

Rapture Debate Topic:

The Church Will Face the Antichrist Before the Rapture.

Location: The Hope Center, Plano, Texas. September 25th, 2015

Participants:

Alan Kurschner—Affirmative

Eschatos Ministries

Dr. Thomas (Tommy) Ice—Negative

Pre-Trib Research Center

Kerby Anderson—Moderator

Probe Ministries

Format:

Opening Statement—25 minutes

Break

Rebuttal 1—15 minutes

Rebuttal 2—12 minutes

Rebuttal 3— 10 minutes

Break

Cross-examination—20 minutes

Closing Statements—7 minutes

Transcript begins:

*****Moderator*****

Kerby Anderson:

Well I want to welcome you all to coming out tonight here in this very significant debate. I think you will really enjoy it and you'll have an opportunity to hear quite a bit, and obviously there will be time for interaction as well. This will be a longer discussion and debate so we will have a couple of breaks, and so I'll explain that in just a few minutes. The topic tonight is: "The Church Will Face the Antichrist Before the Rapture." And, obviously we have an individual taking the affirmative and one taking the negative. We'll be looking at that in some detail.

We will have Opening Statements. And these Opening Statements will last about 25 minutes. I'll be the time-keeper, and do our best to try to keep us on track. And so we'll have an opening statement from both of the individuals here for twenty-five minutes. And then it seemed like a good time to take a break.

When we take a break let's make it very short because it will be a long evening. But the breaks will allow you to go to the restrooms, which are right out this door. We've unlocked the doors so if you'd like to go out into the Prayer Garden and walk around you won't get locked out. Which I guess some of you had the experience of just a few minutes ago. But you'll be able to walk around and I hope you are enjoying this whole Hope Center hospitality, because we're really excited about this.

We will come back and there will be a series of rebuttals. Two fifteen minute rebuttals, then two twelve minute rebuttals, then two ten minute rebuttals. Then after that time we'll take another short break. We'll come back and there'll be an opportunity for both of our participants to cross-examine each other. And then there will be time for closing statements. So, feel free to sit back and enjoy, and get comfortable because this will take a while. And we are excited to have both of our participants here. Speaking first in the affirmative will be Alan Kurschner of Eschatos ministries, which is dedicated to teaching

Biblical prophecy about a futurist, premillennial, Prewrath perspective. He is the author of [Antichrist Before the Day of the Lord, What Every Christian Needs to Know About the Return of Christ](#). He holds a Masters of Arts in Biblical Languages from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. He has also done graduate studies in New Testament from Harvard Divinity, and is currently working on his PhD Greek Linguistics from McMaster Divinity College. He lives in New Jersey with his wife Donna.

We also have with us Dr. Tommy Ice. He is the Executive Director of the Pretrib Research Center. He founded the Center back in 1994 with Dr. Tim LaHaye to research, teach and defend the Pretribulation rapture view, and also to deal with many related Bible prophecy topics and doctrines. Dr. Ice has also co-authored about thirty books, writing hundreds of articles and is a frequent conference speaker. He served as a pastor for seventeen years; has a BA from Howard Payne University, a ThM from Dallas Theological Seminary, and a PhD from Tyndale Theological Seminary. He has done post-doctorate work from the University of Wales in the United Kingdom. He lives in Justin, Texas with his wife Janice. And they have three grown children.

We'll begin tonight with the affirmation statement, and then with the rebuttal that will take place on the Church Will Face the Antichrist Before the Rapture. How 'bout we welcome Alan.

21:20

*****Opening Statement 25 Minutes—Prewrath*****

Alan Kurschner:

Well I want to thank Dr. Ice for Participating in this debate. I actually would have loved to debate a different topic tonight, and that is: "Whether Texas or Wisconsin is God's Country." I'm originally from Wisconsin. I am exiled in New Jersey. But I can personally testify that Wisconsin—the land of Wisconsin—is flowing in milk and cheese.

But we are debating a bit of a more serious topic tonight, and that is whether the Church is going to face the Antichrist before the rapture. Of course, I am

taking the affirmative, and Dr. Ice is taking the negative. And I think that the importance and significance of this debate is...I think it's obvious in that if the Church is told that we're going to be just, you know, raptured out of here before the Antichrist's Great Tribulation, I believe that that sets up the Church to be vulnerable for the intense—not just persecution—but the intense deception that will happen from the Antichrist's Great Tribulation.

And, now Dr. Ice believes that many of the severe warnings from our Lord, for example from the Olivet Discourse, and many of the warnings from the book of Revelation, that these are relegated, not to the Church, they're not applicable to the Church but they're relegated to quote-unquote "Tribulation Saints." And I could not disagree more. These warnings are for the Church. And the, in fact, I believe that the category of the quote-unquote "Tribulation Saints" this is a fictitious construct that's based on a flawed presupposition of Pretribulationism.

So, tonight I'm taking the position of Prewrath. And Prewrath teaches that, of course, the Church is going to face the Antichrist's Great Tribulation. So, at the mid-point you have the revelation of the Antichrist. And at the revelation, the mid-point you have the Abomination of Desolation, the persecution of God's people. And then, for some undetermined length of time, the rapture is going to happen. The Great Tribulation is going to be cut short. And then you have Christ returning in the sky and you have the rapture and the resurrection. We do not believe that the rapture will happen quote-unquote "three-fourths into the seven year period." We don't know the day or the hour. It will be sometime during the second half of the seven year period. And then when the rapture and the resurrection does occur, on that very same day, the Day of the Lord's judgment will begin. The onset of God's judgment executed upon the wicked.

25:01

Now you notice that I made a very important Biblical distinction. And that is between the Antichrist's Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord's wrath. I really believe that Pretribulationism gets it wrong because they do not recognize this Biblical distinction. The Antichrist's Great Tribulation will

happen first . That is directed against God's people. Okay? And then that's going to be cut short. And then you're going to have the period of the Day of the Lord's wrath which is going to be directed against not God's people, we're, the Church is promised exemption from God's wrath, the Day of the Lord's wrath. The Day of the Lord's wrath is going to be directed against the wicked.

25:38

Now. What I want to do is... In my opening remarks. I want to focus on a particular line of reasoning that supports my position that the Church will face the Antichrist. Of course other evidence is going to be brought up in the rebuttal period, rebuttal periods, and the cross-examination. But I want to focus right now of the pervasive theme in scripture, that links together key prophetic events. And this theme, or motif, is found in both the Old and New Testaments. And I call it the Celestial Disturbance event. Of course, this is the event that the Sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven. And this is going to be a pivotal event that's going to signal the impending return of Jesus for His Church, and of course, the wrath of God for the wicked.

26:37

And, since this is a frequent motif in the Bible, it is incumbent upon us to listen to what it is trying to tell us. So, what we're going to do is...or, I'm going to compare scripture with scripture, and what we're going to do is learn that each of these passages—there's going to be four passages—and each of them is going to give us this one piece of information that's going to paint this larger picture, this composite, to show us that the Day of the Lord's wrath will happen after the Antichrist's Great Tribulation. And thus the Church will face the Antichrist's Great Tribulation.

And so, the first passage I want to go to is Joel. Of course, the book of Joel is all about the Day of the Lord. And, there's an important passage in Joel, it says, in Joel 2:30, "I will produce portents both in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire, columns of smoke, the sunlight will be turned to darkness and the moon to the color of blood, before the Day of the Lord come, that great and terrible day." Now, this...Joel provides will this first piece of information. This is a cluster of celestial

disturbances. Its not piecemeal, but it's happening, it happening in a cluster. And it's going to happen before the Day of the Lord. You'll notice that Joel's text, it doesn't say that it's going to happen during the Day of the Lord, or after the Day of the Lord, but before the Day of the Lord. In other words, this is going to be a discernible celestial event portending the eschatological wrath of God. So, in other words, when this happens, we're not going to be like, "you know. Humm. Is this the Day of the Lord?" No. No. And we're not going to have to consult, go to NASA's home page to wonder when this is going to happen. No, this is going to be, it's going to be unmistakable when it happens. Now, of course, it is true that there's going to be different source of heavenly disturbances that are going to happen during the Day of the Lord's wrath. The trumpet and the bowl judgments do witness to certain celestial types of disturbances. But this cluster of disturbances—celestial bodies—will happen before the Day of the Lord's wrath. It will be unprecedented, so the world will not mistake it.

By the way, I find it quite fascinating that Peter cites this text in Acts 2, and you notice that when Peter cites this text there's two prophetic events that happen: there's the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, right? And then, and then he cites this celestial disturbance event. Well we know that formally, if you want to call it formally, that the Church Age began with Pentecost. Right? Well I believe that the Church Age will be completed at the Celestial Disturbances. In other words, Peter's citation has the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and then you have the Celestial Disturbance citation. I think they're bookends to the Church Age. One's going to begin the Church Age and one is going to complete the Church Age.

So that's the first piece of information is, Joel is giving us what's going to happen. The Celestial Disturbance is going to happen before the Day of the Lord.

30:00

Okay. Moving onto our second piece of information. Matthew 24:29. In His lengthy end-times discourse on the Mount of Olives, Jesus, in Matthew 24:29 draws, actually draws from Joel's passage; citing the Celestial Disturbance event. But immediately—He says, "But immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken." So while Joel

explicitly states that the Celestial Disturbance will happen before the Day of the Lord, Jesus adds a second piece of information about this event. Jesus says it's going to happen immediately...after the tribulation of those days. What days? Well, it's the days of the Great Tribulation where Antichrist will persecute the Church and a remnant of Israel. In fact if you go back a few verses, in verse 21-22, it says, "for then there will be Great Tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will be." Verse 22, "unless those days had been cut short no life would have been saved." I believe that's in the context of believing life. "But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short." So it's the days...He's referring back to the Great Tribulation. And by the way, in the context of the Celestial Disturbance, Jesus gives the sign of His coming. The sign of...the Greek term is *parousia*. That's in verse 29, "for just as the lightning comes from the East and flashes to the West so will the coming of the Son of man be. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven and all the tribes of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man arriving on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a loud trumpet blast and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heaven to the other." We're going to see, after a while, the gathering of the elect there is the rapture of God's people.

So, let me sum up the first two pieces of information: Joel says it's going to happen before the Day of the Lord. Jesus, in His Olivet Discourse, says that it's going to happen after the Great Tribulation- In other words, before the Celestial Disturbance event the Antichrist will go after God's people during the Great Tribulation. Then after the Celestial Disturbance event God will go after Antichrist and his people. during the Day of the Lord. In fact I want to actually repeat that again. Before the Celestial Disturbance event the Antichrist will go after God's people during the Great Tribulation. then after the Celestial Disturbance God will go after Antichrist and his people during the Day of the Lord. It's a beautiful consistency here between Joel and the Olivet Discourse.

29:50

Another account of the Olivet Discourse, moving to our third piece of information and our third passage is Luke 21:25-28. Luke says, "And there will be signs in the sun, moon and the stars." Sound familiar? "And on the earth nations will be in

distress, anxious over the roaring of the sea and the surging waves. People will be fainting with fear from the expectation from what is coming on the world. For the... Note that it is the wicked are fainting in fear for what is coming on the world, not what has already happened before the Celestial Disturbances, because they know God's judgment is coming. And it says, "Then they will see the Son of man arriving in the cloud with power and great glory. But when these things begin to happen, stand up and raise your heads because your redemption is drawing near."

So, what is Luke's piece of information? Well he highlights that there's going to be a polar response... a polar responses, from the Celestial Disturbance event; from two types of people: the wicked and the righteous. And, actually, Matthew has an abbreviated account as well; effecting two groups of people.

But here Luke is very explicit. He elaborates. He says that, "the ungodly will be in distress, anxious, fainting from fear and from the expectation of what is coming on the world." God's people, however—which I believe it is the Church at this time, before Christ returns—however are exhorted to, "stand up and raise your heads because your redemption is drawing near."

34:36

By the way, Luke also adds a terrestrial element, which I think is actually maybe tsunami language; talking about earthquakes and the waves and all that... So, it actually could also be called the Celestial / Terrestrial Disturbance. So, up to this point we're tracing, we're doing good, comparing scripture with scripture, and tracing this event. It gives us three pieces of information so far: The Celestial Disturbance happens before the Day of the Lord. And then its going to happen after the Great Tribulation. And when it does happen, its going to produce two polar responses. No one is going to be sitting on the fence on this one.

So, moving on to our fourth and final passage. The fourth passage gives us a fourth piece of information. And that is: the sixth seal in the book of Revelation depicts the Celestial Disturbance event. Of course, before we examine this sixth seal, we need to back up a little bit and get some information about this. And we need to look at the first five seals. So there's

seven seals on the scroll in the book of Revelation. And when we examine the seals we see that they are conditions before God's wrath happens. They're not God's wrath in and of themselves. They are conditions that must happen before the scroll is opened. That's the whole point of the scroll. When the scroll is opened, then you have with the final seal, the breaking of the seventh seal, then you have the unleashing of the contents of God's wrath; and that is the trumpet and the bowl judgments. So, the seals are not God's wrath. They are conditions that must be met before the Lord's, the Day of the Lord's wrath.

So, when you examine the four seals—of course, we don't have time to go through each of the four seals—but, when you examine them you'll see that they are natural events. Now, of course, you know, don't get me wrong, obviously God has, God has worked through natural events to express his wrath. I am not denying that. But it's very interesting, there's a striking contrast when you examine the seals, particularly the first five seals, it's in contrast to the supernatural, the supernatural that will occur in the trumpet and the bowl judgments. And, now I believe that the Church is going to experience these seals. Of course, this is nothing new. The Church has experienced these events before; the conquering, wars, famine, death. But, I do believe that the four seals will be much larger in scope. So, but it's the fifth, and the sixth and the seventh seals that are the most important for our discussion.

36:28

The fifth seal is important for our debate tonight, because—and I'm sure this might be brought up in the rebuttal period as well, because it's very problematic for the Pretribulationist position. The fifth seal contradicts their claim that the seals are God's wrath. Pretribulationism says, "the seals are God's wrath." But what is the fifth seal? I mean, first of all, all Pretribulationists rightly, I mean the Prewrath can agree with the Pretrib view that the Church will be exempted from the Day of the Lord's wrath. We will be raptured before the Day of the Lord's wrath. That is what we can agree on. The question, of course, is the timing of the, when does the, when does the Day of the Lord begin? And yet when we look at the fifth seal it explicitly depicts

blood-bought martyrs. So, to assume that this is, to argue that this is the wrath of God—I think it, I say, it contradicts scripture. I mean, if you make the fifth seal God's wrath you have God executing wrath against His own redeemed people. Because the fifth seal is not about, it's not about God's wrath. Why is it not about God's wrath, because God's wrath has not happened. It will happen, it will formally be pronounced at the breaking of the seventh seal, when the scroll is opened.

