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Reviewing My Radio Interview on Michael Brown's The Line of Fire – Pre-Wrath and Post-Trib Eschatology – Ep. 14

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***The following is a transcript so it has not been edited for grammar and spelling.**

Transcription results:

[music]

It's time for the Biblical Prophecy Program with your host Alan Kurschner of Eschatos Ministeries.

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Reviewing my radio interview on Michael Brown's The Line of Fire program, pre-wrath and post-trib Eschatology.

Well, I'd like to make a few announcements before we begin. First of all, there is a course - a seminar course - that I'm going to be teaching at the New Jersey Bible Institute. So, for anyone who lives in New Jersey, I will be teaching a seminar. It's a six week seminar - a weekly seminar - on Monday evenings, in Wayne, New Jersey. And I'm teaching on a-- it's a survey of the history of the Bible. And this is a very important topic, because one of the most important questions in the Church is, "How do we get a Bible?" So, there's a lot of important issues I'll be addressing in this seminar. And again, that's going to begin February 2nd; Monday. So, early next year, and you can go to newjerseybibleinstitute.org and register for the seminar. Again, it's going to be six weeks, on Monday evenings,, beginning February 2nd. And it will be in Wayne, New Jersey.

Another announcement-- actually a couple announcements of two seminars. Actually, one is a conference and one is a seminar. The first one is the Florida Bible Prophecy Conference coming up January 10th, 2015 in Orlando, Florida. And you can go to alankurschner.com and click on the menu there where it says 'speaker events, upcoming events'. It's called the Florida Bible Prophecy Conference. It will be Timothy Gill, Darcy Gill, [Sama Daktak?], Charles Cooper, and myself. I'm giving two sessions in that conference; one is going to be on a vital Biblical distinction, and the other session I'm giving is - on the pre-wrath rapture - is the 800 pound gorilla. Can you guess what that is? Yes, that is the 2 Thessalonians 2. So, sign up for that soon; January 10th. That is actually coming up really soon.

The other one is Salt Lake City area. Out on the West Coast, Salt Lake City area, and that will be March 7th. You can sign up for that as well at alankurschner.com. This is one of my own seminars that I put on. Before the Day of Lord's seminars, I will be giving six sessions on Bible prophecy and explaining the pre-wrath view. Be sure to sign up for that. Again, that is March 7th, 2015, Salt Lake City-- or at least Salt Lake City area.

And actually, one other announcement I want to make. As you know, Christmas is coming up and some gift ideas I would suggest is my book Pre-wrath - A Very Short Introduction to the Great Tribulation, Rapture, and the Day of the Lord. If you purchase ten of these copies, I have a bulk discount. You can get them for \$5 each. I mean, these are perfect Christmas stocking stuffers, especially for your pre-

tribulational friends and family. \$5 a copy, you can't beat that. Again, you can go to alankurschner.com and you'll see an image in the righthand column for the book *Pre-wrath - A Very Short Introduction to the Great Tribulation, Rapture, and the Day of the Lord*.

Just over a month ago, Michael Brown had New Testament scholar Greg Keener on this show, *The Line of Fire Program*, to discuss why pre-tribulationism is not biblical. And I tuned in, I'm always kind of fascinated to see how other viewpoints argue against pre-tribulationism. Of course, pre-wrath, we can share a lot of these arguments, and some of these arguments that Keener and Brown made against pre-tribulationism, I agreed with. But there are a few arguments that of course, are post-tribulational, that I just didn't think were very good. And I think they argued even better. But the topic of pre-wrath was brought up by a caller, so you can imagine my pretty pre-wrath antennas going up, right? And the caller called in about whether Keener was pre-wrath or some questions about pre-wrath, and the answer that Brown and Keener gave, I was really disappointed to hear that they - both Brown and Keener - misrepresented the pre-wrath position. Of course, they didn't misrepresent it as bad as pre-tribulationists misrepresent it, but they have some misunderstanding of it. I think some of it is just honest misrepresentation and a lack of ignorance, and I don't think they've really read primary literature. I get the sense that they have not read primary literature on pre-wrath.

