

GNITN

The Rapture The Blessed Hope or Blessed Nope

Week 6

Delivered from Wrath, Not Through It

Going Through The Tribulation

Critics of the Pre-tribulation Rapture like those of us that believe in it are a bunch of escapists and worse that we can't handle persecution. In fact, we are doing everything we can to avoid it while saints and martyrs throughout history have bravely faced it unto death. They even go farther and say that the great delusion is that we will take the mark of the beast and be condemned to an eternity without God all because we're not prepared. In my 50+ years as a Christian I've heard it all. To be fair I grew up with the Rapture being taught this way and it was even used as a fear tactic to get people saved. I now see it much differently but the stigma of this mindset of wanting to avoid tribulation and persecution still hangs over the pre-trib doctrine like a dark cloud of gloom and doom. You may not know this but the fear of not going in the Rapture is a clinically diagnosed phobia as we read from an [article](#) about it *CNN.com*:

"Rapture anxiety," as it is often called, is recognized by some faith experts and mental health professionals as a type of religious trauma. Darren Slade, the president and CEO of the Global Center for Religious Research, has been studying religious trauma across several faiths and denominations for years.

"This is a real thing. It's a chronic problem," he says of rapture anxiety. "This is a new area of study, but in general, our research has revealed that religious trauma leads to an increase of anxiety, depression, paranoia and even some OCD-like behaviors: 'I need to say this prayer of salvation so many times,' 'I need to confess my sins so often.'"

"Now imagine," he continues, "You are taught that at any minute, you could be left here on Earth. What does that do to the teenager who just had premarital sex, or even simply took the Lord's name in vain?"

Rather than research it in the Bible many of the "exvangelicals" as they call themselves just rejected it altogether. They literally threw out the baby with the bathwater. Sadly, with just a little time they could have rejected the bad teaching and embraced the true Biblical view of the Blessed Hope.

Not Appointed To Wrath

Even being taught to fear not going in the Rapture, I knew that the Church would be gone to not go through the Tribulation. And the verse I and many others based this on it [1 Thessalonians 1:10](#): *and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. (NKJV)*

Critics who see this verse acknowledge that we will be delivered from this wrath, but they explain it away as being delivered through the wrath, much like the Israelites were spared from the plagues of Egypt or protected from the burning furnace like the three Hebrew boys. They even point to Noah and his family being spared from the Flood as another example. It's like they need to prove to God they aren't cowards who will fold under the pressure of persecution that others in the world have faced or are currently facing. But are they interpreting this verse correctly? I'm going to refer to a [teaching](#) by Bible author, teacher, and pastor *Rick Renner* who does an excellent job of giving us much needed clarity on this:

And today we're going to see that we are going to be delivered from the wrath that is going to be poured out during the tribulation. But I want us to go back to 1 Thessalonians 4:15 and 4:17 and read them in the King James Version. And then I want to give them again to you in the RIV (Renner Interpretive Version). The King James Version says in 1 Thessalonians 4:15:

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep."

Then verse 17:

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the cloud to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Now, that is the King James Version of 1 Thessalonians 4:15 and 17. But listen to the RIV of verse 4:15:

"For we declare this to you by the word of the Lord. Those who are spiritually living, spiritually robust, spiritually thriving, spiritually vibrant, and spiritually vigorous. I'm talking about the remaining remnant of spiritually alive and vibrant believers who have endured and will still be left around at the time of the coming of the Lord."

He then reads his Bible version of verse 17:

"At that exact synchronized moment, those who are spiritually living, spiritually robust, spiritually thriving, spiritually vibrant, and spiritually vigorous — I'm talking about the remaining remnant of spiritually alive believers who've endured and who will still be left around at the time of the coming of the Lord — they will be suddenly and supernaturally snatched away out of imminent danger."

Now, that is a really good interpretation — snatched away out of imminent danger, just in the nick of time, as the Lord initiates a divine rescue operation to transport them into the clouds.

Saved From What?

Now Renner really digs in deeper to make his case that we won't be around for this wrath:

A rescue operation from what? Well, the answer to that is found in 1 Thessalonians 1:10. In this verse, Paul says that we're waiting for His Son from heaven — talking about Jesus — whom He raised from the dead. Even Jesus, now listen to this, who delivered us from the wrath to come. It's talking about a coming wrath. Now, there are those who say, "Well, Brother Rick, people have always lived through hard times. People in the past were not delivered. What about the church in China that suffered persecution? What about the church during the Roman Empire that suffered persecution? They were not delivered."

Renner lets us know that he's well aware of such suffering because of where he lives and ministers: *Well, friend, remember who you're talking to. You're talking to Rick Renner. I am coming to you from my studio in Russia, the former Soviet Union. In my years of living in the former Soviet Union, I have met many believers who suffered for their faith and went to prison for their faith. They really suffered hard times.*

He then begins to provide the Biblical differences between that and wrath:

But going through persecution and going through hard times does not equate wrath. Wrath is on a completely different level. The word wrath is the Greek word orge. It describes something that is all bent, all twisted. And in fact, it is a long building swelling emotion that literally erupts into wrath or into vengeance. And wrath is when God has held back his anger and held it back and held it back and held it back, but finally it can no longer be held back and there is an outburst of divine vengeance. And my friends, that is not the same thing as you going through a hard time or believers suffering persecution. I respect everyone that's been through a hard time and through everybody that's experienced persecution. I know many people that have experienced that and I have experienced that. But wrath is a completely different thing.

