

Expanded Analysis of  
1 THESSALONIANS

"RELATIONSHIP, REVIEW, AND RAPTURE"

EXPANDED ANALYSIS OF 1 THESSALONIANS

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# 1 THESSALONIANS

## "RELATIONSHIP, REVIEW, AND RAPTURE"

### A 1 THE RELATION OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH OF THESSALONICA 1 - 3

#### B 1 His Greeting 1:1

- C 1 The writers: Paul, Silas and Timothy: {1} Paul and Silvanus and Timothy<sup>1</sup>
- C 2 The recipients: the church of the Thessalonians: to the church of the Thessalonians
  - D 1 In God the Father: in God the Father
  - D 2 In the Lord Jesus Christ: and the Lord Jesus Christ:
- C 3 The blessing: Grace and peace Grace to you and peace.

#### B 2 His Prayer of Thanks 1:2-3

- C 1 The recipient: God 1:2 {2} We give thanks to God
- C 2 The time: always
- C 3 The subjects: for all of you,
- C 4 The vehicle: making mention of you in our prayers;
- C 5 The content: remembering their: {3} constantly bearing in mind 1:3
  - D 1 Work of faith: your work of faith
  - D 2 Labor of love: and labor of love
  - D 3 Steadfastness of hope: and steadfastness of hope
    - E 1 The object of hope: in our Lord Jesus Christ
    - E 2 The ground of hope: in the presence of our God and Father,

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. 1:1 - Paul and Silvanus and Timothy: Paul frequently uses the pronoun "our," as in "our prayer" (1:2), "our gospel" (1:5), "our coming to you" (2:1), "our exhortation" (2:3), "our authority" (2:6), "our labor and hardship" (2:9), and "our labor" (3:5). He is, of course, referring to the apostolic team. For simplicity's sake, I refer throughout only to the Apostle himself.

**B 3 His Assurance of God's Choice of Them 1:4-10**

- C 1 The statement of his knowledge: {4} knowing, 1:4
  - D 1 They are brothers: brethren
  - D 2 They are beloved by God: beloved by God,
  - D 3 God has chosen them: His choice of you;
- C 2 The evidences of his knowledge 1:5-10
  - D 1 The power behind the presentation of the gospel: {5} for our gospel did not come to you 1:5a
    - E 1 Not mere words: in word only,
    - E 2 With power: but also in power
    - E 3 With the Holy Spirit: and in the Holy Spirit
    - E 4 With full assurance: and with full conviction;<sup>2</sup>
  - D 2 The character of the presenters 1:5b
    - E 1 Men of proven character: just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you
    - E 2 Working for the benefit of the Thessalonians: for your sake.
  - D 3 Their imitation 1:6
    - E 1 Their role models
      - G 1 The apostolic team: {6} You also became imitators of us
      - G 2 The Lord: and of the Lord,
    - E 2 Their actions
      - G 1 Welcoming the word: having received the word
      - G 2 Enduring affliction: in much tribulation
      - G 3 Possessing joy from the Holy Spirit: with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

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<sup>2</sup> 1 Thess. 1:5 - with full conviction: or certainty (*plerophoria*, 4136)

D 4 Their serving as a pattern to all believers: {7} so that you became an example to all the believers 1:7

E 1 The location: in Macedonia and Achaia. 1:7

E 2 The action: 1:8

G 1 The word of the Lord rang out from them: {8} For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you,

H 1 not only in Macedonia and Achaia,

H 2 but also in every place

G 2 Their faith toward God has gone out: your faith toward God has gone forth,

E 3 The result: Paul had no need to speak anything: so that we have no need to say anything. 1:8

E 4 The proof: They themselves [i.e. other contacts in Macedonia, Achaia and elsewhere] relate: {9} For they themselves report about us 1:9a

G 1 The apostolic entrance into Thessalonica: what kind of a reception we had with you, 1:9b

G 2 How the Thessalonians turned to God from the idols: and how you turned to God from idols 1:9c-10

H 1 To serve a living and true God: to serve a living and true God, 1:9d

H 2 To await God's Son from the heavens: {10} and to wait for His Son from heaven, 1:10

J 1 The One God raised from the dead: whom He raised from the dead,

J 2 Jesus: that is Jesus,

J 3 The One delivering us from the coming wrath: who rescues us from the wrath to come.

