

1 Thessalonians 5

Rea goes on to say that, “This passage should be read right along with the last part of chapter four, about the parousia and the rapture. The artificial chapter-break tends to destroy the connection of thought.”¹ However; as Geisler states, “Paul’s use of *now* (Gk: *peri de*) indicates a new subject in every place he uses it in his writings.”² Paul starts chapter 5 by addressing “the times and the epochs” surrounding these events. Vincent states that the plural is used to represent a number of incidents relating to the preparation and accomplishment of the Second Coming occurring at different times. He also highlights the use of *kairos* time in this context to represent a juncture, occasion, right moment of time or the opportune moment.³ Then in verse 2, Paul speaks of the “day of the Lord,” which is a separate and distinct event from the previously addressed “coming of the Lord.” He uses *erchomai* to say that the day of the Lord will *come*. Here, Ladd points out that the “day of Christ” (mentioned in six other contexts: 1 Cor 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; Phil 1:6, 10; 2:16) and the “day of the Lord” are the same all-inclusive event under the *Parousia* and represents judgement for unbelievers and salvation for believers.⁴ Whereas, Walvoord states that “the day of the Lord” is mentioned by Paul at this juncture as a new subject following the Rapture, which was addressed in chapter 4, but tied together in Paul’s overall theme of eschatological times (*chronos*) and dates (*kairos*).⁵ Traditionally, the Day of the Lord

¹Rea, 114.

²Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 4, *Church/Last Things* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2005), 626.

³Vincent, 4:43.

⁴Ladd, *The Blessed Hope*, 92-4.

⁵Walvoord, 218-22.

from both the Old and New Testament (Deut 4; Jer 30; Dan 9; 12; Matt 24; Mark 13; 2 Thess 2) is another term for God's judgement/wrath to be poured out on the earth and unbelievers for sins committed throughout History and will occur during the End Times. Another term for this is the Tribulation described by Chapters 6-19 of the Book of Revelation.⁶ This Tribulation also implies the need for *deliverance (sozo)*, *salvation (soteria)* or *escape (ekpheugo)* from it by the Church. This very theme of God's *deliverance* from His wrath, through the *salvation* of the Lord Jesus, is addressed in verses 9 and 10 of this chapter, "for God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." This connects back to the Rapture previously mentioned in chapter 4 by the words, "that whether we are *awake or asleep*, we may *live together with Him*." Paul then ties all this together in verse 23; where he says, now may the God of peace (Old Testament name for God—*Yahweh Shalom*—the God of wholeness, completeness and peace mentioned in Judg 6:24) Himself sanctify you entirely (complete sanctification, to be made entirely like Jesus, or glorification, occurring when believers see Jesus face to face per 1 Cor 13:9-12) and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete (again happening when believers see Jesus face to face) . . . at the *coming (parousia)* of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul uses the word, *parousia* (as opposed to *erchomenon*), in this section to make a clear, separate, and distinct difference between the Rapture of the Church before the Tribulation and the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus after the Tribulation.

Ladd has a different view on the subject of "wrath or tribulation." Although he completely agrees with idea that Christians will never be subject to God's wrath, he does however, believe they will go through most of (if not all) the Tribulation, since the "wrath of

⁶J. Randall Price, "Old Testament Tribulation Terms," in *When the Trumpet Sounds*, ed. Thomas Ice and Timothy Demy (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1995), 82-3.

God” will not be poured out in full until the Second Coming itself (Rev 19:11-6). This is directly preceded by the seventh trumpet and the pouring out of the seven bowls of judgement on the followers of Antichrist and not believers (Rev 11:17-8; 14:9; and 16:2, 8).⁷ He clarifies his point of view by saying, “There are however two alternatives to that of a pretribulation rapture. One is that the Church will be raptured toward the end of the Tribulation just before God pours out His wrath upon unbelieving men. This view is usually called midtribulationism . . . There is a second alternative. It is possible, and we believe the Scriptures indicate, that the Church will be on earth throughout the entire period of the Tribulation but will be divinely sheltered from the wrath of God.”⁸ However, Walvoord sums up his position by saying, “Taken as a whole, the pretribulation point of view gives sense and meaning to 1 Thessalonians 5 and explains why this is introduced after the Rapture. In effect, Paul was saying that the time of the Rapture cannot be determined any more than the time of the beginning of the day of the Lord, but this is of no concern to believers because our appointment is not the wrath of the day of the Lord but rather the salvation that is ours in Christ.”⁹

⁷Ladd, *The Blessed Hope*, 120-9.

⁸Ladd, *The Blessed Hope*, 120-1.

⁹Walvoord, 233.