So what I did was, I responded in a blog post to that misrepresentation, and I'll leave the link in the show notes for that response. But for example, Brown responded with Keener's agreement to the caller regarding pre-wrath by saying, "We are not taking out any time before Jesus' appearing or appears in glory." Well, that's not what pre-wrath teaches; that's the pre-trib position, not pre-wrath. Pre-wrath, we believe that the rapture will happen on the same day that Jesus appears in glory. There's no dissent on that in the pre-wrath camp; that's just a basic tenant of pre-wrath view. We believe that when Christ returns in glory, God's people are raptured and the text we would support for that is Matthew 24: 29-31, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10, and 2 Thessalonians 2:8. Just a sampling of just standard text that teach that.

The rapture is not disconnected from the second coming of Christ. This is very important. I'm often amazed why so many people get this wrong. I don't know why it's a big question out there. What's the relationship between the rapture? Or is the rapture the second coming? I think Paul makes that very clear in just one verse actually. 1 Thessalonians 4:15 he says, "Those who are left and alive opt to the coming of the Lord." The Greek word behind coming there is *parousia*. It's the term we use for the second coming. Paul's teaching that there is no gap between the rapture and the second coming. Those who are left up to the coming of course, Paul explains a few verses later, they're raptured. You have Paul teaching that when the rapture happens, that God's people, the church, the last generation of the church will be on Earth; they will live and survive, remain up to the coming, up to the second coming of Christ. So there's no disconnect here. The rapture is not the second coming. The second coming is not the rapture. The rapture is only part of the second coming. It's one of God's first divine purposes within this whole *parousia*.

When we think of second-- let me put it this way. It's like when someone would ask me, "Is the birth of Christ the first coming of Christ? Or is it a separate event?" We would say, "Well, it's part of the first coming Christ." So the birth of Christ is not disconnected from the first coming of Christ. It was one of the Father's first divine purposes of the first coming of Christ. There was the arrival-- it was a complex whole. There was the arrival - that's the birth - and then there was his growing up, his childhood, his ministry, casting out demons, teaching ministry, healing ministry, confronting the Jewish leadership, the Passion Week, his ascension. All that was a complex whole. It wasn't some simple snap of the fingers, and bam, that was it. The first coming of Christ was about 33 years of length, and the second coming of Christ will be-- well, we don't know the exact length of it, but we know that it begins with Christ arriving on the clouds. When he arrives on the clouds Paul says, "That is when the *parousia* - the second coming - happens. And then there will be the resurrection of the dead and then those who are alive will be called up to the Lord." So there is no disconnect between the rapture and the glorious return of the Lord.

Another example is when Keener says in the show, that he thinks the pre-wrath distinction between the great tribulation and the Day of the Lord's Wrath is 'semantic'. When I heard that, I was like, "You've got to be kidding me." It's not semantic. The Biblical distinction between the Great Tribulation and The Day of the Lord's Wrath is not semantic. The Biblical data is voluminous; it's voluminous in showing that there's a period of tribulation before the wrath of God is poured out. I mean, you see that in Matthew 24 clearly. You see that in both of Paul's Epistles; you see that in the book of Revelation. So when he says it's semantic; when I hear that, I was like, "Well, this makes sense coming from a traditional post-tribur." They have this amorphous type of view of the Day of the Lord that gets-- The Day of the Lord is the Great Tribulation; the Great Tribulation is the Day of the Lord, and it's all kind of-- it's just a momentary event. Maybe it happens within one day or-- now of course futurist post-tribulationists, they would make it more complex as the pre-wrath view would. But the traditional post-tribs, they just view it as some simple and amorphous event that's all kind of intermingled and whatnot. That's unfortunate, because the Biblical data does not support Keener's assertion that the Biblical distinction is semantic understanding.

