

## Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth.

**Key verse:** 2 Timothy 2:15. Be diligent to present yourself **approved** to God, a **worker** who does not need to be **ashamed**, rightly dividing the word of truth.

**Approved** – to believe that something or someone is good and acceptable.

**Worker** – a person who does a specified type of work.

**Ashamed** – to feel embarrassment, shame or guilt over something said or done.

**Introduction:** The Lord categorically stated in John 14:6 that He was - **The Way** (for those who are **Lost** and need direction from Him. Therefore, Yeshua/Jesus is either a liar, a lunatic or the Lord of all as He said He was), **The Truth** (for those who want to **Learn** from Him) and **The Life** (for those who **Long** for eternity. As it is written God has put the thoughts of eternity into every human heart. *Ecclesiastes 3:11*).

Secondly, the Lord has given some whom He calls into His Kingdom the right to be Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers according to what He has given them to proclaim regarding the Gospel (The Good News of the forgiveness of sins, holiness and eternal life).

*See 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 2:20, 3:5, 4:11; 2 Peter 3:2.*

### Proposition:

1) What is Theology, Hermeneutics and Exegesis?

2) What is Soteriology?

3) What is Eschatology?

4) What is Apologetics?

**Theology** is the study of God's Word. **Hermeneutics** is the methodology of interpretation of God's Word to teach and explain through exegetical rules and **Exegesis** are the individual rules used, there are approximately 42 of these which allow us to rightly divide the Word of Truth given.

**Soteriology** is the study of salvation events throughout the Holy Bible.

**Eschatology** is the study of last things, those things yet to come before He comes/returns.

**Apologetics** is the area of theology that allows us to defend the faith once and for all given.

### Teaching:

When we want to study and examine any passage of the Scriptures or a verse or several verses that teach us something of the doctrines (the teachings) of God we must use the first four exegetical rules of Hermeneutics. This is a discipline if ignored that will lead to error and incorrect or false teaching. So, what are these first 4 Rules?

1) **Contextual** – if we take a verse or verses out of context we have a pretext - something which is not correct, we do not have the true meaning that God gave us. Sometimes context is historical (e.g. understanding the historical context in which the prophets of old were speaking) and sometimes context is relational (e.g. understanding a passage in the light of other passages/prophesies which

the writer has penned elsewhere). In this respect, we need to be aware that the writer is in reality the Holy Spirit - and He has written Scripture through many scribes (most of them Jewish) - this therefore enables us to disentangle what may at first seem to show contradictions within God's word.

2) **Literal** - The literal meaning of a word is its original, basic meaning. It also means to translate each word separately, without looking at how the words are used together in a phrase or sentence.

3) **Grammatical** - Is to obey the rules of grammar in looking at the structure of a sentence in its entirety. What is the function or meaning of a word in the setting given. Is the word a pronoun, noun, adjective, adverb, verb, preposition, conjunction or interjection? These are the eight parts of speech. God spoke or God said is stated at least 3,800 times in the Tanakh or the Old Testament of what God gave.

4) **Historical** – This is the setting and the events of the story, the facts recorded and to whom it is addressed and at what point in the history of the Holy Bible it was given. It is also about how it was understood at the time it was given.

There is heresy which has become prevalent in the church today, 'the first hearer's heresy', which corrupts these rules and says that we have to understand what a word or passage meant to the first hearers...and that this is the only way a word or passage is to be understood. This so-called exegetical rule has been used in several ways; one application is to deny the Hebraic prophetic understanding (that prophecy is pattern); another is to deny that Old Testament moral laws have validity in our day (this goes along with re-interpretation of the meaning of certain words); and a further application is to permit the re-interpretation of passages to fit our 'culture' (it being said to be different from Old Testament or First Century cultures) because what a passage meant to 'first hearers' is deemed irrelevant and not applicable today. Ultimately what this heresy does is to deny that Scripture is the Word of God and reduce it to being Jewish or Christian spiritual writings, which we then have to interpret (re-interpret) for our day and culture. It denies that the Word of God is living and active (*Hebrews 4: 12*) in and of itself.

Now that we have established these rules we can now rightly divide the Word of Truth.

### **Bible Study:**

So, let us now look at Matthew chapter 24 which is about the last things to come that the Messiah Yeshua (Hebrew name) Jesus (English name and translation) taught about.

