

5.24.20 ~ 1Thessalonians 5:1-11, The Day of the Lord: Part One

Last Sunday we studied about the “catching away” [*rapture*] of the church (**1Thessalonians 4:13-18**). Paul sums up that event in **verses 16-17**, “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.”

Paul reassured the believers that not one of the Lord’s followers will miss the rapture, whether they die before Christ’s return or are alive at His coming in the air, they all will be “changed” instantaneously, being given incorruptible and immortal bodies, so that we might be with the Lord forever.

Read **1Thessalonians 5:1-11...** I’m not sure how many sermons it will take to properly work through this section, but for today, let’s take a look at **verses 1-2**. Paul now makes a transition from the rapture of the church into another area of concern or confusion for some of the believers — the coming of the Day of the Lord.

Paul says, “now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you.” What are “the times and the epochs?” Well, it could be many things, but the fact that it is associated with the “day of the Lord,” narrows it down for us.

The Greek word translated “times” is the word *Chronos*, meaning times that are measured by the clock or calendar [hours, days, months, years, decades, centuries]; the Greek word translated “epochs,” is the word *Kairos*, meaning periods of time or seasons measured by special moments or periods of time.

Notice that the times and the epochs are plural; speaking of many different future and final events and times, i.e., these are eschatological in nature, relating to life, death, heaven, hell, eternity: the Rapture of the Church, Rise of the Antichrist, the Tribulation Period, the Second Coming of Christ, Armageddon, Satan’s Imprisonment, the Millennial Kingdom, Satan’s Release, Worldwide Rebellion, the White Throne Judgment, New Heavens and New Earth, Eternity.

Paul (**5:1**) tells the believers in Thessalonica they have no need to be instructed concerning the timing of these future events. For (**5:2**) they “know full well” that the day of the Lord will come just “like a thief in the night.”

First let’s look at what the Bible says about the “day of the Lord,” then, if time permits, we’ll look at why it says the day of Lord will come “like a thief in the night”.

Four times the phrase “*the day of the LORD*” is used in the New Testament, here (**1Thessalonians 5:2**), and also:

Acts 2:20, “The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before *the great and glorious day of the Lord* shall come” (cf. **Joel 2:31**).

2Thessalonians 2:1-2, "Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that *the day of the Lord* has come."

2Peter 3:10, "But *the day of the Lord* will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up."

In order to understand what New Testament writer's were saying about *the day of the Lord*, we must look at what the Old Testament prophets' wrote explicably about the Day of the LORD [Isaiah 13:6, 9; Ezekiel 13:5; 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Obadiah 15; Zephaniah 1:7, 14; Malachi 4:5].

The following passages give a brief but consistent overview of the OT's teaching about *the day of the LORD*.

Isaiah 13:9, "Behold, the day of the LORD comes cruel with both wrath and fierce anger to lay the land desolate."

Ezekiel 30:3, "*the day of the Lord* is near; it will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations.

Joel 2:11, "*The day of the LORD* is great and very terrible."

Obadiah 15, "For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head."

Zephaniah 1:14, "Near is the great day of the Lord, near and coming very quickly."

The *day of the Lord* is about judgment, God's anger, wrath, and vengeance will bring desolation and destruction upon unbelievers. Six times it is referred to as a day of doom. Four times it is called a day of vengeance.

Read Revelation 20:1-15... The good news is, Satan will be dethroned and put away and Christ will take His prophesied position as King, to rule over the earth for 1000 years, as all the Gentile and Jew survivors of the Tribulation (those who testified to Christ and the Word of God) enter the millennial kingdom.

All of the believers who were put to death during the Tribulation (because they wouldn't worship the Antichrist), will be resurrected in their glorified bodies to reign with Christ during the 1,000 years, along with all who were previously raptured.

At Christ's return to earth, all living unbelievers will be put to death to await the Great White Throne judgment, at the end of the millennial period; for they will be raised again to stand before God, and then sentenced to the lake of fire, which is 2nd death (Christians are born twice, and they die once; unbelievers are born once, and they die twice).

The phrase *day of the Lord* always references God's judgment coming upon the ungodly, and so, it must be clearly distinguished from other similar phrases like *the day of the Lord Jesus* (**1Corinthians 5:5; 2Corinthians 1:14**); *the day of the Lord Jesus Christ* (**1Corinthians 1:8**); and *the day of Christ Jesus* (**Philippians 1:6**); for these phrases always have to do with the Redemption, Rapture, and Reward of genuine believers in Christ.

There is another similar phrase, "*the day of God*" (**2Peter 3:12**), and it refers to eternity, as Peter exhorts believers to be "looking for and hastening the coming of the *day of God*, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!"

So, *the day of God* is God's day, when everything will be made brand new, no more corruption, no more sin, nothing displeasing or offensive to God will ever exist again, from that day throughout eternity, for everything that had become corrupt, as a consequence to sin, will be done away with (**Revelation 21:4**), "there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

It is no wonder that the Thessalonians had questions about future events like the rapture of the church and the day of the Lord. The church has been asking such questions and waiting for the return of the Lord since the first century AD.

In **Matthew 24:3** we are told, "As He [Jesus] was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

In **Acts 1:6-8**, the disciples were asking Jesus, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Even today, there is much speculation, with an abundance of blogs, books, and videos being produced by so-called prophecy "experts," many of whom erroneously and sacrilegiously speak and write about future eschatological events and times that God has not given specific timing about in His Word.

The truth is, God says we have enough information, we don't need to know more than we have already been given in His Word, concerning the times and the epochs of these final events.

It would appear that we are not going to get to our study on why the Lord's return at His second coming is referred to as being, "like a thief in the night." But next week, Lord willing, we will study that phrase, and we will also look into why

(**1Thessalonians 5:3**) the people were saying "Peace and safety!" as destruction came upon them suddenly, like labor pains upon a woman with child.

I'm going to close today's study with the following passage from 2Peter 3:

2Peter 3:8, But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. **9** The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. **10** But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. **11** Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, **12** looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! **13** But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. **14** Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, **15** and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, **16** as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. **17** You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, **18** but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

Pastor Mike
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