I mentioned that I wrote a blog post responding to this misrepresentation by Michael Brown and Keener. And Michael Brown, he learned that I took issue with it, and he graciously invited me on his show - The Line of Fire - to explain pre-wrath eschatology for his listeners, and I appreciate that, and to interact with his post-tribulationism. This was last week, and I'll leave the link of the interview in the show, but I'm actually going to play it on today's show. It was a very brief exchange. I knew it was going to be a brief exchange, so I had to really talk fast and I was able to fit in a good explanation of pre-wrath. However, we did not have enough time to have a substantive exchange on post-tribulationism. I wanted to do that, but unfortunately, again, time restraints with commercials and whatnot. But I do want to play you, as I mentioned, the clip of the interview. It's about ten to 15 minutes, minus the commercial break. I'm not sure if it's one or two commercial breaks - I don't remember - but I will cut those out for you. And then after I play the clip, I want to comment on a few points from the interview. So here is the interview with Michael Brown.

It is Thoroughly Jewish Thursday, but question of Israel, the end of the world. The question of what the prophetic books say is certainly something that is very appropriate for Thoroughly Jewish Thursday. A few weeks back, my dear friend and colleague, Professor Craig Keener, came on and we talked about why we don't believe in a pre-trib rapture, and then why we don't believe in a pre-wrath rapture. Professor Keener even said, "I want to be left behind." Meaning that it's those who are falling under judgement who get taken. Those who are left behind are the righteous. When we were contacted by Alan Kurschner, who's director of Eschatos Ministries, which is dedicated to teaching Biblical prophecy from a futurist, pre-millennial, pre-wrath perspective. So very similar to mine, but with some nuances. Kurschner has written, "Anti-Christ Before the Day of the Lord: What Every Christian Needs to Know about the Return of Christ." And he's been serious in his academic work. MA in Biblical Languages from Gordon-Conwell. Graduate studies at Harvard Divinity School. New Testament Jewish Studies at Chabad Jewish Center, New Jersey. That's interesting. I want to ask Alan about that. And he is currently working on his PhD in Greek Linguistics, and he teaches Biblical Studies at the New Jersey Bible Institute. And the biggest issue for Alan is he felt that we did not adequately or rightly represent pre-wrath rapture teaching. So with that introduction, Alan, welcome to The Line of Fire. Thanks so much for joining us.

Thank you for having me on, Dr. Brown.

And Alan, before we get into the specifics of the theology, as a Jewish believer in Jesus, how did you get to study with Chabad? These are ultra-orthodox Jews, for listeners who don't know. Did they welcome you for who you were? Try to influence you? How were you able to do that.

Sure, good question. I live in New Jersey, but actually I'm originally from Wisconsin, if you can't tell by my Wisconsin accent. When I moved out here, I was like, "Wow, I'm in an epicenter of Jews here out in New Jersey." North Jersey, that is. There seems to be a Jewish center, a synagogue on every other

corner. I was like, "I think I want to take advantage of this." There's a Chabad-- there's different Chabad centers in the area. Of course, their main one is the Biblical School in America down in Moristown, New Jersey. There's all these offshoots. I'm taking some type of courses at a particular ones here in North Jersey, and they're very welcoming. They know that I'm a Christian, a Gentile, although people ask me if I--

I made the wrong assumption. So they're letting you in as a Gentile; I said a Jewish believer. My bad there. Sorry.

Yeah. No, that's fine. People ask me that all the time. As far as I know, I'm not Jewish; I haven't really done any extensive of research. But I have an interest, of course; my area is more in Greek linguistics and other areas of research, but I'm attending the High Holiday season - Holidays - this past month, and I just want to take in some of the Jewish studies and culture, because of course it's an interest of mine. I have a heart for Israel and for Jews to come to Christ, and I want to know their theology and their thinking better.

Do you find them to be outward legalistic hypocrites just going through the motions and insincere, or do you find them to be sincere seekers, but somehow have not connected rightly with who Jesus is?

Well, the particular Jews that I've been interacting with seem to be very sincere. If you ask me that in maybe two or three years, I might have maybe a more seasoned answer to that, but as far as my experience, they are very sincere, especially the orthodox Rabbi that I've been interacting with.

Of course that's been my experience with many religious views for many, many years. Alan, explain exactly what the pre-wrath rapture is and how you would distinguish that from a post-trib view, and feel free to say however you felt that I or Professor Keener did not adequately represent the view. Lay these things out for our listeners.

