

1 Thessalonians 5 - The Day of the Lord

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(3) Day of the Lord (5:1-11)

(A) Description of the Day of the Lord (5:1-3)

1 Now as to the periods and times, brothers and sisters, you have no need of anything to be written to you.

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

1 Now you do not need to have anything written to you about times and dates, brothers,

1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

- "Now as" - *peri de*, "now concerning"; indicates a shift in topics, to a related but different topic (Cf. 4:9).

— Paul uses this Greek phrase often to denote a change of topic, most notably in 1 Corinthians. In the second half of that epistle (1 Cor 7-16), Paul uses *peri de* to denote his answers to each of the seven questions the Corinthians had asked of him (Cf. marital issues, 7:1,25; liberty, 8:1; worship, 11:2; spiritual gifts, 12:1; resurrection, 15:1; money, 16:1; Apollos, 16:12).

— This "new" topic is a contrast between the certainty of Christ's coming as set forth in the preceding section, and the uncertainty as to its timing

— Here, Paul uses *peri de* to switch topics from a positive event (the Rapture), that they didn't know much about, to a negative event (the Day of the Lord), that they did know a lot about.

- Of course the first question from the Thessalonians would be when the Rapture will take place, so Paul addresses that question here, relative to the coming judgment that will take place on the entire earth, namely the Tribulation period.

- "...the periods and times" - Paul had already taught them about the "times" (*chronos*, chronological periods) and the major features of those periods ("seasons" *kairos*, a definite period of time) of the future Day of the Lord

— Paul states here that he already taught them what they needed to know, and there was "no need" to know more about the timing of end time events. The Thessalonians were already aware of the chronological events of the Day of the Lord.

— Jesus used this exact phrase when He answered the disciples' question about when He would restore the kingdom (Acts 1:6-7). However, at that time His disciples were not to know the times or seasons. Here, Paul states that he had already taught them about the times and season. The difference can be explained by realizing that at the time of Acts 1 certain prophetic details were yet to be revealed. Paul's writing of 1 Thessalonians some ~17 years later indicates many of these details had been divinely disclosed.

- "...brothers *and sisters*" - see note on 2:17

- "...you have no need of *anything* to be written to you" - when Paul was in Thessalonica during his second missionary journey, he had already instructed them on this issue. He taught them both about the Rapture, and the Day of the Lord that would follow subsequent to the Rapture.

— Paul tells the Thessalonians that they don't need any additional divine information on the topic of the Day of the Lord, because they will not be participating in it.

2 For you yourselves **know full well** that **theday of the Lord** is coming just like **athief in the night**.

2 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.

2 for you yourselves know very well that the Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

- "...know full well" - Paul had previously covered the topic of the Day of the Lord when he planted the church in Thessalonica and remained with them for ~6-12 months, before he was driven out of Thessalonica by the unbelieving Jews.

- "...the day of the Lord" - in the context of 1 Thess, this expression describes what planet earth will experience post-Rapture; specifically used to describe the seven-year Tribulation period (the "night")

— "day" - Hebrew: *yom*, first used in Gen 1:5, to include an evening and a morning. So the Hebrew/Jewish idea of a "day" is darkness first (evening) followed by light (morning).

— After the darkness/night of the Tribulation, the light/morning will be the messianic kingdom

— Sometimes the "Day of the Lord" can have different meanings in different contexts (it's not a technical expression; the meaning is based on the context):

- In the OT, the "Day of the Lord" is analogized to the invasion and exile of the northern kingdom (Amos 5:18)
- In 2 Peter 3:10-11, describing the destruction of the earth after the millennial kingdom, Peter calls that event the "Day of the Lord"

— Paul also mentions "the day of the Lord" again in 2 Thess 2:2, then goes on in v3-12 to describe five things related to the Day of the Lord. All five things relate to the seven-year Tribulation period.

— So the "day of the Lord" begins with the start of the Tribulation period. This is both the OT understanding (Is 2:12-21; 13:9-16; 34:1-8; Joel 1:15-2:11; 28-32; 3:9-12; Amos 5:18-20; Obadiah 15-17; Zeph 1:7-18), as well as Paul's understanding in 2 Thess 2.

— See [Day of the Lord](#) for more background.

- "...a thief in the night" - symbolic of a lack of notification of the events of the Tribulation; these events will come upon the earth like a thief comes upon a house in the middle of the night; unannounced, and the world will be taken off guard

— A prophetic parallel event is Noah's Flood (Matt 24:36-39)

— This is a negative event, so this imagery cannot refer to the Rapture

— This imagery refers to what the world can expect to happen *after* the Rapture takes place

— The idea of a "thief in the night" in relation to the Second Coming of Christ is used 7x (Matt 24:43; Luke 12:39; 1 Thess 5:2,4; 2 Peter 3:10; Rev 3:3; 16:15); see notes on Matt 24:43.