So, when you examine the fifth seal, you see that the martyrs themselves recognize that their plight is not is result of God's wrath. In fact they view it as still in the future.

Verse 9: listen to this, "Now when the Lamb opened the fifth seal I saw under the alter the souls of them who had been violently killed because of God's wrath." No it doesn't say that. It says that, "they were killed because of the word of God and because of the testimony they had given." I believe that's because of, because that will occur during the Antichrist's Great Tribulation. But notice verse 10: That's not the only thing it says. Verse 10 shows that the martyrs themselves recognize that their plight is not because of the wrath of God. It says "they cried out in a loud voice, "How long sovereign master, Holy and true, before you judge those who live on the earth and avenge our blood. So these themselves, it says that "before you judge." So they view the wrath as still in the future. And then, there's more. Verse 11 they're given a divine answer. And you'll notice in verse 11, the divine answer is not: "no, no. no. you martyrs have got it wrong, you are here because of the result of God's wrath." No, that's not the divine answer. The divine answer is, "each of them was given a long white robe." They are given a white robe. They're not wearing it yet. They will be wearing it. And they were told to, "rest a little bit longer until the full number was reached of both their fellow servants and their brothers who are going to be killed just as they had been."

The divine answer is, "You're right. Don't worry vindication is coming." So, it explicitly states that the result of their being killed is due to not God, but because of the word of God, and because the testimony they had given. And I believe these martyred saints are part of the Church that will be present

during the Antichrist's Great Tribulation. These believers who have not been killed by the wrath of God. Because, again, the Day of the Lord's wrath has not begun. In fact, the fifth seal is not only not the wrath, it cannot be the wrath, unless God breaks His promise, which He will not.

40:33

Now we turn to the sixth seal. The function of the sixth seal depicts the Celestial Disturbance among the Sun, moon and stars. It's a bit of a lengthy text here and I don't have the time to read it all, but it is, again, reiterating the Celestial Disturbance event. And what I want to highlight though, is that, being consistent with Luke, the wicked are responding to it. In fact, it says that the response to the Celestial Disturbances, and then there's a great earthquake as well. It says, "The kings of the earth, very important people, rich, poor, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They said to the mountains and the rocks, fall on us and hide us from the wrath, hide us from the face of the one who is seated in the throne of the Lamb, because the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to withstand it?" So, here the immediate context is that, the wicked, they recognize the pending wrath of God. And so the. And again, as I mentioned, this is consistent with the account of the Celestial Disturbances, from Luke, in which the wicked is going to be in distress. So, okay we have six seals right? The first seal is opened, the second seal is open, the third seal is opened, the fourth seal is opened and the fifth seal is opened, and the sixth seal is opened, and then—before the seventh seal is opened there's a conspicuous break in the narrative. There are two groups of people who have just been delivered. There's 144,000 Jews who are sealed and protected on earth. And then there's this great multitude, an innumerable multitude, you can't count it. And they appeared in heaven wearing white robes—that's symbolic, of course, of the resurrection. And its noteworthy that the text says that, "they have come out of the Great Tribulation."

43:05

Very consistent with the Olivet Discourse and it should be consistent right? Because the Olivet Discourse is given by Jesus and the book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ.

And speaking of Jesus' teaching, He says, and I'll just mention that here, He says, yeah, in Mathew 29, 24:29, "He will send His angels with a loud trumpet blast and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." So, this is two groups of people being delivered. And before the seventh seal is opened two groups are delivered. And I believe the innumerable multitude is the raptured people of God. And, again, why are they being delivered at this point? Because when the seventh seal is opened, the scroll is opened and the wrath of God will begin. And the account of the opening of the seventh seal itself indicates that something ominous is about to happen.

In Revelation 8, verse 1 to 2 it says, "and when the Lamb opened the seventh seal there was silence in heaven for about half an hour." And it says, "I saw seven angels who stand before God and seven trumpets were given to them." So, before the first trumpet is sounded there is a solemn silence in heaven. It's a silent overture. And I believe it indicates what is about to happen, and that is the Day of the Lord. and, this makes sense from the Prewrath perspective. Because you have the resurrection and rapture of God has just happened and now you have the Day of the Lord's wrath is going to be executed.

And so, let me just conclude here by saying that given all this, there's a consistency between Jesus' teaching and the book of Revelation. And this is what I'd like to say about the seals: they function, again, they function as conditions. And there's a progression, that's the key. There's a progression to God's wrath. And I'd like to say that the fifth seal promises wrath. The sixth seal portends wrath. An interlude in Revelation 7 protects from wrath. And the seventh seal pronounces wrath.

45:44

*****Opening Statement 25 Minutes—Pretrib*******Thomas Ice:**

Shalom y'all. Welcome to the great Lone Star state. The other being Israel: God's promised land. Its great having Kerby as our moderator. In 1988 Dave Hunt and I had a debate that was run over you'all's network with the Reconstructionists. And so, anybody twenty-seven or younger were not alive when we had that debate.

So, welcome. I am, of course, presenting the Pretribulational rapture view, which means that believers and the Church will not be in the tribulation, any part of the 70th Week of Daniel, nor see the Antichrist. And here's a basic graphic there. You don't have to do anything to qualify for the rapture. Its part of the package deal you get when you become a believer. And here's Alan's view; very complicated. And, both the Pretrib and Prewrath view—which by-the-way, our view is pre-wrath as well—all other rapture views are related to the timing of the rapture. And, I guess they couldn't come up with a timing view that fit their view so they came up with Prewrath, which is also true of the Pretrib view as well. And, the 70th Week of Daniel, is a seven year period, often known as the Tribulation, these are things we have in common. God will allow the Antichrist to rule during the Tribulation. And the Church will be removed before God's wrath begins. So the question is: When does it begin? And, Pretribulationists believe that God's wrath extends throughout the entire seven-year period. Thus the Church is removed before the Tribulation via the rapture. So, the Prewrath view believes that God's wrath comes toward the end of the Tribulation, and the Church will be present until this point, and subject to the reign of the Antichrist.

The key question that must be answered is: "When during the Tribulation does the wrath of God begin?" To answer this question, we will be looking at why the New Testament teaches Pretribulationism. Thus, insuring that the Church will not face the Antichrist.

So we start with a definition of what is the rapture. Well, the rapture is the translation of the living believers to heaven without experiencing death in a

moment of time. Now, in conjunction with that, believers from the Church Age will be resurrected. But the rapture refers to living folks being taken up, or caught up, or snatched up as 1 Thessalonians 4 says, to heaven. Jesus introduces the rapture. And this is very important. He introduces it the night before He was killed: A few days after He had already taught the Olivet Discourse, Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21.

48:46

And He, of course, was answering Peter's question of "Why are you going away?" "I would like to go with you," etcetera. And He said, "You can't go where I'm going." And He says, "Let not your heart be troubled." In other words, "You believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many dwelling places, if it were not so I would have told you. For I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you," and since its active, it probably should be taken—*paralambano* here—as "take you to myself. That where I am there you may be also."

So, this is what is part of what is called "The Upper Room Discourse." Its only found in John's gospel. There's a 93% difference between John's gospel and the three synoptics. And, what's significant is the Upper Room Discourse is John 13-16 followed by the High Priestly Prayer of John 17. And two-thirds of the way through John 13, Judas leaves the room and Christ starts talking to them. And everything He talks about from then on, through chapter 16, relates to brand new doctrine that the Church is going to be built upon. And that is why three times in the Upper Room Discourse He repeats this: "These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you, but the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you." Three time He told His apostles that He's introducing them, in essence, to Church Age truth. Later, He's going to build upon that through the mystery that He introduces, especially through the apostle Paul. And that's what much of the New Testament was, was Him answering or fulfilling what He said would do here, so, this means that the rapture is a brand new doctrine; not taught in the Old Testament. In fact, a scholar named J.B. Smith, a Mennonite brethren back in the sixties, in his

commentary of Revelation, did a study of all Second Coming passages and rapture passages. And he found that there's a thought-for-thought progression that lines up exactly in John 14:1-3, and 1st Thessalonians 4: 13-18; which, of course, is the passage where Paul talks about the rapture. And you see that this is an illustration of the fulfillment of Christ's statements in the Upper Room Discourse, that He would expand upon what He was teaching them, and introduce them to in the Upper Room Discourse. And, of course, the rapture of the Church is one of those very things that He said he would introduce them.

51:35

So that's important to know. That this is a brand-new doctrine that's part of what we could call the mystery teaching for the Church. And when we go to 1st Thessalonians—that passage that expands upon what Jesus introduced—we see here in 1st Thessalonians 4:13-18 Paul talking about the fact of the rapture. I'm not saying he talked about the timing of the rapture here. But he expanded upon the fact of the rapture. And what's interesting is Galatians is the first book that Paul wrote right before the Jerusalem council, and then it was followed by 1st and 2nd Thessalonians. So, right off the bat, in Paul's ministry—who's the apostle to the Gentiles—the mystery truths, of the eschatology especially, relating to the Church that was unique, was introduced in 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, where those epistles are dominated by the Church's eschatology. And he says he doesn't want 'em to be uninformed—Conjunctive mood here— “Stop being uninformed brethren about those who are asleep.” Sleep was a term for Christian death. “That you may grieve as the rest who have no hope. For if we believe,” verse 5, “If it's true,” from the writer's perspective, “That Jesus died and rose again so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in, or by, Jesus.”

Now, “bring with Him” is important because apparently, if you read the white spaces in between the pages, they were wondering if they would see their loved ones again. Because some were dying, apparently they thought Christ would return so soon, and that's why He's saying He's going to bring those who died with Him when He comes back, by means of Jesus. “For this we say

to you by the word of the Lord.” Now, this either refers—the phrase, “by the word of the Lord”—either refers back to the Upper Room Discourse, but possible it also, rather, refers to Paul’s visit in heaven in 2nd Corinthians chapter 12 where twice the Greek word *harpazo*, he was raptured up into heaven; kind of like Isaiah. And we know from Galatians that, he said that, no one taught him the gospel, he learned it directly from Christ Himself. And so it’s very possible that the doctrine of the rapture that he’s teaching here was taught him in that visit, whether in body or out of body, to heaven, and he receives it directly from the Lord. But it came directly by the Lord. “That we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord,” so the rapture event, which is separate from the Second Coming, is a coming but is not a Second Coming to the earth. That doesn’t happen until seven years, at least seven years later. When, just as Christ walked the dusty shores of Galilee and He left, He’s going to come back, at the Second Coming, and touch the Mount of Olives, as we have learned in Zechariah 14. “Shall not proceed those who have fallen asleep.” Now, Dr. LaHaye like to say the reason why the dead are going to have a head start is that they’re six foot under. I don’t know if that’s true, but never the less. “The Lord Himself will descend from heaven, with a shout, the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God.” I think that’s just passing down the chain-of-command. For those of you who used to be in the military: The commander, through the lieutenants. And then the general command given through the trumpet here. “And the dead in Christ shall rise first.” Any Episcopalians here? Okay, you’re going to be the first to go. And, in other words, this is a reference to all believers. And this was a technical term used about eighty-three times in Paul and Peter’s writings, to refer to the Church. So, Church Age believers are going to be taken to be with Christ.

55:17

“Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up.” And here’s the Greek word “*harpazo*” that was translated by Jerome in the late 300s with the Latin word “rapture” or “*rapio*.” And it came into modern parlance during the 1600s when people from different countries came together and they all spoke different languages. And they used Latin and developed all these theological terms. And if you, and I have about 125 commentaries on 1st Thessalonians

and everybody, regardless of their view, uses that word. Because, a lot of people say the word rapture's not in the Bible. It is in the Latin Bible. But the concept certainly is here as well. "And we'll be caught together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus shall we always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words." So, when you combine that with going back to the Father's house, the rapture is Christ meeting us in the atmosphere and taking us back to the Father's house.

And, its important, for example, what Alan just presented is very common for people who don't take into account the mystery religion, the new revelation that is given to the Church that is found, especially, in Paul's epistles. And they develop, oftentimes, a eschatological system that does not factor in the impact of this new teaching or doctrine there. So, a mystery in the Bible is not something that is mysterious or hard to figure out. A mystery refers to a new revelation about something in God's plan. And we see this in Daniel, as God used him to reveal aspects of His plan. He was, "the revealer of mysteries," the text says. New revelation about God's plan for history. And we see this in the New Testament, ~~the relation~~, introduction to new truth related to Christ and the Church. And so, since the rapture is a new doctrine its said to be a mystery. "And of this Church," Paul says in Colossians 1, just one of three major passages that talk about this, "I was made minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God. That is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations. But has now been manifested, *phaneroō* brought to light to His saints to whom God willed to make known what is the riches and the glory of the mystery among the Gentiles. Which is Christ in you the hope of glory."

And so we see this idea of the Church being a hidden doctrine. And the program of God for the Church is not revealed until we get to Christ and then His apostles. And we see that it is specifically called a mystery in 1st Corinthians 15 in verse 50. He says, "Now I say that brethren that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." In other words, no Church Age believer is going to make it into the Millennium except in a resurrection body. "Nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold I tell you a mystery.

We shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed.” One nursery had this slogan above their nursery beds. “We shall not all sleep but shall be changed.” “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.” That’s pretty fast. And, as a result, here he’s focusing on what’s going to happen. The transition, in other words, the rapture is basically the being caught up to heaven and getting your resurrection body without dying. That’s pretty good. “At the last trump. For the trumpet will sound, the dead in Christ will rise imperishable and we shall be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable and this mortal must put on ~~immortality~~, immortality, not immorality.

And so we see the flow of God’s plan in Ephesians 3:8-11 it says, “Paul was called to be an apostle to the Gentiles. And to preach the unfathomable riches of Christ. And to bring delight, what is the administration,” or as the King James says, “the dispensation of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God. Who created all things.” See, this is not plan B, as some have wrongly said of us. I do not know anybody who has our viewpoint who believes that God has, God doesn’t have plan B’s. it was always part of His plan. It was His only plan, it was just hidden from revelation...

59:56

...Until we get to the New testament here and the epistles specifically. “Which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things in order that the manifold,” and that’s *polypoikilos*, as we say in Greek. It’s a word only used here in the entire New Testament. And it’s the idea of a many-sided object. God’s plan has multiple dimensions to it. Interesting he mentions that here. And people talk about, well, “there’s only one people of God.” Well, there’s only one way of salvation. But if a novelist can have multiple themes that they weave throughout a novel and then bring it all together in the end, don’t you think God’s quite capable of doing something similar? He’s made history very interesting. And, therefore, He has a plan for Israel, a plan for the Church, and a plan for the Church which includes Jew and Gentiles co-equal, in Christ during this current age. “In order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the Church. This was in accordance with the eternal

purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus.” This was always part of His plan. But He just now is revealing it because the Church had been born.

