

NOT APPOINTED TO WRATH

By Shane Shaddix

A great abuse of scripture by the dispensationalist pre-tribbers is their argument for a pre-trib rapture that is based on the following two verses:

I Thessalonians 1:10 "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come"

I Thessalonians 5:9 "For God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ".

They commit two great deceptions here.

First: they fail to distinguish between the wrath of man, the wrath of Satan, and the wrath of God. Though God's people have been saved from the wrath of God by our Lord Jesus Christ, we are in no wise exempt from the wrath of Satan and the wrath of man. Much to the contrary, the whole of scripture teaches us that God's people are, and always have been, victims of the wrath of man.

It began when Cain killed his brother Abel because "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain..." and continued through time, up to and beyond our Lord who was crucified by the Jews because of their "zeal of God".

Before delving too deep here, let's first establish from scripture that the wrath of man and the wrath of Satan, do in fact exist.

WRATH OF MAN: James 1:20 "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." It is Man's wrath because they are of their father, the devil, and the lust of their father they will do. (John 8:44) In John chapter 8, we learn from verse 31 that he was speaking to "Jews that believed on him". If we follow the dialogue that takes place between those "Jews that believed on him" and our Lord, we see that they argued with our Lord and by verse 44 our Lord declares to them that "ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do". May we be warned by this passage to not argue with the one whom we call Lord!

WRATH OF SATAN: Revelation 12:12b-13 "...for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child." Also: Revelation 12:17 "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Notice in verses 12b-13 that the devil persecuted the woman that brought forth the man child. In verse 17 it states that the devil was wroth with the woman. From this we learn that persecution, affliction, and tribulation are manifestations of Satan's wrath and man's wrath.

The church has always, since Abel died at the hand of his brother, suffered violence from the world. Some, if not much, of the tribulation poured out on God's people has been by those who profess Christ. Such, I believe, has been the case of the church in America. Though we have not resisted unto blood striving against sin, we have, no doubt, received persecution from the mouth of those who profess Christ.

NOT ALL AFFLICTION IS PHYSICAL

Hebrews 10: 32-39 "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions. Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an

enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

Hebrews 12: 3-4 "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:"

So, while the Hebrew believers in these passages did receive a great fight of afflictions and were made a gazingstock, both by reproaches and afflictions, and as they were cast away by their brethren, the Jews, they also became companions of their brethren that were so used. However, no doubt, they had not resisted unto blood striving against sin.

Peter also, in his writings, makes the connection between the wrath of Satan and persecution of believers by the world:

I Peter 5:8-10 "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

So we see then that the scriptures clearly demonstrate that Satan uses his children, the world, to pour out his wrath on God's children, the church.

In conclusion, you can see that we find that not all wrath is the wrath of God. Now, for examples of God's wrath, let's look at the following scriptures:

Revelation 6: 16-17 "And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

Revelation 11:18 "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." Here we learn from Revelation 11:18 that the time of the dead (the resurrection) and the time of the judgment is also the time of God's wrath. It is a time of reward for believers and a time of destruction for unbelievers. From this verse we learn that the time of the resurrection of the saints is the time when God's wrath is come. This is in perfect harmony with the teachings of the old testament prophets, the teachings of our Lord in the gospels, and the teachings of the apostles. So far, I have found four other passages which clearly teach that the resurrection of the last day will be of both the believers and the unbelievers:

Daniel 12:2 "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Matthew 13:30 "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

John 5:28-29 “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

Acts 24:15 “And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”

It seems as though are all in agreement. There is no commentary needed on this point, for the scriptures speak plainly.

Secondly: the other great deception of the pre-tribbers in using I Thessalonians 1:10 and 5:9 is that, while they acknowledge that “God has not appointed us to wrath”, they fail to acknowledge that we are appointed to tribulation. In the very book pre-tribbers use to make their argument, right between the two chapters in which they pull their “proof” texts from, we find some very enlightening scripture:

I Thessalonians 3:2-5 “And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.”

So, though we learn from I Thessalonians that we are not appointed to wrath, we do discover that we are appointed to tribulation, afflictions, suffering, and temptations, all of which are basically referring to the same thing. When comparing spiritual things with spiritual things, we find that these descriptors are used interchangeably. Let us consider some other passages of scripture which also teach that we, as believers, are appointed unto tribulation:

Matthew 10:22a “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake:”

Matthew 24:21 “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”

Mark 13:19 “For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.”

Luke 21:12 “But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.”

John 15:20 “Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.”

John 16:33 “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Acts 14:22 “Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”

Romans 8:17 "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

Philippians 1:29 "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;"

II Timothy 3:12 "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

Hebrews 12:6-8 "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

I Peter 2:19 & 21 "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully." (19) "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:" (21)

I Peter 4:12-13, 17 & 19 "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." (12-13) "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (17) "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." (19)

I Peter 5:8-10 "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

Though we just looked at quite a few scriptures that teach we are not only appointed to, but are called to and given unto tribulation, afflictions, and sufferings, these are just the tip of the iceberg of scripture that declare such; for the whole of scripture teaches us so. While believers are not appointed to God's wrath, we are definitely appointed to the wrath of man and Satan.

Some have asked me: "Why would God drag His bride through the mud before he returns for her?" To this I would answer: he has no need to do so, for she is already wallowing in the mud. He is however, as Peter declares, going to put us through the fire. Consider, if you will, a verse from a favorite hymn. It is not a scriptural argument, but it is however based on a scriptural principle that is taught in Isaiah 43:2.

HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie
My grace all sufficient shall be thy supply
The flame shall not hurt thee, I only design
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine

Published in 1787 by John Rippon
Author remains a mystery

While mentioning hymns, I challenge you, dear reader, to find a hymn published before the early 1900's that teaches a pre-trib return of Christ. So far, as of yet, I have found none, though I have found six which claim a

post-trib return of our Lord. All six hymns I speak of were written pre-1900. Something changed in the early 1900's. It may just be a coincidence, but the C.I. Scofield Bible, which taught dispensationalism and a pre-trib rapture, appeared in 1909 and was later revised by Scofield in 1917.

So in conclusion: we have learned that all wrath is not God's wrath, and that while we are not appointed to God's wrath, we are appointed unto tribulation, persecutions, afflictions.

CREDITS AND DISCLAIMER

All scripture quoted is KJV

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All historical and hymnal information is from a general consensus of 25 years of study.

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