**B 4 His Approval of His Initial Ministry toward Them 2:1-12**

- C 1 His successful beginning (his entrance not in vain): {1} For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain, 2:1
- C 2 His boldness despite persecution 2:2
  - D 1 His prior suffering at Philippi: {2} but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know,
  - D 2 His boldness in the gospel in much struggle: we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition.
- C 3 His straightforward exhortation: {3} For our exhortation does not come 2:3
  - D 1 Not in error: from error
  - D 2 Not in uncleanness: or impurity
  - D 3 Not in deceit: or by way of deceit;
- C 4 His desire to please God, not men 2:4
  - D 1 His status -- approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel: {4} but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel,
  - D 2 His method of speech: so we speak,
    - E 1 Not as pleasing men: not as pleasing men,
    - E 2 But as pleasing God, who proves his heart: but God who examines our hearts.
- C 5 The absence of improper motives 2:5-7
  - D 1 No flattering words [to gain approval]: {5} For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, 2:5
  - D 2 Not giving the gospel as a greedy pretext for financial gain: nor with a pretext for greed--God is witness--
  - D 3 Not seeking men's fame: {6} nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, 2:6a
  - D 4 Rather, serving as Christ's apostles (sent ones) with humility: even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority. 2:6b

C 6 His gentleness among them as a nursing mother: {7} But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. 2:7

C 7 His sacrifice 2:8-9

D 1 His longing for them: {8} Having so fond an affection for you, 2:8a

D 2 His willingness to give to them: we were well-pleased to impart to you 2:8b

E 1 Not only God's gospel: not only the gospel of God

E 2 But also his very soul: but also our own lives,

D 3 His love for them: because you had become very dear to us. 2:8c

D 4 His hard work for them 2:9

E 1 The intensity -- "labor and toil:" {9} For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship,

E 2 The timing -- "working night and day:" how working night and day

E 3 The motive -- unwillingness to place a financial burden on them: so as not to be a burden to any of you,

E 4 The goal -- proclaiming the gospel of God to them: we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

C 8 His ethical conduct 2:10

D 1 His witnesses -- the Thessalonians and God: {10} You are witnesses, and so is God,

D 2 His conduct

E 1 Holy: how devoutly

E 2 Righteous: and uprightly

E 3 Blameless: and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers;

C 9 His speaking as a father 2:11-12

D 1 Exhorting them: {11} just as you know how we were exhorting 2:11

D 2 Consoling them: and encouraging

- D 3     Charging them: and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children,
- D 4     Testifying that they should walk worthy of God, who calls them: {12} so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you 2:12
  - E 1     To His kingdom: into His own kingdom
  - E 2     To His glory: and glory.

### **B 5   His Thanks for Their Acceptance of God's Word 2:13-16**

- C 1     Paul's ceaseless thanks to God: {13} For this reason we also constantly thank God 2:13
- C 2     Their welcoming of the apostolic word: that when you received the word of God which you heard from us,
  - D 1     Not as the word of men: you accepted it not as the word of men,
  - D 2     But as the word of God, which presently operates in them as believers: but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.
- C 3     Their imitation of the churches of Judea: {14} For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, 2:14-16
  - D 1     In undergoing persecution at the hands of fellow-citizens: for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, 2:14
  - D 2     The antagonism of the Jews toward the Judean churches: even as they did from the Jews, 2:14-16
    - E 1     Killing the Lord Jesus: {15} who both killed the Lord Jesus 2:15
    - E 2     Killing the prophets: and the prophets,
    - E 3     Chasing off Paul and his team: and drove us out.
    - E 4     Not pleasing God: They are not pleasing to God,
  - D 3     The antagonism of the Jews toward all men 2:15-16
    - E 1     Contrary to all men: but hostile to all men, 2:15
    - E 2     Hindering Paul from speaking to the nations for their salvation: {16} hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved; 2:16

D 4 The judgment upon the Jews 2:16

- E 1 Their filling up [their measure of] their sins: with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins.
- E 2 Their receiving of complete wrath: But wrath has come upon them to the utmost.

**B 6 His Eagerness to See Them 2:17 - 3:13**

C 1 His thwarted desire 2:17-20

- D 1 His feeling of bereavement: {17} But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short while 2:17
  - E 1 In physical presence: --in person,
  - E 2 Not in heart: not in spirit—
- D 2 His eager desire to see them face to face: were all the more eager with great desire to see your face.
- D 3 Satan's hindering Paul's plans to come: {18} For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once--and yet Satan hindered us. 2:18

D 4 His estimate of them 2:19-20

- E 1 They are his hope, joy, and crown of boasting at Christ's coming (parousia): {19} For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? 2:19
  - E 2 They are his glory and joy: {20} For you are our glory and joy. 2:20

C 2 The ministry of Timothy 3:1-10

D 1 Paul's willingness to be left alone in Athens 3:1

- E 1 His inability to stand it any longer: {1} Therefore when we could endure it no longer,
- E 2 His satisfaction at staying alone in Athens: we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone,

D 2 His sending of Timothy: {2} and we sent Timothy, 3:2-5

E 1 His characterization of Timothy 3:2

G 1 His brother: our brother

G 2 His co-worker for God in the gospel of Christ: and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ,

E 2 His purpose for sending Timothy 3:2-4

G 1 To establish them [in the faith]: to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith, 3:2

G 2 To urge them not to permit their faith to be deterred by their persecutions: {3} so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; 3:3-4

H 1 Their knowledge that Christians are appointed to troubles: for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. 3:3

H 2 His reminder of his prior warning of the imminence of troubles: {4} For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; 3:4

H 3 His comment that it happened just as he said it would: and so it came to pass, as you know.