So, in a sense, when you look at the development of the Bible. You have God’s plan for Israel laid out. And I would argue as early as Deuteronomy chapter 4 He lays out their future plan prophetically; expands upon it a lot in Deuteronomy as well. And then He reveals the Church on top of that; and interacts with Israel and the Church. And so, these are two tracks. And the purpose for the Church is during the age in which Israel is in disbelief and Diaspora, the Godly remnant, of course, who believe in the Messiah are part of the Church. But He’s using this different instrument, the Church, to spread the gospel and then when that is finished, He’s going to take us out ‘cause He’s going to deal with Israel during the 70th week of Daniel. It makes sense.

62:10

So the Church will be removed at that point. And so the purpose, theologically, for the rapture is to end the Church Age. Recognize anybody there? Well other than Jesus. And, so the rapture ends the Church Age, so that God can do what? Complete His unfinished business, the 70 week of Daniel, the 70th week of Daniel, that we know of as the Tribulation period—that is expanded upon in the Olivet Discourse, for example in the New Testament. And all throughout the Old Testament. And so, I know Alan likes to show similarities between what he thinks the rapture in 1st Thessalonians, and other, like 1st Thessalonians 5 and all this, I agree with a lot of the stuff on 1st Thessalonians 5 and Matthew 24, for example. But, there are similarities, but there are even more differences. And, if a person were describing something that has leaves, form in substance, color, plant, branches, roots, well is that a bush or a tree? See, and only the main difference between a bush and a tree is the trunk, but its an important difference. And so differences are just as important as similarities. And different contexts give different connotations to a passage. So that, similar does not mean same in a passage, and context is the deciding factor. You have to go with the context. And so, distinguishing traits, for example between the revelation of Christ from the rescue of Christ—the rapture versus the Second Coming—there are angels present in both but an

archangel is present at the Second Coming, or the rapture rather. And the gathering of the elect by angels from the *Diaspora*, referring to Israel, as I will show later. The gathering together with the Church in the air with Christ, is the rapture, the basis. The death and resurrection of Christ in the rapture, the basis of the Messianic mission of power and glory in the Second Coming. There's watchfulness, because Israel was not watchful at the First Coming. In fact, Luke makes a big deal out of that, you only have, what was her name? Anna watching for the Messiah, and she knew that He was coming but the others were not. And then an urgency regarding His coming. You notice His coming, He's coming at any moment. The rapture is a rescue by Christ. The Second Coming is judgment, there's judgment passages: the apocalyptic Son of man comes at the Second Coming but Christ is the deliverer at the rapture.

And, when I first became director of the Pretrib Research Center, I set down and made a list of passages I believed refer to the rapture, either refer to the rapture or described the rapture. And I have them over here on one side. And then, I took some of the passages, because there's even more passages that talk about the Second Coming. Only rapture passages are found in the New Testament. Second Coming passages are found in the Old Testament as well as the New. And, I, you know, went and looked at the differences between these passages. And you can see by the graphic that the rapture is the meeting Christ up in the air. The Second Coming is, the bride making herself ready in Revelation 19 and He returns to planet Earth, etcetera. And so those are qualitatively two different events. And the more you see the difference the more you're going to be Pretrib.

And so you have the translation of all believers at the rapture but there's no translation at the Second Coming. The translated saints go to heaven but the translated saints return to the Earth, as Revelation 19 makes clear, at the Second Coming. There's no judgment language in rapture passages. The Earth is judged and righteousness is established in the Second Coming passages. The rapture is imminent, could happen at any moment. It's sign-less. That's why you're always to be ready. And the Second Coming follows definitely predicted signs including the Tribulation. The rapture is not predicted in the Old Testament but the Second Coming is predicted often in the Old Testament.

The rapture's for believers only, and the Second Coming affects all mankind. Every eye will see Him as we say. It's before the day of wrath or the Tribulation. It concludes the day of wrath after the Tribulation of those days, Matthew 24:29. There's no reference to Satan at all in the rapture. Satan's bound at the Second Coming. We see Christ comes for His own but He comes with His own at the Second Coming. Christ comes in the air. Christ comes to the earth at the Second Coming. Christ claims His bride. He comes with His bride at the Second Coming. Only His own will see Him. But every eye will see Him at the Second Coming. The Tribulation follows the rapture. But the Millennial Kingdom follows the Second Coming.

And so we see the doctrine of imminence, it's an event that could, but not necessarily, take place at any moment. Soon is not the same as imminent. So, an imminent event could happen soon or it may not occur for over two thousand years. So, no prophetic event must take place before an imminent event could happen. The rapture is imminent, while the Second Coming is not. And you see these passages in the New testament about waiting eagerly for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Maranatha*, means our Lord come. An Aramaic term but it has a sense of expectancy implied in it as well. "For our citizenship is in heaven, from whom we eagerly wait for a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Notice, we're not looking for the Antichrist, which if his view is correct, that would precede the coming of Christ. The Lord is near, *eggys*, at hand. So it means it's the next event. We are waiting for His Son from heaven, in 1st Thessalonians. Titus 2:13, "Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ." James 5:9-7, "Be patient, therefore, brethren until the coming of the Lord. For the coming of the Lord is at hand. Behold the judge is standing right at the door," meaning it's the next event. And we see, 1st Peter 1:13, "Fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." See your focus is on Christ Himself. As Peter says, "Whom we have not love, seeing we love" that's why you want Him to come back. "Waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life."

And so we see that the purpose of the Tribulation is for Israel. It's a time of preparation for Israel, its restoration and conversion. It's called the time of

Jacobs tribulation, or trouble. The Church is currently experiencing tribulations in the world, as Christ said. But she will not experience the Tribulation. And the purpose of the Church differs from Israel. The Church is a mystery of Jews and Gentiles in, who are in, a co-equal body. The Church is not appointed to wrath.

69:15

And Alan would agree with me on this. "Much more, we having now been justified by His blood will be saved from the wrath to come." And, "Who delivered Christ," In 1st Thessalonians 9-10 says, "Who delivered Christ from the wrath to come." And, "God has not destined us for wrath but for the obtaining of salvation." And then the Church is promised to be delivered from the hour, from the time of testing. And notice in Revelation 3:10 and 11 it says that, "Because you have kept the word of My perseverance," in other words, during the Church Age, "I will keep you from the hour," or time period of testing, and look at this, that, "hour which is about to come upon the whole world to test those who dwell upon the earth." See, the purpose is to test earth-dwellers not Church Age believers. And that's clearly reiterated throughout the book of Revelation, as the entire 70th week of Daniel. And then He adds, "I am coming quickly." Obviously the vehicle for them not going the Tribulation, is that.

Well, so we see that the Bible has plenty of evidence, in the New Testament, for Pretribulationism, thus Christians, or the Church will not face the Antichrist.

70:07

*****Moderator*****

Kerby Anderson:

Take a five minute break.

70:47

This is part 2 of the debate and it will involve rebuttals. We'll have a Prewrath rebuttal then a Pretrib rebuttal. And the first set of rebuttals will take place for 15 minutes, so 15 and 15. And we'll have a second set of 12 minutes. Again a Prewrath and Pretrib rebuttal. Then finally 10 minutes a Prewrath and Pretrib rebuttal. Then we'll take another break before our final time of cross-examination, and closing statements. But let's begin with the Prewrath rebuttal.

71:19

*****15 Minute Rebuttal—Prewrath*****

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. Thank you for your opening remarks Dr. Ice. So, Dr. Ice made a lot of assertions with Pretribulationism. Actually there were some statements about the rapture in general that I would agree with him. But there were a couple of statements that I want to respond to. Actually, particularly one major statement. And, in my 15 minutes here I want to actually spend these 15 minutes to respond to it because it is absolutely fundamental to the whole Pretribulationist theological interpretation. In fact, in my view, it's a deeply seated presupposition. And Dr. Ice spent a little bit of time on it, not a lot of time, but he did spend some time on it.

And that is, and this.. this is in a great amount of Pretrib literature. What you see is, that they will make this comparison chart. Over here is rapture passages and over here is Second Coming passages. Rapture passages, you know, Christ comes for His church—Second Coming passages Christ comes, you know, with His Church. In the air—on the earth. Now, I am actually glad

Dr. Ice brought this up because it gives me an opportunity to respond to it in a substantive manner.

First of all, I actually want to point out three flaws in this argument. First of all, it is highly selective with the evidence, with the Biblical evidence. And it is circular in nature. It begins with a preconceived conclusion and then they fit the evidence to fit that conclusion. For example, in their system of interpretation they begin with the preconceived conclusion that if a passage contains a sign or something intervening event before Jesus' coming, well, that passage can't refer to a rapture passage. So they automatically relegate to, it must be referring to, a quote-unquote Second Coming passage. This is classic circular reasoning. In essence, the way they reason is not that there is no evidence of a passage or a sign, or no evidence of a passage or a sign, or any passage with a sign, before the rapture. But, in their view, there cannot be evidence. And that's problematic. For example this type of fallacious reasoning is tantamount, when we hear, for example, I hear this type of reasoning from atheists refusing to accept, for example, you might have heard of this type of reasoning where they say they will not accept the evidence of the supernatural. Well, right? That's tantamount, again to, when you don't enter, if you don't allow for evidence, what does that say? Its selective evidence. And I believe that this is the type of evidence, the type of reasoning, that Dr. Ice and other Pretribulationists make. So, in other words, the Pretrib criteria will not allow any evidence against their position because they have a, again, a preconceived definition of what the evidence can only allow for their conclusion. And this is why they can't have the coming in Matthew 24:31 refer to the rapture because there are signs that signal this coming. Especially, the Antichrist's Great Tribulation. Well, you have a sign, you know Christ's glory, the Great Tribulation. These are events, these are signs before the coming in Matthew 24—that can't be the rapture. It has to be the Second Coming. But this type of selective evidence does not reflect the Biblical reality. So, this is my first point, they argue in a circular fashion.

My second point is that they have a fundamental mistaken idea of disconnecting the rapture from the Second Coming of Christ. Now to be clear: the rapture is not the Second Coming. I don't want, Prewrath does not believe

the rapture is the Second Coming of Christ. That's the other extreme of Post-tribulationists, many Post-tribulationists, not all of them but many Post-tribulationists would identify the rapture event with the Second Coming. What I believe is that the rapture is part of the unified Second Coming of Christ.

So, let's maybe define some terms here. We talk about coming. The term, there's several terms, don't get me wrong here, but the term I want to highlight here is the Greek term *parousia*. And *parousia* it means, an arrival and a continuing presence. This is the term we use for the Second Coming, or the Second Advent. So, in other words, the Lord's Second Coming, it will be a comprehensive, unified whole. And it's not going to be some simple snap your fingers, instantaneous event. No, the rapture, of course, will be. At least the transformation of the bodies will happen in the twinkling of an eye. But the Second Coming is a comprehensive whole. And, its gon'na, the scope of it will include certain divine events, in that the Father is going to fulfill in the Son. I'd like to use an analogy of the First Coming of Christ. The First Coming of Christ was a, it was an arrival and a continuing presence. The First Coming of Christ began with the birth of Christ. And then there was a unified whole: Jesus, His birth, His growing up, His ministry, His death, burial, resurrection, teaching. All that, His ascension. All that was a comprehensive whole. Well, likewise, the Second Coming of Christ will be the same. In fact, in 1st Thessalonians chapter 4 verse 15 Paul actually uses this term, *parousia*, it says, "Those who are left up to, until the coming of the Christ, of the Lord." Then he goes on and talks about that. The rapture's going to happen. Paul also uses the term *parousia* in his classic resurrection passage in 1st Corinthians 15 when he says, "But each in his own order, Christ the first fruits, then when He comes," that is the *parousia*, "those who belong to Him," of course will be resurrected. And so, there, notice there's, this is one of the very first divine events of the Second Coming will be the rapture and the resurrection. And the Second Coming begins in the sky. It doesn't begin on the earth. This is a deep seated assumption among many Pretribulationists, Amillennialists, Post-tribulationists. No, the Second Coming according to, even Jesus uses the term, *parousia* in Matthew 24, talking about that when He comes on the clouds right? And the angels do the gathering. The Second Coming begins in the sky,

and there's a comprehensive whole. Now, of course, there's, eventually Christ's going to come on Earth. There's the seven year period. He will bring Israel back to salvation. So, there is again a comprehensive whole in the Second Coming of Christ.

78:56

Initiated with Christ in the clouds, rapture, resurrection, Day of the Lord's judgment, bringing Israel back to righteousness, and, of course, the apex of the Second Coming of Christ is going to be when Jesus is ruling on this Earth in the Millennium. That is part of the whole comprehensive whole. So, what Pretribulationists do is that they disrupt this unity. Well you have the rapture coming over here, then seven years later you have the Second Coming. I just see that as very strained reasoning. So, this false dichotomy, it's a false dichotomy of rapture passages over here, Second Coming passages over here. Its circular reasoning and it misunderstands the meaning of the *parousia*. And, therefore, they misunderstand the relationship between the rapture and the Second Coming of Christ.

And this leads me to my third point, I wanted to respond to at least a couple of these contrasts. Just open up a Pretribulational book and you see this chart, rapture passages over here, Second passages, Second Coming passages over here. And, I wish I had time to go through each one and respond to each one but I don't have that time. So let me respond to a couple of them. Well, the first one I want to respond to. Actually, I just want to not one other analogy: it would be tantamount to me, what if I was to stand up here and I was to say, "Okay now we have the birth passages over here, and then we have other passages, we have Crucifixion passages over here. Therefore, there's not one First Coming of Christ." No that would be absurd. It's a comprehensive whole. And, again, just like the First Coming of Christ, the Father fulfilled divine purposes in the Son in one whole coming. And, just like the Second Coming of Christ, He is going to do the same.

81:05

But as I mentioned, I want to respond to a couple of these. And, this is from, Dr. Thomas Ice has a article on his web-site called, "*Why I Believe the Bible Teaches Rapture Before Tribulation.*" He has a whole chart there and, of course, in his opening remarks he also gave a comparison as well. But one of these is—and this is one of the most common, you know—"at the rapture Christ comes for His Church; Second Coming Christ will come with His Church at Armageddon." Of course, I believe, that at the battle of Armageddon, I do believe the Church is involved in it, but that's not the beginning of the Second Coming of Christ. Another one—is very similar to the first one is. He says here—"He comes in the air at the rapture and He comes to the earth at the Second Coming." And, again, I've heard these two slogans many times, but its fundamental, fundamentally, in error. Now, Dr. Ice, he assumes that the Second Coming begins at the end of the seven-year period with the battle of Armageddon. I don't...eventually...either or, touching on Earth. Again, I'm not sure where they get their evidence. I believe its assumed that the Second Coming begins at that point. But, the problem with that is—again, don't get me wrong, the battle of Armageddon is part of the Second Coming of Christ, it's just that it's not the initiation, or the onset of the Second Coming—And I believe the Second Coming begins with Christ coming on the clouds to resurrect and rapture His people. And in the book of Revelation where does that happen? It happens between the opening of the sixth and the seventh seal, as I showed in my opening. It is, that is when the Second Coming begins; which will be instituted by the Day of the Lord's judgment, with the battle of Armageddon at the beginning of the judgments of the *parousia*.

