



**Doctrine: The Rapture of the Church
The Great Removal is About to Take Place
Part 1
1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11**

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We are going to begin a discussion, based on where we are in the text, of a yet future event that as believers in Jesus Christ, we are looking forward to. Jesus is the one who introduced this idea; which is the harpazo or removal of the church, in His briefing to the disciples just before the cross. Harpazo (take by force, to snatch away) is the Greek word used by Paul in our text, but we know the doctrine via the Latin word rapiemur, which means to seize. It is translated caught up.



There is a reason why the word may carry the connotation of force being involved.

At the Rapture, the devil and his cohorts may do all in their power to keep Christians here on earth. But the Lord Jesus will overpower them, delivering us by the omnipotent power at His command as if carrying us off by supreme might. (Jeremiah 2023, 72)

The rapture is part of a broader topic we call Last Things or. If you like snooty theological terms, Eschatology. The word simply means the study of last things or end times.

It is important because approximately 27 percent of the Bible contains prophetic or predictive elements. Although not all prophecy relates to the end of history, lengthy and important passages in both the OT and NT concern the last things. Major OT prophets such as Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah wrote about eschatology. Jesus spoke at length concerning eschatology in the Olivet Discourse, and the apostles Peter, Paul, and John all wrote in some detail regarding eschatology. (Menn 2013, xxi)

There are two ways to examine those passages dealing with last things, allegorically, or literally. Here at Calvary, we use a literal approach.

Perhaps one of the strongest evidences for the literal method is the use the New Testament makes of the Old Testament. When the Old Testament is used in the New it is used only in a literal sense. One need only study the prophecies which were fulfilled in the first coming of Christ, in His life, His ministry, and His death, to establish that fact. No prophecy which has been completely fulfilled has been fulfilled any way but literally. (Pentecost 1958, 10-11)

Are figures of speech, allegory, types and other forms of language used? Yes.

In the literal method Scripture may be compared with Scripture, which, as the inspired Word of God, is authoritative and the standard by which all truth is to be tested. Related to this we may observe that it delivers us from both reason and mysticism as the requisites to interpretation. One does not have to depend upon intellectual training or abilities, nor upon the development of mystical perception, but rather upon the understanding of what is written in its generally accepted sense. Only on such a basis can the average individual understand or interpret the Scriptures for himself. (Pentecost 1958, 12)

Eschatology covers the entire range of future things. it includes the doctrines of resurrection, judgment, the second coming of Christ, the Millennium, and the rapture ("carrying away") of the church. (Ryrie 1981, 9)

Thanks to what Jesus told us in Matthew 24 of events that would precede His second coming, not the rapture, and the convergence of all those events now taking place everywhere all at once. Interest in this topic has increased. For His disciples, familiar with marriage customs in Galilee, this would sound familiar.

What Jesus will tell them is world changing. It is the very first time anyone will ever hear that God has a plan to remove His people off this planet to be with Jesus. Israel was promised the land, the Kingdom of God was all about, well, here and involved the land. But Jesus tells His disciples new truth. He will be returning to the Father and while there, He will be personally preparing a place totally individualized for each of His followers.

This is new truth, it is something His disciples must have been blown away by, and it is a promise that we are still waiting to be fulfilled today. We call it the harpazo of the church.

John 14:1-3



“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, **I will come and get you**, so that you will always be with me where I am.” (NLT)

“This is a coming for deliverance for the faithful, however, not a coming for judgment. He will retrieve the faithful and take them back to the Father’s house with Himself (John 14:2–3). There they will remain with Him until He returns to the earth to establish His earthly kingdom for a thousand years. We conclude, therefore, that Jesus was the one who initiated the teaching of the imminence of His return both to judge the world and to deliver the faithful.” (Thomas 2015, 28)

Although the rapture of the church was introduced by Christ the night before His crucifixion, as recorded in John 14:1–3, the details of the rapture were not revealed in Scripture until 1 Thessalonians was written. It is not too much to say that 1 Thessalonians 4–5 is probably the most important passage dealing with the rapture in the New Testament. (Walvoord 1976, 299)

There is something else Jesus taught as well in the same briefing.