E 3 His sending of Timothy 3:5

G 1 His inability to stand it any longer: {5} For this reason, when I could endure it no longer,

G 2 His reason for sending Timothy

H 1 To assess their faith: I also sent to find out about your faith,

H 2 To see if somehow Satan had tempted them, making his effort fruitless: for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain.

D 3 The good report from Timothy 3:6

E 1 Timothy's arrival: {6} But now that Timothy has come to us from you,

E 2 Timothy's good news

G 1 Their faith: and has brought us good news of your faith

G 2 Their love: and love,

G 3 Their continuing good memory of Paul: and that you always think kindly of us,

H 1 Their longing to see him: longing to see us

H 2 As Paul did them: just as we also long to see you,

D 4 Paul's resultant comfort 3:7-10

E 1 His statement of comfort: {7} for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith; 3:7

E 2 His perspective 3:7-8

G 1 Their faith has made his suffering worthwhile: {7} for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith; 3:7

G 2 He can live if they stand [firm] in the Lord: {8} for now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord. 3:8

E 3 His gratitude 3:9

G 1 His inability to thank God enough : {9} For what thanks can we render to God for you

G 2 His cause for thanks -- his joy over them: in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account,

## E 4 His petition 3:10

G 1 The frequency -- night and day: {10} as we night and day keep praying most earnestly

G 2 The content -- to see their face: that we may see your face,

G 3 The purpose -- to adjust any shortcoming in their faith: and may complete what is lacking in your faith?

## C 3 The Prayer of Paul 3:11-13

D 1 That God might direct his way to them: {11} Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; 3:11

D 2 That the Lord might cause them to excel in love: {12} and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love 3:12

E 1 Toward one another: for one another,

E 2 Toward all men: and for all people,

E 3 Even as Paul does toward them: just as we also do for you;

D 3 That their hearts might be blameless in holiness: 13} so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness 3:13

E 1 Before whom? God, our Father: before our God and Father

E 2 When? At the coming<sup>3</sup> of our Master, Jesus with all His saints: at the coming<sup>3</sup> of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

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<sup>3</sup> 1 Thess. 3:13 - at the coming of our Lord Jesus: The "coming" (*parousia*, 3952) (lit., "being alongside") of Christ indicates both His arrival and His manifestation or bearing when He arrives. It can refer to His 1st Coming (2 Peter 1:16), the Rapture, or 2nd Coming (Matt. 24:37,39), or it can refer to one's "presence", determined by context. Comparing this passage with 4:14-15 in the same letter, it seems most likely Paul here refers to the Rapture (see Thomas Constable, 1 Thessalonians, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, NT, p. 700; H. C. Woodring, *The Thessalonian Epistles*, p. 34).

## A 2 THE COMMANDS AND TEACHING OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH OF THESSALONICA 4-5

### B 1 Refresher Commands: They must be... 4:1-12

C 1 Improving in their walk 4:1-2

D 1 Paul's urgency: he asks and beseeches them in the Lord: {1}  
Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus,  
4:1

D 2 His reminder of his previous instructions: that as you received  
from us instruction

E 1 How it is necessary to walk and please God: as to how you  
ought to walk and please God

E 2 Their present participation in this lifestyle: (just as you  
actually do walk),

D 3 His urging them to abound yet more in that lifestyle: that you  
excel still more.

D 4 His motivation: their knowledge of the commands he had  
previously given them in the Lord: {2} For you know what  
commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.  
4:2

C 2 Sanctified in their moral behavior 4:3-8

D 1 His revelation of God's will 4:3

E 1 Generally: Their sanctification: {3} For this is the will of  
God, your sanctification;

E 2 Specifically: Their abstention from fornication: that is,  
that you abstain from sexual immorality;

D 2 The technique: Each should know how to possess his own vessel  
4:4-5 {4} that each of you know how to possess his own vessel<sup>4</sup>

E 1 Positively: in sanctification and honor, 4:4

<sup>4</sup> 1 Thess. 4:4 - possess his own vessel: "Vessel" σκεῦος (*skeuos*, 4632) may refer to one's body or to one's wife. Combined as it is with the word *ktasthai*, generally, "to acquire", even "to purchase", σκεῦος may best refer here to one's wife. If this be true, then "sexual immorality (*porneias*, 4202), 1 Thess. 4:3, envisions fornication, or illicit sex by a single person, and the warning about defrauding the brother, 1 Thess. 4:6, creates a scenario in which a single Christian man is (in danger of?) committing fornication with another's wife or fiancee, thus defrauding him; or perhaps defrauding the young woman's father. The apostolic solution then, is for the erring brother to marry his own wife, albeit in sanctification and honor, not in passionate lust. Cf. 1 Peter 3:7, where the wife is referred to as the weaker vessel (σκεῦος).