So the rapture, the rapture is, it's only one aspect—it's not disconnected from the Second Coming—it's an aspect—just like the birth of Christ was the arrival, well Christ is the one who will arrive at the Second Coming and rapture the Church. So it's a unity. There's a unity of the Second Coming of Christ and it will be, again, resurrection, rapture: one of the first purposes. So, more accurately, the Pretrib statement ~~should be conceived as two polar events~~. Or, should not be conceived as two polar events. Instead it should be a unified whole. That is, at the Second Coming of Christ, He comes to resurrect, rapture His people, in the air. He will judge the world, will bring the remnant,

bring salvation to the remnant of Jews, and establish His physical kingdom. In other words, the Second Coming of Christ is a comprehensive whole.

Okay, just maybe one other parallel I want to mention: Sometimes you see, sometimes in their chart they'll have only believer are affected at the rapture, while at the Second Coming affects all men. This is not the case. At the, of course, at the Second Coming it affects all men. That's because the rapture will initiate the Second Coming of Christ. But if you look at 2nd Thessalonians 1, there's a unity. There's back-to-back events: deliverance-judgment, deliverance-judgment. Dr. Ice believes there's like a gap between the rapture and the judgment of Christ. And you can't have that

Let me just conclude by saying this: Here is the reason why they are forced to place a gap between the rapture and the Second Coming. It's because they, they cannot...the Second Coming passages right? Have signs and events before the Second Coming. Well one of the events is the Antichrist's Great Tribulation. And they can't have that. If they did occur before the rapture then that would undermine the Pretrib theological system. In fact, this is exactly what Dr. Ice has said in his article after his comparative chart. This is what he says, "An interval, of gap of time is needed, between the rapture and the Second Coming in order to facilitate many events predicted in the Bible in a timely manner." You see the circular nature of his statement? A gap is needed, he says. Is needed to fit the presupposition. Yes. Because they can't have any events or signs before the rapture.

85:59

*****15 minute Rebuttal—Pretrib*****

Thomas Ice:

I'm goinna to be responding to his opening comments. He said we believe the Olivet Discourse is not applicable to the Church. It is applicable, but it is given to the Jewish believers during the Tribulation. He quoted Joel 2:30 and its connection to Matthew 24:29, Matthew 24:29, Luke 21:25-28, Revelation

6:15-17, the Sixth Seal. I agree with all of his views; all those connectedness. The question is, “does it refer to events leading up to the Second Coming or the rapture?” And we of course believe they’re no signs leading up to the rapture, therefore, these lead up to the Second Coming. And, so I don’t have any problems with a lot of the connections that he makes at those points. So, I agree with much of what, probably 80% of what Alan said in his opening remarks. It’s just the suppositions he drew from them. And, notice how he never provided any arguments for the location of the rapture. He just said it occurs between the Sixth and Seventh. But I’m the only one supposedly who made, who has, unwarranted assumptions. And, therefore, he uses circular reasoning as well. And he’s given lot of information but made no actual arguments. Just statements about what he thinks, here and there. For example: Mathew 24 speaks of the rapture and not the Second Coming. It’s just a statement, but a debate is about arguments. And, it’s not true about the seal judgment thing.

If you’ll open your Bibles to Revelation chapter 6—I’m using the New American Standard. I’m an old guy—and you’ll see in the first four seal judgments, also known as the horse judgments, verse one he says, “And I say the Lamb, broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say as with a voice of thunder. What does he say? “Come. And then I looked and behold a white horse.” In other words, you have that statement, “Come.” You look down in verse 3, “And when He broke,” He being Christ, Chapter 5 is all about who is worthy to open ~~the Lamb~~, the scroll to take back planet Earth. And Christ is the only one worthy, and so He’s the one breaking the seals. Thus He’s initiating these judgments from heaven. In fact, theirs is a theme between the Earth-dwellers, mentioned eleven times in the book of Revelation and the heaven-dwellers mentioned three times. And those who look to heaven, where the will of God is coming out of, and being implemented upon the Earth-dwellers. And that’s why what comes out of heaven is more important than what occurs on Earth. And it shows God’s sovereignty that He’s able to implement against the Earth-dwellers whose focus is only on the Earth.

89:29

And so in verse 3 he says, "And when He broke the second seal I heard the second living creature say, Come." And then he talks about what happened. And then in verse 5, "And when He broke the third seal I heard the third living creature say, Come," And, so he talks about what the black horse judgment is. And then in verse 7 it says, "And when He broke the fourth seal," Christ breaking the seal, "I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, 'Come.'" Well, when you get to the fifth seal judgment. Let's look at it in verse 9, "And when He broke the fifth seal..." There's no come there. "I saw underneath the alter the souls of those who were being slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which he had, which had, maintained." And, so, when you get to Revelation 6 verses 15 and following, "The kings of the Earth and the great men, and the commanders and the rich and the strong, and every slave and free man had hid themselves in the caves and upon the rocks of the mountains. And they said to the mountains and the rocks, fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb." I believe this is a theophany at this point. Where the heavens rolled back as it says earlier. And people get to see that this is God's wrath that is happening to them. In other words, "Gladys is that El Nino? No, it's not El Nino, its God." And it takes on a more serious dimension from here on out, because everybody knows its God versus Satan in the Tribulation period. And look at verse 17, "For the great day of their wrath has come." And so this is an answer to the first four seals that say "Come." And those are ~~present indicatives~~. Or present imperatives rather. And here you have an aorist indicative, and it's got to be a ~~ingressive aorist~~, a constantive aorist, rather, that refers to the entire thing that's already happened. And grammarians have shown that when you have this kind of construction it always refers to what happened in the past. So that you do have this as a summary statement at the end of this series of judgments, which it is called, "the wrath of the Lamb." And it does not include the fifth one because that's something, the response, of those. But God allowed it. You have, later on in Revelation 13 where it says, "If to death you are destined, to death you will go. If to life then to life." So, yes, God often does things that lead to certain consequences. And I believe that this is one of those sovereign events where He opens all of these seals, but with this particular grammatical

construction, it shows, it links, these with the wrath of God later. Also, at the end of chapter 9, if you look over there. That's the end of the trumpet judgments. You have a similar thing occurring. And you have an evaluation, just like you had here, the evaluation of the Earth-dwellers in Revelation 6, because they're not going to repent. They'd rather hunker down and take it. That is, the wrath of God. And, by the way, that's out of Isaiah 13, as well. And so, you have after the six trumpet judgments that are occurring in Revelation. You have a summary statement there, an evaluation, in other words, it's kind of, as if God evaluates the bombing campaign, if you will. They didn't repent so He's going to go onto the next phase. The next phase is the trumpet judgments. And you see that here in verse 20 it says, "And the rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons and idols," etcetera, verse 21, "and they did not repent of their murders." So the evaluation at the end of this series of judgments is: no repentance. So God goes onto the next phase, go to Revelation 16. And when you look at chapter 16, and starting in the third bowl. And here you have targeted judgments. Targeted munitions in the military, well this is targeted only for those who have the Mark of the Beast. And it says, actually verse 8 and verse 9 which is the fourth bowl judgment. It says that, "Men were scorched with fierce heat and they blasphemed the name of God who had the power over these plagues and they did not repent so as to give Him glory." Look at the fifth bowl judgment. Verse 11, "And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores and they did not repent of their deeds." So, it's very clear to me that, if you're looking at the flow of the book of Revelation. It is calling those first seal judgments, which is also coordinated with the events of Matthew 24. If you look at Matthew 24 and the order in which Christ talks about the beginning of birth pangs in verses 4 through 9. They're the same exact order of the seal judgments. And the first thing to look out for, the first seal is the rider on a white horse, and Christ calls those false Christs. So that's the Antichrist. And so you see that the Antichrist shows up immediately at the beginning of the Tribulation of the 70th week of Daniel. And that these start at the beginning. And, therefore, since Alan would agree that the Church is promised, that we will not experience the wrath of God, you have actually scripture teaching that the Church will escape the wrath of God.

Which he agrees with. He agrees that those New Testament passages teach that. And so that's one of the twenty-three terms used in the Old Testament to describe the 70th week of Daniel. And instead of chopping it up, like Bob Gundry, I think that was started in the '70s, and I think Robert Van Kampen must have picked up on him, on that. On chopping the 70th week of Daniel into segments and classifying them. Most people, historically, have seen these twenty-three terms to describe various characteristics of the 70th week of Daniel. You know that are talked about in scripture. And that's what the Church has been promised to escape is the wrath of God. Why? As we saw, Revelation 3:10, because she has already been tested. Millions of Christians have died down through the ages. And that's why, if we were to somehow to go through the Tribulation, anyone who teaches the word of God and the Bible, is going to prepare somebody to be mature, and a mature Christian, can live through the times of trouble today and will certainly be able to during that time, just as Tribulation believers will as well. But instead, the New Testament tells us to look for Christ. We're supposed to be waiting for Christ. Do you realize how many moral commands are attached to the idea of waiting. And so what we see that Prewrath reverses this command. We're supposed to be motivated by the fact that Christ could come at any moment. We're waiting for His Son and that leads to God, "And he that has his hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure. What manner of people ought we to be in all manners of Godliness," etcetera. And they reverse it by saying we're not preparing people to go through the Tribulation. I am not preparing people to go through the Tribulation. I'm teaching them the word of God and giving them the blessed hope. And teaching them to live through the trials and tribulations that we're experiencing in the Church Age, and increasingly in America, as well. So, so, much of what he says, I agree, but it applies to the Second Coming rather than the rapture.

99:02

***** 12 Minute Rebuttal—Prewrath*******Alan Kurschner:**

Okay. Dr. Ice made a lot of statements there. I don't, in my twelve minutes I can't respond to every single one, but I do want to highlight a couple at least. And that's elaborating more on the seals. So, I agree that the first seal is the Antichrist, but if you look at the nature of the first seal; the Antichrist is in his unrevealed state. And I believe that Dr. Ice would probably agree with that as well. And I believe that happens—I would put the first three seals at the, in the first half of the 70th week of Daniel—but it will, of course, be the mid-point in which the Antichrist will be revealed. You know, I've heard this grammatical argument before. With the idea of the horsemen, and the come, and the grammar and all the Greek. And, I'm sorry, its wrong. Its reading way too much into the Greek there.

In fact, you know, I've heard a form of the argument goes, "Well, the seals are God's wrath because Jesus himself opens up the wrath; or opens up the seals." Again, that's just an assumption. That...in fact it's, I mentioned in my opening, I gave a—I thought a consistent view in showing that the seals, actually they point to the onset of the Day of the Lord's wrath, which will happen at the opening of the 7th Seal. But let me just mention here this claim that Jesus opens up the seals, therefore, its God's wrath. How that is exactly, we're not told, except that maybe this grammatical argument. And, its simply, again, that is assuming, just reading way too much into the Greek. So. But it makes sense that Jesus does open up the seals because He's the only one worthy. What is the function of it? That's what we've got to be asking. Why are the seals being opened up? Because Jesus is the one only worthy to take back His kingdom from Satan. And Jesus' act of opening up the seals shows His control and sovereignty over the events of the Earth; even the bad events.

For example: when we examine the book of Job we see that God gives Satan permission to test Job with harsh trials. But it wasn't God's wrath. God was testing Job's faithfulness. Well, if you examine the seals; this is God giving Satan permission—to you know, these horsemen—to wreak havoc on people. And it's not because it is God's wrath in and of itself. But, of course, I believe that

the Church, this is going to be a trial for the Church. It's not the Great Tribulation, that's going to be, of course, more intense—the scope is going to be narrowed to God's people—but the first three and a half years is going to also be a time of trial.

So, this point in Job, Job you know, he affirms the sovereignty of God in light of evil. And so, that's what we see: Jesus initiating the seals. It shows His control over world events. It's a non-sequitur to say that, you know, "Jesus opens up the seals, therefore, they are God's wrath." No. the Lord oversees the seals because He is sovereign and He has avowed to establish His kingdom on Earth. This is why: no one else can open up the seals.

Now, I want to respond to another argument that he brought up in the issue of Revelation 6. Particularly Revelation 6:17. I've heard this a number of times, this argument, yeah. Revelation 6:17, you have this, where it talks about that, you know, the wicked, the unrighteous, they see the Celestial Disturbances. They're fleeing from, they're from the Celestial Disturbances and they say that, "this is the great day of His wrath," you know, of course, "and who can stand," right?

103:13

"And who is able to stand?" and Pretribulationists often point out that, "Oh look, it says that the wrath has come. That's past tense." No. Excuse me. (Interruption) But I was actually going to qualify my statement here in a moment here. That is, that the aorist, that you mentioned, refers to, that you can't—I mean, I understand some Pretribulationists will take that as a, it's a, happening at that moment, or present tense. Nevertheless, here's the point: the aorist in Greek, this is a term that's very abused. And, a lot of Pretribulationists will say that, in other words, they will read into the Greek tense to determine the timing. I come the perspective in Greek linguistics that temporal references is not encoded in Greek, in the Greek tenses. I know that's hard for us English speakers because, you know, when we think of tense in English we think of time. But in Greek its different. Now I understand there's traditional scholars who hold onto a more traditional view, but the emerging view, today, recognizing, no, the way you determine time, and what is called the kind of action, you examine the context. You cannot look at the Greek tense and read a lot of this into it. And, in other words, I mentioned the aorist tense, we don't have that in English, but in the aorist—this is a term when a user, a Greek

user, wanted to use this term they wanted to depict an action as a whole, as an undifferentiated process. And so, it is the context that determines the temporal reference, and the kind of action; how's the action happening? And when we do that, well, what is the context? I pointed some of this out in my opening remarks but I have to revisit this. The context, once again, is that the very reaction of the wicked is that they are fleeing this, I believe, its impending wrath. They are recognizing that God's wrath is coming. Now, of course, they may think that is the wrath of God. This is the wicked saying that. Of course, formally, the wrath of God comes with the 7th Seal.

But notice, that if the seals were all God's wrath, why are they fleeing now? Why didn't they flee at the 1st Seal? Especially, Paul says, in 1st Thessalonians chapter 5, "The Day of the Lord will come with sudden destruction." So, why are the wicked fleeing now and not later? Because they know the wrath of God is coming. And so, and yet, there is a theophany there—I agree with Dr. Ice, there's a theophany there—the wicked; they're not interpreting the Celestial Disturbances as some freakish natural event. No. they see that this is divine in origin. They know, they see this is a supernatural event. They see the Lamb, and they know that it is going to be God's collision course with human kind.