- The metaphor of a thief in the night shows the unbeliever is caught off guard since he never really believes God is actually going to judge in history. The unbeliever thinks he has gotten away with ignoring God all his life, therefore the Lord is a non-factor.
- This metaphor is never used to describe the Rapture. Jesus does not come to the Church like a "thief in the night." The Church is looking for and waiting for the Lord to come.
- A thief breaking into your house at night is not a good/positive thing, it's a bad/negative thing, therefore the NT never uses this metaphor to describe the Rapture
- Previously taught (Matt 24:43-44; Luke 12:39-40) as a regular part of apostolic teaching (2 Peter 3:10; Rev 3:3; 16:15)

3 While **they** are saying, "**Peace and safety!**" then sudden **destruction** will come upon **them like labor pains upon a pregnant woman**, and **they will not escape**.

3 While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.

3 When people say, "There is peace and security," destruction will strike them as suddenly as labor pains come to a pregnant woman, and they will not be able to escape.

3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

- "...they...them...they" - notice the shift in pronouns from "you" referring to the Thessalonian believers (v1-2), to "they" referring to the unbelievers who will be present on earth during the Day of the Lord/Tribulation period

— In the first two verses Paul is addressing the "brethren;" now he says that it is not necessary for him to write to them about the times and seasons, because they will have nothing to do with it—believers will be gone at this time.

— "they" who will claim "peace and safety" are unbelievers

— This is in sharp contrast to the pronouns Paul used to describe the Rapture in 4:13-18: "we" inclusive of himself

— The switch in pronouns from first person to third person is very strong evidence for a pre-Tribulational Rapture

- "...Peace and safety!" - this will be the chorus of the world when they will be completely caught off guard by the beginning of the worldwide Tribulation period. This will be a faux peace because peace does not exist outside of the Prince of Peace.

— The "peace and safety" chorus likely coincides with the covenant (peace treaty) that the Antichrist will sign with Israel (Dan 9:27), which will start the seven-year clock of the Tribulation

— When the Antichrist arrives (at the 1st Seal judgment, Rev 6:1-2), he brings peace to the world. We know this because at the 2nd Seal judgment (Rev 6:3-4), it says that the peace

was taken from the earth. You can't have peace taken from the earth unless it was already there.

— So the Antichrist establishes a "false peace," a pseudo-peace, because it doesn't last. It's temporary. See (8) **A Period of Peace and False Security** in [Pre-Tribulational Events](#).

- If a person rejects the Prince of Peace, they have a void in their life that they will attempt to fill with any cheap substitute that may come along: the right leader, a right supreme court justices, the right Senate, we need to get the debt under control, we need to get inflation under control, we need our guy in the White House...because if we don't have all of these things, we don't have peace.

— If your peace comes from the direction of the world, the strength of the economy, who is in the White House, then you're going to be one miserable person. If you reject the Prince of Peace, then you'll accept any second-rate substitute.

— This is why this world is a sitting duck for the Antichrist (John 5:43). Jesus said that Israel was a sitting duck for the Antichrist because they rejected Him and thus they will settle for any artificial substitute who comes along.

- "...destruction" - not physical annihilation, but rather the eternal separation of the lost from Christ (2 Thess 1:9). Opposite of the salvation awaiting believers (v7-10).

- "...like" - a simile

- "...labor pains upon a pregnant woman" - once labor pains begin, they increase in frequency and intensity, and the process is irreversible

— The moment Israel thinks they have the world figured out and they have their Messiah, is the moment the labor pains begin and accelerate to the point that they can't be reversed

— Jesus used the same analogy in Matt 24:8

- "...will not escape" - *mē ekpheugō*, a double negative, the strongest negation available in the Greek language. It means it's an impossibility.

— No one living on the earth then will be able to escape the turmoil to follow. They can't escape it any more than a pregnant woman can escape the labor pains leading to delivery.

— This argues against a mid-Tribulation or Pre-Wrath Rapture, since no one on earth who is living in "peace and safety" during the first half of the Tribulation will escape the destruction coming in the second half, except those who die.

(B) Application of the Day of the Lord to the believer (5:4-11)

4 But **you, brothers and sisters**, are **not in darkness**, so that **the day** would overtake you like a thief;

4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief;

4 However, brothers, you are not in the darkness, in order that the Day of the Lord might surprise you like a thief.

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

- The Thessalonians were not ignorant ("in darkness") of these events, since Jesus and Paul had revealed them (Cf. 4:13-17)
- "...you, brothers *and sisters*" - change of address again, from the 3rd person (they/them) in v3 back to the 2nd person (you, brothers) in v4; Paul is now describing/addressing believers again
- "...not in darkness" - this doesn't refer to their knowledge about the Day of the Lord (Cf. v2), but rather the fact that they are not currently in the Day of the Lord like they believed they were
- "...the day" - Paul's previous topic: the Day of the Lord, the Tribulation period
- It's the unbelievers who are caught off guard, like a "thief in the night," by that Day, not believers

5 for you are all sons of light and **sons of day**. We are **not of night** nor of darkness;

5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness;

5 For all of you are children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to darkness.

5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

- "...sons of day" - are contrasted with the "children of the day"; not intoxicated by the stimulants of the world—glamour, pleasures, appearances

- "...not of night" - note the rhetorical reversals: light, day vs. night, darkness

— How can believers be included/present during the day of the Lord when we are called by these identifiers, but the entire time period is characterized as darkness?

