

03a REV

This is Friday, the 12th of August, 2005. We continue our study in the book of Revelation, picking up in chapter 4. We'll take a moment at the outset to clear our minds, prepare our hearts, as we go before the Lord in prayer. Father, we thank you for another opportunity to spend time in fellowship in the study of your word.

We thank you for the spiritual gifts that you have given to each one of us. We thank you for the blessings that we receive as we spend time together. We thank you for the enthusiasm of each one that is here for your word.

And we pray that our search will be rewarded as we look for the truth that will strengthen our hearts and instruct us in the way of righteousness so that our life will reflect your glory and accomplish your purpose. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

As we look at this section of Revelation and see the door open in heaven and the vision that John has of the heavenly throne and those who surround it, we have already identified the various living creatures that are in this scene, the 24 elders, the four living creatures. And we're getting ready to approach chapter 5. Before we do, this is an opportune moment to stop and examine the grounds or the basis for our belief concerning the time of the rapture. We have postulated or concluded without a great deal of detailed study that the 24 elders are representative of human beings and within the category human being that they would of necessity be out of the church, primarily because the age of Israel is not yet complete.

And by almost anyone's calculations, the age of Israel is not complete as you begin the tribulation period. There are a few who think that Daniel's 70th week was fulfilled back shortly after the time of Christ, but they are in a minority. You have to practically spiritualize the entire Old Testament prophetic record in Ezekiel and Isaiah as well as Daniel and then the Revelation and what Jesus said about the time of the end in Matthew 24 and become an amillennialist to get that to fly.

So we will safely discount that point of view. But the question remains in the minds of many, and there has been a debate and an ongoing scholarly dialogue concerning the time of the rapture. There have historically been three views, the pre-tribulational, mid-tribulational and post-tribulational views.

Those are fairly self-explanatory. There is some wiggling on the mid-trib position where I think the majority of the mid-trib folks believe that at the dividing line, the halfway mark, three and a half years in, the first three and a half years of the 70th week of Daniel are not bad from a human point of view. Peace and safety is what everyone is saying.

Antichrist has made a covenant. He achieves a sort of false and superficial peace, but there are no seals, trumpets and bowls going on in the first three and a half years. It is

when he breaks the covenant that the wrath of God begins in the final three and a half years.

So there are people who think, well, you can actually be a church age believer and go into that first three and a half years. There are others who you could classify as mid-trib or more accurately as pre-wrath rapture, most notably represented by Marvin Rosenthal. I have his book here to show you, *The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church*.

He says this is a new understanding of the rapture, tribulation and second coming. His view is predicated largely on the sudden appearance, which we will see in Revelation chapter 7, of the white-robed saints from every tribe, nation, kindred, etc. singing the song of salvation after the opening of the sixth seal and before the opening of the seventh.

His conclusion is, well, this is the church popping into view, having been down on earth. He makes cogent and well-organized arguments in this book for that view. I will, in the course of our two sessions tonight, try to explain why I think he has overlooked a couple of important things in arriving at this view.

But it's defensible. Obviously, he's written this nice book that got published. It's over 300 pages, so it's not without merit.

But let's take a look, first of all, at the evidence before us in Revelation chapter 4. There are a few additional things as I have prepared this discussion of the timing of the rapture that have been pointed out by others that I want to bring to your attention. One of these is by Kenneth Wiest. Some of you may have his set of books on the nuggets from the New Testament, one thing or another.

He's a great Greek scholar. Not all of his eschatology matches my own, but he's always a fruitful read. He has a lot to say, and he knows an awful lot about the Greek.

But one of the things that he has pointed out in this passage is that when it says, after these things, I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this. And he says, in looking at the words, the things which shall be hereafter, or the things which must take place after this, the Greek word that is translated, shall be, or must take place, is not the verb of being in the future tense. This is the Greek word, *mellō*.

And this is, to cut a long story short, this is something that is used in Greek. You can find this in Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon. Of those things which will come to pass by fixed necessity or by divine appointment.

