

The Second Coming of Jesus
1 Thessalonians 5:1-3

1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief.

Do you like a merry-go-round? They make me dizzy. They remind me of eschatology, the biblical study of last things or end times; *eschatos*, Greek for last, all the details surrounding the end of earth history and the Lord's second coming.

There are so many different views that it gets dizzying:
Post-mil, a-mil, preterist, partial preterist, historic pre-mil, dispensational pre-mil, with a pre, mid or post tribulation rapture.
I know you're pan-mil, it all pans out in the end.

Actually, teaching on the end is not given to make us dizzy but holy. What happens at the end should govern everything about today, filling you with hope and encouragement. That's Paul's point. And just like surviving a merry-go-round, you need to find a fixed point to look at, so Paul gives us a fixed point in this text: *the Day of the Lord*.

Paul is answering some concerns they had, and many people have, about the end of history:

- had their loved ones who died miss out on something when Jesus returns?
- and would they who are alive have something to fear about final judgment?
- or might they somehow miss the appearing of Jesus?
- are there second chances for people?

The answer to all concerns is no. They couldn't possibly miss the day of the Lord. Here are Paul's four reasons: it is
predicted, audible, swiftly sudden and inescapable.

1. Predicted

I Now as to the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you.

Paul strikes a note of simple irony:
you know (*you yourselves are fully aware*)
that you can't know the exact time (*day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night*)

You know that a thief wants to strike at night time, (kairos, suitable time/opportunity)
but can't possibly know the exact hour. (chronos, date). not even Jesus (Mt.24:36), knows the exact hour.

But the point is, the day of the Lord will come because God said it would.
And God's been saying so for a long time.

The day of the Lord is not new to the NT. Runs all through the OT prophets.
Marked special visitations of God,

judgment on either Israel or her enemies and (bitter)
both in blessing/deliverance for Israel. (sweet)

So actually multiple fulfillments of *the day of the Lord*, each building, anticipating this great future day of the Lord, as if smaller mountain ranges in foreground, leading up to the granddaddy of them all in the back.

So at Pentecost Peter interprets the pouring out of the Spirit as *the day of the Lord*, just as the prophet Joel foresaw, but the NT sees it in two installments,
-that day at Pentecost (blessing: HS poured out) (sweet)
-and a final day in earth history (judgment), what Paul stresses here. (bitter)

And to be sure, it is the last day of earth history as we know it:
Just as the Bible is prone to do, various words or phrases are used to describe the same thing. So in this case,
day of the Lord is synonymous with *the second coming of Jesus*:

1 Thessalonians 4:15

“the coming (parousia) of the Lord” (first ref. in 1 Thess.2:19)

1 Thess.5:2

“the day of the Lord”

destruction (olethros) v.3 wrath v.9 (first ref. in 1 Thess.1:10)

“the day” v.4 5: 23 the coming of our Lord Jesus”

2 Thess.1:7 destruction (olethros) v.9 (Romans 8)

2 Thess.2:1-2 explicitly connects them

1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, 2 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.

Paul connects them in:

1 Cor. 1: v.7 the revelation of Jesus Christ = v.8 the day of the Lord

1 Cor.15:23-24

23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. Jesus, John 6:40; 5:25-29

Phil.1:6 (refers to the time of the completion of our sanctification)

Acts 2:20 “the great and glorious day of our Lord”

1 Cor. 15: 50f last trumpet death of death

2 Peter 1:19, 2:9; 3:4,7, 10, 12

subject: day of the Lord

motif: thief in the night

result: final judgment, recreation of the earth

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.

2. audible

According to 1 Thess.4:16 *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God,*

Shout:

Why do people shout? To get peoples attention, whether to announce their presence (honey, I'm home); to warn (watch out!); or to summons them (come here).

In the Parable of the ten virgins Jesus told, at midnight there was a shout

Voice of archangel:

angels (messengers) announce matters coming from heaven. No king ever came to his royal perch and asked everyone to be quiet: his servants do that: hear ye, hear ye! Even to this day in our country, judges are introduced by another's voice, as in, Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the US.

Trumpet of God:

Very prominent OT image:

At Sinai voice of God like a trumpet

Summons a public assembly

Most common use in war;

As a summons to war (angels come with Jesus to deal out retribution to those who do not know him)

At commencement/end of a battle: your strife on earth is done

Announce a claim to kingship

Announce a time of worship

All of this takes place when Jesus appears.

Put each aspect of the trumpet blast together:

We'll hear the voice of God, Jesus;

We'll assemble with him;

He will take his rightful claim as Lord of the whole earth;

He will come to end our strife on earth;

He will commence a swift battle to defeat his enemies,

we will worship him as he is hailed by all king of kings

So Paul calls this the last trumpet in 1 Cor. 15:50

51Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

"Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

56The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. swiftly sudden

Paul uses two images from Jesus' teaching in the Olivet discourse (Matt.24), comparing his coming to a thief on the night and birth pangs on a woman.

*Birth pangs come suddenly, unexpectedly, out of nowhere.

**When are thieves most likely to succeed? At night, when its dark, when you can't detect them coming, when they can attack swiftly and suddenly. Take you by surprise. Typically don't advertise ahead of time!

That's Jesus' and Paul's point to believers; they need to be ready, morally.

What distinguishes them from unbelievers, is their attitude betrays a

"everything's fine" outlook: *3 While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon*

Remember after 911 people flocked to church, sensing danger, disorientation.

Well God isn't to simply be pursued then, but he is worthy always of all our devotion. The end of the world is not the reason to flee to Christ.

The reason is, it is the right thing to do. Not to save your skin, but to give him his rightful place as Lord in your heart.

If you run to God simply to escape judgment, then when you no longer sense the gravity of judgment, you'll likely return to living for yourself.

But when your heart has been washed in his grace, the sweet hand of his authority is over you, you wouldn't dream of leaving him.

4. inescapable

destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.

There are lots of folks who are counting on a second chance to make things right with God. I'll do my thing for now, and later get to the God-thing. If I die before that, God will understand, he's compassionate, it's his job to forgive. In fact, we have a bargain: I'll leave him alone if he leaves me alone.

Well, the bible is clear that there are no second chances.

1. Heb.9:27 *It is appointed for all men to die once and then comes judgment.*
2. Today is the day of salvation Heb.3:7,15,4:7 2 Cor. 6:2
behold now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation.
3. Question presumes innocence, but we are not. Rom 1 we are without excuse
4. are we embarrassed by God's judgment? Isn't it good and only deserving in every case?

Final thought: it is the day OF the Lord. The LORD's Day. HIS day.

His coming is pay day. He gets his people, the ones he has from all eternity longed for, lived for, died for, ruled the world for, gifted his church for, poured out his Spirit for, prayed for, suffered with them, and finally he gets them all face to face. We are his inheritance.

Ps. 2 fulfilled:

Ask of me and I will give you the nations as your inheritance.

He will be gloried as a friend of sinners and savior/redeemer.

Eph. 2:7 *in the ages to come he might show the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness towards in Christ.*

God shows off his trophies of grace to the entire universe. See these, I died for them! I love them! They are mine! Behold my incomparable kindness.

The day is about Jesus; the revelation of the Lord Jesus. Coming to be glorified in his saints.

It's also pay day for those who don't love him. He will repay them what they are due. He will be glorified as a just judge and king.

It's the day *every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father.* That is the most right thing in the universe.