Some Christians mistakenly think Matthew 24 and Luke 21 are the same event or are directly parallel passages. This is not so - some parts of Luke 21 (e.g. verses 12-19) are focussed on first century events. Matthew 24 is a private briefing to the disciples on the Mount of Olives, whereas Luke 21 follows Yeshua's statement about the destruction of the Temple, and is a public briefing answering questions posed by the crowd in the temple.

*Luke 21: 20-44* are clearly related to the destructions of Jerusalem that happened in 70AD and 135AD. Early historians Josephus (Jewish) and Eusebius (Greek) record that the believers in Jerusalem heeded Yeshua's warnings; Eusebius says that in the period 66-70 AD many fled to a mountain city called Pella, which is in the Decapolis region.

*Luke 21: 25-27* sees Yeshua speaking about His second coming at the end of the tribulation, and this

is parallel with *Matthew 24 :29-31*.

So, now to focus on Matthew chapter 24 and the first scholarly book we shall take points from is *The Bible Exposition Commentary* by Warren W. Wiersbe. A scholar and author of over 100 books.

Verses 1-2 is where the Lord Yeshua predicts the destruction of the Temple

Verse 3 is where His disciples ask 3 questions relating to the time of the end. A) Tell us, when these things will be? B) And what will be the sign of Your coming? C) And of the end of the age?

Verses 4-14 describes **The Beginning of the Tribulation**.

Verses 15-22 describes **The Middle of the Tribulation**.

Verses 23-44 describes **The End of the Tribulation**.

Verses 45-51 describes the Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant.

**The Beginning** verses 4-14 are further divided into **Religious Deception** (verses 4-5), **Death from Wars** (verse 6), **Famines** (verse 7a), **Pestilences, Earthquakes** (verses 7b-8), **Martyrs** (verse 9), **Division, False Prophets and The Falling Away** (verses 10-13), **Worldwide Preaching** (verse 14). **We are to note that this gives us an overview of the Signs of the Times and of The End of the Age.**

*Question? Is Yeshua speaking to just His disciples at the time or for every disciple down through the centuries? The context implies every disciple because of verse 14.*

**The Middle** verses 15-22 speaks of an event, prophesied centuries ago by Daniel (Book of Daniel 9:24-27). **We are to note that this prophecy concerns the Jews and Jerusalem.** The prophecy has 3 parts - 1) For seven weeks (49 years) the city of Jerusalem would be rebuilt and worship re-established. 2) After 62 weeks (434 years) Messiah would come and die for the sins of all that would believe. 3) The prince will make an agreement with the Jews for 1 week (7 years) to protect them from their enemies.

*Question? Is the elect spoken of in verse 22 and 24 speaking about the Jews (Israel) or also about the Church? We have in Isaiah 45:4 'For Jacob **My** servant's sake, And **Israel My elect**, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me.' Then in Colossians 3:12 we have, Therefore, as **the elect** of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;*

*It is this that led me years ago to see the mid-point Rapture position whereas today I am pre-trib Rapture because of further systematic study within the New Testament.*

*Warren W. Wiersbe is pre-trib Rapture. Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum is pre-trib Rapture, Willmington's Guide to The Bible by Dr. H. L. Willmington is pre-trib Rapture as are dozens of more theologians and scholars, let alone pastors, teachers, evangelists and saints. Today we have a number of teachers and therefore saints who believe in the Rapture just before the 7 Bowls of Wrath and some who believe we go to the very end of the Tribulation Period. The problem with this last position is fitting in the Bema Judgement Seat of the Lord spoken of in 2 Corinthians 5:10 and then The Marriage Supper of the Lamb spoken of in Revelation 19:7-9 before His Coming in Revelation 19:11-21 to Reign and Rule. The Marriage Supper of the saints could be on the earth with the*

*remnant of Israel, saved and alive on His return to reign and rule.*

*Another consideration is the name or term Church signifying Jewish and Gentile believers one in Messiah (Ephesians 2:14). W.E. Vine's Expository Dictionary gives us this insightful information from these Greek words in the manuscripts: -*

*Ekklesia (Anglicized word is Ecclesia) which literally means (Out Called) - Called Out ones. Ekklesia was changed to mean Church.*

*Episunagoge means a place of assembling or gathering. Used in Hebrews 10:25 and in James 2:2. This gave us the English word Synagogue. However, Jews use the word Shul for a place of gathering.*

*Episunago means to gather together.*

*Kyrios (ancient) or Kurios (modern) means Lord in Greek.*

*Kyriakon means the Lord's House but again changed to Church in the Bible in the N.T.*

