

suddenly and with violence (so the verb "come upon" which means the "stand over"). This inevitable end is like the travail of a woman which must end in birth.

d. Like a final end

The double negative linked with the verb "escape" means that there is none whatsoever. This is the strongest grammatical construction in Greek for a negation. It is horrendous.

Conclusion While the rapture is a truth of comfort, it also removes ignorance concerning the dead in Christ. This is really our only hope in this dreadful world. For those who do not believe, there is the coming "day of the Lord." That will bring destruction and of such a nature that none will escape. Doom and darkness are for those who reject salvation in our Lord Jesus. Oh, flee to Him today for refuge (Psa. 34:8; John 3:16).

THE BOOK OF FIRST THESSALONIANS

"Known Facts About Christ's Coming"

1 Thessalonians 5:1-3

Introduction

1. Eschatology is the study of last things. There are last things for the church (the body of Christ) and last things for the nation Israel. This latter item is the subject of this section.

2. That God makes a distinction between Israel and the church is patent (1 Cor. 10:32). The themes of prophecy for each of these are separate.

3. The teaching concerning the second coming of Christ includes the material concerning the church (4:13-18) and now concerning Israel (5:1-10). God makes it clear that the two issues are not to be confused. This is the way He does it:

1. By a DISTINCTION v. 1.

The particle "but" is actually a phrase in the original Greek. It introduces an entirely new idea. The rapture has been discussed in the previous chapter. The Lord will gather His saints to the air for a meeting. Later, the Lord will come to the earth and deliver Israel from destruction. It will be His day, that is, the day of the Lord. That this Greek phrase does introduce new items is evident from its usage (cf. 1 Cor. 7:1; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1).

2. By a DESCRIPTION v. 1.

"Times and seasons" are both plural nouns. This is due to the varied incidents included in each item. The two words are only found together here and in Acts 1:7. "Times" has reference to quantity of time. It refers to the length of time before His coming and the time His coming will occupy. It is time absolutely without regard to circumstances. The idea of an extended period is involved in the term. "Seasons" speaks of time in quality. It points to a definite period, a juncture, a suitable time (Matt. 16:3). It notes more the characteristics of

the period before, during, and after the coming of our Lord.

3. By a DESTINATION vv. 1, 2.

a. To brethren

This is the common word meaning those in the family of God. It is the saved people who have the facts relating to His second coming. It is not expected that those who are unbelievers will know anything (1 Cor. 2:14).

b. To "no need" persons

The present tense shows the believers did not at that moment have need. It is a contrast with the previous section on the rapture (4:13-18). There was a need for that. In fact, it is the initial written statement to them on the subject, but not so with regard to the "day of the Lord" (cf. 2 Thess. 2:5).

c. To "know perfectly" persons

The verb "to know" means innate knowledge. By virtue of the new birth, these believers were expected to know certain facts. Further, they were to know them accurately. This word is used of study (Matt. 2:8; Luke 1:3), of teaching (Acts 28:25, 26), and of obedience (Eph. 5:15). Surely, this should give some sort of fiber to our information relating to the second coming. There is no need to hedge about the truth.

4. By a DESIGNATION vv. 2, 3.

The "day of the Lord" is first mentioned in Amos 5:18 and Isaiah 2:12, two contemporary prophets. It had reference to a day in which the Jews gained a victory over their enemies. But since it was really God who gave them the ability to do it, it was indeed a "day of the Lord" (cf. Jer. 46:10; Ezek. 13:5; 30:3). Obviously, in all their difficulties, Israel hoped the "day of the Lord" would be repeated. He warned against pride and those who dealt unrighteously with their neighbors, because for them the day of the Lord would be one of darkness (Isa. 33:14; Zeph. 1:12). As time went on, the "days of the Lord" diminished until the captivity of Israel (722 B.C.) and

Judah (586 B.C.). There was still a "great and terrible day of the Lord" to come (Joel 2:31; Mal. 4:5). That would be future and see the complete overthrow of Gentile power (Isa. 13:9-11; Dan. 2:34, 44; Obad. 15). Consequent upon this, the Messiah would be established in Jerusalem (Psa. 2:6; 110:1). Hence, the "day of the Lord" technically refers to the tribulation and the millennium. While Christ did not use the expression, "the day of the Lord," He certainly had it in mind (Matt. 24:30; 25:31; Luke 21:34). It is clear that certain signs are related to the "day of the Lord" (Dan. 8:23-25; 11:36; 2 Thess. 2:2, 3). This was common knowledge among all the believers, but the truth of the rapture was brand new. The rapture truth supplemented what was already known (John 16:12, 13). This "day of the Lord" is described here.

a. Like a thief

Some thought Christ would come at night. In fact, some expected Him on Easter eve. This gave rise to the practice of vigils at the time of Passover. It was not permitted to dismiss people before midnight because they expected the Lord to return. This is utter nonsense. His coming, however, will be like a thief comes at night: unexpected and unprepared (cf. Matt. 24:43, 44; 25:1-13).

b. Like false peace

It is clear that the time concerns much calamity upon the Jewish and Gentile peoples, hence this cannot be a reference to international conditions (Zech. 14:1-5; Jer. 30:4-11; Matt. 24:6, 7). The thought is that the nations of the world will be secure in not expecting some divine interposition. This attitude will possess their hearts right up to His coming when He breaks His silence and intervenes again directly in the affairs of men (Psa. 50:1-6). It will be like the days of Noah (Matt. 24:36-39; Luke 17:26-30).

c. Like a destruction

This is a term only used by Paul in the New Testament. Here and in 2 Thessalonians 1:9 it speaks of the calamities which will accompany the second advent of Christ to the earth. This does not mean destruction of being, but of well being. It is not annihilation, but ruin of the purpose for which one exists. It will come