- E 2 Negatively: Not in passionate lust 4:5 {5} not in lustful passion,

  - G 1 Even as do the Gentiles (nations): like the Gentiles
  - G 2 The ones not knowing God: who do not know God;

- D 3 The perspective: not to go beyond and defraud one's own (spiritual) brother in this area 4:6 {6} and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter

  - E 1 Because the Lord is the avenger: because the Lord is the avenger in all these things,
  - E 2 Even as Paul previously told them and testified to them: just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you.

- D 4 The calling of God: {7} For God has not called us 4:7

  - E 1 Not to (moral) uncleanness: for the purpose of impurity,
  - E 2 But in sanctification: but in sanctification.

- D 5 The warning to him who would reject this command : {8} So, he who rejects this 4:8

  - E 1 He is not rejecting man: is not rejecting man
  - E 2 He is rejecting God, who has given us His Holy Spirit: but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

- C 3 Increasing in their brotherly love 4:9-10

  - D 1 The lack of necessity in his writing: {9} Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, 4:9-10

    - E 1 They are taught by God to love one another: for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; 4:9
    - E 2 Their present practice toward all the brothers in Macedonia: {10} for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. 4:10

  - D 2 His exhortation to them to excel yet more in love: But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more, 4:10

C 4 Diligent in their work 4:11-12

D 1 His exhortation: They should strive eagerly: {11} and to make it your ambition 4:11

E 1 To be quiet: to lead a quiet life

E 2 To mind their own business: and attend to your own business

E 3 To work with their own hands: and work with your hands,

D 2 His consistency: he had already commanded them: just as we commanded you,

D 3 His goal 4:12

E 1 That they might live appropriately in the eyes of unbelievers: {12} so that you will behave properly toward outsiders

E 2 That they might have no (financial) need: and not be in any need.

## B 2 Teaching Concerning Those Dead in Christ 4:13-18

C 1 His desire for them 4:13

D 1 To be knowledgeable concerning those "sleeping": {13} But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep,<sup>5</sup>

D 2 That they do not grieve as the rest [unbelievers], who have no hope: so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

C 2 His assurance concerning the future 4:14-17

D 1 The belief about the past 4:14

E 1 That Jesus died: {14} For if we believe that Jesus died

E 2 That He rose again: and rose again,

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<sup>5</sup> 1 Thess. 4:13 - those who are asleep: Not a sleep of the soul, cf. 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 1 Thess. 5:10. Rather a sleep of the body in the earth until resurrection. Thomas L. Constable, 1 Thessalonians, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Victor Books, II, 703. In the New Testament thinking, "asleep" is an appropriate euphemism for believers who have died, inasmuch as their deaths are only temporary. Unbelievers, tragically, will be resurrected to horrible, eternal Second Death in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

- D 2 The belief about the future: even so God will bring with Him<sup>6</sup> those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.
- D 3 The details of believers in relation to Christ's return [The Rapture] 4:15-17
- E 1 The certainty of the details: "We say by a word from the Lord": {15} For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, 4:15
- E 2 The order: The living do not precede those having slept (the dead in Christ): that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.
- E 3 The descent of Christ from heaven: {16} For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven 4:16
- G 1 With a word of command: with a shout,
- G 2 With the voice of an archangel: with the voice of the archangel
- G 3 With a trumpet of God: and with the trumpet of God,
- E 4 The disposition of believers 4:16-17
- G 1 The dead in Christ will rise first: and the dead in Christ will rise first. 4:16
- G 2 The living will be snatched up together with them in the clouds: {17} Then we who are alive and remain<sup>7</sup> will be caught up<sup>8</sup> together with them in the clouds

<sup>6</sup> 1 Thess. 4:14 - God will bring with Him: God will bring with Jesus [when He returns] the ones who slept through Him [i.e. the dead in Christ]. I take this to mean that God will bring the spirits of deceased [Church-Age](#) believers with Jesus when He returns for the [Rapture](#). The bodies of these deceased believers will be raised from the dead and the returning saints will be reunited with their (now-glorified) bodies (1 Thess. 4:16)!