It is used in contexts where this is scheduled. It's a scheduled event. Let me show you what's next on the schedule kind of a thing.

Hereafter, in the Greek text, is *metatauta*, the demonstrative pronoun, etc. etc. The things, John, so his translation is, the things which are about to become, because *mellow* is about to be, or scheduled to, but it doesn't say they're about to be, it says they're about to become.

And the Greek word there is *genomai*. So you have *mellow* and *genomai*. *Mellow* is about to be, or scheduled to be, and *genomai* is to become.

Why is that important? Because Jesus, at the beginning of the book, said, you're going to write the things which were, which are, and which will be. And the things which are, have been covered fairly obviously in chapters 2 and 3, in the letters to the seven churches. These things are in the present tense.

They're written to the churches. You have a few things. You have a few that have not defiled themselves.

You have a few that have not soiled their robes. All of that is in the present tense. And after the conclusion of the seventh letter, after these things, I looked.

Jesus says, let me show you what's next on the schedule, the things which are about to become. And that indicates that there is a shift away from what that same Jesus has just said to the seven churches. He says, okay, now let me show you what's coming next.

So the letters pertain throughout the church age, and the language of the Greek is, now let me show you what's scheduled next. Well, next compared to what? Compared to what he has just said in the first, in these letters to the seven churches. So it's not conclusive.

In fact, none of these arguments by itself is a definitive spike through the heart of any other view. You have to kind of take them together. But it is a pretty significant break between looking at what is and what will be.

Now, it's possible that the church would still be in some of these future things, but there's definitely a break there. Secondly, there is the vocabulary. Forgive me if a few of these are points that I've made before, but I tried to be comprehensive here.

The vocabulary that is used of what we are about to study in Revelation, especially chapters 6 through 19, which is the opening of the seven seals, the sounding of the seven trumpets, the pouring out of the seven bowls. Obviously, there is a difference in vocabulary. The church is mentioned 17 times in the first three chapters.

It isn't mentioned again until you get to the end of the book. During this period that is spoken of, which clearly matches the 70th week of Daniel, the predictions of the Lord Jesus about the time of the end in Matthew 24 and so forth, there is a strong Jewish flavor. It is called in Jeremiah 30, verse 7, the time of Jacob's trouble.

It doesn't say the time of the saints' trouble or the trouble for the people of God. It's called the time of Jacob's trouble. And so clearly, whatever else you want to say, could there be a mixture of people or not, clearly Israel is in view.

There is an emphasis on Israel during this period. It is the time of Jacob's trouble, Jeremiah 30, verse 7. Jesus says, pray that your flight may not be on the Sabbath day or in winter over in Matthew 24, 20. Why would the Sabbath day make a difference unless you're back on a Jewish calendar? If you're back in the age of Israel, the Sabbath is an issue.

The Sabbath basically means nothing to us. So that's a strong indication. In that same chapter in Matthew 24, 15, Jesus says, watch for the abomination of desolation being set up in the holy place.

Now this is more significant than it first sounds because first of all, you have to have a temple to have a holy place, right? This clearly refers back to Daniel chapter 9, the abomination on the wing and so on. But secondly, why would Jesus call it the holy place unless it is the holy place? There is a holy place in Jerusalem where this abomination is going to be set up and it is an affront to God that it is set up there. It is an abomination to God that it is set up in this holy place.

This means that there is a temple that God looks at as a holy place. And so once again, you have the idea that you're back in the age of Jewish ritual. One of the things, my father is actually preparing a short study on dispensations and I was reviewing some things looking for material for him and I was reminded as I reviewed some of those materials that one of the things that marks a dispensation, of course you all remember my favorite thing about what marks a dispensation, right? It's one of the little known markers in my mind that God is changing the dispensation is that He changes the menu, He changes the diet.

And so in the age of innocence, you have all fruit. After the fall, they go out and He says you'll be earned bread by the sweat of your brow. You'll till the soil and raise grain.