— The "thief" is going to come in the night, but believers are declared not to belong to the night or the darkness. The implication is clear that believers are in a different time reference, since they belong to the day that precedes the darkness.

[Matt 5:13,16; John 8:12; Eph 5:8,11]

6 so then, let's not **sleep** as others do, but **let's be alert** and sober.

6 so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.

6 Therefore, let's not fall asleep like others do, but let's stay awake and be sober.

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

- Paul describes activities that are done at night (sleep, v6; get drunk, v7), and activities that are done during the daytime (be alert and sober, v6)

- "...sleep" - *katheudō*, refers to spiritual lethargy

— This is a different Greek word from the one translated "asleep" in 4:13,14,15 (*koimao*), which refers to physical death

- The application by way of spiritual analogy is that since we are not children of the night, but rather sons of the light/day (v5), we should not be involved in the activities that happen at night because the night is not for us, it's for the unsaved.
- So we as believers should not be involved in moral sleeping or moral drunkenness, because these are the activities of the people of the night
- "...let's be alert" - opposite of "sleep" (indifference to spiritual realities)
- "watch" - *greyoreo*, to stay awake, to be in constant readiness, to be on the alert
- This is an admonition for all believers to always be watchful for the Lord's return at the Rapture throughout the Church Age. It is not an admonition to be watchful for the Antichrist (as post-Tribulationists believe).
- Believers are to remain alert and "sober" (self-possessed), not asleep (insensitive) to the things that God has revealed "like others do" (Cf. Matt 24:42; 25:13; Mark 13:35; Luke 21:34)
- This is a moral exhortation that goes beyond just simple mental alertness
- All true prophetic teaching has an application. The imminence of His return is an impelling motive to be living for Him every day.
- The object of our "watchfulness" is the return of Christ for the Church, the Rapture. If the Church must pass through the Tribulation before the Rapture, it is useless to watch for Christ daily. If that were the case, we would be instructed to look for the Antichrist. However, we're never instructed to be "watching" for the Antichrist, as post-Tribulationists believe. See [Doctrine of Imminency](#).

Watch

"Watch" is a common term used within the contexts of Second Coming passages, with the same Greek word. However, in those passages the object is different (Matt 24:42-43; 25:13; Mark 13:33-35,37; Luke 21:36). The context demands that these watching passages relate immediately to events occurring in the Tribulation. Thus, these Tribulation events are leading up to the Second Coming of Christ, not the Rapture.

Imminence

Jesus' imminent return demands morally and spiritually wakeful activity, being on the alert against the assaults of sin and unrighteousness (Matt 24:43-44; Mark 13:33-36; Luke 12:37). His return is one of the chief objects of Christian watchfulness (1 Cor 1:7; Titus 2:13; Heb 9:28; 2 Peter 3:12).

7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who are drunk, get drunk at night.

7 For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night.

7 For people who go to sleep, go to sleep at night; and people who get drunk, get drunk at night.

7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

- Illustrates behavior consistent with their position. When we follow the world system, the normal cycle of things, we're doing what unbelievers do, but that isn't who we are as believers; that is not our character (Cf. 1 Peter 4:3).

— We as believers are not to act like the "children of the night"

— Our position in Christ requires watchful preparation in view of the future

8 But since we are of *the* day, let's be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, **the hope of salvation**.

8 But since we are of *the* day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

8 But since we belong to the day, let's be sober. We must put on the breastplate of faith and love, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

- 3rd application: armor-up; the time of darkness hasn't started yet, but it's coming, so be ready

— As soldiers engaged in spiritual warfare, we need to protect our vital parts ("put on the breastplate") with trust in God and love of others

— We also need to protect our thinking from attack (with "a helmet"), by keeping our sure hope of our deliverance through Christ in our minds

— This is much of what Paul later talks about in Eph 6:11ff, which he hadn't even written yet

— The world that we're living in is currently being setup for this time of darkness; we're living in hostile territory, so we need protection. We're not on offense in this world, we're on defense.

— This is why Paul calls believers today "ambassadors," someone who represents the values of their home country in a foreign country (i.e. represent American values in Iran).

The ambassador's goal is not to convert Iran into America, it's to represent the principles of "light" and the principles of the kingdom in a world that does not have the kingdom yet.

— Not only does this world not yet have the kingdom, but they are about to be plunged into a time of darkness and Tribulation that the world to this point has never seen, and there is no way of escape.

— We have this rare moment of time before this happens to represent godly values in the devil's world, so we need to armor-up

- "...the hope of salvation" - better translated "deliverance" or "rescue"; an allusion to the Rapture; it is the full realization of our salvation in the future (our glorification). Spiritual

salvation is not in view.