<sup>7</sup> 1 Thess. 4:16 - Then we who are alive and remain: "(Paul) thought that Christ would probably return in his lifetime, or at least he allowed for its possibility." Thomas L. Constable, 1 Thessalonians, [The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#), Victor Books, II, 704.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Thess. 4:17 - will be caught up: This phrase renders the 1<sup>st</sup> Person Plural [Future Indicative Passive](#) of the verb *harpádzō* (726), meaning, according to the context, to snatch up or away (Matt. 13:19; John 10:12, 28, 29; Acts 8:39; Jude 1:23), catch up (2 Cor. 12:2, 4; 1 Thess. 4:17; Rev. 12:5), take by force (Matt. 11:12; 12:29; John 6:15; Acts 23:10). The context must determine whether the connotation is beneficial or adversarial to the subject. In this case, the being "caught up" is extraordinarily beneficial for the individual members of the Church when Christ returns for them – both the living and the resurrected will be transported up together to meet the Lord in the air, and will forever afterwards be together with the Lord! No wonder this is a cause for Christians to celebrate and to comfort one another (1 Thess. 4:18)! There are a couple of observations worth making at this point:

(1) There are no signs given prior to this event in this Scripture passage. There is no warning at all that the

4:17

- E 5      The culmination of the event: Unto a meeting with the Lord in the air: to meet the Lord in the air,    4:17
- E 6      The goal of the event: For believers always to be with the Lord!: and so we shall always be with the Lord.    4:17
- C 3      His instruction that they comfort one another: {18} Therefore comfort one another with these words.    4:18

### **B 3      Teaching Concerning Times, Seasons and the Day of the Lord 5:1-11**

- C 1      Their awareness of future events 5:1-2
- D 1      Their not needing to be informed concerning the times and seasons: {1} Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you.    5:1
- D 2      Their present knowledge of the sudden coming of the Day of the Lord (as a thief in the night): {2} For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord<sup>9</sup> will come just like a thief in the

Church will have to go through the deadly and perilous Tribulation period first. There are no indications that prior to Jesus' return for the Church there will be a succession of seven seals of judgment that must be broken (Rev. 6:1-8:5), seven trumpets that must be blown by seven angels (Rev. 8:6-11:19), nor seven bowls of the wrath of God that must be poured out upon a rebellious earth (Rev. 15:1-16:21) before this profound hope of the Church is consummated. Nor is there any indication that, before Christ returns for His church, the good news of the kingdom must first be proclaimed to all nations (Matt. 24:14); or that the "Abomination of Desolation" predicted by Daniel the prophet would stand in the holy place of the Temple (Matt. 24:15); or that an unprecedented Great Tribulation must occur prior to Christ's coming (Matt. 24:21).

(2) This event is presented as being imminent, without preceding signs, so much so that Paul included himself among those he expected to be alive at Christ's return (1 Thess. 4:17).

(3) There is no sense here that Jesus snatches up His Church to a meeting in the air, only to have them descend to the earth as a welcoming party. The more likely scenario is that He takes them with Him to heaven to the dwelling places He has prepared for them (John 14:1-3), most likely, New Jerusalem. (See the article on the [Vocabulary](#) of the Return of Christ.)

I therefore label this return of Christ for His Church as the [Pre-Tribulation Rapture](#). It is at the end of that terrible time of judgment upon the earth that Christ will return in power and great glory to wreak vengeance on His adversaries and purify the whole human race in order to set up His Millennial Kingdom. So the return of Christ is to be seen in two phases: (a) His return FOR the Church for the purposes of [REUNION](#); and (b) His return WITH the Church for the purpose of [RETRIBUTION](#) and setting up His Kingdom upon Earth.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Thess. 5:2 - the day of the Lord: A period of time when the LORD enters into human history in order to bring about terrible judgment upon man for his evil. There have been historical fulfillments of the [Day of the LORD](#) (Joel 1:1-2:25; Isaiah 13:1-22). These historical fulfillments use language that typifies yet future fulfillments more devastating in ferocity and scope. Those eschatological fulfillments will take place during the [Tribulation](#) (Isaiah 13:6-13; Ezek. 30:3; Obad. 1:15-16; Zeph. 1:14-18), at the [Second Coming of Christ to Judge the Nations](#) preparatory to setting up His global [Kingdom](#) (Joel 3:1-17; Zech. 14:1-15), and at the [Destruction of the Existing Heavens and Earth](#) preparatory to the Creation of the [New Heavens](#) and [Earth](#) (2 Pet. 3:10-13). For more on the [Day of the LORD](#), go to [The Day of the LORD Index Page](#).

Incidentally, a number of Bible teachers mistakenly assume that "[the day of the Lord](#)" is referring to what they believe is the [Post-Tribulation Rapture](#) of the Church. They assume that the event Paul described in 1 Thess. 4:13-18 is the same event as that which he is now describing in 1 Thess. 5:1-11. To them, "[the Day of the Lord](#)" is the [return of Christ](#). In my view they overlook several important facts:

(1) The mood of 1 Thess. 4:13-18 is decidedly jubilant and comforting, whereas the mood of 1 Thess. 5:1-11 is

night. 5:2

C 2 The illusory nature of the Day of the Lord 5:3

D 1 The [world's] proclamation of peace and safety: {3} While they are saying, "Peace and safety!"<sup>10</sup>

D 2 The coming of sudden destruction on them: then destruction will come upon them suddenly<sup>11</sup>

D 3 The analogy of labor pains: like labor pains upon a woman with child,

D 4 The absence of any escape! and they will not escape.