And so man became vegetarian and he ate not only fruit but also cereal grains and vegetables until the time of the flood. Noah comes out from the ark and God says you can eat the meat but drain out the blood. And so then man becomes sort of omnivorous.

He's eating ideally a balanced diet of fruit, cereals, grains, vegetables and meat. But before the flood, there was no meat eating. And so you have a change in dispensation from what they call innocence in the garden to the age of what they call conscience from the garden to the end of the flood.

And then you have the age of the patriarchs beginning with Noah where now you have all of that. And the age of the patriarchs goes down to Mount Sinai. Israel comes out of

Egypt, crosses the Red Sea, goes out in the wilderness and gets the law.

And at the point of getting the law, the law modifies the diet again, doesn't it? Now you have clean and unclean animals and you can't eat pork and so on. Doesn't say a thing in the world about anybody not eating pork until Sinai. Abraham may have raised hogs for all we know.

But you have a change in the diet. Come all the way down to the church age, Pentecost, Peter, great sheet let down, rise Peter, kill and eat. All things are clean.

What God has called clean, you don't call unclean. And we're totally omnivorous. Once again, we don't have the restrictions of the law.

When you get to the millennial kingdom, there's going to be another change in diet. So in each of these different dispensations, you have this change. Well, another thing that changes is the priesthood.

Priesthood changes. What kind of priesthood do you have in the garden? You have no priesthood. You really have no need for priesthood, do you? Because there's no separation.

God walks in the garden in the cool of day and so on. Once there's sin and separation, you then have the individual priesthood. Adam is still alive, but Cain offers his own offering.

Abel offers his own offering. Presumably Adam offers his own offerings. We're not told.

But the fact that Cain and Abel each offer their own offerings and Adam is still very much alive tells us that there is some sort of an individual priesthood. And this continues down till the time of Noah. Noah offers sacrifice.

But then beginning with Noah, you have that change of dispensation and you get into the patriarchal priesthood where it is the senior patriarch within the family or the clan who offers sacrifice. This is reflected in the time of Job. Job is in the patriarchal age.

He offers sacrifices on behalf of his sons. That didn't happen before the flood. You see no evidence of that.

So what's my point? You get down to the age of Israel after Sinai. You have the Levitical priesthood. You get to the age of the church.

You have the individual believer priesthood again. Once again, harking back, just as in the days when everybody was omnivorous and you had an individual priesthood, now everybody's omnivorous again and you have an individual priesthood again. So there is a symmetry there.

Well, why is this important? Because when you look at this statement by the Lord Jesus that the abomination of desolation is set up in the holy place, this is strong implication that the Levitical priesthood is back in effect. The holy place is a part of the whole Levitical system, isn't it? It's a part of tabernacle and later temple worship, Levitical priesthood and so on. And the fact that sacrifice and offering are cut off according to Daniel 9.27, sacrifice is cut off? What kind of sacrifice? Church doesn't offer any sacrifices that can be cut off.

So this is, we're back to the Levitical priesthood. You know, we've talked in the past about how they've already made great preparations over there. They've got all the accoutrements.

They've got the trumpets and the shovels and the breastplate and the lampstand and they've got a red heifer and they're all ready to go as soon as they can build something where they can worship. And I was reading a website the other day where a rabbi, Moshe, somebody or others, all excited because the southern wall on the Temple Mount is bulging and it's been slowly bulging out, but it moved like, what did they say, three and a half inches or something just in a couple of months. And he got all excited and he said, you know what's going to happen? That wall is going to give way and it's going to be a cascade effect and that entire mountain is going to go sliding downhill and the Dome of the Rock is going to fall over.

And so he's all excited. Now, if you look at that on a map, there's a pretty swinging good distance between that wall. I mean, it's going to have to be some kind of landslide to get all the way up underneath it.

I don't know how many yards it is, but it's a lot. It's not like the thing sits right over the wall. There's a big courtyard and a big distance and that Dome of the Rock sits on, I mean, the reason they call it Dome of the Rock, it sits on rock.