*The reason we have looked at this is we cannot find the word ecclesia (Church) found in Revelation chapter 4 through to Revelation 21. The word ecclesia is not found at all after Chapter 3, except for chapter 22 verse 16 which is clearly speaking with reference to the churches in chapters 2 and 3. In Chapter 19 we only find the word servants used so it is in Chapter 20 we read of the saints, being the Tribulation saints. These are the ones who become martyrs from the mass of believers after the evangelistic work of the 144,000 Jews spoken of in chapter 7. We see this Jewish elect again in Revelation 14 where they are spoken of as being virgins none of them having known a woman. They have no time for marriage and children as time is short as they obey the call of the Lord to witness unto Yeshua/Jesus as the only way of salvation for mankind.*

*We also have described in chapters 4 and 5, the twenty-four elders who are worshipping before the throne of God. To understand the meaning of characters, symbols and signs in Revelation one of the best ways is through the appropriate Old Testament reference or analogy. The only significant '24' in the Old Testament are the 24 divisions of the priesthood - and hence one could understand these 24 elders as representative of the priesthood - and that would include Yeshua's disciples, being priests of the Lord. Furthermore, the song that these 24 elders sing in chapter 5 verses 9 and 10 identifies them quite clearly as being saved by Yeshua's blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation - they can be none other than the raptured church...all this before the beginning of the tribulation Revelation chapter 6.*

Now back to Matthew chapter 24:

**The End** verses 23-44. World conditions will be so terrible that men will wonder if any relief will come! Verse 27 teaches that the return of Yeshua/Jesus to the earth will be sudden. Before this in verses 23-26 we see false christ's and prophets confusing and deceiving people. In verse 29 we read of cosmic disturbances which precede the Return of the Lord to rescue Israel from the armies of the nations.

We must not confuse the trumpet of verse 31 with the 'trump of God' in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 which is for the Church (saved Jews and Gentiles). Verse 31 in Matthew is speaking about the elect of Jews and Gentiles being gathered by the Lord's angels on His return. It is the Lord who will gather His Church (the ecclesia) as 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 teaches.

Warren W. Wiersbe writes in his commentary that scholars of prophecy do not agree on all the

details of the future events. But the following summary is a fair representation of what many prophetic scholars believe as to the order of events:

1. The Rapture of the Church (1 Corinthians 15:51-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. This can occur at any time. (It is known as the immanency factor. It is the blessed hope).
2. A leader makes a seven-year agreement with Israel. (Daniel 9:27).
3. After 3.5 years he breaks this false covenant of peace (Daniel 9:27).
4. He moves to Jerusalem and sets up his image in the temple. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4) - this is prophesied in Daniel 9 verse 27 and Daniel 12 verse 11 and Yeshua refers His disciples to these passages in Matthew 24 verse 15. There is also a prophetic pre-figuring of this abomination by Antiochus Epiphanes, prophesied in Daniel 11: 31 which also uses the words 'abomination of desolation'.
5. A warning to flee Jerusalem - there are several scripture references which indicate that the place of safety to which the Jews should flee in the end times is Bozrah (which means sheep-fold); e.g. *Isaiah 63: 1* and *Micah 2:12*.
6. The Antichrist begins to control the world and forces all people to worship and obey him. They must take his mark which condemns them to eternal perdition, whereas the tribulation saints will overcome by the blood of the Lamb and their testimony of being born again.
7. The nations gather at Armageddon against Israel which sees the King of Israel and the Lord of lords Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus the Messiah) defeat them.
8. The Lord Yeshua/Jesus then establishes His Kingdom and He will reign for 1,000 years.

### **Objections (by some):**

**Objection 1)** *In Acts 3:12-26* – verses 19-21 have been used to try and disprove the pre-tribulation rapture position.

So, let us then use the first 4 exegetical rules as we have already discussed to disprove this: -

The point made by some is that if in verse 21 - Heaven must receive Jesus until the times of the restoration of all things. This being at His return at the end of the 7 years of Tribulation and the start of the Millennium Rule and so He cannot come before then to take the Church home to Heaven. However, the times (plural) of restoration were spoke of by the prophets (plural) and so we need to study the major and minor Prophets as different parts were revealed to them and then shown to us as the whole picture within the canon of the O.T. and N.T. revelation of God's perfect plan and purposes.