9 For God has **notdestinedus** for **wrath**, **but** for **obtainingsalvation** through our Lord Jesus Christ,

9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

9 For God has not destined us to receive wrath but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus, the Messiah,

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

- "...not" - emphatic by position

- "...destined" - *tithēmi*, placed, appointed; God's will and perfect plan does not include His wrath being poured out on believers

- "...us" - Paul includes himself, referring to believers

- "...wrath" - *orgē*, the origin of many sexually-explicit words in English, but the basic meaning is "passion without limits"; it is speaking of God's emotions when He's had enough of this sinful world, humanity has exceeded its limits, and God releases His rage full vent on planet earth

- Paul says here that believers, himself included, are not candidates for this full vent of God's wrath on the earth

- The context here is The Day of the Lord, so "wrath" refers to God's wrath during the Tribulation, not eternal wrath in Hell

- As in 1:10, wrath is used in its eschatological sense; in contrast to eternal wrath, which is the context of John 3:36

- Day of the Lord = Day of Wrath (Cf. Is 13:9-11; Zeph 1:14-16 vs. Rev 6:12-14)

- We need to be able to differentiate between God's wrath and divine discipline (Heb 12:5-13). Discipline is corrective; it's done from a place of love. Wrath is the time period where God is directly introducing divine judgment.

- If believers are exempt from undergoing God's wrath, then that exemption must take place prior to the beginning of the time period that will contain God's wrath (the Tribulation). Paul explained the mechanics of this removal in 4:13-18.

- Once the church has been removed from the earth via the Rapture, the world then becomes a candidate for God's wrath

- "...but" - *alla*, instead, rather; in the form of an objection; in contrast

- The believer is not appointed to wrath and salvation (as post-Tribulationists believe). The text states "not one, but instead the other."

- Instead of eschatological wrath, God has appointed/destined believers to salvation through Christ

- "...obtaining" - *peripoiasin*, to make an encirclement; to bring about, make secure, preserve; "keeping safe"
- "...salvation" - *sotarias*, deliverance [from God's wrath] and referring to our glorification (Cf. Rom 8:30; 13:11). Paul is not referring to spiritual salvation, *per se*; he is arguing that present-day saints are now, presently, placed into a safe-mode, and will be no means go into the period the tempest of God's wrath and anger.

Three Reasons Believers Will Not Be in the Tribulation

1. We are not appointed to wrath (v9)
 - Promised exemption: 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9; Rom 5:9; 8:1; Rev 3:10
 - Tribulation = divine wrath/anger: Rev 6:16-17; 11:18; 14:10; 15:1,7; 16:1,19; 19:15
2. We are exempted from wrath whether morally asleep or awake (v10)
3. Promises of comfort (v11)
 - John 14:1: "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.
 - 1 Thess 4:18: Therefore, comfort one another with these words.
 - Titus 2:13: looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus

Believers Not Appointed to God's Wrath

John 3:36: He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Rom 1:18: For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

Rom 2:5: But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God

Rom 5:9: Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

1 Thess 1:10: and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thess 5:9: For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The reason believers are not destined for God's wrath is because Christ died for us, and completed the work of taking God's wrath upon Himself (propitiation). Jesus final words on the Cross were, **It is finished**. He didn't say that He did most of it, and we need to kick in the rest. He didn't pay for dinner then have us leave the tip. It completed the work required to satisfy God's wrath against sin, as a substitute in our place. We aren't asked to "pay,

pray and obey" to finish out our salvation. Religion tells us that, Roman Catholicism tells us that, but that's not what the Bible says. We receive it as a gift, the wrath of God has been absorbed in our place, so we are not destined to wrath.

People don't understand the severity of God's wrath during the Tribulation period. Combine Seal 2 and Trumpet 5/6, and 50% of the world's population will be killed. 50%! And Jesus is the cause of these judgments because He is in heaven opening the seven-sealed scroll. Paul, as he rehearses these events, says that believers are not going into that period of time because that would put the blood-bought bride under the judgments of Jesus Christ Himself. If that would happen in any sense, then the substitutionary atonement of Jesus, where He died in our place, is a falsehood.

10 who **died for us**, so that whether we are **awake** or **asleep**, we will live together with Him.

10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.

10 who died for us in order that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.

10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

- "...died for us" - this is why believers are exempted from God's wrath...because 2000 years ago, Jesus died for us, absorbing in His own body the wrath of God against sin

— Jesus, in effect, went through the Great Tribulation in place of believers, leaving us free from God's wrath

— If you put Christians in the wrath of God (Tribulation), what you're saying is that the atoning work of Jesus was not enough. It did not sufficiently atone for my sin, and thus I need to absorb some level of punishment for it because Jesus' sacrifice in my place did not fully propitiate the wrath of God.

— Because Jesus' death fully satisfied God's wrath toward sin, for those who accept His sacrifice, God no longer deals with us out of anger because His anger has been fully satisfied. This is one of the most difficult things for Christians today to get into their minds...God does not have a grudge against me, and does not deal with me out of anger.

— I may go through trials or discipline, but those are temporary and for either my correction or my perfection

- "...awake" - spiritually and morally active; moving forward in our progressive sanctification. It refers to a Christian who is actively walking with the Lord.