John 16:13

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and **He will disclose to you what is to come.**” (NASB 2020)

We are promised special understanding, through the Holy Spirit, of future things. “The Lord, then, expects us to understand prophecy, including the prophecy of the rapture of the church. Clearly that doctrine cannot be ignored if we enter fully into the fulfillment of Christ’s promise.” (Ryrie 1981, 21)

Because of this promise that the Holy Spirit will reveal to us those things to come, this means we can all learn about last things without having to take time wasting courses on interpretation and the like. As believers, the Holy Spirit lives in each of us and Jesus tells us the Holy Spirit is responsible for teaching us all things (John 14:26). Especially last things.

Forget about stuff being hidden or hard to understand. If you know Christ, you know.

For the doctrine of the rapture there are several primary key texts we will be examining.

- John 14:1-3 where Jesus introduces this idea to His disciples.
- Paul covers it in two teachings.
 - 1 Corinthians 15:51-58
 - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11
- Then Jesus touches on it again in Revelation 3:10.

We are going to be concentrating on His imminent coming again to get us, which is a totally different event than His second coming.

But for us to understand this topic, we are going to camp here at the end of the age for awhile so we can grasp all the various truths that come into play. I will try to define some of the terms we run into along the way.

Something else for us to understand before we get into this too far, this is now considered, by some, to be a controversial topic. My intent is to show you what we believe here at Calvary, the doctrine of the pretribulation rapture of the church, is what scripture teaches.

By the way, if your view of when the rapture will take place varies from what we teach and believe, that is okay. This is not a point to divide over even though many today do so.



I know there are many who want to argue for their view. I will not engage in any such arguments. As a church, we are here to make disciples. This is part of that since it was obviously important enough to Paul to have included it in the training, he provided to the church in Thessalonica in their first two weeks as believers.

One more thing we need to understand. I have no idea when it is that Jesus will return for His church. There have been many who have tried to put a stake in the ground using all kinds of different methods to validate their reasoning. The bottom line.

Matthew 24:36

“No one knows, however, when that day and hour will come—neither the angels in heaven nor the Son; the Father alone knows.” (GNB)

There are common pitfalls to avoid as we study this topic. Newspaper prophecy is just the beginning.

“When it comes to interpreting Bible prophecy, one of the more common problems is the tendency for people to view biblical predictions through the eyes of their own personal experience. The Germans call this a *zeitgeist*, a current mood or response to certain existing conditions. Thus, the great temptation for those who attempt to interpret prophecy is to move from the biblical facts to their own assumptions and speculations. As they view the future through the eyes of the present, their speculations can end up seeming like real possibilities. The tragedy of all this is that instead of rejecting prophetic speculation for what it is, many Christians are often duped by it. What's more, those who attempt to guess the date of Christ's coming and determine the identity of the antichrist are claiming to know more than the authors of Scripture. Daniel Mitchell, professor of theology at Liberty University, has said, “Speculating on the date of Christ's return not only breeds bad theology ... it is the original sin all over again—trying to know as much as God.”” (Hitchcock and Hindson 2018, 32-33)

Jesus is indeed coming for His church at any moment. Yes, there is a massive convergence of the signs He said to look for regarding His second coming, an event which takes place at the end of the Tribulation. The shadows are indeed reflecting on us today pointing to the nearness of His coming to get us.

We need to be discerning of “popular teachers” who, every time there is a blood moon or a comet or whatever, begin predicting when Jesus will come back. There are those who simply report the information and allow you to discern what the scriptures are saying. Then there are those who ask leading questions to get you to make a judgment that they have already predetermined.

There are numerous videos on You Tube surrounding the theme of the rapture. If they tell you they can predict when, they can't. If they tell you they can show you the signs that it is near, they can't because there aren't any.

If you find a podcast that will take you step by step as to why the rapture should be today, don't bother wasting your time. Paul will tell us right here in 1 Thessalonians it is something he expected to happen in his lifetime, and we are to be living the same way.

Our lens is the scriptures.

Remember, the disciples thought they had it all wired about the coming of Messiah and what He would do. They missed so many of the obvious signs it isn't even funny when you look at it in retrospect. No one had the complete picture until Jesus taught it the evening of His resurrection. We forget that if Satan had the whole story, and he didn't, then he would have tried to stop it. Instead, he and his fallen brethren instigated the crucifixion not even knowing they were signing their own death warrants (1 Corinthians 2:8).



If that was the case, then guess what, the same principle of communications jamming may also be going on today.