You know, it sits on a rock. So I don't know if his expectation has any foundation or not. His expectation may fall over before the Dome of the Rock does.

But, regardless, they've also figured out that that thing is sitting in the wrong place. They just recently discovered the actual Pool of Siloam isn't where they thought it was. It's a completely different place.

And they've about decided that the original temple didn't sit where the Dome of the Rock is. And if they come to some sort of accord and build a big fence, they may be able to build the temple on the Temple Mount and just put a wall between it and the Dome of the Rock. And the Dome of the Rock will be on a wing of the temple.

And if you have some kind of big Islamic something or other going on there and you have an abomination right next to the temple, you could imagine easily with the rise of

Islam, this is something that none of us really saw coming, I don't think, a few decades ago as far as how overwhelming and pervasive Islam was going to become. Everybody thought, well, Antichrist is going to parlay the power of the Catholic Church or he's going to have some kind of big secular thing running through the revived Roman Empire. But I certainly had no inkling in all of the prophecy guys that I was listening to up until recently that all of this could take place under the flag of Islam.

But you look at how they have taken over and become the majority in a lot of European countries and their numbers are rising all over the world in just astonishing proportions. And this could be the glue that Antichrist winds up using. Especially, can you imagine what would happen if he could get the Catholics and the Muslims to shake hands? You've got 80% of the world happy if you can get those two groups to smile.

And because they're both devoid of hardly anything that has to do with the actual creator God of the universe, they don't have a whole lot to fight about. The Pope has already come out and said, well, you know... Anyway. I say all of that to say that during the 70th week, there is a Levitical priesthood operating.

You have a holy place. You have sacrifices. You have the Sabbath being observed.

Pray that your flight doesn't take place on the Sabbath. So, one of the questions one has to ask oneself, and it's a legitimate question, could there be some church-age believers who are living in the 70th week for whatever reason? Either the rapture hasn't happened, it's going to be mid-trib, or some of them got left behind because they weren't faithful and they didn't qualify for the promise that says, be faithful and I will deliver you from the wrath and so on that you find in chapter 2. What is the deal? Well, one question that a church-age believer who found himself in any part of the 70th week would have to ask is, should I proselyte to Judaism? Am I supposed to be observing the Sabbath and offering the sacrifices and respecting the holy place? What's my code of conduct here? What are my marching orders? Because if God says it's a holy place and here are legitimate sacrifices being offered and there's a legitimate priesthood, well, what about my believer priesthood? Is it optional, either or? If you get saved, does it depend on whether the witness that witnessed to you was one of the 144,000 or whether it was a latent, wake-up church-age believer? It would get a little confusing, to say the least. So that would be a question to address.

Priesthood defines the dispensations and we have no previous example of overlapping priesthood. There seems to be a clear demarcation where one stops and another begins. And typically it's a pretty clear demarcation.

There was a clear demarcation between no priesthood in the garden and Adam getting kicked out and becoming his own priest. There's a clear demarcation between the individual priesthood from Adam to Noah, called the Flood, which started the age of the patriarchs and Noah sacrifices on behalf of his family and everybody after that,

Abraham, Job, Isaac, Jacob, etc., offer sacrifices on behalf of their families. Then you get to Mount Sinai and once again you have a great episode there at Mount Sinai where there's a clear demarcation and you come back with anointed, sanctified, clothed, clearly identified Levitical priest.

You get down to Pentecost, huge change, tongues of fire, etc. clearly marking out a change of dispensation, change of priesthood. So one would expect that there would be something to indicate the end of the church age priesthood and the resumption of that Levitical priesthood for the remaining seven years of that age.

And this would, of course, be consistent with a rapture at the beginning of that period. One of the most helpful places we can turn are the two letters of Paul to the Thessalonians. If you turn with me to 1 Thessalonians 1, verse 10, we find Paul here saying that what a great thing it is the manner of entry we had to you and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. Of course, the question of the moment is, who is us? Who is us? The Thessalonians are a pretty faithful church. There's not a lot of rebuke in the Thessalonian letters as there are in the Corinthian and Galatian letters.