Sure. I did want to real quickly thank you for your ministry, particularly the Jewish Apologetics, as you know living in North Jersey that's very relevant. And in fact, I require as a textbook, *The Real Kosher Jesus*, when I teach a course on the Gospels at the New Jersey Bible Institute. So the students appreciate your work on that.

Well, thank you so much. Much appreciate it.

So, pre-wrath of course it's a position under the umbrella of pre-millennialism, and we do have-- pre-wrath does share much more affinity of course with post-tribulationism than pre-tribulationism. For example, pre-wrath highlights and argues for a future reconstituted national installation of Israel, including the land promises. We share many arguments against pre-tribulationism, and we both believe that the church will one day face an Antichrist figure, although some post-tribulationists seem to historicize more the Antichrist figure than make it more futurist. Maybe you can clarify that in the future on your-- briefly later on your position on that.

But let me just summarize the pre-wrath position for your listeners so they at least have a contour of it. The pre-wrath position is a very important distinction between the Antichrist Great Tribulation which is directed at the church and Israel. The church and Israel will face a persecution of a future Antichrist figure, but this Great Tribulation is distinguished from a very important event - The Day of the Lord's Wrath - which will be directed against the ungodly. As far as the Antichrist Great Tribulation, it's going to be cut short. We don't know the day or the hour, but those days of Great Tribulation will be cut short with the glorious return of Christ at the start of his parousia - or second coming - with the resurrection and the rapture. And then immediately, after this great deliverance event, The Day of the Lord's Wrath will begin to be executed against the wicked, displayed in the systematic judgments of the trumpet, the bowls, and the battle over Armageddon.

So this distinction, I'm convinced that the student of prophecy does not recognize this distinction between the Antichrist Great Tribulation and then The Day of the Lord's Wrath is going to confuse certain [?] relating to the second coming of Christ. Especially pre-tribulationists, I think that they have a

lot of confusion on that. So I believe that the consistent distinction in Jesus' teaching and Paul, Thessalonians, and the Book of Revelation; there's a consistent pattern of Antichrist Great Tribulation and The Day of the Lord's Wrath.

So just to make sure I understand this then. In your view, since you spoke about the parousia and the return of Jesus. And you know Greek better than I know Greek in terms of parousia speaking of an arrival, a king's arrival somewhere, an actual visit somewhere. So my understanding is that Jesus appears in glory, the dead rise first. We are raised together with Him, caught up to meet him in the air, glorified. And then, we escort him back. We return with Him to Earth as he destroys the wicked. In your view, what happens when-- the moment Jesus appears, where are we and what happens next?

This is a very important question. A very important difference between post-trib and pre-wrath is that, when God's people are caught up with the Lord in the air, I believe that Christ will usher us into the arms of His Father in Heaven. And then during that time, Christ will meet out His wrath on the Earth, and then eventually, the people of God will then descend. After the wrath, they will descend in the New Jerusalem, then be on Earth. Now, post-tribulation-- by the way, I believe that the Biblical text that I support that position with is 2 Corinthians 4:14, John 14:1-3, Revelations 7:13-15; if some people want to look up those references. So post-tribulationists I think, make a very big lexical mistake when they say-- well, the great term "eis apantēsin"-- by the way, I use the modern pre-pronunciation. So "eis apantēsin" - meaning meeting - they read way too much into it and say, "Well, that term, that's a technical term for a Hellenistic reception."

Welcome back to the Line of Fire broadcast on this Thoroughly Jewish Thursday. I'm speaking for a few minutes here with Alan Kurschner. If you want to go to his website, find out more about Eschatos Ministries and the Pre-Wrath Rapture view that was put forward, I would say most famously by Jewish believer Mark Rosenthal, the website alankurschner.com. Hey Alan, one more question for you, and again I have historically not held to this view - I've been more of what would be a more traditional Post-Trib person - we have commonality on so many issues here, in terms of our futurist views, in terms of our premillennial views, in terms of not being Pre-Trib - and I have no over-reaction against your Pre-Wrath view. But thanks for clarifying it further for us. Second Thessalonians 1 in my mind goes against the Pre-Wrath view in that rest comes to the believers at the moment that Jesus comes in wrath to destroy the wicked. Obviously, you've studied that in depth. Can you just give your brief take on that 2 Thessalonians 1, and why that is not go against your pre-wrath view?