106:23

And I mentioned Joel 2:30—30 and 31—Again, Joel says, I believe this is a parallel passage, with the 6th Seal. Joel says this is going to happen, "Before the Day of the Lord." Matthew 24 and Luke 21, I mentioned that before; the 5th Seal, the 5th Seal points to...they recognize the wrath of God is still coming.

Now, it's interesting the very next verse, the very next verse after Revelation 6:17, 6:17 says, "Because the great day of wrath has come and who is able to with stand?" The very next verse—and there shouldn't be a chapter break here—it says, "After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the Earth, holding back the four winds of the Earth so no wind could blow on the Earth, on the sea or on the trees. Then I saw another angel ascending from the East who has the seal of the living God and he shouted out with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given permission to damage the Earth and the seas." In other words, don't damage, don't damage, yet. Well, why is that? Because there's going to be two groups of

people. First of all, have to be protected and delivered. And then you're going to have the wrath of God.

So, the Pretribulation interpretation of Revelation 6:17, I think they read way too much into the grammar. And I don't believe they have the context itself on their side of interpretation.

So, those are the two points I wanted to highlight as far as the seals and mentioning about why Jesus is opening up the seals and why that's not a legitimate objection to the Prewrath position. And my second response is to mention that Revelation 6:17, you can't read into the aorist tense then a certain temporal reference and what's called kind of action. To get a little linguistically geeky here: The German technical term here is *Aktionsart*, "the kind of action," how the action happens. Only the context can explain and depict and inform us on that action.

108:41

*****12 minute Rebuttal—Pretrib*****

Thomas Ice:

I was taught at Dallas Seminary that aorist does not refer to tense. It refers to kind of action. Is that right Alan?

Alan Kurschner, in the background:

"No, Wallace takes a traditional..."

Thomas Ice:

Wallace was a classmate of mine at Dallas.

Alan Kurschner, in the background:

Yeah. His temporal reference is encoded in the verb, and..

Thomas Ice:

Right. I said kind.

Alan Kurschner, in the background:

Yeah. Yeah.

Thomas Ice:

That's what we were taught. It does not refer to time. That was drilled into us.

Alan Kurschner, in the background:

Well. Yeah. No, I agree. I wasn't...

Thomas Ice:

It comes from the context. It has to be in the indicative mood, and all this kind of stuff. I never said that.

Alan Kurschner (in the background):

I didn't say that, and...

Thomas Ice:

And notice...that he has to go to other people's arguments. He didn't answer my argument, at this particular point. And my argument was that, it is

probably a consummative aorist answering the reference to the ones. That's not based on Greek. Even though I classified the type of aorist that does come from the Greek. It's a contextual argument. You could understand that in English, or whatever translation. If you have a good translation. And so, they're answering the statements of "come" that are identified there. And those are identified with the initial judgment phases there. And so, he accuses me of circular reasoning, and yet his view has all kinds of similar statements. I didn't, I couldn't, I don't even remember him making a particular proof from the text. It was all, "Well this happens here. This happens there, this happens there as well." And then he accuses me of making circular reasoning. I made a lot of similar statements as well. But, I didn't hear one proof from a text where it taught, for example, where the rapture's going to occur, etcetera.

And, I would argue that I, my classification of rapture passages is not circular. Obviously, 1st Thessalonians is a rapture passage. Wouldn't we agree? The word "rapture" is used there. He believes John 14 is a rapture passage. He believes 1st Corinthians 15 is a rapture passage. So, if you just took those three passages that virtually everyone agrees is a rapture passage, as your thing, and then compare them with the bold and guts that occur in all these clear other passages, that I believe refer to the Second Coming. So, when I refer to the Second Coming I understand that he equates the two. And is that not an assumption that he makes? Unproven? And that's not circular reasoning, because those are clear rapture passages. And then you have other passages that he believes are rapture passages like 1st Thessalonians 1:10. And the Bible uses multiple terms, including the word *parousia* to refer to the rapture. *Parousia* doesn't always refer to Christ's Second Coming. I didn't say he said that. Notice the difference in pronunciation. And, also, the fact that many—there's probably six or seven terms in my opinion that refer to the rapture, including the rapture the gathering together, *episynagōgē*. You know, a lot of different terms are used to refer to that, because each term, I believe, interpretative comment here, is providing a different dimension or aspect to the fact that Christ is going to *paralambanō*, to receive us or to take us to be with him.

And so, you have those terms used to refer to both comings. Because both are comings. And he says that I believe in two comings and he doesn't. He only believes in one coming, but then he divides it into two phases. How is that different? Please tell me. I'm having a hard time. Even Bob Gundry, who developed, so-called Dispensational Posttribulationism, believes in a gap of say hours between the rapture and the Second Coming. In fact, you go back to the 1600s, that's all over Puritan writing. All the way back to Joseph Mead 1627 who believed in what I call the Preconflagration Rapture view. That people were splitting the rapture and the Second Coming into two phases. But they weren't Prewrath because—see what happened: Pretrib precipitated all these other rapture views. All modern rapture views, including Posttribulation Rapture views are responses to Pretribulationism. And people say, "Well I'm a Historic Premillennialist and so I believe what the Early Church did." No you don't. you do not believe what the Early...You do in some ways, but so do Dispensationalists like me. I believe some of the things the Early Church believed, but your system is different you see? And everything is a response to Pretribulationism.

And so, analogies and illustrations are not proof. He had a lot of analogies and so, "this is like arguing to an atheist." Well I happen to be Van Tillian in my apologetics.

Alan Kurschner (in the background):

Me too.

Thomas Ice:

And I wouldn't argue that rationalist, semi-rationalist approach that you referred to. The Atheist. Because, ultimately, we're dependent upon revelation. Presuppositions in Biblical Christianity is based on, "Thus saith the Lord." Revelation. And you have to start with that. You don't start with so-called common ground, rational common ground, so you don't use those kind of arguments; in my opinion, dealing with unbelievers.

I believe that the campaign of Armageddon, if you look at our chart book, among other places, has eight phases to the campaign of Armageddon. That

culminate in the Second Coming of Christ that's talked about. I believe that Christ first returns, according to Isaiah 63:1-3 to Bozrah to rescue the Jewish people who are in Bozrah, which is probably Petra, because Bozrah was a small village where Petra later built that place. And God is supernaturally protecting them there. So, there are these phases. He wants to put 'em after Christ returns instead of, I see them better fitting into the build-up leading to His rescue. Because the rescue, the Second Coming is a rescue of the Jewish people; that they would have been wiped out if that were not so.

Also, when you look at Matthew 24:29, I'm sorry, 31, it says, "And He will send His angels to gather His elect from the four winds of the sky, from one end to the other." That's a direct quote, part of the is a direct quote, out of Daniel 12:1. And in Daniel 12:1 it says that everyone, he's talking clearly about Jewish people—Michael there—"everyone whose name is found written in the book will be rescued." And so, Christ incorporates that statement from Daniel 12:1 into Matthew 24:31. And we call these circumlocutions in grammar, where you use a lot of words. If you want to read a lot of circumlocutions, read the Puritans. What we can say in two words, they say in fifteen. And, Christ...So Daniel says, "Everyone whose name is found written in the book." Christ simply shortens it to the single term, "The elect."

117:16

And it's in the context of Israel being regathered. And this is not the rapture of the Church. And that is contextual evidence from the Old Testament. That same comment is made in the context of Israel being rescued in the last days. And you have all these comments that are quoted from the Old Testament, like Joel chapter 3 that is in Matthew 24:29 which leads up to the Second Coming. And you have that description of Christ's return to rescue the Jewish people there in the book of Joel. And so, He's talking about the sun will be turned to darkness, the moon into light before the great and terrible Day of the Lord. And so, when you look at the rapture passages. And if we, I guess if I was Donald Trump and you were someone else, we could negotiate a really good view of what passages of what passages refer to the rapture. And we could sit down and negotiate.

By the way, in 1994 when I first became director of the Pretrib Research Center, I could not find a list of rapture passages on the one side and Second Coming. As far as I know, in my writings I was the first guy to do that. So most of your writings must have been after 1994. But it's not a widely done thing in Pretribulationism necessarily. And I couldn't find one, at least I couldn't find one. Maybe there are some. But there's clear difference between those in the context. And the passages that talk about the rapture are in the context of New Testament epistles. You see. Of clear rapture passages we could start with, ones that we agree on, and then compare them with these other passages. And there are these clear differences between those passages.

119:20

***** 10 Minute Rebuttal—Prewrath*****

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. My last rebuttal period. Ten minutes left. I want to focus on one particular argument, and that is responding to, well, Matthew 24:31. Yeah, there's definitely similar language. No question about that. Matthew ~~21:31~~, 24:31, "And He will send His angels with a loud trumpet blast and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heaven to the other. And, actually just before Matthew 24, at the end of Matthew 23 there's a promise that there's going to be a remnant of Jews who are going to be saved. And, yeah, I do believe there will be a remnant of Jews who are going to be regathered at the end of the seven-year period. But I do not believe that Matthew 24:31 is describing that event. And I want to give you a few reasons. As many reasons as my time allows here to explain why I believe that Matthew 24:31 is referring to the rapture of the Church, the rapture of all God's people.

And that is, well, reason number one:

There's a cause and effect action in the sky. It does not happen on the Earth. When Jesus regathers His people it's going to be on the Earth. But there's a gathering happen, a cause and effect in the sky. And, we need to look at verse 30 to see a little bit more information. Because it says, "Then the sign of the

Son of Man will appear in heaven and all the tribes of the Earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man arriving on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” So, He’s arriving on the clouds. Okay? And then, here’s the cause and effect, don’t miss the effect here: “He will send His angels with a loud trumpet blast, and He will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” So notice, the focus in verse 30, is that Jesus the Son of Man, He’s in the sky, He’s on the clouds, He’s in heaven, the clouds of the heaven, that is. In other words, He is not on Earth. This may seem self evident but the obvious point is meaningful in the light of the gathering of the elect issue. Because we’re told that His angels “gather His elect from one end of the heaven to the sky to the other.” So the cause and effect action, I believe, is clear. When Jesus arrives on the clouds in the sky, He will command His angels to gather His elect. And I just believe that the most natural purpose of the gathering of the elect, to Jesus, is to the sky, is for the rapture. And, there’s nothing here to suggest that the elect are gathered to a location on Earth; at this point in the narrative, that is. So Jesus intends for us to focus on the action happening in the sky, not on the Earth. And what other gathering action do we know happens in the sky? The rapture. As depicted by the apostle Paul in 1st Thessalonians 4:13 through 18.

122:25

And this leads me to the next reason:

And that is: Paul’s rapture teaching parallels Jesus’ teaching of the gathering of the elect. In my book the *Antichrist Before the Day of the Lord* I have a chart in the appendix. There’s thirty parallels between, the Olivet Discourse, Jesus’ teaching and Paul’s teaching in Thessalonians. And why are there thirty parallels? A lot of people will say, “Yeah, there’s some similarities between Paul’s teaching and Jesus’ teaching.” No, there’s not more than, there’s not just a few parallels. There’s a lot of parallels. Thirty of them. It’s not a coincidence. I believe that the tradition of the Olivet Discourse was handed down, right? To the disciples. Of course, it was relayed to the apostle Paul. Which is interesting because, at the beginning of Paul’s teaching in 1st Thessalonians chapter 4 he says that he received this as a word from the Lord. and I don’t believe it’s a

revelation. I do believe it's the Olivet Discourse tradition that he received. And so, in the first reason we say a cause and effect action in the sky. Here, I believe that the apostle Paul will fill in more detail about the gathering picture as we compare Jesus' ~~account to it~~, or account to his.

So, notice, as I mentioned, there's glorious sky language. And in Paul's passage as well. And there's nine parallels that can be discerned. I mentioned thirty but I want to focus on nine, between the two accounts. The initiation of the *parousia*—there's not two different stages of a *parousia*—they're focused on the inception part of the *parousia*. You know that in Matthew 24 the sign proceed the *parousia*. Paul talks about the beginning of the *parousia* with the resurrection and rapture. His presence is perceived. Other parallels: God's people survive up to His return. Jesus with the clouds. Power and great glory accompanied with angelic presence. Announced with a trumpet call. The gathering of God's people. Meeting Jesus in the clouds. So, Paul's parallel language should not be surprising, again, because he's drawing form the Olivet Discourse.

And, a few more minutes left, I want to mention that Jesus draws from, in Matthew 24, He draws from one of the most explicit resurrection passages in the Old Testament. And that is Daniel chapter 12 verse 1. And I believe that's important for our context because, again, there's parallels here between Daniel 11:36 and 12 through 3. For example: there is the Abomination of Desolation, Daniel 11:36, Matthew 24:15. You have the next event, the Great Tribulation. Daniel says there will be a time of distress unlike any other, from the nation's beginning up to that time. Jesus has the same, the next event, in the Olivet Discourse, "For then there will be great suffering unlike anything that has happened from the beginning of the world until now." And then you have the rescue of the elect remaining both in Daniel's account and the Olivet Discourse. Then you have, I believe, the resurrection. In, of course, you have the resurrection passage in Daniel, and then you have the gathering event in, the very next event in the Olivet Discourse which can be none other than the resurrection, the gathering or at least the, the result of the gathering.

And, in my final minute here I just want to mention also, I mentioned this in my opening remarks, and that is, that the elect, they're gathered at the end of, when the Great Tribulation is cut short, Matthew 24. And the great multitude in ~~Matthew~~, or in Revelation 7, the innumerable multitude who appear in heaven just before the Days of the Lord's wrath. They appear in white robes. I believe symbolizing the resurrection. I believe this is the rapture of all of God's people. And it said in Revelation 7 its said they have come out of the Great Tribulation. I do not believe that is a coincidence. I believe that is the rapture. And, I believe these reasons. There's more, but I don't have time. But there are more reasons. I believe that Mathew 24 verse 31—the reference to the gathering—is the rapture of God's people.

126:45

*****10 minute Rebuttal—Pretrib*****

Thomas Ice:

First of all, I believe the white robes in Revelation represent righteousness, not the resurrection. You see that clearly in Revelation 19, "These are the righteous deeds of the saints." So, it just means that they're righteous. It doesn't necessarily mean they're resurrected at that point. And I think many of them are, or most of, they are.

