

Jesus and Paul's Undeniable Proof of a Post-trib Rapture

Matthew 24:29-31
and
1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

“But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.”

(Matthew 24:29–31)

“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 not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. “

(1 Thessalonians 4:15–18)

JESUS

Matthew 24:29-31

“But immediately after the tribulation of those days... they will see **THE SON OF MAN COMING** on the **CLOUDS** of the sky with

“He will send forth **HIS ANGELS**”

“with **A GREAT TRUMPET**”

“they will gather together **HIS ELECT**”

“from the four winds, from one end of **THE SKY** to the other”

PAUL

1 Thessalonians 4:15–18

“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**... For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven”

“with the voice of **THE ARCHANGEL**”

“and with **THE TRUMPET OF GOD**”

“and **THE DEAD IN CHRIST** will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them”

“in the **CLOUDS** to meet the Lord **IN THE AIR**”

The Post-trib or Pre-Wrath interpretation sees Paul's words as pointing specifically to Jesus' words in Matthew 24:29-31

The Pretrib interpretation says that Paul's teaching is entirely based on raw, direct revelation from heaven, with no recorded words of Jesus to connect to.

JESUS

Matthew 24:29-31

PAUL

1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord”

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“that we who are alive and remain until **THE COMING OF THE LORD... For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven”**

“He will send forth **HIS ANGELS**”

“with the voice of **THE ARCHANGEL**”

“with **A GREAT TRUMPET**”

“and with **THE TRUMPET OF GOD**”

“they will gather together **HIS ELECT**”

“and **THE DEAD IN CHRIST** will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them”

“from the four winds, from one end of **THE SKY** to the other”

“in the **CLOUDS** to meet the Lord **IN THE AIR**”

The Post-trib / Pre-Wrath interpretation sees both Jesus and Paul as speaking about the rapture / coming (*parousia*) of the Lord.

The Pretrib interpretation says that Jesus and Paul are talking about two completely different things separated by seven years.

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“in the **CLOUDS** to meet the Lord **IN THE AIR**”

The Post-trib / Pre-Wrath interpretation sees both passages as speaking literally about the Lord coming on the clouds.

The Pretrib interpretation says that Jesus was speaking about His second coming, but Paul was speaking of another coming on the clouds that happens seven years earlier.

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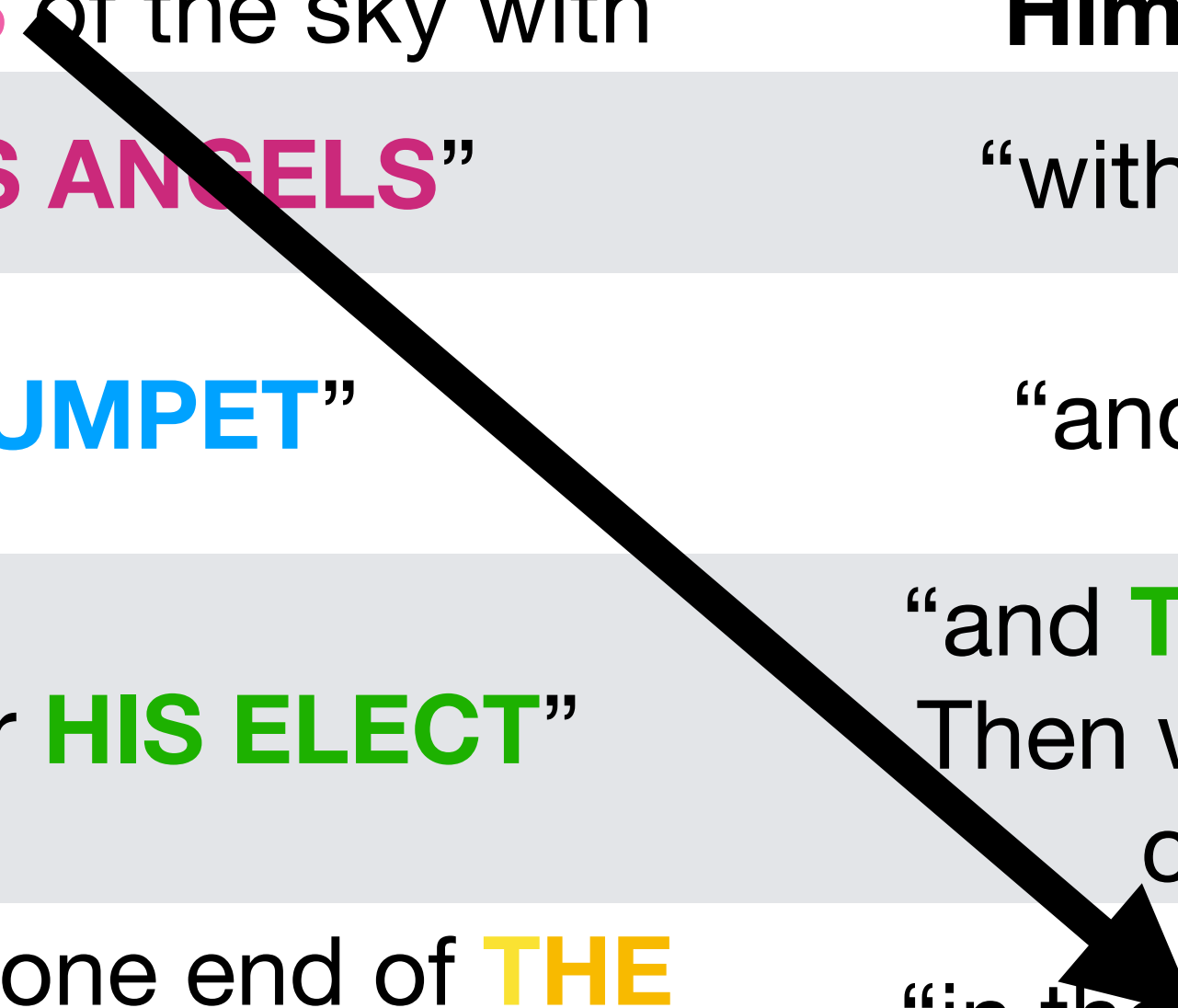
“that we who are alive and remain until **THE COMING OF THE LORD... For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven**”