“The identity and purpose of the messiah are unknowable from a Bible verse—and even many Bible verses. The profile proceeds along conceptual trajectories that eventually merge into a portrait. And so Jesus’ question (Luke 24:26) to the two men on the road to Emmaus makes eminent sense: “Was it not necessary that the Christ suffer these things and enter into his glory?” Yes, of course it was. It’s just hard to see that unless you know what you’re looking for. The messianic portrait can only be discerned by assembling a hundred terms, phrases, metaphors, and symbols, which themselves take on meaning only when their patterns and convergences are detected.” (Heiser 2015, 248)

About the different viewpoints regarding when the rapture will occur.

The principal disagreement today lies between pretribulationists and posttribulationists, both of which are premillennial. (Premillennial means before the millennium begins) Pretribulationists hold that Christ’s coming for His church, the rapture, will occur before the Tribulation (the entire seventieth “week” of Daniel) begins. Posttribulationists teach that the rapture and the second coming are facets of a single event occurring at the conclusion of the Tribulation. Both agree that the second coming of Christ will be followed by the Millennium on earth. (Ryrie 1981, 12)

The Tribulation from 50,000 Feet

And I am sure I have just lost some of you with that because you may be wondering about the word Tribulation. We have taught through the books of Daniel and Revelation if you want to do a deep dive. But let me give you a quick summary.

1. The Tribulation begins when a globally known political leader who the scripture calls the antichrist, makes a seven-year treaty with Israel allowing them to rebuild the Temple, begins Temple worship and offering military protection (Daniel 9:27).
2. The first half of this 7-year period is known as the Tribulation. We see this in the seven seal judgments in the book of Revelation. There are wars (revelation 6:1-11), famines, unprecedented natural disasters and the martyrdom of those who come to Christ during this time at the hands of religious zealots.
3. At the 3 ½ year point, the Antichrist will stop the sacrifices (Daniel 9:27) in the Temple and declare he is god, demand worship, and set up an image of himself in the Temple (Revelation 13:14). This kicks off the Great Tribulation also known as the time of Jacob’s trouble.
4. Using global cybertechnology, the Antichrist (Beast) takes over all economics requiring anyone wanting to participate to take some type of mark, chip or injection (Revelation 13:16-18). Those who don’t, Jews and Christians, will be martyred.
5. When all this begins, at least 1/3 of all the Jews in Israel will head for the hills and be supernaturally protected by the Lord for 3 ½ years. They are the ones who will pray for Messiah to return and enter the Millennial Kingdom of Messiah at the end of Armageddon in human bodies.
6. All of the armies of the world will gather into Israel. They will surround Jerusalem and capture a portion of it before the faithful pray for Messiah to return (Zechariah 12:1-9, 13:9).



7. Jesus Christ returns and intervenes freeing and empowering His people as He and the armies of Israel eliminate every last vestige of the armies of the planet and the Beast (Zechariah 14).
8. King Jesus takes over. All of Israel is saved. OT saints are resurrected, and Tribulation saints are resurrected. Sheep and goats judgment takes place. Satan is imprisoned and the Kingdom begins.

The sheep and goats judgment means, that at the end of Armageddon, there are those who are to be judged and those who are to be rewarded. This is one of the items that makes it difficult to defend a post tribulation rapture.

One more thing, once chapter 3 of Revelation is completed and John is told to come up here, the church is no longer referenced at all in the book and it is all about Israel. "In any event, like the church, from that point on John views the Tribulation from heaven." (Geisler 2005, 612)

The most damaging evidence against posttribulationism in the New Testament is found in the Apocalypse. There is no prima facie evidence that mildly resembles a posttribulation rapture in John's capstone to prophetic literature. If Revelation gives the most detailed account of the events in Jacob's time of trouble, then conspicuously absent from the vivid coverage of our Lord's return to earth (Revelation 19) is any hint of a posttribulation rapture. If any passage of Scripture would be expected to explicitly teach posttribulationism, this is the prime candidate. However, the silence is significant. (Mayhue 2001, 6)

There is also a midtribulation view, a partial rapture view (only the ready go) and most recently, a pre-wrath view. "Those who hold to a midtribulation rapture believe the rapture takes Christians from the earth at the middle of this seven-year tribulation. The prewrath rapture view suggests that the rapture occurs about three-fourths through the seven-year tribulation." (Hart 2015, 19)

Most of those who object, and who will make snide remarks online, are people who say they are followers of Jesus Christ.