If the rapture occurs about a year or so between His two-phased coming then there's not much time for the Earth to be repopulated with believers again. And, you have, clearly the multitudes from every tribe, kindred, tongue or nation, Revelation 7. Numbers too great to be numbered, later in Revelation 9. ~~Paul talks about, John~~, Jesus talks about a two-hundred-million man army. So, I take it, the multitude too great to be numbered is in the hundreds of millions. And, yet that's in the first half of the 70th week of Daniel. And, it appears that not many people are going to get saved in that last period of time. I don't want to characterize it, because they get upset, if you mischaracterize, if it's a year, year and a half, year and a quarter, or whatever. So, you know, that's a real problem.

Why not, our Lord say, why does it have to refer to the ~~Upper Room Discourse~~? As I said, why can't it refer to, I'm sorry, why does it have to refer to the Olivet Discourse? Christ's Upper Room Discourse is just as much of a discourse. Plus, you have the fact that, you have the parallel in John 14 with 1st Thessalonians 4 that I pointed out in the flow of the thought. And that makes better sense. And I don't see why it can't also rather be a result of His visit to heaven as well. Because he talked to the Lord face-to-face there. And we know that he got, from Galatians, where he says that.

Parousia is only used three times in Matthew's gospel. In Mark and Luke it's never used. In fact, the word *erchomai*. I would challenge an English reader to go through Matthew 24 and tell me when *erchomai*—which is the other term for coming—is used and when *parousia* is used. And exactly, exact parallel passages like Mark and Luke, where Matthew uses *parousia*, Mark uses *erchomai*. So, I think Alan's kind of making it into a semi-technical type term, there to refer to that event. But, you know, these are general terms that are depending on the context.

Once again, I agree with all these parallels that he's making between the passages. But he doesn't prove anything as a result. He's just stating all these parallels. But he doesn't have a gotcha point, where that proves anything. Because, within my understanding of scripture, I can absorb those into the Second Coming. Because I believe from the context that these are referring to the Second Coming because of all the connections to the Old Testament. Notice you don't have any Old Testament direct references in rapture passages, by the way. You have all this stuff relating to the judgment stuff from the Old Testament. In fact, I believe the book of Revelation was ~~Paul~~, John was told to write what he sees, twice. That's why, they say thirty-nine times, and he saw, "I saw, and I saw." About fifteen times he said, "I heard." And he dictates. And so, the book of Revelation is John giving a verbal description of visions. And John was so full of the Old Testament, I think, that he used phrases and words from the Old Testament prophets. And the book of Revelation provides a chronological framework to organize many of these passages from the Old testament that are scattered throughout. And you have the Abomination of Desolation in the middle of the book of Revelation, after the seal and trumpet

judgments. And we know from Daniel 9, that that occurs in the mid-point. And so, it makes better sense, just from the chronological framework and, by the way, it also has pauses to deal with issues topically. You know like Israel in Revelation chapter 12 and stuff like that, or the Antichrist in Revelation chapter 13. But, by and large, there's a progressive development from chapters 4 through 19, with, in the middle, chapter 11 is the Abomination of Desolation, rather the Temple and Jesus tells them to flee. You have the same pattern there. And so, ~~that makes sense~~, or that would not support his view, if Prewrath, if the book of Revelation is chronological in the way that I just said.

By the way, the term elect is used of Jews twice, or a cognate of it is used twice in Romans 11. And further, in Matthew 24:31, "And He will send His angels to gather His elect from the four winds, from one end to the other." By the way, the term elect is used twice earlier. Once about, lest the elect be deceived. And what's the other reference? Does anybody remember? Well its used three times...What? But yeah, for the sake, that's right, for the sake of the elect they're going to be saved. And I think all three references are references to Jewish believers, because that's the whole point. And it's used specifically of Jews, even non-Christian Jews, in Romans 11, the cognate form of it is. And you also have in Matthew 24:31 the passage of Deuteronomy 30 verse 4 or 5, I forget which one, where it talks about the prophecy of He's going to scatter the Jews around the world. Then He's going to gather them back. And as my friend Arnold Fruchtenbaum likes to say, "Today the Jews go back to Israel on Al El Airlines. At the Second Coming they're going to be gathered by angels." And they don't have to have frequent flyer miles or anything to do that on. And so, this is in order to bring the Jews back, who by this time, all the non-believing Jews will be purged out—Ezekiel chapter 20 and 22—so that all Israel will be saved. Which is said to be another mystery. And therefore, that's what Paul's arguing in Romans 10 where he says, "How shall whoever believes on the name of the Lord be saved?" Quote from Joel. "How shall they call on Him in whom they haven't believed?" Well see, this is what the Tribulation is all about, at least in this aspect. And that is, to purge out the non-elect so that all that are left, by the time you get to the end, are believing Jews and they believe, and call, and He rescues them. And even throughout the

Millennium all Jewish mortals will be saved. He makes it up to them at that time.

Now the purpose for the Tribulation according to Revelation 3:10 is to test the Earth-dwellers. And that term Earth-dwellers comes out of Isaiah 24, its Jews and the prophets. It's even used in Luke. It's used eleven times in the book of Revelation. And it's to vindicate that an unbeliever is an unbeliever, is unbeliever. And all eleven times that that's used when you get to the last two times its only the Earth-dwellers that take the Mark of the Beast, and its only the Earth-dwellers it says, "Whose names were not found written in the Book of Life." And the Tribulation is to vindicate Gentile unbelief among the Earth-dwellers. And that's what it says, "To test the Earth-dwellers." To test them, to vindicate the qualities that they have. And that's why He's putting them through this series of tests and you have these evaluations. And that's why I think, as Robert Thomas argued in his commentary on Revelation, whenever you have that type of construction, where you have come, come, come and then you have a summary statement of it later on in a passage, it always has to refer to what precedes it, not what comes back. His view is they believe its proleptic. In other words, these judgments are about to happen. But instead grammarians believe that it, because of the linguistic usage there of the passages, that it refers to what has preceded ~~there~~, them. And it's a summary statement of that. And so, that connects that to the wrath of God.

Thank you.

*****Moderator*****

Kerby Anderson:

Are you ready for another break? We'll come back for our final session.

136:32

First will be a time of cross-examination where the Prewrath position will actually ask questions of the Pretrib position. And then the Pretrib position will ask questions about the Prewrath position. You'll have two time-keepers.

One I'll keep track of the 20 minutes for each one of those, but also we have another timekeeper here keeping track of the fact that we have the answers are usually about a minute long, so nobody has a chance to filibuster for too long. Then we'll have some closing statements of 7 minutes each. And then we'll be done for the evening. So, again, we appreciate you staying here for so long. So let's begin.

***** 20 Minute Prewrath Cross-Examination*****

Alan Kurschner:

Well, Dr. Ice. The, Titus 2:13 reads, "Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." So, in Titus 2:13, what is our blessed hope?

Thomas Ice:

I believe it's the rapture. And that's better translated, "waiting for" not looking.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. On what basis can you say that is the rapture. How do we know that's the rapture?

Thomas Ice:

Because the rapture could happen at any moment. Whereas the Second Coming is preceded by signs.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. So, the blessed hope is the rapture. Correct?

Thomas Ice:

Yes.

Alan Kurschner:

What about the next phrase, “The appearing in glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus?” is that also part of the rapture?

Thomas Ice:

Yes.

Alan Kurschner:

It is.

Thomas Ice:

He appears in the sky. According to, based on other, rapture passages.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. Now, you mentioned the blessed hope, the rapture, is sign-less. Is there any, is there any, in this text itself, is there anywhere you would say, “That is sign-less?” Is it because you would say, “There are no signs mentioned in this passage?”

Thomas Ice:

Because you have that, and a collection of other passages that talk about waiting for Christ. And, that implies imminence. That He could come at any moment.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. So it’s your position that, in the context of Titus 2:13 it doesn’t say either—one way or the other—whether it is sign-less or there are signs. Correct?

Thomas Ice:

I do not know. It talks about the First Coming, it contrasts it with the First Coming. But, you have the whole idea of a blessed hope is a positive thing, versus having to face the Antichrist.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay.

Thomas Ice:

That's not anything that would provide hope.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay, then. We are to look for the *epiphaneia*? Is that correct? The appearing, *epiphaneia*? Okay, so you would agree that the *epiphaneia* and the blessed hope is the same thing? For that...

Thomas Ice:

In that context. Those words are used, obviously, it's used for the First Coming of Christ there earlier. Verse 11.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. But you do agree though, the blessed hope in that passage there. Would you agree that there are, that there's no intention to indicate whether there are signs or non-signs preceding the blessed hope in this passage?

Thomas Ice:

Right.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. My next question would be... The...

Thomas Ice:

In other words, it's the quality of the statement itself. The qualitative nature of the statement. The idea of a blessed hope certainly wouldn't involve going through any part of the Tribulation.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. So you do agree, you have to go to other passages to find if the rapture is sign-less.

Thomas Ice:

No. other passages in their context are used similarly.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay.

Thomas Ice:

And, therefore, none of those other passages, in other words, they all have you waiting for Christ.

Alan Kurschner:

Question for you: Does the apostasy in 2nd Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 3, whatever its referent, would you agree that this apostasy happens before the seven-year period?

Thomas Ice:

Yes.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. And your position is that the Greek word *apostasias* in 2nd Thessalonians 2:3 is most likely, here, means a spatial departure, as you interpret that as the rapture. Is that correct?

Thomas Ice:

That is the view that I think is most probable. However, the passage is giving two reasons why they are not in the Tribulation. It's not saying that this has to happen first. And, therefore, my preferred interpretation is that it does refer to a physical departure, because that's what the word *aphistemi* means. But, even if you take it to be a departure from the faith or revolt, or whatever, he's saying the reason why we're not in the Day of the Lord, i.e. the 70th week of Daniel, is because these things haven't happened yet.

Alan Kurschner:

Uh hm. So you do affirm the word *apostasia* in 2nd Thessalonians 2:3 refers to a spatial departure, that is the rapture?

Thomas Ice:

That, I think, makes the best sense in that context.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. Could you cite for me a single instance in all of Koine Greek literature where this term ever means a spatial departure?

Thomas Ice:

I'm getting my evidence. Let's see. If you look at Wayne House's article, in the book I edited with Tim Demy called *When the Trumpet Sounds*, he provides examples. And, he shows that Robert Gundry's study of *apostasia* has many errors in it. And, he cites, in that article, some from the papyri.

Alan Kurschner:

Right, but my question is can you say, can you document at least one, just one instance, of all of Koine literature, almost over a four-hundred year period, just one instance which the noun *apostasia* means a spatial departure.

Thomas Ice:

Wayne House did in that article and I don't have that with me.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. So, you don't have the documentation.

Thomas Ice:

I do not have it with me.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. Alright.

Thomas Ice:

But, you also have the fact that the *apostasias* is only used like two times in the all of Greek literature with the just the article with an ellipsis there, not referring to the object.

Alan Kurschner:

When you say all of Greek literature you mean Koine Greek literature?

Thomas Ice:

Any form, not including the Lampe(?) or anything like that. In other words, apostolic era, or post-apostolic era. And so, it's a very rare usage. And, almost always it has an object that it uses. And, the verb, which is the cognate of, which most nouns come from, is used sixty-six times for spatial departure in Greek literature. In the Septuagint alone its used sixty-six times. Gundry was in error by saying that the abstract usage revolt was used more times, but it wasn't. It was used only fifty-three times.

Alan Kurschner:

Right. So...

Thomas Ice:

And so, you have, of the fifteen uses of the verb in the New Testament, you have twelve probably refer to a spatial departure, so..

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. I want to get to the verb. But right now I'm talking about the noun, *apostasias*.

Thomas Ice:

I understand.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay.

Thomas Ice:

But almost everybody agrees that nouns come from verbs and when you have an unusual low usage, of something, with a noun with an article, all you're establishing here is the parameter of what it's used for. And Liddell and Scott list disappearance as its second usage or meaning. So, they apparently believed also that it has..

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. First of all, you mentioned that the verb form *aphistemi* are you aware you're committing the cognate fallacy? By reading the noun from the verb. That's called the cognate fallacy, in fact, D.A. Carson in his book, he calls it the root fallacy. The cognate fallacy is a form of the root fallacy where, you know, you can't make those assumptions. Are you aware of the cognate fallacy?

145:41

Thomas Ice:

Yes I am. And I did not make an argument. I just simply said what people... If you read anybody, Kittles, all these people, they talk about the semantic range of words. And that's all I was talking about, that it is possible. And Wayne House, as I say, cites an example or two about, I think, one about someone standing on the dock and watching the boat disappear, you see.

Alan Kurschner:

Right. But you're not presenting that as evidence tonight because you don't, okay, okay...

Thomas Ice:

Right.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay, that's what I wanted. Okay, I have a question...

Thomas Ice:

I did not say, did not say, that proves anything about the noun.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. I guess I just want to move on a little bit here. Could you tell me why there aren't any standard New Testament lexicons that list *apostasia* as a meaning for spatial departure?

Thomas Ice:

Yes, because when you had Jerome translating the Vulgate, he translated it departure. And all the English translations, early English translations, about six of seven of them, translated it departure. And that's the best translation. That's what it means. And then you had the...

Alan Kurschner:

I'm sorry...

Thomas Ice:

Let me finish. You had the Rheims Bible came in, and the first Catholic English translation. And translated it revolt. They gave a theological interpretive translation because they wanted it to refer to the Reformation. And then the King James were the first to translate it as falling away, and then others apostasy. And so, they were countering it by saying the Roman Catholic

Church. So, they did theological interpretations rather than going with the earliest translations which translated it simply departure and let the reader understand. If that had been translated departure it would not be a hard argument to get it to refer to a physical departure.

Alan Kurschner:

But are you aware that Jerome's Vulgate and the early English translations, a lot of them, yes, they translated as departure. But are you aware that they did not translate it as a spatial departure. They also meant that it was a rendering, a gloss, for also a religious departure as well. In fact, are you aware, Hebrews 3:12 in the early English versions, where they actually use the term departure using, referring to, an apostasy?

Thomas Ice:

Yeah. I mean, I agree and understand those things. But the point is, they translated those as departure. And that, by many linguists, is said to be the best translation that then allows the interpreter to understand whether it's a physical departure or an abstract noun, you know, like apostasy.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. My next question is: You mentioned the Liddell and Scott's lexicon. Are you aware that this is not a Koine Greek lexicon?

148:47

Thomas Ice:

Yes.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay.

Thomas Ice:

It's for all of Greek. I have my copy.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. Good. And, you mentioned they have a secondary meaning that refers to spatial departure, in fact, I have it right here. It says, departure, disappearance. Are you aware, the one instance they can find for it to refer to a physical, or a physical departure or a spatial departure it's from the Sixth Century? That's almost five centuries removed from the New Testament.

Thomas Ice:

Right. I'm aware of that.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. Then that you're using the anachronistic fallacy by that reading a term that's, a very rare term from the Sixth Century, reading it back into 2nd Thessalonians 2:3. That's an anachronistic fallacy.