And so you could get the idea that maybe this us who are delivered from the wrath to come would be sort of the overcoming believers, the faithful believers. And so we don't have anything to distinguish that yet. But, Paul says, Jesus delivers us from the wrath to come.

What we want to do is find in context what is the wrath to come. What does Paul say the wrath to come is? Well, in the same letter, go over to chapter 5. Concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

Now, this is one thing we must understand. What is the day of the Lord? The day of the Lord is an Old Testament Jewish concept. The term day of the Lord is never applied to the rapture.

It is never applied to the church. Now, there's a little bit of circularity in that argument because there are people that say that it does, but I'm telling you it doesn't. And I'll explain why as we go along.

But, assume for the moment that this is true. And I think you'll see how it works out. You'll have to trust me on this.

You yourselves know perfectly the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. Now, we're going to assume for the sake of argument that the day of the Lord always is the

Old Testament concept and refers to the second advent, second coming. Jesus talked about the day of the Lord.

The Old Testament prophets talked about the day of the Lord, the great and terrible day of the Lord, the day of God's wrath, the day of judgment. Sometimes it's bigger and comprehends a lot. Sometimes it's smaller and comprehends less.

You have Peter talking about it over in 2 Peter 3. But, when he says, you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. This makes sense because what is the night in which the day of the Lord comes? The night is the last three and a half years of the tribulation period of the 70th week. That is the time of the seals and the trumpets and the bulls.

It is the time when there is massive destruction, when the sun and the moon are darkened. And if those days were not shortened, no flesh would survive. But, for the sake of the elect, those days are shortened.

Well, if the days are shortened, what does that do to the nights? They're lengthened. Theoretically, anyway. So, the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night.

When they say peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. Notice, third person.

You yourselves know the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. They say peace and safety. Sudden destruction comes upon them, labor pains upon a pregnant woman.

They shall not escape. That's the night. The they are living in the night.

The day of the Lord comes upon them like a thief. Thieves come in the night for the sake of argument. You know, the truism is, a thief doesn't come in broad daylight.

He comes under cover of darkness when you're asleep. If the householder had known what hour the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and protected his goods. But he gets taken unawares.

Now, when are people going to say peace and safety? It's not during the days of wormwood. It's not during the days of a third of the earth being scorched. It's not when the sun is dark and the moon is turned to blood.

When do people say peace and safety? First half of the 70th week, correct? They say peace and safety. Sudden destruction comes upon them halfway through when Antichrist breaks the covenant, wrath of God starts being poured out in seals, trumpets, and bowls. So, when they say peace and safety, it gives us that same kind of distinction we saw at the beginning of Revelation 4. Look at verse 4. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this day should overtake you as a thief.

The brethren, and of course, Paul under the ministry of the Spirit is writing to all believers. You, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this day should overtake you as a thief. Remember, he talks about the fact that there are those who say that the day of the Lord has come already.

Keep your finger here in chapter 5 and turn to 2 Thessalonians, just a few pages over, chapter 2. Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus and our gathering together to Him, we ask you not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled either by spirit or by word or by letter as if from us as though the day of the Lord had come. Your new King James says Christ, but if you look at your text note, the Nestle-Allen-UBS text, and in this case, I think that that is correct rather than the majority text, that the day of the Lord had come. And you can see why somebody would change this away from the day of the Lord because there is an understanding historically that the day of the Lord is talking about the second coming, the second advent.

Somebody was trying to shake the faith of the Thessalonians and say, look, we are in the day of the Lord, we are in the tribulation, look at the persecution, look at all the problems we are having, look at the imprisonments, look at the executions, look at the scattering, look at what is going on in Israel, look at how the Jerusalem church has been destroyed and scattered, look at how the Jews have been dispersed. This is the day of the Lord. And he says, I don't want you to be shaken in mind as though the day of the Lord had come.