In reality, all true Christians believe God will win in the end! Pretribulationists believe He will win by rapturing the church, converting Israel, condemning the world, fulfilling the millennial promises, and ushering in the eternal state. The other eschatological views more or less see the same end results, but they take different routes to get there. (Hitchcock and Hindson 2018, 15)

The rapture of the church is a biblical doctrine. Here in Thessalonians 4 we find a "passage of scripture that speaks of a meeting with the Lord Jesus in the air concerning those who are alive and those who are asleep. This very special meeting with the Lord to be with Him forever is of primary importance since it involves the entire church. It is even more significant since this passage concerns the entire church age, every believer in Christ since the day of Pentecost." (Olander 2009, 11)

We will also discover that this event is imminent meaning impending. It could happen at any moment. There is no one event that must take place beforehand. This is what the church has been looking for, for almost 2,000 years.

Titus 2:13

"looking for **the blessed hope** and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ," (NKJV)

Scripture does not say the rapture is soon, it says it is imminent.

As applied to the coming of the Lord, imminency consists of three things: the certainty that He may come at any moment, the uncertainty of the time of that arrival, and the fact that no prophesied event stands between the believer and that hour. (Vanhetloo 1959, 20)



The doctrine of imminency is taught in Scripture in such passages as John 14:2–3; 1 Corinthians 1:7; Philippians 3:20–21; 1 Thessalonians 1:9–10; 4:16–17; 5:5–9; Titus 2:13; James 5:8–9; Revelation 3:10; 22:17–21. (Pentecost 1958, 168)

Ever since chapter 1 of this book, we have been seeing images, here and there, of future things involving the church. What is the Church. “The Church is not Jewish or Gentile, but Jew-Gentile, comprised of believers from Israel and believers from the Gentiles, united into a new entity: the Church. Yet both retain their ethnic identity. This is true unity without uniformity. Thus, the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise of Christ Jesus through the gospel (Eph. 3:6). The Gentiles are fellow-partakers, but not takers-over. A major purpose of the Church Age is a calling out from among the Gentiles by the gospel, according to Acts 15:14.” (Fruchtenbaum 2003, 140)

Acts 15:14

“Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.” (NKJV)

That process has continued for almost 2,000 years now. But there is a time coming where the number of Gentiles to enter is completed.

Romans 11:25–27

“I want you to understand this mystery, dear brothers and sisters, so that you will not feel proud about yourselves. **Some of the people of Israel have hard hearts, but this will last only until the full number of Gentiles comes to Christ.** And so all Israel will be saved. As the Scriptures say, “The one who rescues will come from Jerusalem, and he will turn Israel away from ungodliness. And this is my covenant with them, that I will take away their sins.”” (NLT)

Since today we are into metrics and numbers, visualize that in heaven there is a jumbotron that says, Gentiles Saved with a number that keeps increasing.

Per Jesus, every time that number ticks up, there is a party in heaven.

Luke 15:7

“I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.” (NKJV)

And as each gentile is saved, Satan must ask himself, is that the one, is that the last one. He has no idea, we don't either, all we know is when the last one to be saved is saved, the Father will turn to Jesus and tell Him to go get them. Until then, we continue to go about making disciples per His command and continue to occupy until He comes.

The Church is composed of all true believers from Pentecost in Acts two until the Rapture of the Church. The Rapture excludes the Old Testament saints. It also excludes the Tribulation saints. The only saints who will be raptured are the Church saints. (Fruchtenbaum 2003, 142)

Paul had taught this to the Thessalonians. He made reference to this right up front in chapter 1.

1 Thessalonians 1:9–10

“For they themselves report about us as to the kind of reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to **wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is, Jesus who rescues us from the wrath to come.**” (NASB 2020)



This was a church firmly committed to the imminency of the return of Jesus Christ for His church. We learn here, they are already waiting for Him to rescue them from the world.

The last phrase of this statement (who delivers us from the wrath to come) reflects a participial construction in the original Greek that could easily be rendered: “who will deliver us from the wrath to come.” This kind of participial construction is inherently timeless, so any temporal implication must derive from the context or from the nature of the statement. In context, the participle presents Jesus as “our Deliverer from the wrath to come.” (Hodges 2000, 23)

The question asked by believers for almost 2,000 years – when? When will this deliverance take place?

This verse ties this together for us. We are waiting for Jesus because He is the one who will rescue us from the wrath to come. The wrath to come is the Tribulation meaning that His deliverance of us would have to be prior to that event since He is going to rescue us from the wrath to come.