Renner actually uses the example of the judgement poured out on Egypt and tells us that those are not even close to the wrath to come:

The closest thing we have to wrath in the Bible is when the plagues were poured out on Egypt. Even that was minor compared to what is coming in the book of Revelation. We are talking about bowls of wrath, one after another. It will be destructive as God pours out His wrath on the ungodly world.

What Does Delivered Mean?

This is the key to this happening before the wrath and Renner clears up that very well:

*Yet this verse says the righteous will be delivered from that. We will be gone before it takes place. The word delivered comes from the Greek word **rhuomai** (rhoo'-om-ah-ee) which means to deliver, rescue, or remove from a dangerous situation. It depicts God rescuing His people from peril-literally.*

Renner notes that the Apostle Paul wasn't using this word casually when he could've used another: *Paul was a linguist. He knew Greek extremely well. He intentionally chose this word to tell us that before wrath is poured out on the earth, God's people will be delivered and rescued.*

He then makes his case by letting us see how the word is used all through the New Testament: *To help you understand this word rhuomai, it is used 15 times in the New Testament. When you see how it's used all 15 times, you understand exactly what Paul means when he says we are delivered from the wrath to come.*

In Matthew 6:13, Jesus used this word when He taught His disciples to pray:

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

This means to be rescued and removed from danger — a divine rescue operation.

In Matthew 27:43, the thief on the cross said of Jesus, "Let Him deliver Him." Again, rhuomai — rescue and removal from danger.

In Luke 1:74 (Zechariah's prayer), he prayed that God would grant that we be delivered out of the hand of our enemies — literal rescue.

In Luke 11:4, Jesus again teaches, "Deliver us from evil," meaning to be snatched away from peril.

In Romans 7:24–25, Paul cries, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" and rejoices that Jesus has rescued him.

In Romans 11:26, the Deliverer comes out of Zion — the Messiah who rescues and removes His people.

In Romans 15:31, Paul asks in prayer that he might be delivered from unbelievers in Judea — literal danger.

In 2 Corinthians 1:10, Paul says God "delivered us... does deliver us... and will yet deliver us."

Total rescue, past, present, and future.

In Colossians 1:13, Christ "delivered us from the power of darkness." Literal transfer from one kingdom to another.

Then we come to 1 Thessalonians 1:10 — the verse under study — where Paul promises the church will be delivered from the wrath to come.

In 2 Timothy 3:11, Paul says the Lord delivered him from persecutions — he was snatched out.

In 2 Timothy 4:17–18, Paul says the Lord delivered him from the mouth of the lion and would deliver him from every evil work.

In 2 Peter 2:7–9, God delivered righteous Lot just in time. Peter concludes that the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation.

He ends this thorough logic this way:

After reviewing all 15 uses of rhuomai, 1 Thessalonians 1:10 is not figurative or allegorical. God literally delivers, rescues, and removes His people from wrath.

One Of These Things Is Not Like The Other

Now that I have that song in your head, Renner sums his teaching up by letting us know that wrath and difficult circumstances aren't the same thing:

Hard times are not wrath. God does not allow the righteous to suffer with the ungodly. Abraham declared this in Genesis 18:23. Jesus said in Matthew 24 that the great tribulation would be unlike anything the world has ever seen.

He then elaborates on the word describing the Tribulation:

*The word *great* means enormous and massive. *Tribulation* describes crushing pressure —*

overwhelming, suffocating stress beyond imagination.

This pent up wrath is poured out on unbelievers who rejected grace when it was fully available to them. It isn't meant for those of us who accepted the shedding of blood that Jesus shed as he endured the wrath of God for our sins. Why would God have His children come anywhere close to that wrath again? The answer is He isn't going to. The word for deliverance makes that clear as does Renner when he says this:

Wrath will be poured out during those seven years — but we will not be here. He will deliver us from the wrath to come. From Genesis to Revelation, God has never abandoned His people to wrath. He always provides a rescue. And we can rest in that truth.

There are some, like the preterists or partial preterists who explain away this by saying the Tribulation happened way back in 70 AD. Of course, they reject the idea of the Rapture altogether among a great deal of other things. And there are those who adhere to a mid-tribulation Rapture which means the Church sticks around for the first 3 ½ years which in my estimation is certainly no walk in the park at all. And then you have the post-tribulation believers which has us going through the entire Tribulation. Folks, none of this makes sense Biblically to me now that we've taken a very deep dive into this whole being around for the wrath. It simply doesn't hold up under scrutiny. Renner ends by making another point briefly that I've already addressed, but it's not a bad idea to bring it up again:

Someone asked, "Who is the great restrainer?" The great restrainer is mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2. Paul describes an onslaught of evil at the end of the age and says that something — or someone — is holding it back. That restrainer is the church. As long as the church is on the earth, evil is restrained. The presence of believers holds back the full manifestation of the antichrist. And that shows just how powerful the church truly is.

Amen to that!