“with the voice of **THE ARCHANGEL**”

“and with **THE TRUMPET OF GOD**”

“and **THE DEAD IN CHRIST** will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them”

“in the **CLOUDS** to meet the Lord **IN THE AIR**”



The Post-trib interpretation sees the reference to angels and the archangel as one and the same thing.

The Pretrib interpretation says these two references are entirely unrelated and separated by seven years.

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“in the **CLOUDS** to meet the Lord **IN THE AIR**”

The Post-trib interpretation sees the great trumpet and the trumpet of God as the same.

The Pretrib interpretation says these are two entirely unrelated trumpets, seven years apart.

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The Post-trib / Pre-Wrath interpretation sees the elect and those in Christ as the same.

The Pretrib interpretation says the elect is Israel and not those “in Christ.”

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The Post-trib / Pre-Wrath interpretation sees Jesus' reference to the sky and Paul's reference to the air to be the same thing.

The Pretrib interpretation says that Jesus was not being literal here and neither reference is related.

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Comparison of 1 Thessalonians 4-5 and Matthew 24

| | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Christ Returns | Matthew 24:30 | 1 Thessalonians 4:16 |
| From heaven | Matthew 24:30 | 1 Thessalonians 4:16 |
| Accompanied by angels | Matthew 24:31 | 1 Thessalonians 4:16 |
| With the trumpet of God | Matthew 24:31 | 1 Thessalonians 4:16 |
| Believers gathered to Christ | Matthew 24:31, 40-41 | 1 Thessalonians 4:17 |
| In the clouds / the air | Matthew 24:30 | 1 Thessalonians 4:17 |
| Time unknown | Matthew 24:36 | 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2 |
| Coming like a thief | Matthew 24:43 | 1 Thessalonians 5:2,4 |
| Unbelievers unaware | Matthew 24:37-39 | 1 Thessalonians 5:3 |
| Judgment like sudden birth pains | Matthew 24:8 | 1 Thessalonians 5:3 |
| Believers not deceived | Matthew 24:43 | 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5 |
| Be Watchful | Matthew 24:37-39 | 1 Thessalonians 5:6 |
| Warning against being drunk | Matthew 24:37-49 | 1 Thessalonians 5:7 |

Svigel's passages as to why Matthew 24 is not the rapture, but the gathering of Israel back to the land.

MATTHEW 24:29-31

31 And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together (ἐπισυνάγω) His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other (ἀπ' ἄκρων οὐρανῶν ἕως τῶν ἄκρων αὐτῶν).

MARK 13:27

27 And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together (ἐπισυνάγω) His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven (ἕως ἄκρου οὐρανοῦ).

Cf. language and imagery from the following:

DEUTERONOMY 30:3-5 (Greek Septuagint)

3 And the Lord shall heal your sins, and he will show mercy to you, and he will gather (συνάγω) you again from all the nations into which the Lord scattered you there. 4 If your dispersion should be from one end of heaven as far as the other end of heaven (ἀπ' ἄκρου τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἕως ἄκρου τοῦ οὐρανοῦ), from that place the Lord your God will gather (συνάγω) you and from that place the Lord your God will take you. 5 And your God will lead you from that place into the land that your fathers inherited, and you shall take possession of it.