I read 2 Thessalonians 1, in terms of that there's going to be a great persecution up to the Apocalypse of Christ - the revelation of Christ. And that on the very same day that God's people are delivered, will be the same day that the Day of the Lord's Wrath will begin. There's no gap of time between the rapture and seven years-- pre-tribs teach that seven years later or days later or whatever. The rapture will happen on the very same day. Paul describes it as given wrath. Of course in his previous Epistle, he describes it-- the same pattern is there, he just describes it more in depth and with more description, with the rapture narrative depiction. Well, here he calls it a rest. In fact, I think this is very fitting for the pre-wrath, and it's fitting for post-trib too, it's just not giving us a lot of extended narrative there in the first chapter. But it's consistent in the sense of, there's a deliverance-- first of all, there's persecution up to the Apocalypse of God's people. And then you have Christ's return - the Apocalypse - and then you have judgement. So, that's consistent in Matthew 24, 1 Thessalonians 4, and Book of Revelations. So, we would see it as very consistent with pre-wrath position.

Got it. Alan, thanks for articulating that. I appreciate the greater clarity for all of our listeners, and perhaps we can dialogue about this more in the future. And blessings on your studies in ministry.

Thank you.

I thought I gave a good synopsis of the pre-wrath position, given of course the amount of time I had. We only had time for Dr. Brown to basically kind of challenge me on two points. One of the challenges that Dr. Brown made was, what I considered the most-- I think it's the most common argument made by post-tribbers. Of course, I'm always prepared to respond to it. He didn't go in depth into-- he didn't

really develop the post-trib argument. It was more kind of a surface level objection, explanation of the argument. But he argued that after the rapture, God's people were in the sky with Christ and we would be immediately escorted back to Earth. What Dr. Brown was alluding to, he was alluding to that in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, the Greek term *eis apantēsin*. That is behind the word 'meeting'; the English rendering is 'meeting'. When we meet the Lord in the air. And they believe that this term - this Greek term - is a technical term that means there's an immediate descent to Earth. So you go out and meet the person and immediately, you escort them back.

I began to respond to his argument, and just before I made my point, the commercial break started. So, I was like, "Oh, no," and guess what? When the commercial break was finished, Dr. Brown quickly shifted to a different point. I wish we would have stayed on this point, because this is essential. In my view, this term does not support post-tribulationism. Post-tribulationists, they need to be challenged on this point. It's a tradition for them. They just assume that this word means an immediate descent back to Earth.

Well, I actually just recently, I did in a previous episode, I devoted in entire program to this argument. It's entitled, *Where Do Believers Go After The Rapture? Remain In The Sky, Descend To Earth, Or Ushered Into Heaven?* You can find that at alankurschner.com/8. The eight means that it's episode eight. So alankurschner.com/8. And in that episode, first of all, I explained that the rapture of God's people are not escorted to the Earth, but to the Throne of the Father, before the Throne of the Father in Heaven. I provided four Biblical passages that demonstrate this, that after the rapture, we will be escorted, we will be before the Throne of the Father. That is 2 Thessalonians 4:14, John 14:1-3, Revelation 7:13-15. In Isaiah, even though it's not explicit, but it's implied. Isaiah 26:19-21.

So in the first half of the program, I demonstrated Biblically that God's people are escorted to Heaven. Well, nowhere, no text anywhere in the Bible teaches that the people of God are escorted immediately back to Earth. Nowhere. And post-tribulationists, they recognize this, so what they have to do, they have to read into a particular Greek word and that's what I responded to in *eis apantēsin*, in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, and they believe that-- and I provided four arguments for this. One was of course, that there's no passages that teach that God's people descend back to Earth immediately. Instead, there are explicit passages that teach the contrary, that they will be escorted before the Throne of the Father in Heaven. That's the number one argument I gave.

