

1 Peter 4:12-13 (KJV) says, Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

A fiery trial has shaken the whole world by this corona virus. Hebrew says that everything that can be shaken will be shaken so that which remains cannot be shaken. This is Clearly a time to embrace Romans 8:28 (KJV) And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. In this time of trials and shaking we are being changed and conformed to the image and likeness of Christ. We are being strengthen by God's Spirit in the inner man. In this, God is being glorified as we learn to live more in faith and trust knowing that God is not finished with His church or America. We believe that an awakening, a revival and a great harvest will come in during these last days. And that the Lord will bring the nations to a tremendous restoration, the nation's whose God is the Lord.

We do not know the exact time, but we feel that the catching up of the church, which is commonly referred to as the 'rapture', is probably not far away. This is evident as we look at the events of the last few years on this earth. Both Jesus and Paul told the believers to comfort one another with the knowledge of the rapture. It is our desire today that we are all comforted with this glorious truth.

John 14:1-4(KJV)

- 1) Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.
- 2) In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.
- 3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.
- 4) And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

Jesus is assuring His disciples, as well as us today, that He will come to receive us unto Himself, in what is commonly referred to as the rapture. Remember that the definition of salvation includes healing, deliverance,

restoration, provision, safety and saving from God wrath. Scripture is clear that we as born-again believers, are not children of God's wrath. The children of wrath will be all those who have not received Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, and will go through all seven years of the tribulation.

The tribulation will be the most catastrophic time the world will ever see.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-18 (KJV)

- 1) Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.
- 2) For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.
- 3) For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:
- 4) That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;
- 5) Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:
- 6) That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.
- 7) For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.
- 8) He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

There is much confusion in the church today regarding whether or not we must obey the commandments of God in the New Testament. We are saved, sanctified, delivered and redeemed as we dwell in Christ Jesus. Jesus manifest through us, holiness and righteousness as we submit to the sanctification process of the Holy Spirit.

In v. 2 its clear that we in fact must obey the Lord and His commandments. We also see in **John 14:21-24 (KJV)** 21) **He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.** Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest

Thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, **If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him. He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings: and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me.**

In **1 John 3:22-24** (KJV)

And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment. And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in Him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us.

Just as we are saved by grace through faith we obey God by grace through faith, not by legalism and works.

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

9) But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

10) And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

11) And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

12) That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

Here we see Paul referring to the great commandment of Mt. 22:37, to love God, man and self. Paul is giving us instructions on obeying God as he did in all his letters and at the same time, he is encouraging them to grow in their love for one another.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

13) But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

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.

16) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

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

18) Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Paul is assuring us that all that are truly born again, whether alive or dead, will be caught up (raptured) to meet the Lord in the air and we will be with the Lord forever. This is clearly a pre-tribulation rapture position. For we are not the children of wrath.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-15 (KJV)

1) But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

2) For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

3) For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

4) But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

5) Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

6) Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

7) For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

8) But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

9) For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

10) Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

11) Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

V. 9 confirms, For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. The mid-tribulation position and post-tribulation position which we do not proscribe to would make us children of wrath and would hardly be something to comfort one another with.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-17 (KJV)

1) Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

2) That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

3) Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

4) Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

5) Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

6) And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

7) For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

8) And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

9) Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

10) And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11) And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

12) That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Even now great deception has come upon the earth. Seducing spirits, with doctrines of devils, are already plaguing mankind. False teachers had confused the Thessalonians into believing they had missed the coming of the Lord. So Paul writes this second letter to ensure them that the rapture had not taken place. After the 7-year tribulation Jesus tells us in Mt. 24:29-31 that He will send His angels to the four winds of the earth, to collect the elect that have been saved during this 7-year period. This is important because in 1 Thess. 4:16-17 Jesus personally comes to the clouds and catches us up to be with Him forever. These are undeniably two different events, the first being Jesus coming for His church at the end of the church age. The other event involves the angels collecting the elect after the tribulation.

13) But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

14) Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15) Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

16) Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

17) Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

For additional scriptural evidence concerning the pre-tribulation rapture we are including the following scriptures.

Matthew 24:36-44 (KJV)

But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two *women shall be* grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

In Matthews account called the Olivet discourse, Jesus talks about both His second coming, the tribulation and the rapture of the church. We have included verses 36-44 which talks about the rapture.

Luke 21:36 (KJV) Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Luke also teaches on the second coming, tribulation and the rapture. V. 36 makes it clear that the true believers will escape the tribulation.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 (KJV) Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Titus 2:11-14 (KJV) For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live

soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.