- "...asleep" - *katheudō*, from the same root as "sleep" in v6, which refers to spiritual lethargy

— This is a different Greek word from the one translated "asleep" in 4:13,14,15 (*koimao*), which refers to physical death

- "Asleep" referring to death fits the context of 4:13-18, but 5:1 begins with *peri de* ("Now concerning") which indicates a change in topic. Then in 5:6, Paul uses "sleep" to refer to a Christian's moral posture (a backslidden Christian).
- So "asleep" in v10 refers to a Christian's moral condition, their progressive sanctification (Cf. Demas, 2 Tim 4:10). A Christian who is "backslidden," not walking with the Lord. They have instead fallen in love with the world.
- This verse directly refutes the belief in a Partial Rapture, which is the idea that if you are a Christian but are not walking with the Lord, if you've backslidden a little, or a lot, then you won't be taken in the Rapture, but instead will go through the Tribulation period.
- The purpose of a backslidden Christian going into the Tribulation is to "straighten them out." And as that person is "straightened out" during the Tribulation, then one-by-one, when God thinks they are straightened out enough, they are raptured.
- One of the key verses for Partial Rapturism is Rev 3:20, where Jesus is standing outside the door of the Laodicean church, knocking and trying to get inside. They also take the Parable of the 10 Virgins in Matt 25 and apply it to the Church (instead of Israel), and teach that the five foolish virgins
- That the significance of Christ's death is not discussed in the Thessalonian epistles demonstrates that this doctrine (vs. Galatians) was not questioned at Thessalonica
- This was at the heart of apostolic preaching at Corinth at the very time this epistle was being written (1 Cor 2:1-2; 1:17-18; 15:1-3)

Ray Brubaker


"The Purpose of the Tribulation," Radar News, (December 1968): 6.

"Finally, we should note that the purpose of the tribulation is also to be **the testing of lukewarm shallow Laodicean Christians who will be left behind at the coming of Christ.** No doubt multitudes who expect to be raptured will be disappointed because like the foolish virgins, they were not watchful. **Tribulation is then for the purpose of trying the faith of those who profess to be Christians but who really never repented or are living in disobedience to the will of God.**"



Brubaker, who has since gone to be with the Lord, was a big Partial Rapture advocate.

The purpose of the Tribulation, contrary to what Brubaker says here, is: (1) to bring Israel to the point where they recognize Jesus as their Messiah, and (2) reign down judgment on the unsaved world.



G.N.H. Peters
Theocratic Kingdom, 2:332

“It is not simply those who ‘watch’ that shall ‘escape,’ but those, Luke 21:36 who ‘watch and pray always,’ avoiding the corrupting influences around them. The number of translated ones may not be very large (for the number of translated ones given as...types in comparison with the number of those not translated, and with that of the resurrected saints is small so that Dr. Seiss, with whom many concur, is undoubtedly correct in saying: **‘I have no idea that a very large portion of mankind, or even of the professing Church, will be thus taken.** The first translation, if I may so speak, will embrace **only the select few who watch and pray always,**’ etc.””

Unfortunately, G.N.H. Peters, who does a fantastic job in his three volume set commentary on Revelation and the kingdom, is also an advocate of the Partial Rapture theory.

Luke 21:36 has nothing to do with the Church; in this passage, Jesus is talking about the Jews during the Tribulation period

The "first translation" is the "initial" rapture in Peter's mind, which will be followed with numerous "mini-raptures" as Christians begin to get their act together

Problems with Partial Rapturism

(1) Every divine blessing is given on the basis of His grace, not on human effort (Eph 2:8-9; Rom 12:6)

- We did not receive God's "grace package" at the point of faith on the basis of probation. If God's grace was given on the basis of my actions or behavior, it's wouldn't be grace (*unmerited* favor). This is not how God's promises were given to us.

(2) Symbolic parallels mandate that carnal as well as sanctified Christians will be taken up in the Rapture (Gen 19:22)

- Look at Lot...if 2 Peter 2 was not in the Bible, where Peter says 3x that Lot was "righteous" we would have no idea that Lot was saved based on his actions/behavior
- (3) The promise of the rapture is mentioned in Paul's letter to the carnal Corinthian church (1 Cor 15:51)
- Paul tells the most carnal church that we have record of (in Corinth) that "all" of them will be included in the Rapture (1 Cor 15:51)
- (4) A partial rapture would sever Christ's body (1 Cor 12:12-14)
- A partial rapture does injustice to the "body of Christ" metaphor that Paul uses over and over again to describe the church. So you mean the ankle will be raptured, but the foot will not?
- (5) The partial rapture view subjects believers to God's wrath (1 Thess 1:10)
- Partial rapturism violates God's promise that believers are not subject to God's wrath
 - The verses cited that exempt believers from God's wrath do not have caveats attached
- (6) Partial rapturism makes the Bema Seat Judgment unnecessary (1 Cor 3:10-15)
- The Bema Seat judgment is where God deals with carnal Christians, not beforehand at the time of the Rapture. He doesn't deal with carnal Christians out of anger, but with a lack of reward.
 - If partial rapturism is true, sanctified Christians go in the initial rapture, then as the remaining carnal believers become sanctified, they are raptured ad hoc. So if everyone who ends up in heaven is sanctified, there's no need for the Bema Seat judgment of rewards.
- (7) Partial rapturists never objectively quantify the exact degree of faithfulness or spiritual maturity that is necessary to participate in the rapture
- You have to live a holy life? Well, how holy? The Bible, nor those who believe in Partial Rapture, never quantifies how holy a person must be to be included in the initial rapture.
- (8) Partial rapturists appear individually biased
- Those who believe in a partial rapture always include themselves as qualified to be included in the first ride out
- (9) Partial rapturists dispensationally misapply Bible passages
- Partial rapturists apply passages related to Israel, to the Church (Matt 25:1-13; Luke 21:36)
- (10) Partial rapturists misapply passages promising a reward to faithful believers
- Rev 3:11 urges believers to not allow anyone to take their crown (reward); they interpret this as missing the rapture

11 **Therefore, encourage** one another and **build** one another up, just as you also are doing.

