

“Next Matters Now”

1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

God has a plan. What happens next matters right now.

Jesus return

The Parousia

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 talks about the return of Jesus. The word used here is “parousia”. This word is used of the coming revelation of God and a visit by a King. Thus the word itself infers that Jesus second coming is as God and King.

Paul also notes that this coming is with followers of Jesus who have died and living followers of Jesus who join them. Thus the painful separation that death causes from Christ and from those who have remained alive is satisfied in Jesus’ return (Stott, The Message of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 97).

Paul’s teaching on the sequence of events to the Lord’s return emphasizes that the dead in Christ have not been forgotten. They are not missing this amazing point in history. They will rise first. It is important to see how Paul links this to the truth that Jesus died and rose again. This is part of the results of Jesus resurrection.

Those who are alive in Christ will be snatched up together with them. This is commonly referred to as the rapture. The Greek word for rapture is harpazo and it indicates a sense of suddenness, abruptness, and urgency (Acts 23:10).

There is much debate about the timing of this event in relationship to a time of great tribulation or wrath referred to in the New Testament book of Revelation. Some see this rapture as taking place before, others mid, and some post a time of great tribulation on the earth. Here in 1 Thessalonians Paul does not emphasize the need for snatching up from a time of tribulation.

The term for “meeting” in the air would suggest that Paul is seeing the rapture in close proximity with Jesus return to the earth to exercise judgment on the earth.

For more information on this see the book, “Three Views on the Rapture: Pre, Mid, or Post-Tribulational”.

The Day of the Lord

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 shifts its vocabulary from “parousia” to “day of the Lord”. Although different words they are indeed in Paul’s mind the same thing.

In the Old Testament “Day of the Lord” is a time of judgment for God’s opponents but also a day of deliverance for the faithful (Isaiah 21:1-6; Joel 1:15, 2:1, 11, 31-32; Amos 5:18-20; Zephaniah 1:14; Zechariah 14).

In the New Testament the “day of the Lord” (2 Thessalonians 2:2) is equal to the “day of the Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:8; 2 Corinthians 1:14) and the “day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6, 10, 26) and the “day” (1 Thessalonians 5:4; 2 Thessalonians 1:10).

There is no distinction in the context of 1 Thessalonians 4 and 5 between the “day of the Lord” and “parousia”.

The day of the Lord is to be anticipated with hope by the follower of Jesus because as in the case of the parousia it is because of Jesus death and God’s appointment that this time leads to the full expression of our salvation, life together with Jesus.

Jesus return helps me . . .

Face _____, 4:13-18

▪ **Death is not the** _____

▪ **I grieve but with** _____

Jesus return helps me . . .

Live _____, 5:1-11

I am full of anticipation so I am

▪ _____

▪ _____