Have there been other takings in the past that we can look to in the scriptures? Actually, the answer to that is yes. These rapture(s) involved Enoch (Genesis 5:21-24), Elijah (2 Kings 2:11-12), Jesus (Acts 1:9-11), Philip (Acts 8:9-40), Paul (2 Corinthians 12:2-6), and the two witnesses (Revelation 11:11-13), and then possibly John (Revelation 4:1-2). We also see, in the scriptures, that one of the known requirements for one to be a prophet of God is to be interviewed in the presence of the divine council, which also may be a post taking up event. In some cases, the council came to them like with Ezekiel, but then there is Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1-6), and Micaiah (1 Kings 22:19-23).

Let's take a look at our text here in 1 Thessalonians 4.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as indeed the rest of mankind do, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead, so also God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus. For we say this 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, who remain, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore, comfort one another with these words. Now as to the periods and times, brothers and sisters, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord is coming just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction will come upon them like labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, so that the day would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then, let's not sleep as others do, but let's be alert and sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who are drunk, get drunk at night. But since we are of the day, let's be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. **For God has not destined us for wrath**, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, just as you also are doing.” (NASB 2020)

Remember, the Thessalonian church only had the benefit of solid teaching for about 2 weeks. The scope of their knowledge as new believers is one which challenges all of us involved in making disciples. Can any of us say we knew the following after being Christians for only 2 weeks assuming a totally pagan background?



It is amazing that their instruction included such doctrines as election (1:4), the Holy Spirit (1:5–6; 4:8; 5:19), conversion (1:9), assurance of salvation (1:5), sanctification (4:3; 5:23), and teachings on the Christian life. Obviously there were great gaps in their understanding of theology in general, and more particularly of the prophetic future events. (Walvoord 1976, 300)

But we already know from our study thus far that every chapter makes a reference to the future coming of Christ.

We already saw the evidence in chapter 1.

1 Thessalonians 2:19

“For who is our hope, or joy or crown of pride, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? Or is it not indeed you?” (NASB 2020)

Paul wants to be able to “show off” the believers in Thessalonica when Jesus returns. And Paul went further talking about their ultimate sanctification in chapter 3.

1 Thessalonians 3:13

“so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.” (NASB 2020)

So why the need for updated teaching on the coming of Jesus Christ for His church?

This was a church under serious persecution. Some had lost their lives as a result. Add to this the fact that several years had gone by and as life continued, some of the fellowship had also died. They knew that a return by Jesus was coming. They also knew a resurrection was coming. The timing of all of it was still vague to them So Paul is writing to them to clear up misunderstanding they might have on the topic of the rapture.

This church was looking forward to the return of Jesus and they had a fear that since some of their number had died, that they would miss out on it. In the pagan culture of the 1st century world, death was considered the end. Paul’s “point is that believers who have hope in the resurrection do not sorrow in the same way as others, people who lack that hope. And on this point, the evidence is thoroughgoing that death in pagan antiquity was understood as final and complete, so that untimely death often elicited unspeakable sorrow and mourning. (Fee 2009, 168-169)

As believers, we know that our brothers and sisters in Christ who go before us will be resurrected. Death for the Christian is not goodbye, it’s I’ll see you soon. This is a change from the world’s viewpoint. Why do we have this? Paul says the world has no hope, but we do.

Jesus died and then rose from the dead. Our future resurrection is guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is something they knew. But what they did not know was how this fits in with the return of Jesus Christ for His church.

The church in Thessalonica was concerned that those who had died were going to miss out on what Jesus had in store for the church when He would return to take us to be with Him in the rapture.

When some of their church members died, the others grieved because those members hadn’t lived long enough to see Christ come again. They were afraid their deceased loved ones had missed the Rapture—indeed, that those loved ones had missed heaven itself. (Jeremiah 2023, 20-21)



Paul is answering this concern, brought to him via Timothy and what he provides is good news. His answer also shows us that there are other topics he has also taught to the new believers.

They already had a basic understanding of the day of the Lord and what that involved. What death meant for the believer versus the unbeliever. And the teachings of Jesus on the topic.

For the day of the Lord, this means that Paul had done some teaching most likely using the book of Joel as a portion of his text. Joel is all about the day of the Lord.