C 3 The believers' non-participation in the Day of the Lord 5:4-10

D 1 Their identity -- "brothers:" {4} But you, brethren, 5:4a

D 2 Their orientation 5:4b-5

E 1 "not in darkness," (so that day will not overtake them as a thief): are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; 5:4b

E 2 They are all sons of light: {5} for you are all sons of light 5:5

decidedly somber and alarming. In this latter passage Paul used words such as "like a thief in the night" (1 Thess. 5:2); "like a thief" (1 Thess. 5:4); "destruction" (1 Thess. 5:3); "suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child" (1 Thess. 5:3); "darkness" (1 Thess. 5:4); and "wrath" (1 Thess. 5:9). In this latter passage, the comfort Paul offers is that his readers will be *exempted* from "the day of the Lord," not merely that they will not be surprised by it.

(2) Paul used the words "*Peri dè*," "Now concerning," to begin the topic of 1 Thess. 5:1-11. That is Paul's stylistic way of introducing a new topic. The topic of 1 Thess. 5:1-11 (the [Tribulation](#)), though in the same genre, [Eschatology](#), is a decidedly different topic than the topic of 1 Thess. 4:13-18 ([Rapture](#)). See Paul's use of *Peri dè* to introduce new topics in 1 Cor. 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12; 1 Thess. 4:9; 5:1.

(3) Again, in my view, those who believe both passages (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Thess. 5:1-11) are describing the same event have not studied adequately the somber and judgmental nature of "The Day of the LORD" in the OT. They defend their position by saying that the Return of Christ will be joyous for believers, but terrifying for unbelievers. In my judgment, they err in assuming a [Post-Tribulation Rapture](#), a position that is eschatologically untenable. For more information see the article, "[Nine Reasons Why Belief in a Post-Tribulation Rapture Is Not Credible](#)."

(4) They assume that the [Second Coming of Christ](#) will occur in one event. They are oblivious that the New Testament teaches that Christ will return in two stages – (a) for His [Bride](#), the [Church](#); (b) In power and great glory to destroy His enemies and set up His [Millennial Kingdom](#). In short, they fail to recognize subtle distinctions in the Scripture. Believing Sons of Israel were completely unaware that the coming of their [Messiah](#) would occur in two stages. Similarly, the vast majority of the members of today's organized church are unaware that the [Second Coming of Christ](#) will occur in two stages.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Thess. 5:3 - peace and safety: "This day will begin when world conditions appear calm rather than calamitous. This peace will come with the signing of the seven-year covenant, predicted in Daniel 9:27" Thomas L. Constable, 1 Thessalonians, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Victor Books, II, 705.

<sup>11</sup> 1 Thess. 5:3 - upon them suddenly: i.e. the world, not the Christians, who have been raptured.

E 3 They are all sons of day: and sons of day.

E 4 We are not of night: We are not of night

E 5 We are not of darkness: nor of darkness;

D 3 Their responsibility 5:6-8

E 1 Let us not sleep as the rest (unbelievers) do: {6} so then let us not sleep as others do, 5:6a

E 2 Let us watch and be sober: but let us be alert and sober.  
[5:6b] 5:6b-7

G 1 Those who sleep, do so by night: {7} For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, 5:7

G 2 Those who get drunk do so by night: and those who get drunk get drunk at night.

E 3 Since we are of the day, let us be sober: {8} But since we are of the day, let us be sober, 5:8

G 1 Putting on a breastplate: having put on the breastplate

H 1 Of faith: of faith

H 2 Of love: and love,

G 2 Putting on a helmet -- the hope of salvation: and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

D 4 Their destiny 5:9-10

E 1 Their non-appointment to wrath: {9} For God has not destined us for wrath, 5:9a

E 2 Their appointment to the obtaining of salvation: but for obtaining salvation [5:9b] 5:9-10

G 1 The Master of their salvation -- Jesus Christ: through our Lord Jesus Christ, 5:9c

G 2 The provision of salvation -- His having died for us: {10} who died for us, 5:10a

G 3 The purpose of salvation: living with Christ 5:10b

H 1 Whether we watch [live (vigilantly)]: so that whether we are awake

H 2 Or sleep [die]: or asleep, we will live together with Him.