11 Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

11 So then, encourage one another and build each other up, as you are doing.

11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

- "Therefore" - in Paul's epistles, "therefore" indicates that he is now moving into how to apply what he has just disclosed/taught (Cf. Rom 12:1; Gal 5:1; Eph 4:1). A total of 22 commandments follow (Cf. John 14:15).

— When Paul completes his teaching on topics of this nature, he always instructs us to use this teaching for the encouragement and building up of other believers (Cf. 4:18)

— If our minds are propelled into fear or anxiety from these things, then you need to re-study these things because they were not meant to instill fear in the hearts of believers, but instead designed to instill comfort and encouragement.

— Which Rapture view provides the believer with the most comfort?

- "...encourage" - the doctrine of the Rapture is to be a comfort and an encouragement to believers (Cf. John 14:1; 1 Thess 4:18; Titus 2:13)

— One of the blessings of the pre-Tribulational Rapture view is that we aren't looking for the Antichrist, we're looking for Jesus Christ

— All of the other Rapture views take the focus off the coming of Christ, and put it onto the Antichrist. James 5:8-9 says that we are to be patient, the coming of the Lord is near. In fact, the Judge is standing right at the door.

- "...build" - *oikodomeō*, the same Greek word used in Matt 16:18 where Jesus said "I will build" My church

— Our words should be encouraging, not tearing down, but used to build people up (Cf. Eph 4:29; Prov 18:21). This is the ultimate purpose of every spiritual gift...to edify, build up and encourage the body of Christ (Cf. 1 Cor 12:7; 14:3,12,26; 1 Peter 4:10).

(4) Church life (5:12-15)

(A) Attitude toward leaders (5:12-13)

12 But we ask you, brothers *and sisters*, to **recognize** those who **diligently labor among you** and **are in leadership over you in the Lord**, and **give you instruction**,

12 But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction,

12 Brothers, we ask you to show your appreciation for those who work among you, set an example for you in the Lord, and instruct you.

12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

- Paul now changes topics and begins to exhort the Thessalonian believers (and us) on how to behave toward leadership in the local church

- "...recognize" - appreciate; not grudging submission, but recognizing that God has placed that person in a position of authority
- "...diligently" - while God expects believers to appreciate and honor those in authority in the local church, He does not expect blind submission. God gives strict instructions to those placed in authority.
 - The first instruction given here is that those in authority are to be diligent in their labors. A true spiritual leader is one who is spiritually consistent
- "...labor among you" - ministry is hard work (Cf. 1 Tim 5:17)
 - The ministry is a great hiding place for lazy people. If you're a lazy person, you can actually hide in ministry for a long time before anyone figures it out.
 - This is not the type of leader that people want to submit to; people want to submit to a person who is working hard, diligently, at preaching and teaching God's Word (2 Tim 2:15).
- "...are in leadership over you in the Lord" - the person who people want to submit to are ones who didn't just get hired on or voted in, but whom people believe the Lord Himself put there
- "...give you instruction" - a spiritual leader is called, in some form or substance, to be a teacher of the Word of God (Cf. 5:27; 1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 4:2)

13 and that you **regard them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.**

13 and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.

13 Hold them in the highest regard, loving them because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

- "...regard them" - hold them in high regard; esteem them
- "...very highly" - don't just regard/esteem them highly, but *very* highly
 - Treat them in the same way that the Lord has treated you
 - Lack of respect for spiritual leadership in the church is the main cause of church fights and splits
 - Leaders can never do their best work when they are subject to carping criticism from those who should be their followers
- "...in love" - love them unconditionally, not until you disagree with them in some minor point
 - These are all attitudinal aspects of being a vibrant church member. We have to guard ourselves against a critical spirit. Some people think their spiritual gift is criticism, but believers are not called to be hyper-critical, especially of the church.

— We're called to find a church that is generally moving in the right direction in terms of progressive sanctification; we're called to love leadership that is generally moving in that direction, and not just to esteem them, but to esteem them highly (Cf. Heb 13:17).

- "...because of their work" - when you find a shepherd who is faithful among the sheep, you should respect that person because it's not their work, it's God's work

- "...Live in peace with one another" - speaking of the shepherd/sheep relationship, since that is the context

— If you highly esteem God-ordained leaders, and leaders are doing what God has called them to do, then there should not be hostility between shepherds and sheep, but harmony/peace.

(B) Ministry to one another (5:14-15)

14 We **urge** you, **brothers and sisters**, **admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.**

14 We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

14 We urge you, brothers, to admonish those who are idle, cheer up those who are discouraged, and help those who are weak. Be patient with everyone.