Let no one deceive you by any means. There are two things that have to happen before the day of the Lord can come. First, there is the apostasia, the standing away, widely misunderstood.

And I'll tell you now, this is where Mr. Rosenthal gets fouled up because he is convinced that apostasy is a great falling away from the faith. And based on that, his entire argument hinges on that understanding of apostasia. And apostasy just means standing away, and I'm sure we've studied that in the past.

But, secondly, the man of sin has to be revealed before the day of the Lord. And Paul offers this as a strong argument. He says, look, don't let anybody foul you up on this, that you're in the day of the Lord.

Of course, John hasn't written his letter, they don't know about seals, trumpets, and bowls, but they do know about the day of the Lord from the Old Testament. And they know about the day of the Lord from Matthew chapter 24, and the verbal accounts of what Jesus told the disciples, who are now the apostles. And they know about all of the signs in the heavens, and the earthquakes, wars, and rumors of wars, famines, and all of this.

And they hear about this, and they say, maybe God is pouring out His wrath right now,

and we didn't go. And he already told them in the first letter, you know perfectly well about the timing of when Jesus is coming back for you. Let no one deceive you by any means.

That day will not come. The day of the Lord will not come unless the standing away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed. The son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

The abomination of desolation set up in the temple. You can imagine a guy coming in saying, I'm the second coming of Mohammed. I'm the fulfillment of all of the Koran, and the Bible, and everything.

I'm it. Showing himself that he's God. Do you not remember that I was still with you? I told you these things.

Now you know what is inhibiting. Now you know what stands in the way. That day can't come until the standing away and the man of sin is revealed.

Do you see any man of sin revealed? Have you left? The day can't come. Now if it was just simple spiritual apostasy, there hasn't been an age, even in the days of Jesus, there was apostasy. And in every year since Jesus first came and commissioned the disciples, left and Pentecost happened, every single year there has been apostasy.

There hasn't been a time when you can't point to apostasy. Ananias and Sapphira apostatized right there in the middle of the book of Acts. So, do you not remember when I was with you I told you these things, Paul says.

Now you know what is standing in the way, what is inhibiting, what is restraining. That he, the man of sin, may be revealed in his own time. The mystery of lawlessness is already at work.

Only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. Now, who is he who restrains and is going to be taken out of the way? You see in your text there's a capital H. This has been universally understood to mean the Holy Spirit. Now, all church-age believers at the point of regeneration are sealed, indwelt and filled with the Holy Spirit.

That is a part of the package. You cannot be a church-age believer unless you receive the fivefold ministry of God's Holy Spirit. You are regenerated.

You are sealed. You are indwelt. You are filled and you are gifted.

That is the fivefold package for a church-age believer. So, if the one who restrains is going to continue to restrain until he is taken out of the way, how is he ever going to be taken out of the way while there is still a church-age believer standing in the earth? It

doesn't say faithful church-age believers. If there is even one believer here, it would be like Abraham questioning God about Sodom and Gomorrah.

Well, what if there are ten righteous? Even if there are ten, I won't destroy the city. And if there are any church-age believers remaining on this earth, it doesn't matter how apostate they may be, they are still sealed, regenerated, gifted, filled and indwelled. And the Holy Spirit is still here.

You can't be saved and you can't be body and bride of Christ. You can't be regenerate and not have the Holy Spirit. So, he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.

Then the lawless one will be revealed. Why can he deceive the whole earth? Because there is no spiritual discernment left as that week begins, that 70th week. Now, there is going to be a return of the ministry of the Spirit once people start waking up and coming to faith again.

The people who come to faith in that 70th week are back in the age of Israel and they are Old Testament saints, Old Testament covenants, Old Testament endowment and ministry of the Holy Spirit. They will understand the word of God the way Moses and Joseph and David and Daniel did. And they will be overshadowed and endued that the two witnesses who are going to prophesy and be slain and be raised are under the Old Testament prophetic ministry of the Holy Spirit.