C 4 Their corporate need 5:11

D 1 To comfort one another: {11} Therefore encourage one another

D 2 To build up one another: and build up one another,

D 3 As they are presently doing: just as you also are doing.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> 1 Thess. 5:11 - just as you are doing: "This verse gives some insight into the meetings of the early church. They included opportunity for mutual edification among the believers." Thomas L. Constable, 1 Thessalonians, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Victor Books, II, 707.

**B 4 Instructions Relating to the Assembly 5:12-13**

C 1 Regarding leaders 5:12-13

D 1 The request for them to know their leaders: But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those 5:12

E 1 Laboring among them: who diligently labor among you,

E 2 Leading them in the Lord: and have charge over you in the Lord

E 3 Admonishing them: and give you instruction,

D 2 The request for them to value their leaders: {13 }and that you esteem them very highly in love 5:13

E 1 The degree: "Most exceedingly": very highly

E 2 The spirit: in love

E 3 The reason: because of their work.

C 2 Regarding one another: "Be at peace among yourselves": Live in peace with one another. 5:13

**B 5 Concluding Exhortations 5:14-22**

C 1 The responsibility of the assembly toward types of people among them 5:14-15

D 1 Admonish the idle: {14} We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, 5:14

D 2 Console the faint-hearted: encourage the fainthearted,

D 3 Hold on to those who are weak: help the weak,

D 4 Be longsuffering with all men: be patient with everyone.

D 5 The stance regarding those who mistreat 5:15

E 1 Avoid returning evil against anyone: {15} See that no one repays another with evil for evil,

E 2 Always pursue good: but always seek after that which is good

G 1 In regard to one another (as fellow-believers): for one another

G 2 In regard to all men: and for all people.

- C 2    The responsibility of individuals regarding their own spiritual lives 5:16-18
  - D 1    Always rejoice: {16} Rejoice always; 5:16
  - D 2    Pray unceasingly: {17} pray without ceasing; 5:17
  - D 3    Give thanks: {18} in everything **give thanks**; 5:18
    - E 1    The circumstances: in everything
    - E 2    The reason: for this is God's will for them in Christ Jesus: for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
- C 3    The responsibility of the assembly gathered toward the working of the Spirit among them 5:19-22
  - D 1    Regarding the general working of the Spirit among them: Don't quench the Spirit: {19} Do not quench the Spirit; 5:19
  - D 2    Regarding the prophetic ministry of the Spirit among them 5:20-22
    - E 1    Don't despise prophecies: {20} do not despise prophetic utterances.<sup>13</sup> 5:20
    - E 2    Prove all things [i.e. prophecies]: {21} But examine everything carefully; 5:21-22
      - G 1    Hold fast to the good (prophecies): hold fast to that which is good; 5:21

<sup>13</sup> 1 Thess. 5:20 - prophetic utterances: I have heard someone claiming to be giving a prophetic utterance. The first thing I would note that, to me rendered the so-called prophecy spurious was that it was delivered, unbelievably, in King James English. Imagine the Holy Spirit delivering a message to a prophet in a language that was 350 years out of date! Absurd!

I believe that if the Holy Spirit were indeed revealing God's will through prophecy today, it would be impossible to stifle the prophet. One could reject what he had to say, but it would be just as impossible to silence a genuine prophet as it would be to prohibit someone who has the gift of teaching from teaching. There is a fire in the belly, and the teaching will come out and the prophecy will come out.

I personally reject the notion that there are Biblical prophets today. I believe there are people who *think* they are prophets and I believe there are people who are *masquerading* as prophets, but I do not believe there are any true prophets today. I also admit the possibility that I could be wrong. I do not believe it is likely that I am wrong, but it is possible.

Reasons: (1) God's Word predicts a doing away with prophecy (1 Cor. 13:8-10). (2) The doing away with prophecy will come about when "that which is complete" arrives. I believe that "that which is complete" refers to the completed Scriptures, to which nothing has been added for 1900 years.

I further believe that this completeness is a stage. I believe that prophets will again be active during the Tribulation period. Revelation 11:3 speaks of two witnesses who will prophesy for 1260 days. I also believe that during the Millennium there will be only one Prophet, Jesus Himself. The Word of the Lord will go forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 11:3)! Jesus is the prophet predicted by the great prophet Moses in Deut. 18:18-19. It would not surprise me at all if Jesus words are written down and incorporated into the Bible! All other prophecy will cease (Zech. 13:2-6). The price for false prophecy is death (Deut. 18:20). There is zero margin for error in Biblical prophets (Deut. 18:21-22).