Number two is, I explained that the Greek term *eis apantēsin* is not a technical term in what's called Hellenistic formal reception descriptions. Again, go to alankurschner.com/8 for me to unpack that.

The third argument was that there's a lack of correspondence between Paul's description in 1 Thessalonians 4, in Hellenistic formal receptions.

And the last argument was that Paul's description resembles instead, actually Old Testament and Jewish apocalyptic imagery. And even Jesus's imagery in Matthew 24. It's not modeling, if you will, or resembling more of a Greek type of imagery or event reception; but instead, a Jewish reception or-- not reception, but a Jewish apocalyptic imagery.

I concluded by citing in an episode, one more popular post-tribulationists, who actually also argues that this argument - *eis apantēsin* - is not a good argument to use. They recognize that you can't read into this term. It's not a technical meaning for an immediate escort back. That's what I wanted to explain to Dr. Brown. But again, the commercial breaks and the brevity of the show didn't allow that.

The second point that Dr. Brown challenged me on was what kind of threw for a loop, because I've never heard this before, and that was on 2 Thessalonians 1. And he suggested that this was troublesome for pre-wrath. He didn't really explain why. I was kind of caught off guard and I had to use some quick thinking. So I thought, "Well, okay. This is an opportunity. Maybe I can explain pre-wrath more." And so, because 2 Thessalonians 1, that's not really-- I don't know how that's an objection from post-tribulationists, and I think it just maybe stems from Dr. Brown's misunderstanding of pre wrath. Again, believing that there's a disconnect between the rapture and the glorious return. Because in 2

Thessalonians 1, it explicitly teaches that the day of the rapture-- well, in that text, Paul is describing the rapture as relief; relief for God's people. On the very same day that God's people is given relief from persecution will be the exact same day that the Day of the Lord's Wrath, the judgement of God will begin. So that's what I explained to Dr. Brown. I hope that as well shows that first of all, they have a misunderstanding of pre-wrath, and that we don't see any disconnect between the deliverance of God's people and the glorious return of Christ.

Now, one thing you should understand about Dr. Brown and Keener, there's basically two types of post-tribulationists. They come from the more-- there's the historicist and the futurist post-tribblers. They come from more of a historicist, maybe traditional type of-- the historical, pre-mill, post-tribulationist camp. They don't affirm a future seven-year period, and they don't make really much of a future Antichrist, even though they'll-- they may affirm a future Antichrist, a future embodiment. They don't really stress it, and they're kind of ambivalent when it comes to whether there's going to be a future temple that's going to be recreated or reconstituted. So they're more focused on the historicist thing. How they view the future is basically, like I mentioned before, it's kind of this amorphous, simple event. If you've been reading my material for any time long or listening to me, I make a contrast between what's called simple eschatology and complex eschatology. I'm not referring to it's "simple" as easy to understand or "complex" as difficult to understand. That's not the sense I'm using these terms. What I mean by "simple" is that, "simple" basically means it's this amorphous event. It's going to happen very quickly, snap; basically, it happens. In contrast, to a complex eschatology, there's going to be a number of events that are going to happen. There's a sequence of events. It's a manifold of events that God is going to fulfill certain divine purposes through these types of events.

Again, the Keener and Brown and the camp of historicists, post-tribulationists see it as a very simple event, which by the way, almost of them will make the seals, trumpets, and bowls the same event, or at least they take a concurrent view of these. That is, they basically happen at the same time. In contrast to a pre-wrath understanding of the seals, trumpets, and bowls, where they will happen consecutively; one after another.

I mean, don't get me wrong. Futurist, post tribulationists will also take certain concurrent views of the seals, trumpets, and bowl judgments. But the traditional post-tribulationists again, they have a simple type of eschatology. It's kind of, like I said, this amorphous simple event in the future. It's not very discreet type of concrete complex or any events that are going to happen. Of course, they'll admit, there maybe some intensification - sometimes they use that term - there's going to be an intensification before the return of Christ. But they don't go into certain particulars of the events surrounding the second coming of Christ.

Well, I hope today's show has helped to clarify these topics, and I will leave all the links to pages I mentioned in the program in the show notes.

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