumed to be true.**

For example, a case can be made that the “mystery” of the Rapture was left for the Apostle Paul to address during his ministry and that was shared in his letters or epistles. The early Disciples had no need to know the details of the “Blessed Hope” because the Church had not been birthed while Jesus was still present on the earth. But there is an evidential basis for a more subtle argument that **Jesus did in fact discuss the Pre-Tribulation Rapture.** Please note closely.

Jesus addressed the topic by means of a form of word-picture. ***“For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah”*** - (Matthew 24:37). In the days of Noah, while the ark was being constructed, non-believers scoffed, just as they do today until ***“God shut the door”*** - (Genesis 7:16). The rains began and as the waters rose and flooded the land, the ark floated up over the disaster taking place below. Then when the waters receded, the ark rested back on the earth to begin a new dispensation, or epoch of time. This type of experience is exactly what will happen in the future. God will shut the door of the Church Age when the Rapture of ‘born again’ believers are taken up into the clouds. The Greek term for this is called ***“harpazo”*** or “caught up”. They will be above the Tribulation which will be occurring below the clouds and on earth.

This could not be a better example to describe the event we call the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. There are roughly 100+ examples of “typology” language in the Bible which communicates the concept of the topic for this series: “Deliverance before Judgment”. It absolutely affirms the words of Proverbs 25:1 describing how God has hidden “diamonds and nuggets” within His Word for us to discover on our own. The Apostle Paul told the Thessalonian Church: ***“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”*** -(1st Thessalonians 4:17).

Then, after the Great Tribulation, which will last seven years, those who were ‘caught up’ in the clouds will return to the earth to begin a new

dispensation, at the Millennium. Think of it this way: Noah's deliverance was pre-flood, and not mid-flood or post-flood. Logic alone tells us that if it were anything other than pre-flood, Noah and his family would have perished in the flood. Furthermore, if Noah was considered a righteous man in God's eyes, -(Genesis 7:1) why would God subject Noah to suffer even a partial portion of the same judgment that would befall the rest of mankind at that time? Contrary to what is being taught in many churches, the doctrine of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture WAS taught prior to 1830. This is when the claim was made that the rapture theory originally began. However, this is an erroneous claim. It was taught in Scripture by the Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and it was also taught by early Christian teachers.

Former host of the PTL Club, televangelist and former Assemblies of God minister, Jim Bakker,⁽²⁾ teaches his audience that the Pre-Tribulation Rapture is a "new" teaching introduced by a young Scottish teenage girl, Margaret MacDonald. The belief was then picked up and taught by John Nelson Darby.⁽¹⁾ This is a common lie taught by those who may have an agenda meant to attack the Pre-Tribulation doctrine. Whether intentional or otherwise, such false teachings deny one's salvation by inferring that believers will be subjected to the judgments of the Great Tribulation. Somehow they believe and teach that believers have to suffer by going through the 70th Week of Daniel 9:24-27, known as the Great Tribulation. But this is a misconception that undermines what the Bible really teaches.

Baptist preacher, Morgan Edwards, taught the Pre-Tribulation Rapture in the mid-1700s, a century before John Nelson Darby came on the scene. Even with the Roman Catholic suppression of dissent, we can still find dozens of church leaders who taught and wrote about Pre-Millennialism and the Dispensationalist beliefs on the concept of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture.

Regrettably, Pastor Bakker has unwittingly placed himself in a difficult spot. Because he literally needs the belief he has in a Post-Tribulation doctrine in order to justify selling survival supplies. The issue of accurate Biblical understanding then becomes very difficult to approach or to even make an honest and thorough examination of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture teaching apart from personal belief. When there is a strong attachment to one's beliefs, then those beliefs often trump the desire for truth in the mind of those being deceived because they end up viewing truth through the lens of their own beliefs.