Thomas Ice:

Yeah. Well. I argue mainly from the context because the words *apostasia* can mean physical departure and therefore the context is that he's talking about *episynagōgē*, or gathering together to Him. And, therefore, the context better supports that. Plus, in verse 15 he talks a letter he had previously written to them. And you read 1st Thessalonians, he never wrote about the doctrine of apostasy or anything. But he talked all over it about the rapture and our departure to be with Christ. And so, I think what tips me, in the direction of that is the idea of the context. But, this is a secondary issue for most Pretribulationists. You know, I happen to lean in that direction but Pretribulationism doesn't rise or fall on this.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. And again, yeah. I just want to reaffirm here. You're just mention that *apostasia* can refer to a physical departure, but you're not able to produce a single instance in all of Koine Greek literature that *apostasia* ever means a physical departure. Is that correct?

Thomas Ice:

I'm not able but Wayne House was.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. But you're not able to give us what Wayne House...

Thomas Ice:

I can't give it to you here.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. I want to move on. I have another question here, and that is: Do you agree that the, 1st Thessalonians 4:15 teaches that Christ's coming will happen when the Church will be on Earth here at that time?

Thomas Ice:

I'm sorry.

Alan Kurschner:

Do you agree that 1st Thessalonians 4:15 teaches that Christ's *parousia*, coming, will happen when the Church will be on Earth at that time? So, 1st Thessalonians 4:15, the term *parousia* is mentioned right?

Thomas Ice:

Yes.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. So, in 1st Thessalonians 4 we have the depiction of the rapture, correct?

Thomas Ice:

Uh huh.

Alan Kurschner:

And that's going to happen at the *parousia*, at the beginning of the *parousia*?

Thomas Ice:

Uh huh.

Alan Kurschner:

Now in Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians, at the beginning of chapter 2 he says, "Now concerning the coming," *parousia*, "of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to Him, we ask you brothers," and so on... Would you agree that the *parousia*, and our being gathered to Him, Paul is likely making a reference back to his first epistle?

Thomas Ice:

Yes.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. Alright then, my question is: a few verses later in 2nd Thessalonians 2:8, Paul that the Antichrist will be here before the Lord's *parousia*, coming, he says, "Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end the appearance," that is, the appearance, the *epiphaneia* of His *parousia*. Do you agree that the Church, then, will be here, at that time?

Thomas Ice:

No.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay, then. On what basis can you disrupt the unity between the *parousia* mentioned in verse 1 and *parousia* mentioned in verse 8?

152:47

Thomas Ice:

The context. In the first usage of *parousia* in 2:1 he has an adjectival qualifier, "And our gathering," *episynagōgē* our gathering together with Him." And then, by the time you get to verse 8, he's talking about the events in the Tribulation,

the career of the Antichrist. So, obviously, as he talked about in chapter 1, he's talking about the Second Coming. When the Lord is going to return and blow away the bad guys.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. So, you would say the *parousia* in verse 1 refers to the rapture, and then seven years later in verse 8 you have this other *parousia*?

Thomas Ice:

Yes. As I, I made the point earlier, its used many times in different ways. For example, in Philippians it is used about Paul being present with Him. That's not the Second Coming. And he talks, in another passage, about simply, his presence with the Corinthians. So, it's not a word that is a... And, as I said, you try to make it a semi-technical term, when that's not legitimate.

Alan Kurschner:

I don't believe it's a semi-technical term. Just when it's in the context of the Lord's coming. But I have...

Thomas Ice:

That's the implication that you're trying to make here. And the context accounts for the different usages.

Alan Kurschner:

Now, it also mentions the *epiphaneia* of the *parousia*. The *epiphaneia*. So, you would say that we're not here for the *epiphaneia*?

Thomas Ice:

Well, in this context, no. but in 1st John chapter 3, you know, "We won't shrink back at His coming." That is a reference to the rapture.

Alan Kurschner:

Right, but you said in Titus 2:13 that *epiphaneia*..

Thomas Ice:

No. 1st John...

Alan Kurschner:

Okay but the *epiphaneia* in Titus 2:13 though, you would say that's..

Thomas Ice:

Yeah. That's the rapture. And, we had in Dallas, a hermeneutical cheer. We used to call it "Context, context, context." And context is the most important factor for narrowing down nuance, usage of words.

Alan Kurschner:

So, you would say that, you would believe in two *epiphaneias*?

Thomas Ice:

Yes.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. That's all my questions then. So...

Thomas Ice:

(To the audience) You remember that hermeneutical cheer? You must not have had the right teachers.

155:07

***** 20 Minute Pretrib Cross-Examination*****

Thomas Ice:

Okay. If the Church is vulnerable today for not preaching, and warning people about facing the Antichrist then why are there not New Testament warnings? Instead you have the passages that tell us to wait and look for Christ, or not to look, but to wait for Christ, who's coming at any moment.

Alan Kurschner:

Well, I believe there's a passage, for example in Paul. 1st Thessalonians 5 that talks about waiting, correct?

Thomas Ice:

But there he's talking about the Tribulation and we're not of that. Believers are not of that day.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. But he, its actually directed to believers. 1st Thessalonians...

Thomas Ice:

The whole Bible's directed to believers.

Alan Kurschner:

Yes. But that's in the context of 1st Thessalonians 5 gives a specific *grēgoreō* that's the term there to, I believe that's the term, to refer to as waiting. Waiting and being alert, watching and being alert.

Thomas Ice:

Right. Because we're not of the night. In other words, that's why we're waiting for the Lord. and we're waiting for that day even. You know, and it's going to come suddenly. In fact, that leads to another question: If the Day of the Lord comes suddenly, as this passage talks about, and unexpected by unbelievers, wouldn't that best fit a Pretrib view versus having gone through the majority of the 70th week of Daniel?

Alan Kurschner:

The, the...

Thomas Ice:

How's that going to catch them off guard?

Alan Kurschner:

Oh.

Thomas Ice:

The unbelievers.

Alan Kurschner:

The wrath of God is going to come suddenly, and it's going to come when they're saying, "Peace and safety," and that happens during the Antichrist's Great Tribulation. The word is going to love this guy. There's going to be a false security and the world is going to say, "Peace and safety," but then, of course, sudden destruction is going to come upon the wicked. That's how I would see it.

Thomas Ice:

Right. Well since, Daniel 9:27 says that the Antichrist is the one who makes the covenant, "He will make a covenant with the many." The Many is a technical term in Daniel for Israel, or at least the remnant of Israel. So, he's there, present from the beginning. And yet, you don't seem to think that he's going to be there at the very beginning. In fact, I even heard you say one that you're not even sure if we'll know when the Tribulation starts.

Alan Kurschner:

Well, I'm likely to think that believers will be discerning when the seven year period begins. You will have a covenant and, I believe, in conjunction with reinstatement of the Levitical system. And, I think that, you know, we see a seven year covenant be made in conjunction with that, I think we're likely but

I don't know if we can be certain. That's interesting because Paul, Jesus and the book of Revelation really focus on the mid-point, not the beginning point. And I believe it's the revelation of Antichrist at the midpoint, that is going to be the, you know, touchstone, you know, that we are in this for sure.

Thomas Ice:

Well, I agree. It focuses on the midpoint. But it says he will make a seven year covenant with the many, and in the middle of the week. But, that statement includes him there, at the beginning of the 70th week, making the covenant with Israel. Or, imposing it, or however you take that.

Alan Kurschner:

Yeah. Like I say, I think, I'm likely to think that when the seven year period happens, I think we will know that it has happened. I'm just saying, we're not going to be as dogmatic until the midpoint.

159:02

Thomas Ice:

Well, I heard you, on one of your programs say that we might not even be sure when the Tribulation starts, because it might be, I don't know if you worded this secretly or clandestine type of covenant.

Alan Kurschner:

That's what I mean by when the seven-year period begins, that's going to be the time when, again, you know, we don't know for sure. That's... If you mean by the Tribulation period, the seven-year period?

Thomas Ice:

Yes.

Alan Kurschner:

I don't know if we can say for 100% certainty that we're going to be here, I'm sorry, 100% certainty that we are going to know that we have entered in to the seven-year period.

Thomas Ice:

Yeah, whereas Pretribulationists don't have that because of the discontinuous event called the rapture. And, after that, clear signing of the covenant. And, this seems to be a public event that people are going to know.

Alan Kurschner:

Actually, I would... I think all Pretribulationists are going to know when the mid-point happens because they're going to see it...

Thomas Ice:

From heaven. Yes.

Alan Kurschner:

'Fraid not.

Thomas Ice:

I think, Kerby, God's going to save at least one Journalist to give us reports.

What passages actually teach the chopping up of the 70th week of Daniel? In other words, not just a person classifying this as this and that but actually teach discontinuities. We know that there, that it teaches the Great Tribulation is the second half, but other than that, I don't know of passages that clearly teach the chopping up of these things into segments as you do.

Alan Kurschner:

Well, I mean, if you have the mid-point, right? You have the mid-point of... in Matthew 24, I think you would agree, you have the Abomination of Desolation, verse 15, and it says, then there's going to be a Great Tribulation. But before

verse 15 you have, in verses 4 through 8, a mention of the beginning of birth pangs. So, I think its....

Thomas Ice:

We agree on that. I'm talking about other terms.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. Other terms...Great Tribulation will be cut short, and then the Day of the Lord's wrath will begin.

Thomas Ice:

Yeah. The phrase that Great Tribulation...It doesn't say the Great Tribulation will be cut short. It says those days, the days that would lead to the destruction of the Jews.

161:30

Alan Kurschner:

Actually, no, that's not correct. It's actually referring back to, the Tribulation of those days. And the immediate context is...and it says, why are they cut short? For the sake of the elect. And it shows that the elect are being persecuted under the Great Tribulation.

Thomas Ice:

Yeah. In other words, the Jewish people would be would be wiped out if that process is continued. So, its limited to seven years.

Alan Kurschner:

Why...I'm not asking the questions so, I guess...

Thomas Ice:

Right.

Why do you not recognize the four to five different black-outs throughout the 70th week of Daniel and the book of Revelation and seem to limit it to one, for example in Revelation 6 it's just one of the black-outs, and yet you seem to merge all the other black-outs that are all in different contexts, and, development into that black-out.

Alan Kurschner:

That's a good question. In my opening statement I actually did acknowledge that there are black-outs during the Days of the Lord's judgment and the trumpet judgments, bowl judgments, for example, a third of the stars, a third of the light goes out. But the Celestial Disturbances that I'm referring to, there seems to be a consistency of, not just a consistency of the terminology, like: the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven. You don't see that language in that form in the trumpet and bowl judgments. You do have other luminaries going dark, chaos, and whatnot. During the trumpet judgments and bowl judgments but, when it comes to this, especially when Jesus is citing from Joel that, He says this cluster of events will happen before the Day of the Lord. I'm trying to compare scripture with scripture and with this very—it's not just similar language—it's the context because you have before it you have Great Tribulation. And after it you have God's decisive intervention with human history.

Thomas Ice:

Yeah. But you have different contexts like the situation there in Revelation 6, is the stars fall to the Earth. I take that as asteroids. But others the stars fall from the sky. It doesn't say they go to the Earth. And so, you have qualitative differences, once again. And yet, you seem to merge those into a single event.

Alan Kurschner:

I think you're reading a little too much into the figurative language there. But I do agree, whether its asteroids or meteors whatever...

Thomas Ice:

Yeah.

Alan Kurschner:

... coming in. I think that is the language, especially when it talks about stars right? I mean...

Thomas Ice:

Right.

Alan Kurschner:

So...

Thomas Ice:

astēr

Alan Kurschner:

I don't know if you're making... It sounds like you're making too strict of a distinction between the language, because the New Testament writers, they could have a, they could have a certain latitude of freedom in their terms, their description. So, I wouldn't be so hard fast with...

Thomas Ice:

It would seem you'd almost have to have a recapitulation view of the seals, trumpets judgments. Which you say you don't.

Alan Kurschner:

Yeah. Not at all.

Thomas Ice:

But. For example, the trumpet judgments are partial judgments. And that's why He then dumps the full judgments and so there are similarities between the trumpet and bowl judgments. But you have different black-outs and events going on at that time but...

Alan Kurschner:

I agree.

Thomas Ice:

So that's a reason for those being different. And, therefore, it occurs, it seems to me, that that black-out there in Revelation 6 occurs early on.

Alan Kurschner:

I would see that before the trumpets right? I mean, I would. Would you?

Thomas Ice:

Yeah. Definitely before the trumpets.

Alan Kurschner:

Right.

Thomas Ice:

Because it has come. So why is your view of the timing of the rapture based on an inference and not clear passages?

Alan Kurschner:

It's not based on an inference. It's based on clear references, passages, I believe. 2nd Thessalonians chapter 2 is the most explicit passage in the New Testament. Where it explicitly... The Thessalonians were fretting about, that they were in the Day of the Lord, that it had already passed—however you want to interpret that verb. And Paul is reassuring them. Paul is reassuring them that, “No you're not in the Day of the Lord.” there are two events that have to happen before the Day of the Lord, and by extension the rapture. Because in verse 2 you have, Paul began, or verse 1, chapter 2 verse 1 Paul says, “Concerning the coming and our being gathered to Him.” And then, He doesn't differentiate between the Day of the Lord or the *parousia*. He uses those terms interchangeably. But He's addressing—this is the issue—the coming and the Parousia. Two events have to happen before that. And that is,

and that will be: the man of lawlessness and the apostasy will happen before the Day of the Lord. and I believe that's the basis to show the rapture will happen...

Thomas Ice:

Yeah. I have

Alan Kurschner:

...after the Antichrist.

Thomas Ice:

I had a radio debate once with Robert Gundry on this. And his book *First the Antichrist* based on that very passage. And I pointed out to this great Greek scholar, that, he's not saying—you look up any translation, virtually, and it will say— that the Day of the Lord has come. It doesn't say we are in the Day of the Lord. don't you understand that?

Alan Kurschner:

Actually, you have the, of course, I believe, the apodosis is missing

Thomas Ice:

Yes.

Alan Kurschner:

The action though is showing that... That's why Paul says, you know, don't let, don't let, be deceived, right?

Thomas Ice:

Right.

Alan Kurschner:

He mentions the Day of the Lord. as if they're fretting. Don't let any... Don't be deceived by any letter or any oral teaching or whatnot.

Thomas Ice:

That we are in the Day of the Lord. and he gives reasons why we are not in the Day of the Lord. Yet you say...

Alan Kurschner:

Correct.

Thomas Ice:

...its saying that the Antichrist has to come first. And that's not what it

Alan Kurschner:

Yes.

Thomas Ice:

... says.

Alan Kurschner:

Actually it does say that.

Thomas Ice:

No it doesn't.