**1) Contextual setting** – Those being spoken to are the men of Israel as per verse 12 and 25-26. They are unsaved so they are not part of His House (Church). We need to realize that Peter is discussing God's plan for Israel nationally and so Adonai Yeshua will remain in Heaven until He comes as Revelation chapters 19 and 20 shows at the end of the Tribulation Period to destroy the enemies of Israel and then to reign and rule for 1,000 years.

The expression Peter uses, about the restoration of '**all things**', clearly implies something that is wider than Israel's restoration. It is an allusion to the restoration that will come in the Millennium – as described by Paul in Romans 8:19-22.

It is only in the Millennium we see the restorations prophesied in the Tanakh, including the restoration of Israel in her land (larger than she has ever occupied).

**2) Literal meaning** – These men of Israel cannot see the restoration of Israel until Israel repents, as they cry out for Him in distress in the last days and then all Israel will be saved. This is exactly what Yeshua/Jesus taught in Matthew 23:39 and Paul confirms this in Romans 11:25 (a blindness is over

Israel) but they will be saved Romans 11:26 (when the Deliverer comes out of Zion). This is His covenant with them Romans 11:27 (when He takes away their sins). So, verse 22 of Acts chapter 3 shows they have rejected Jesus as the prophet like unto Moses. They refuse to repent, to turn from their sins so that Yeshua as Messiah can be sent. Now it must be as per verses 23-26 of what Acts chapter 3 teaches.

**3) Grammatical setting** - This verse does not stop the Lord coming in the air to take away His Bride of saved Jews and Gentiles who died in faith and those who are alive in Him at the Rapture. They will return to heaven to see their works tested by the Lord at His Bema Seat and then rewards are given for faithfulness and endeavour in the Gospel work. The Lord will not touch down on the Mount of Olives until His Second **public coming** when every eye will see Him. But He can snatch away (Rapture) His Bride to be kept from the hour that will test those who live on the earth. Revelation 3:10. So, every 'born again' (John 3:3) Jew and Gentile will share in the glorious Blessed Hope of Titus 2:13 being the Rapture. We need to fully understand that we are not appointed to any part of God's wrath and as it is written Jesus will save us from the wrath to come. **The Lord does not leave the heavens as it is we who go to meet Him in the air which is exactly the teaching of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.**

**4) Historical setting** – this once again shows it is clearly to the disbelieving men of Israel being spoken to by the apostle Peter. They refuse the message of life and so L'Adonai Yeshua states that they cannot have the Kingdom promised to Israel in Acts 1:6-7 as this is determined by the Father's perfect will and knowledge knowing the beginning to the end of all things. Jacob's Time of Trouble happens in the end times scenario to call out a remnant from Israel. In the end times, the nations of the earth will suffer the wrath of God, spoken of beginning in Revelation 6, and it increases in intensity until Messiah's return to reign and rule in Revelation chapters 19-20. But again, a remnant of Gentiles from amongst the nations will be saved to repopulate the earth during the Millennial Rule of Messiah for 1,000 years.

A verse then taken out of context gives a pretext! So instead of comparing/contrasting with what else is written on the whole subject of Messiah's return we have a teaching that is misleading and incorrect.

**Objection 2)** *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 is not the same in context as 1 Corinthians 15:51-55.*

We can however clearly show by comparing/contrasting that they are to be combined to show the events of the Last Day spoken of by our Lord Yeshua/Jesus in John 6:40 when He would raise believers up on the Last Day. The Last Day is not when He returns to the Mount of Olives, this is the last day for Israel as He rescues His people from the Anti-Christ and some of the armies of the world trying to destroy Israel.

The Last Day for believers to be raised and those alive on this earth to be changed and caught up into the air and clouds to be with their Lord is clearly seen in **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.**

**<sup>13</sup> But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. <sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with**

**them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord.**

**18** **Therefore comfort one another with these words.**

We are told to comfort one another through these verses given by the Lord to Paul the Apostle. We cannot possibly comfort one another if we believe we will have to go through the better part of the Tribulation with millions dying by losing their heads as they refuse the mark of the beast. Millions will also starve through food shortages brought about by droughts and crop failures resulting in the famine spoke of in Revelation chapter 6. Nowhere are we told to or warned to store food for the last days tribulation period. Nowhere is there a comparing of the days of Joseph in Egypt re the 7 years of famine written about in Genesis. But there is a comparing by the Lord Yeshua of the Days of Noah (Lawlessness) and that of Sodom and Gomorrah (Sexual disorder) within Genesis in the last days before He returns.