To stop this cycle of deception, one has to be willing to detach from them (their beliefs) to explore the truth without these mental encumbrances. This factor is true for anyone seeking truth. Attachments of this nature hinder the desire to acquire accurate truth. Sometimes we find scientists falling into this same trap. This situation poses a learning lesson for everyone. Constant vigilance, and an internal commitment to honesty while

seeking truth is required despite the impact to one's needs for personal or deep-seated gratification, whatever that might be for the individual.

If he were to realize that the Pre-Tribulation Rapture doctrine is truly taught in the Bible, Pastor Bakker would lose his source of income because his income is dependent upon his belief in something other than a Pre-Tribulation Rapture. Understanding the truth would mean that he could no longer in all honesty market survival products with the belief that he is helping people prepare to survive the Great Tribulation. This poses a real challenge which may be difficult to come to terms with for it reveals a requirement to make a significant course correction.

At some point, the entire situation becomes a crisis of conscience. Avoiding the truth of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture poses a conflict of interest IF the desire is to adhere to accurate Biblical teaching. One's source of income should never be the foundation on which one bases their beliefs or their understanding of Biblical truths. It goes without saying that faith truly demands a genuine desire for truth regardless of personal cost. Keeping a clear conscience before the Lord must always be the priority in our daily Christian walk. -(Job 32:8; 30:21; John 1:9). With that said, it is also true that God is the One who judges all men, including our Christian brothers. Therefore, it is not our place to pass judgment but God's. If we are guilty of such judging ourselves, we cannot feel justified with our stance because we recognize something incongruous in our brother's walk with the Lord. Rather let us keep our own porches clear of debris in our endeavor to serve. - (Romans 14:10; James 4:11-12; Matthew 7:1-5)

The early church believed in the imminent return of the Lord. Up to the early 300's, they believed and taught the concept of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. The doctrine of imminence is not in conflict with the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. It can only be associated with the Pre-Tribulational doctrine since it is incongruent with all other views of the Rapture event. With the expanding Christian church, a power struggle developed between bishops. By the end of the fourth century, the Christian church had been conquered by the Roman Caesars. During the period known as the dark ages from 500 A.D. to the early 1500s A.D., the Roman Catholic Institution controlled religion, philosophy, morals, politics, art and education and forbade the people from even owning or reading the Bible. They seized power over the church and snuffed out all dissent. In order to justify their control of the church, the Roman Catholic Institution had to invent ways to manipulate its congregants into submission, and so suppressed all Biblical teachings, except the post-tribulation return of Christ Jesus and replaced them with church doctrine. They eventually became overrun by heretical teachings.⁽³⁾

In 1994, the late Grant Jeffrey, discovered a number of manuscripts authored by a Christian writer and poet, Ephraem the Syrian, who lived from 306 A.D. to 373 A.D.⁽⁴⁾

The manuscripts show that he believed in:

1. A literal interpretation of Scripture
2. The Pre-Millennial return of Christ Jesus
3. A man who would become the antichrist and rule the Roman Empire during the last days
4. The Pre-Tribulation Rapture
5. The fulfillment of Daniel's 70th week of Daniel 9:24-27 at the end of this age
6. Concluding with the Battle of Armageddon and Christ Jesus' return

Michael Snyder, a former lawyer, and a new author is a frequent guest on the Jim Bakker Show; he believes in modern theology but he isn't a theologian. Besides being inexperienced and lacking any formal Biblical Studies training or a solid theologian's scholarship, his writings have created a conflict related to accurate biblical teachings. Michael has authored a book that denies the Pre-Tribulation Rapture teaching but was prepared without the experience afforded by a thorough examination and a solid background in theological training. In addition, his book is fraught with error and above all he does not make the distinction between Israel and the Church. This incorrect teaching further serves to buttress a program supported by marketing survival supplies which has become a lucrative business at his news sites. In addition, the whole theme of survival can lead to fear-mongering which often becomes interwoven into topics aired on the Jim Bakker Show. It is certainly not a good idea to be naïve about the state of affairs in the world today. That's a given. At the same time, readers are reminded that God does have a plan to deliver believers from the Great Tribulation, and it will not require stockpiling years of survival supplies. The purpose of the Tribulation is to punish the disobedient world and to bring the Jews, who are the 'Apple of God's Eye' to repentance. It is meant to bring judgment on a God-hating world and not on believers.