G 2 Abstain from [any association with] every kind of evil [i.e. invalid] (prophecy): {22} abstain from every form of evil. 5:22

## B 6 Concluding Prayer 5:23-24

C 1 For the activity of God: "May the God of peace sanctify you completely: {23} Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; 5:23

C 2 For the effect in the Thessalonians – their preservation: and may your spirit <sup>14</sup> and soul <sup>15</sup> and body <sup>16</sup> be preserved complete, 5:23

D 1 The completeness: their entire

E 1 Spirit

E 2 Soul

<sup>14</sup> 1 Thess. 5:23 - spirit: The noun is *pneuma* ([4151](#)). The word can mean either “breath/wind” or “spirit”. In Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus, He used both meanings in one sentence (John 3:8)! English uses of the Greek *pneuma* are weighted towards “wind” or “air.” Diseased lungs are called “pneumonia.” Tools operating on compressed air are called “pneumatic” tools. A few NT passages mean “air”: for example, 2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 11:11; 13:15. But in NT usage, translations are heavily weighted toward the word “spirit.” Most frequently, *pneuma* refers to the Holy Spirit (*pneuma* is often accompanied by the word “Holy”, *hagios*, [40](#)) (Matt. 1:18; Acts 1:2; Rom. 5:5; 1 Cor. 6:19; Heb. 2:4, etc.). Less frequently, it refers to the human spirit (e.g., Matt. 5:3; 26:41; Luke 1:47; 8:55; John 4:24; 11:33; 13:21; 19:30; Rom. 1:9; 1 Cor. 2:11; Php. 4:23; Heb. 4:12; 12:23; James 2:26; 1 Pet. 3:4). Here in 1 Thess. 5:23 it refers to the human spirit, the aspect of humanity through which we can converse with and have fellowship with God.

Theologians have argued whether man is dichotomous (consisting only of material and immaterial qualities) – body and soul/spirit; or whether his existence is trichotomous (consisting of body, soul, and spirit). I, for one, refuse to argue with the writer of Hebrews. He insists, in Heb. 4:12, that God’s Word is able to distinguish between soul and spirit. Here, Paul distinguishes between “spirit” and “soul.” Therefore, man is trichotomous, consisting of body, soul, and spirit. The spirit is how man can commune with God. The soul is how man communicates with himself and with others. The body is how man’s soul and spirit exist and manifest themselves in the created world.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Thess. 5:23 - soul: The noun is *psuchē* ([5590](#)). We derive our English word “psyche” or “psychology” from *psuchē*. According to [Friberg](#), the term is a “many-sided word with the meaning derived from the context.” (1) It can refer to one’s physical existence. In this case it is typically translated “life.” Examples include Matt. 6:25; Acts 20:24; Rom. 11:3; 1 John 3:16; Rev. 16:3. NASB translates *psuchē* as “life” or “lives” 43X. (2) It can refer to the inanimate quality of human existence as opposed to its physical quality. In this case it is typically translated as “soul.” The NASB translates *psuchē* as “soul” or “souls” 47X. Examples include Matt. 10:28; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12; 3 John 1:2; Rev. 20:4. In Heb. 4:12, the writer may be distinguishing between actions performed in this life merely for the purpose of natural existence (*psuchē*) as opposed to actions performed for a spiritual (*pneuma*, [4151](#)) purpose. The point is that God’s Word can distinguish the difference. In Heb. 4:12, the writer contrasts two distinguishable parts of the immaterial part of man (soul and spirit) with two distinguishable part of the material part of man (joints and marrow). Here in 1 Thess. 5:23, Paul distinguishes between the Christian’s spirit, his soul, and his body. The former two comprise man’s immaterial side, the latter, his material side. Final redemption includes the redemption of the complete person – man’s spirit, his soul, and his body.

<sup>16</sup> 1 Thess. 5:23 - body: The word is *sōma*, [4983](#). (1) On a literal level, *sōma* refers to the human body (Matt. 5:29; James 3:6); or to an animal body (James 3:5); or to the bodies of plants and seeds (1 Cor. 15:37-38); or to celestial bodies such as stars and planets in distinction to earthly bodies (1 Cor. 15:40). (2) On a figurative level, *sōma* refers to the body of Christ (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:20, 27; Eph. 4:12), the mystical union of all Church-Age believers, of which Christ is the head. Here in 1 Thess. 5:23, Paul refers to the human body of the believer. He prays that God might preserve them wholly, including the spirit, the soul, and the body of each one of them. Final redemption includes redemption of the whole person, including the body.

E 3     Body

- D 2     The quality: blameless: without blame
- D 3     The time: the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ: at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- C 3     For the achievement: "Faithful is the one calling you, who indeed will do it": {24} Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. 5:24

**B 7   Farewell 5:25-28**

- C 1     The request for prayer: {25} Brethren, pray for us. 5:25
- C 2     The exhortation to greet one another with a set-apart kiss: {26} Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. 5:26
- C 3     The charge to read the letter to all the brothers: {27} I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren. 5:27
- C 4     The benediction of Christ's grace upon them: {28} The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. 5:28

EXPANDED ANALYSIS OF 1 THESSALONIANS

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