Joel 1:15

“Woe for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, And it will come as destruction from the Almighty.” (NASB 2020)

When we see this term, the Day of the Lord, used, we realize that the idea “is that this is Gods’ time. Man has his “day,” and the LORD has His day. In the ultimate sense, the day of the LORD is fulfilled with(sic) Jesus judges the earth and returns in glory. In a lesser sense, a time of judgment as Judah experienced with the locusts and drought is also an example of the day of the LORD.” (Guzik 2000, Joel 1:15-20)

We are currently living in what the Bible calls, the times of the gentiles. In fact, we have already looked at Jesus talking about this and the definitive statement of when it will eventually end.

The day of the Lord has to do with Jerusalem, how the nations treat it and the rescue of His people who have prayed for rescue when He returns as the avenger of blood as Armageddon rages and the beast’s attempts to achieve the genocide of all Jews worldwide. This means the church is no longer on the planet.

Let’s examine this term, the Day of the Lord.

As believers in Christ, the scriptures are very clear that we who believe today, prior to His return for the church, also known as the rapture of the Church, will not be subjected to the Day of the Lord. We also know it is not just a single day but a time period.

Paul made this crystal clear in 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10. “For they themselves report about us as to the kind of reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is, **Jesus who rescues us from the wrath to come.**” (NASB 2020)

Paul again repeats this idea in a portion of our text for this study.

1 Thessalonians 5:9

“**For God has not destined us for wrath**, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,” (NASB 2020)

The day of the Lord is all about the wrath of God on earth dwellers, to use a term John uses in Revelation. Unsaved men and women who believe this is their real home and want nothing to do with the Lord.

The kickoff is when Jesus removes the church. The coming of the day of the Lord will take the world by surprise, but for those of us waiting and watching for Jesus, we are ready to go.

The Day of the Lord “is a time of divine intervention into the affairs of men. This phenomenon has taken place historically, which is but a picture of that future intervention of judgment beginning at the Tribulation. The “light” or blessing aspect of the Day will be experienced during the Kingdom age after Israel has been



brought to repentance in keeping with the “unconditional” nature of the OT promises.” (Hullinger 2015, 101)

That historical example of the day of the Lord is in Joel and involves locusts and drought. The only hope Judah had, was to turn to the Lord and repent. This is no different than the hope we have. We too must turn to the Lord, repent and rely on Him to rescue us, just as Judah did.

Our hope is this, that at any point of the day or night, our Lord Jesus Christ will come for us. He promised in John 14 that not only is He preparing a place, but He will personally come back to take us there.

The church, only the believers of the entire church age, living and departed, will be raptured unconditionally. The rapture of the church is not only assured by the word of the Lord, but it is as certain as the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Olander 2009, 22)

When Jesus removes His body, the church from this planet, that clears the way for the Day of the Lord to begin.

The Thessalonian church understood this to be the case. Paul made it clear to them that they would not be subjected to the wrath of God. Their confusion was making connections that did not exist between ordinary persecution from the world and the wrath of God connected with the Day of the Lord.

Paul pointed that out to them making it clear that the Day of the Lord will not start as long as the church is still here.

I believe that Jesus saw our generation as the terminal generation. The events that He described in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24 & 25) as well as in Luke 17, are all converging in terms of fulfillment in this current time.

We are rapidly approaching the time that would see the time of gentile come to an end.

Luke 21:24–27

“They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away as captives among all nations. Jerusalem will be trampled down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. And there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and on the earth nations will be in distress, anxious over the roaring of the sea and the surging waves. People will be fainting from fear and from the expectation of what is coming on the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man arriving in a cloud with power and great glory.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Our Current Situation

- The nations on earth in distress...check. Ukraine, China, Russia, Israel, etc.
- Signs and wonders in the sky...check, about that.
- NASA is actively working on developing the capability to redirect asteroids.
 - <https://www.nasa.gov/content/what-is-nasa-s-asteroid-redirect-mission>
- Sunspot activity has continued to increase. Resulting in some rather magnificent northern and southern light shows recently.

By the way, we are not only talking about astronomical phenomena, but phenomena associated with the prince of the power of the air...Satan (Ephesians 2:2). If we examine the so-called UFO abduction theories, we see something interesting. “The thousands of contacts with the entities indicate that they are liars and put-on artists. The UFO manifestations seem to be, by and large, merely minor variations of the age-old demonological phenomenon.” (Keel 2013, 326)



This term, the day of the Lord, “became a technical term for a great day on which YHWH would intervene in a unique way to judge either Israel or foreign nations.” (Barton 2011, 59)

And the day of the Lord is not a single day. We get confused over this, so did the church in Thessalonica.

We still have many miles to go and will pick up on this next week.

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