It is exactly the same as it was in the days before Christ. So, the lawless one will be revealed. The Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

So, you have the standing away, the apostasia, you have the removal of the Holy Spirit, you have the revelation of the man of sin, you have the destruction of the man of sin when the Lord Jesus comes back, destroyed by the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan with all power, signs and lying wonders and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be delivered. They did not receive the love of the truth.

It was available. They didn't accept it. It's just like the very same thing that was said about another group of people in the Old Testament age.

He came into His own and His own received Him not. He came into His own, His own received Him not. These do not receive the love of the truth that they might be delivered.

And for this reason, God will send them strong delusion that they should believe the lie that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in

unrighteousness. But, verse 13, we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord because God from the beginning chose you for deliverance through sanctification by the Spirit. And it's not an accident that He says sanctification by the Spirit because He says, look, you possess the Spirit.

You're sanctified by the Spirit. The only reason you stand sanctified is because you are marked and filled and indwelt and sealed, regenerate by God's Holy Spirit. He is the Erebon.

He is the seal. That's the Greek word in Ephesians. He is the seal unto the day of redemption.

Sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth to which He called you by our gospel for the attaining of glory. He says in verse 15, Therefore, brethren, stand fast, hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or epistle. Now, go back to 1 Thessalonians 5. Having clarified that.

They say, peace and safety, sudden destruction comes upon them. You, brethren, are not in darkness so that this day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light.

How many of them are sons of light? All. You are all sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

Therefore, let us not sleep as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and as a helmet the hope of deliverance.

For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain deliverance through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Therefore, comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing. So these are words of comfort and encouragement.

One of the major difficulties with any of the mid or post-trib views is it's pretty difficult to provide comfort to one another knowing that you're heading into the first six seals or under the time of the Antichrist, where, by the way, in the first three and a half years, you know what's going on, don't you? A little thing called the mark. And sure, there's peace and safety, but it's because everybody takes the mark. And those who don't take the mark cannot buy and sell.

And so there's this undercurrent. There are these who are saying, you know, I think I'm believing in God, and I don't think this guy's all he's cracked up to be. And there's this undercurrent, this rising understanding that this is the man of sin and what the power is behind him, but nothing is going to come of that until halfway through.

And that's when the Antichrist himself recognizes that there has been a groundswell of surreptitious and sort of invisible opposition that has been rising, and he's going to finally say, I'm going to break the shell on this superficial calm, and I'm going to reach in there and grab these people and do something to them. He's going to break his covenant. He's going to cut off sacrifice.

He's going to say, why would he do that? If everything is going so well and there's peace and safety for three and a half years, why would he cut off sacrifice and offering at the temple? Why would he set up an abomination there? Because within that is where he finds the 144,000. Within that is where he finds these who are in opposition and who no longer believe in him and support him. And he's got to crack that shell and reach down and try to scramble them.

So, the promise in 1 Thessalonians 1.10 when Paul says that Christ delivers us from the wrath to come, and that wrath is defined in 1 Thessalonians 5 as the time of the revelation of the man of sin. And he says that God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation. He says, you are all sons of light.

You are all sons of the day. Now, we know that there are great and precious promises in Scripture that are given to believers, but we find qualifications on some of those. You will inherit if you hold fast, if you endure.

You have need of faith and patience so that after you have suffered, you inherit the promises. And we know that there are conditions on some of the promises. There is no condition here for deliverance from wrath.

Well, that raises the question, what about the statement to the overcomers in Revelation 2 where he says, because you have kept my name, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is about to fall on the whole earth. Well, we will come to that when we look at the evidence concerning the time of the rapture in the book of Revelation. But this is the evidence that we have from Old Testament vocabulary, from the books of Thessalonians.

And we will pause here and take our break. When we come back, we are going to take a look at what Jesus says in Matthew chapter 24 and what both Jesus and John have to say in the book of Revelation and assemble all of the evidence that we can from the Bible on the timing of the rapture from those sources. But let's go ahead and pause here and take our break.