14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

- "...urge" - not a passing suggestion, but a strong exhortation

- "...brothers and sisters" - see notes on 2:17; to a large extent, he is speaking to church leadership here (pastors, elders, etc.)

- "...admonish the unruly" - there are people within the body of Christ who are wayward, who may teach strange doctrine

— "unruly" - a military term denoting one who was neglecting duties, falling into careless habits; idle

— Those who neglect their daily duties need to be stirred up to action

— Sheep have teeth, and sometimes they fight amongst themselves. Part of the work of a pastor/shepherd or elder is to resolve those disputes Cf. 1 Tim 1:3-4).

— Another job of church leadership (pastors & elders) is to monitor and refute those who contradict sound doctrine. Much of this type of teaching comes into the church through men's/women's ministry and small groups, where the leader is pushing a doctrine or teacher that doesn't line up exactly with church beliefs or sound doctrine.

- "...encourage the fainthearted" - part of ministry is coming alongside those who are having difficulties helping themselves, the timid, fainthearted, the "small souled"

— Those who tend to become discouraged, despondent, worried, or sad more easily

— They are having problems and can't help themselves in terms of Bible understanding, or they may have some physical or economic limitation (Cf. Matt 9:36)

- "...help the weak" - these people are in constant need of provision, constant need of protection, constant need of guidance

— Those who need cheering up, encouragement to press on, or extra help. It includes those who have not yet learned to lean on the Lord for their needs as they should—the spiritually weak—require special support

- "...be patient with everyone" - because Paul knew that in the ministry, it was easy to lose patience with the constant needs of people, he adds in the need that leaders are to be patient with everyone

— When Paul says everyone, he's really referring to the people we don't like, who irritate us, who bother us, who seem good-for-nothing, or who disagree with you. It's easy to be patient with those we like or those who agree with us...but these are not the people that Paul is referring to here.

— Even unbelievers are patient with those who agree with them or are on their side in something. Even they are patient with people whom they like.

15 See that **no one repays another with evil for evil**, but **always seek what is good** for one another and **for all people**.

15 See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.

15 Make sure that no one pays back evil for evil. Instead, always pursue what is good for each other and for everyone else.

15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

- "...no one repays another with evil for evil" - the spiritual life is not summed up by, Don't get mad, get even

— Paul has a great treatment of revenge/vengeance in Rom 12:19-21...

— We are to leave room for the vengeance of God, and instead treat the person who offended us as a neighbor or loved one

— Spiritual growth is when I take my expertise at looking out for myself and begin to transfer that same care to those around me, especially those who have paid me evil (Cf. Phil 2:3-4)

— Jesus did not spend His life looking out for Number 1...that's what the rest of Phil 2 talks about...how He left heaven and set aside His glory because of His tremendous love for us. The only reason He did this is because He had my interest in mind rather than His own.

— Many churches have gotten into this idea that we really just need to love ourselves, but the fact of the matter is that everyone loves themselves, even when they don't think they do.

Loving ourself comes naturally, we do not need to work hard at loving ourselves.

- "...always seek what is good " - rather than repaying evil for evil, we should do positive (good) to all others (Cf. Prov 25:21; Matt 5:38-42,44-48; Luke 6:27-36; Rom 12:17-21; 1 Peter 2:19-23; 3:9)

— A Christian's life consists of doing good and suffering evil

— Not retaliating for personal wrongs is perhaps the best evidence of personal Christian maturity

- "...for all people" - this command is given to believers to perform on unbelievers, or those believers who are disagreeable to us; it applies to everyone (Cf. Gal 6:10)

(5) Holy living (5:16-24)

(A) Positive commands: what to do (5:16-18)

(a) Rejoice always (5:16)

16 Rejoice always,

16 Rejoice always;

16 Always be joyful.

16 Rejoice evermore.

- The shortest verse in the Bible: Two short words in Greek [John 11:35 contains three longer words in Greek!]

- "Rejoice" - one of about 70 NT commands to "Rejoice" (Phil 4:4)

— Rejoicing is a volitional choice, and is extremely important for Christians. We can always rejoice if we remember what God has given us in Christ.

— From the human perspective, anything that impinges on our convenience or our comfort, we have a tendency to look at such an item as an unwanted intruder

— It's easy to rejoice when we're promoted at work and get a pay raise, but it's not so easy to rejoice when we get demoted and our pay is cut, or we get laid off and have no pay at all

— Whether our circumstances are viewed favorably or unfavorably, God has allowed those circumstances into our life for our growth

— God's ultimate goal is not to make us rich and famous, and not to make us poor and miserable, but it is to produce in us Christ-like character. Thus, every single thing we face we can rejoice in because God has sovereignly brought it into my life to produce Christ-like character.