Alan Kurschner:

Its *protos*. You have the apostasy and the man of lawlessness happens before right?

Thomas Ice:

Yeah. But I'm...

Alan Kurschner:

Day of the Lord's wrath.

Thomas Ice:

...not talking about that part of the passage. I'm talking about the part where he says, you know, the sense is the Day of the Lord would not be here, would not have come unless the *apostasia* and the revelation of the man of sin had occurred first. Those are the reasons why they are not in the Day of the Lord. and yet, Gundry and yourself, Prewrathers, want to say that that means, "No this has to come first, and therefore, Pretribulationism's wrong." No, its not saying that. The grammar is, we're not in the Day of the Lord and here are two reasons why: first...

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. Let me address that the term *protos* is used. As Paul is explicitly saying what must come first, okay? And he connects the apostasy and the man of lawlessness, as I see it, as a two-fold event that must happen before the Day of the Lord. it can be nothing but the Day of the Lord because the context here, like you said, Paul is saying, in verse 1 he's saying, "Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to Him. And then he mentions the Day of the Lord and that is the context. And the protasis of the conditional clause there indicates that these events, this two-fold event, will come first before the Day of the Lord. and by extension, I believe, before the gathering or before the rapture.

Thomas Ice:

Yeah, I know that's what you say. But, I mean, I have researched this. I know you have as well. And Bob Gundry did not counter me when I pointed out the original language says, these are, you're not in the Day of the Lord because first.

Alan Kurschner:

Ah.

Thomas Ice:

The Antichrist or *apostasia* hasn't happened, and secondly, the Antichrist is not here.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay. First of all, I completely disagree with, I think, your representation of Gundry, because I have completely read him differently.

Thomas Ice:

Right.

Alan Kurschner:

Here's what...

Thomas Ice:

He's not arguing..

Alan Kurschner:

I get a minute here, so I want to respond. The 2nd Thessalonians 2:1, okay, let's I just want to walk through this. So you have, again, the, "Now concerning the *parousia*," the coming, "of our Lord Jesus, and our being gathered to Him. We ask you brothers not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed either by spirit,, spoken word, letter." So here, "to the effect that the Day of the Lord has come."

Thomas Ice:

Right.

Alan Kurschner:

Okay, so he, so what's being there is that the Thessalonians, they think they're in the Day of the Lord, maybe it's already passed, in any event he wants, Paul

wants, to reassure them that they are not, that the Day of the Lord is yet in the future. And so, he is saying that *protos*, first, the *apostasias*, and then he connects the man of lawlessness with that, together.

171:10

Thomas Ice:

Yeah but he's not saying that the Antichrist has to appear for Christians or believers...

Alan Kurschner:

Well isn't it interesting that 2nd Thessalonians 2:8, a few verses later, he explicitly says that the *parousia* is going to put an end to the Antichrist.

Thomas Ice:

And I agree.

Alan Kurschner:

How can He put an end to the Antichrist if he's not....? But you're making a disruption, you're disrupting the unity of that text by saying that, "Oh, no no no, that *parousia*, that's still in the future. That's not the *parousia* that Paul is mentioning in verse 1." I think that's very inconsistent.

Thomas Ice:

Well, it's very interesting, but almost all commentaries say, yeah he lists first the Antichrist has not appeared. And secondly, the man of lawlessness has to appear. And then he goes off onto the man of lawlessness and talks about his career there.

Alan Kurschner:

First, I disagree. I don't know about your reference to all commentaries. Again that's...

Thomas Ice:

Virtually all commentaries. In other words, this is not what you say it is.

Alan Kurschner:

I disagree with that. I've read a lot of commentaries on Thessalonians and they all, it depends on, we're not here to, you know, to count noses. I know it just depends on who's the interpreter of the commentary on Thessalonians. I mean Colin Nichol, very well known Thessalonians scholar, and, you know, would completely disagree with you. So here, my argument is not to say, well this commentary over here, this person says this. That what you've been doing. But I'm not counting noses. I want to talk about Biblical argumentation. Look at the context. See, I don't believe you can walk through 2nd Thessalonians 2, and look at the coherence of the text. You have to disrupt the text with your presupposition that there is a, quote-unquote, rapture coming and then there's a second coming, or another Second Coming seven years later. My view, Dr. Ice, is that I can walk through 2nd Thessalonians, even back to chapter 1, and go through—because, I believe that chapter 2 is actually a bad chapter break—and walk through the whole text and give a coherent position of the Prewrath position.

Thomas Ice:

Another wrong presupposition because we do it all the time. We go through these texts and teach them. I'm simply saying that 2nd, New American Standard, for example says, "Let no one in any way deceive you, for it," referring back to the Day of the Lord—and of course, this is in italics because the apodosis is missing—"will not come unless the apostasy comes first." In other words, this is why they are not in the Day of the Lord. He's saying that that has to come, whatever that is, whether that's the rapture...

Alan Kurschner:

Yes, I see what you are saying. I know Thomas from Master's makes that argument as well. And, again, the problem, the term, the adverb *protos*, first, is

I think, is very problematic to your conclusion. Because, first of what? It has come first, before the Day of the Lord.

174:05

Thomas Ice:

Right. Well, most of my, hardly any of my commentaries are Pretrib, by the way. And they take a similar understanding of the passage. I'm not basing it on that. I'm basing it on exegesis. So, if your view of the rapture is that, its talked about in Joel and things like this, the Second Coming. Then how could that be since Jesus introduces the concept of the rapture in ~~the Olivet Discourse~~, or the Upper Room Discourse?

Alan Kurschner:

I believe He actually introduces the rapture a few days earlier than the Upper Room Discourse. I find it very interesting that the term that Jesus uses, *paralambano*—I use the modern Greek pronunciation—*paralambano*, Jesus uses that in His analogy of the one taken and the other left. And, it's interesting that, I always find it troubling that, wait a minute; Jesus can use *paralambano* to receive His people in John 14 but, to refer to the rapture, but a few days later Jesus can use that same term to talk about those who are taken, the elect, and yet that can't refer to the rapture. Again, I think this is very inconsistent, and it's your presupposition that the Pretrib rapture is not, or the, yeah, the Pretrib rapture is not found in Matthew 24. And I believe the rapture is found in Matthew 24:31.

Kerby Anderson:

Well we have come to the time of our closing statements. And let me just before we do that encourage some of you to visit the book tables here. We have some great books here and you have an opportunity for them to sign those books. So let me encourage you do drop by there. I appreciate you all for sticking with us. Seven minutes for each one of them and then we'll conclude the evening.

176:10

*****Closing Statement 7 Minutes—Prewrath*******Alan Kurschner:**

First of all I want to thank everyone for attending. Including Kerby Anderson of Probe Ministries. Dr. Ice, I appreciate the spirited debate that we've had this evening. And, actually, I hope this will turn into a series of debates in the future. We'll see what happens there.

But, tonight, tonight, this evening I've attempted to try to, in my limited time to make a case that the last generation of the Church—it could be this generation—and that, the last generation of the Church will face the Antichrist's Great Tribulation before the rapture. I...Whether I've made a Biblical, plausible case for that, of course, is up to your judgment. And the points I tried to stress in this debate is: there's a fundamental distinction between the Antichrist's Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord's wrath. I think that's so important to understand. If you get that wrong I think you're going to get a lot of your eschatology, as far as this surrounding events of Christ's return wrong. You have to recognize that, yes we are exempt from the Day of the Lord's wrath. But the Day of the Lord's wrath is not the Great Tribulation. The Great Tribulation will be directed against God's people. I also tried to present a unified teaching among Jesus' teaching, Paul's teaching and the book of Revelation. And I believed that Dr. Ice's position creates a false dichotomy among this, these teachings and disrupts the coherence of these texts. And so, I believe Pretribulationism, I believe it is riddled with assumptions, circular reasoning and based on the flawed presupposition on the relationship between Israel and the Church. Of course, I believe the Church and Israel are distinct from each other, but I believe that we have to have a proper understanding that God does work with Israel and the Church at the same time. He's done it in the past. He does it right now. He's working with Israel and the Church right now, and He will in the future during the seven-year period. So, overall I do not believe that Dr. Ice has satisfactorily responded to my Biblical arguments.

In my opening period I presented a line of evidence of comparing scripture with scripture with respect to the Celestial Disturbance event. This event, this is not going to be some Hollywood Sci-Fi event. This is going to be a collision course with human kind. So my question, my question for you this evening is: if you are living, if you live in that last generation of the Church. Again, it could be this generation. My question for you is: will you be an over-comer during the Antichrist's Great Tribulation? The book of Revelation is all about—not escaping—but overcoming.

And so, if you overcome and if God wills it, in His sovereign decree that you will be one of the ones who Paul says are alive up to the parousia. When you see those Celestial Disturbances, the question is: will you have the faith that you will not faint in fear of what is coming upon the world? You will not have fear and trepidation that, that you don't know if you're secure in your faith? Because these Celestial Disturbances is going to cause trepidation among many people. No one's going to be on the fence. And my hope is that, my hope is that you will have the confidence—you can't wait then. You've got to prepare right now—that you will have the confidence, when you see these Celestial Disturbances, that you will raise your heads, stand, and know that your redemption draws near.

My final word this evening is an exhortation from the apostle Paul. A bit of a doxology here in this debate. And that is, again, if we are the final generation of the Church we will face the Antichrist. And my hope is that Paul's text here in Romans of God's promise that you may take this promise to heart during the Great Tribulation. And this is the hope that we must depend upon during that time. And that is Romans 8:35-39 and I'll just conclude here: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution, or famine, nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written, for your sake we are being killed all the day long. We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come, powers height, depth nor anything else in creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Thank you.

182:12

******Closing Statement 7 Minutes—Pretrib********Thomas Ice:**

I appreciate this opportunity as well and be able to articulate and defend what the New testament teaches about the Pretrib rapture and its relationship to the totality of scripture. And I believe my opponent has stated his view. I think he's blind to his own presuppositions, and his own circular reasoning. If what he's described is circular reasoning. And I believe that these can only be decided by exegetical hand-to-hand combat, so to speak, going through these passages. And, also, if you notice, he's totally absent dealing with these specific mystery aspects of the New Testament which is the revelation about the rapture and the Church's eschatology. As Paul stated early in his ministry, his writing career in 1st and 2nd Thessalonians; about the uniqueness of the Church's destiny as promised by Christ in the Upper Room Discourse. And he has failed to show any convincing proof that the Tribulation, the 70th week of Daniel should be chopped up into these little segments. Something that, I think, Bob Gundry pretty much started in the late '70s. and it's my understanding from Renald Showers who was good friends with Robert Van Kampen who invented the Prewrath Rapture view, that he was at his house during this month or so when he was going through these passages, that Van Kampen eliminated Pretribulationism in his thinking. And then he eliminated Post-tribulationism in his thinking. And he then came up, had to come up with something different, and this is what he came up with. And I remember when the Prewrath view first came out I got my free copy from Marv Rosenthal and people, a few people, said they believed in the Prewrath rapture and I never could get anybody to explain it to me in the same way. They were very confused about what it means. Because it is a very confusing viewpoint. And, because there aren't clear passages that teach the distinctive features or factors of this. It's based on what I call "Robert Gundryisms," of dividing that up. And the reason Gundry, I think came up with this, is he was trying to come up with a non-Pretrib, Dispensational form of Post-

tribulationism that did separate the comings. And it's very evident that his is, that the features that are new and distinctive to the Prewrath view are in response to these preexisting systems. Some people say, "Well the Pretrib rapture is a new view." Well, it is relatively new although if you go on our web-site we have found over a dozen pre Darby rapture statements, all the way back to around the 280s. and we're finding more and more, that people had some form of the separation of the rapture as a separate event and the Second Coming as a separate event. All the way to 1744 with Morgan Edwards and his very clear statement of Pretribulationism that he wrote at the University of Bristol College, in England, a Welshman who founded Brown University, an Ivy League school, by the way, in America.

And I believe that the New Testament does not tell us in the epistles that are designed to tell a Christian how to live. I don't know of any place where it warns us about you're going to go through and face the Antichrist and all of these kinds of things. It tells us a dozen times roughly that we are waiting for His Son from heaven, that He could come back at any moment. And this idea that somehow if you believe in the Pretrib rapture you're somehow going to deny your faith if it didn't happen is ridiculous, because what enables a person to persevere and to be a person who perseveres is maturity. And we may face all kinds of persecution before the rapture occurs. Are we going to be ready? You know, well, millions of Christians have been before us. And so it's a basic issue of maturity not whether... How are believers, who are brand new believers, during the Tribulation going to endure this? And, even in the passage he read in closing, it talks about how nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, if you're a believer. Not death, not persecution, not anything. And the Bible gives us a different scenario. But yet I hear Prewrathers all the time. This is the big question, is our view is dangerous. Some even have conspiracy theories of the Jesuits involved and all this kind of stuff, bringing in the Prewrath view and how, Lindsey... I even saw one Hal Lindsey, his way was paid to Dallas Seminary so he could be an instrument for propaganda propagating Pretribulationism. And the point is, that it is our blessed hope and it's clearly something that the Church, the early Church, did not realize, but

there's a lot of things the early Church did not realize. Are you going to adopt their view of ecclesiology?

188:01

You going to adopt their works view of salvation? What about the doctrine of Justification wasn't articulated until Luther in the 1500s. what about the doctrine of the Substitutionary Atonement wasn't articulated until Abelard, in, around the year 1000. There has been a development of the Church's understanding of doctrine. But, the Prewrath view, its distinctive elements, you know, were invented in the Chicago-land area by Robert Van Kampen, as he eliminated the two views, Post and Pretribulationism, according to Renald Showers who was actually there with him during that time.

So, I believe that we should be waiting for our Lord because it says in the scripture that purifies us. It motivates us to be the faithful bride who's waiting for our Lord to return. As we go about evangelizing the world in preaching the Gospel. Thank you.

189:41

END

Transcriber's Note:

As I transcribed the statements of the two debaters I was guided by two principles: (1) To document faithfully the actual words spoken by the speakers without bias or interpretation. I tried to let the debater's words speak for themselves. I have tried to generate an exact literal transcript. The one exception is that I decided to eliminate the verbal place-holders Uh, um and ah, unless those were the only sounds coming out of the speaker's mouth. (2) To provide a readable text for the eschatology student that would be easy to follow and electronically searchable. This electronic version will increase the usefulness of this debate for anyone trying to study it. These goals presented a few problems: I am not well-versed in the spelling of the Greek words used cited by the debaters, so what you read is the result of my best

guess in many cases. And, because the debaters were speaking extemporaneously, their grammar and sentence structure sometimes violates standard conventions. Everyone speaks first draft. I tried to insert punctuation in a fashion that would both retain all the words spoken and also be readable as English language text.

Doug Eigsti