ISAIAH 11:11-12 (Greek Septuagint)

11 And this will happen on that day: the Lord will continue to show his hand to be zealous for those of the people who remain, who were left behind by the Assyrians and from Egypt and from Babylonia and Ethiopia and from Elam and from the east and out of Arabia. 12 And he will raise a sign toward the nations, and he will gather (συνάγω) those of Israel who were destroyed, and he will gather (συνάγω) from the four wings of the land (ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων πτερύγων τῆς γῆς) those of Judah who were scattered.

ISAIAH 27:12-13 (Greek Septuagint)

12 ...But as for you, gather (συνάγω) the children of Israel one by one. 13 And this will happen on that day: They will trumpet with the great trumpet (τῇ σάλπιγγι τῇ μεγάλῃ), and those who have been destroyed in the country of the Assyrians and those who have been destroyed in Egypt will come and worship the Lord on the holy mountain, Jerusalem.

ISAIAH 43:5-7 (Greek Septuagint)

5 Do not be frightened, for I am with you; I will lead your offspring from the east, and I will gather (συνάγω) you from the west. 6 I will say to the north, “Bring them,” and to the south, “Do not hinder them.” Lead my sons from a far land, and my daughters from the ends of the earth (ἀπ’ ἄκρων τῆς γῆς), 7 all who call upon my name.

ZECHARIAH 2:6 (Greek Septuagint)

6 “Flee from the land of the north,” says the Lord, “because from the four winds of heaven (ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων τοῦ οὐρανοῦ) I will gather you together (συνάγω),” says the Lord.

SHEMONAH ESREH 10 (Hebrew Blessing)

תִּקַּע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל לְחֵרוּתֵנוּ וְשָׂא נֵס לְקַבֵּץ
גְּלוּתֵינוּ, וְקַבְּצֵנוּ יַחַד מֵאַרְבַּע כַּנְפוֹת הָאָרֶץ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְקַבֵּץ נִדְחֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Sound the great shofar (בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל) for our freedom and raise a banner to gather (לְקַבֵּץ) our exiles, and unite us together from the four corners of the earth (מֵאַרְבַּע כַּנְפוֹת הָאָרֶץ). Blessed are You, LORD, who regathers the scattered of His people Israel.

PSALM OF SOLOMON 11:1-3 (Greek Septuagint)

1 Blow ye in Zion on the trumpet (σαλπίσατε) to summon (the) saints, cause ye to be heard in Jerusalem the voice of him that bringeth good tidings (εὐαγγελιζομένου); for God hath had pity on Israel in visiting them.

2 Stand on the height, O Jerusalem, and behold thy children, from the East and the West, gathered together (συνάγω) by the Lord;

3 From the North they come in the gladness of their God, from the isles afar off God hath gathered (συνάγω) them.

GK Beale's comments

The probability is that 4:15–17 describe generally the same end-time scenario as 5:1–11. Specifically, Paul narrates the resurrection at the end of the age and then recapitulates in chapter 5 by speaking about the timing of this event and about the judgment on unbelievers, which will also happen at the same time. That both 4:15–18 and 5:1–11 explain the same events is discernible from observing that both passages actually form one continuous depiction of the same narrative in Matthew 24, as apparent from the chart on page 137 (following Bell 1967:249–50; see also Orchard 1938:23–30; Wenham 1995:303–14).

Other significant parallels include: the use of the word *parousia* for Christ's coming; reference to Christ's advent as "that day" (Mt 24:36) or "the day of the Lord" (1 Thess 5:2); and a description of someone coming to "meet" another (*eis apantēsin autou*, virgins coming out to "meet" the bridegroom in Mt 25:6; *eis apantēsin tou kyriou*, believers "meeting" the Lord in 1 Thess 4:17; see further Waterman 1975).

G. K. Beale, 1–2 Thessalonians, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 136–137

GK Beale's comments

Since Matthew 24 refers to tribulation that precedes Christ's coming, it is likely that Paul is doing the same throughout 4:15–5:11. Scholars debate which tribulation and coming of Christ Matthew 24 actually narrates (see the commentaries for details), but Paul likely has in mind the basic pattern in Matthew 24 of trials preceding Christ's final historical coming. Paul's particular combination of references from Matthew 24 shows that he interprets the whole of the Matthean text as referring to woes preceding the final coming of Christ (and though Matthew does not explicitly mention the idea of resurrection, he implies it in the phrase "gather his elect" in 24:31, which implies the gathering of all believers, both living and dead [Marshall 1983:126]).

G. K. Beale, 1–2 Thessalonians, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 137–138.