NB. Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum makes a very valid scholarly point re **1 Thessalonians 1:9-10**.

**9** **For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,** **10** **and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.**

**The closing words are crucial** because the church at Thessalonica was waiting for the return of Christ who was coming to deliver them from the wrath to come.

**The word wrath is used** of God's general wrath against sin as in Romans 1:18 and also of the wrath of the Great Tribulation as in Revelation 6:17, 14:10, 19, 15:1-17, 16:1 etc.

**The word is never used** of either Hell or the Lake of Fire.

The wrath of God here is future, and hence cannot refer to the general wrath of God against sin which is a present reality.

While Hell and the Lake of Fire are also future, they cannot be what 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 is referring to. By virtue of our personal salvation, the believer is already redeemed from Hell. Christ is not returning for the sole purpose of delivering the Church from Hell or the Lake of Fire. This has already been achieved at the Cross.

**The wrath that the Church** is being delivered from is the wrath of the Great Tribulation.

Messiah is coming for the specific purpose of delivering the Church from the wrath to come, namely, the Tribulation Period. The believer is guaranteed deliverance from both God's general wrath against sin (Romans 5:9) and from the Tribulation Wrath (1 Thessalonians 1:10 – Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come).

Let us now compare and then contrast the key features between **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** above and **1 Corinthians 15:51-55** below -

**51** **Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed** **52** **in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.** **53** **For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.** **54** **So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."** **55** **"O Death, where *is* your sting? O Hades, where *is* your victory?"**

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

1 Corinthians 15:51-55,

And the dead in Christ will rise first.

And the dead will be raised incorruptible.

We who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

Here, then, are the two same things spoken of. But there is no mention of Messiah's returning to the Earth at this time. We are caught up into the clouds to then go to Heaven for Messiah's Bema Seat. There is no mention of us all immediately going back to live on the Earth with our Lord..

These passages do not directly tell us about the timing of the rapture - they merely describe what will happen at the rapture. However, by comparing and then contrasting the details of the rapture in these passages with other passages of scripture describing Yeshua's coming. It is clear to many scholars and saints that there are two 'comings' which have very different characteristics - the 'Silent Coming' for His saints and the 'Shining Coming' with His saints, but both are sudden in each case. One is not seen and one is, as every eye will see Him.

These things written are the Last Day and the Rapture, when the dead are raised; those alive are changed at the Catching Up (The Rapture) - the dead are given their resurrection body and those who are alive are given their new resurrection body in the twinkling of an eye.

Scientists have now discovered that there is a digital boundary (smallness) of time itself - it is about  $10^{-43}$  seconds - about the time taken for light to pass through the retina...literally 'the twinkling of an eye'. It is amazing - it seems there is not a word or phrase in scripture that is insignificant, each word or phrase has been written by the Holy Spirit for a purpose.

At death, our spiritual body goes into Heaven, the physical body is laid to rest through burial or cremation. Absent from the body we are present with the Lord.

In Heaven, we have the martyrs of the past crying out to be avenged, they are not asleep they are alive calling out before the Lord. His reply is "not until the rest who are appointed to be martyrs, join them in Heaven". See Revelation 6:9-11.

**Conclusion:** Our concluding exegetical thought is based on Revelation 3:10.

**10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.**

The Church is promised by her Lord to be kept from the hour or period of trial that will fall upon the whole earth. In context, this is the Tribulation Period of Revelation chapters 6 to 19. The verse does not say the Church is to be kept safe during the trial but that it will be kept from the very hour of the trial, in other words from the very time of it. This therefore requires a removal (the Rapture) before the Tribulation Period even occurs or begins. Why?

If we are only to be kept safe from this period and not from the period there is a problem! Throughout the Tribulation period saints are being killed on a massive scale. See Revelation 6:9-11; 11:7; 12:11; 13:7,15; 14:13; 17:6 and 18:24. If these saints are Church saints they are clearly not being kept safe, they are dying in great numbers and Revelation 3:10 becomes meaningless as a promise to be kept from the trial to come upon the whole earth.

The Greek word in this verse is 'ek' a preposition which means to be kept out of within the context of the verse.

Therefore, only if the Church Saints and the Tribulation Saints are kept distinct does the promise of Revelation 3:10 make any real sense after looking at all the other verses we have studied above.