The most crucial take away of this lesson is to remember that we must always **under all circumstances** and to the best of our capabilities handle the Word of God correctly. **A good worker who correctly explains the word of truth would be the most effective silencer of false teachers. Christians need unity, strength, the truth of the gospel and to impart the truth to future generations.** This incredible responsibility means **individual teachers, ministers, and leaders must seek not the approval of people, or their own glory but the approval of God.** This includes people who teach through books, blogs, on the internet, radio, television and thru published articles. An unashamed worker can present his or her life and ministry to God, knowing that God will approve the quality of work. **Approval of one's ministry before God will depend on how well one has proclaimed, explained, and applied the word of truth.** We

must help the gospel **cut a straight path and do nothing to hinder it.**-
(2nd Timothy 2:15)^(a)

2nd Peter 2:1-3 states, ***“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall the feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”*** Such rejection is like denying Christ Jesus and it is fatal to our salvation. It is tantamount to facing denial by God at the Day of Judgment. Jesus Himself confirmed this when he said: ***“But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven”*** - (Matthew 10:33; Luke 9:26; 2nd Timothy 2:12).

Although not the unpardonable sin, the Bible does teach that one can be forgiven and restored. In the previous segment, I identified and noted illustrations in the book of Genesis revealing how God provided “deliverance before judgment”. **Be aware and exercise discernment with full reliance on the Holy Spirit.** Watch for possible reasons why some programs marketing products of any nature might not want to endorse the truth of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture.

The Apostle Paul used the expression ***“Edify One Another”***, not once, but twice: 1st Thessalonians 5:11 and Romans 14:19. Chances are he proclaimed these words more often than what are recorded in Thessalonians and Romans. Deceivers were hard at work in Paul’s day just as they are today. We can protect ourselves against deceptions by praying for discernment and by taking up the whole suit of armor. -(Ephesians 6:13-18)

That the Apostle Paul coped with opposition is obvious when you read his response concerning the fact that someone had attempted a pretense at being Paul or speaking on Paul’s behalf. This experience had frightened the church at Thessalonica. The Thessalonians had received a forged letter that was intended to scare them or unsettle them. Some of the Thessalonian believers seemed to have accepted some of these wrong teachings regarding Christ’s Second Coming -(2nd Thessalonians 2:2-3) and what would happen in the world before he returned. Paul had already taught them much when he was with them and had explained more in his first letter -(1 Thessalonians 4-5).^(a) To put it mildly, they were really upset. Interestingly, by reading 2nd Thessalonians 2:1-3, we can conclude they had disputed Paul’s teaching on the events leading up to the Day of the Lord.

Right from the very beginning, Paul’s teachings separated the coming of the Lord from that of believers being gathered together in Him. This

differentiation is extremely important in our understanding of Paul's position. That is because they are two different events. We cannot tell their relative timing from this Scripture, but **we can tell they are two distinctively different events**. In an article at this same website under the heading of "Pre-Tribulation Truth" you will find a comprehensive list comparing and contrasting the distinctions between the Rapture and the Second Coming; within them I note 28 specific and distinct differences. All preclude any possibility that these two events are simultaneous or a single event.

The Rapture is going to happen so fast that we will not have time to think about it when it happens. It will be in the **"twinkling of an eye"**, as Paul says in 1st Corinthians 15:52.

Pastor Bob

Notes:

1. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_MacDonald_\(visionary\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_MacDonald_(visionary))
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Bakker
3. http://www.thirdmill.org/newfiles/jac_arnold/CH.Arnold.RMT.1.html
4. <http://www.arewelivinginthelastdays.com/com/ephraem.htm>

Commentaries:

- a. Life Application New Testament Commentary