

## Mid-East Prophecy Update – September 18th, 2011

- After eight weeks now, counting the introduction, today will be the final part in our series on the "Pre-Tribulation Rapture, with part seven.
- The "seven" reasons in the form of an acronym for the word rapture, that the rapture of the church has to happen before the tribulation are:

**R**EVELATION TO US

**A**FFECT UPON US

**P**URITY OF US

**T**RUMPETS FOR US

**U**NIFORMITY WITH US

**R**ESPONSIBILITY ON US

**E**NCOURAGEMENT FROM US

- Of all these seven, this last one is perhaps one of my favorite because of how it speaks to, and provides comfort for, anyone whose afraid.
- In addition to this, it also, sort of single handedly, dismantles the opposing views, by virtue of what Paul writes to the church in Thessalonica.

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 NIV** (13) Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. (14) We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. (15) According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. (16) For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. (17) After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. (18) Therefore encourage each other with these words.

- This is encouraging and fascinating for a number of reasons not the least of which is, they thought that loved ones who died, missed the rapture.
- Placing the rapture anywhere but at the beginning of the seven year tribulation makes encouragement disingenuous at best, dishonest at worst.
- How can you say; "You'll be beheaded as a Christian if you don't take the mark of the beast, therefore encourage each other with these words."

**1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 NIV** (1) Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, (2) for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. (3) While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. (4) But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. (5) You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. (6) So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. (7) For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. (8) But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. (9) For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. (10) He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. (11) Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

- Notice he says that there's really no need to write them about times and dates knowing that they understand the rapture is as a thief in the night.
- Paul then goes on to write why it happens so suddenly with the analogy of a pregnant woman's labor pains as people saying, peace and safety.
- It's what he says next that should seal the deal for anyone who reads and study's their Bible; "...this day should not surprise you like a thief."

- Why? Because we're not in darkness, we're of the light, of the day, thus we're not doing what others do at night, like fall asleep, and get drunk.
- We do what's done in the day, we're awake, alert, self-controlled, putting on our armor, knowing that God did not appoint us to suffer His wrath.
- It's for this reason, Paul would tell them to encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact they were apparently already doing.

- Question; "if there's no pre-tribulation rapture, then why isn't Paul warning them about surviving, instead of encouraging them about escaping?"
- It would stand to reason that instead of encouraging one another, and building up one another, they would be warning each other to beware!
- In other words, I wouldn't be very encouraging of another, because I'm too concerned about surviving for myself. It simply isn't true to the text.

Ron Graff & Lambert Dolphin said it best this way; "What difference does it make whether we accept the pre-tribulation or the pre-wrath viewpoint? To Robert Van Kampen and Marvin Rosenthal, ...[who] coined the expression 'pre-wrath Rapture' for their position, ...the stakes are great. Van Kampen says, your view of end times may determine whether you, your children, or your grandchildren survive the onslaught of Antichrist or die at his hands.' (*Rapture*, p. 131) Just like the pos-tribulation view, the bottom line for the pre-wrath folks is survival."

- By the way, let me hasten to say, this explains the conspicuous absence of the word theory throughout this entire pre-tribulation rapture series.
- At the risk of sounding a little too strong; "the Pre-wrath teaching is a theory, but the Pre-tribulation teaching is the truth, from the Word of truth."
- The litmus test as to whether or not I've heard truth or not, is how freed I am by it. The truth sets free, but if it's not truth, then I'll be bound up.

- This is where and how I would like to bring this pre-tribulation rapture teaching in for a landing given what's happening this month of September.
- It seems that the ongoing Arab Spring, soon coming Palestinian State, and ever looming Comet Elenin, are forming the perfect prophetic storm.
- Born again Christians all over the world are getting very excited. It's not so much that it's all happening, as much as it is when it's all happening.

- Everything seems to point to the end of this month of September, 2011 on what appears to be a three day window basically from the 27<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Back in July, I suggested that all of these events that we're now seeing, are not cosmic coincidence, rather, I believe they are God's providence.
- Then, when I encouraged you to be like the Bereans and search the scriptures for yourself, and not just take my word for it, you actually did it.

- Talk of the alignment of these events has gone viral, and has resulted in many people believing we're on the cusp of the rapture of the church.
- Perhaps you'll indulge me for a moment as I share with you candidly; while the rapture taking place this month excites me, it also concerns me.
- My concern is that if the rapture does not happen, many people will be unspeakably devastated, and could fall away from the Lord because of it.

- Not only do we not know the day or the hour that He comes, the scriptures are very clear in telling us that we need to occupy until He comes.
- If the truth be known, we have absolutely nothing to lose being ready for the rapture now, and being ready if it's several more years from now.
- By being that ready, we can always be encouraged, and, in so doing, we can be an encouragement to others to always be ready for the rapture.

- This of course pre-supposes that you're encouraging of others, as opposed to surviving for yourself. Does this mean we shouldn't be prepared?
- Absolutely not! There's nothing wrong with being prepared and prudent, but don't be paranoid. Here's a telling question all of us should ask:
- Do I have preparations, or do the preparations have me? If I'm being prudent, I'll have preparations, but if I'm being paranoid, they'll have me.

- One final thought; while a September 2011 rapture may be deemed possible by some, and probable by others, we need to be ready either way.
- I would rather say this to you from the pulpit, and have the rapture not happen, as opposed to not say this, and then have the rapture happen.
- Either way, it's incumbent upon us to both occupy until He comes, and be ready for when He does actually come, because He will come!