— Rejoicing = living in the will of God; trusting the Lord vs. sin of murmuring

— Christian depression denotes a lack of trust in God's power, providence, and forgiveness (1 Cor 15:3-5; Phil 2:6-11; 1 Tim 3:16; Rev 4:8,11; 15:3-4)

- "...always" - *pantote*, it's not the command to rejoice that is so difficult, it's the "always" part that is difficult

— This was a favorite word of Paul—6x in this epistle; 27x in Paul's letters; 15x in rest of NT

— The paradox of joy amid suffering (2 Cor 6:10; Rom 8:18; 2 Cor 4:16-18; 2 Cor 12:10; Col 1:24)

(b) Pray without ceasing (5:17)

17 **pray without ceasing,**

17 pray without ceasing;

17 Continually be prayerful.

17 Pray without ceasing.

- "pray" - maintaining times of prayer (Daniel: 3x/day)

— Note Paul's constantly interjected prayers in this and other epistles

— Paul wanted believers to be people of prayer. He devoted himself to prayer as a fundamental activity in his life (Cf. 1:2b; 2 Thess 1:11; Rom 1:10; Col 1:3,9). Several of his epistles instruct readers to devote themselves to prayer (Cf. 5:25; 2 Thess 3:1; Rom 12:12; Phil 4:6; Col 4:2-3).

- "...without ceasing" - *adialeptōs*, this adverb ("unceasing") is an interesting word: it's used in extra-biblical literature to describe a hacking cough that won't go away

— Paul uses this word to describe prayer...just as you chronically cough, chronically pray

— Prayer to the Christian should be as natural as breathing (Cf. Eph 6:18). Breathing is not something we sit down and think about doing...we're breathing without even giving thought to the fact that we're breathing; we do it automatically.

— Paul is not saying to pray without interruption, he saying to pray whenever possible, maintaining communication with God as much as possible throughout daily life

— Paul is urging a consistency in our prayer life

We could rejoice more if we prayed more.

(c) Give thanks in everything (5:18)

18 **in everything** give thanks; for **this is the will of God for you** in Christ Jesus.

18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

18 In everything be thankful, because this is God's will for you in the Messiah Jesus.

18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

- Developing an attitude of gratitude in everything is a sign of a maturing Christian

- "in everything" - not just when I'm on the mountain top, not just when things are going great, not just when I get the promotion or new job (Cf. Eph 5:20)

— There is no simpler recipe for a happy Christian experience (Job 1:21; 2:10). Not just when you feel like it. This may have to be a contrary-to-feeling choice.

— In every circumstance of life, no matter where God puts you and no matter what your difficulties are, in those circumstances you can thank God for all He has done for you.

- "...this is the will of God for you" - you want to know what God's will is for your life? It's to be thankful in *all* things.

— This is the second specific mention of God's will in this epistle. In 4:3, God's will is our sanctification, specifically that we flee sexual immorality.

— So if you're wondering what God's will is for your life, what city you should live in, what job you should take, what career path you should go down, if you're not being faithful in what God has revealed as His will (fleeing sexual immorality and being thankful in all things), then God will begin to move in your life because He can trust you with His revealed will (the little things). He will begin to trust you with the bigger things; your life will begin to move in more of a God-ordained direction.

(B) Negative commands: what not to do (5:19-22)

(a) Do not quench the Spirit (5:19)

19 Do not **quench** the Spirit,

19 Do not quench the Spirit;

19 Do not put out the Spirit's fire.

19 Quench not the Spirit.

- "...quench" - *sbennymi*, to extinguish; to put out a fire; to suppress or stifle

— To "quench" the Spirit means to ignore His teaching and influence in our lives, or His promptings in our heart when He attempts to lead us

— It is to extinguish or "put out" the Spirit's fire. It is essentially saying "No" to the leading or prompting of the Holy Spirit; it is hindering the Spirit's work in and through a believer.

— The image is of water thrown on a fire (Cf. Mark 9:48; Heb 11:34)

— Our proper response is to follow the Spirit's direction and control without resistance (v18; Cf. Gal 5:16,25)

- However a believer can affect the effectiveness of the indwelling Holy Spirit through resisting the Spirit (Acts 7:51), grieving the Spirit (Eph 4:30), and quenching the Spirit (1 Thess 5:19)

— When we sin as a believer, the indwelling Holy Spirit is involved in that sin (Cf. 1 Cor 6:19), and He begins to grieve or be saddened or frustrated

— If I as a believe have the ability to grieve the Holy Spirit or quench the Holy Spirit, I have the ability to remain a babe/infant/immature believer in Christ

- Quenching the Holy Spirit in no way, shape, or form, has anything to do with the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (see notes in Matt 12)

— The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is a sin that cannot be committed today...it was a sin that was committed by unsaved Israel in the first century, with lasting effects. There is no command in the epistles for believers to not blasphemy the Holy Spirit.

(b) Do not despise prophetic utterances (5:20-21)

20 do not utterly reject prophecies,

20 do not despise prophetic utterances.

20 Do not despise prophecies.

20 Despise not prophesyings.

- Not despising prophecies means to recognize, not discount or ignore, the messages of God when His servants speak (1 Cor 14:3)

— This was evidently one way the Thessalonians were quenching the Spirit. It appears that some in Thessalonica frowned on any manifestation of the Spirit that was at all out of the ordinary, specifically the gift of prophecy, which would in turn quench the Spirit.

— Paul earlier warned against regarding these words from God as though they were only words from men. However, he also counseled his readers to "test" (examine) these utterances (v21).

— They would "test" these prophetic utterances by comparing what the speaker said with the standard of previously given divine revelation (Cf. Deut 13:1-5; 18:20; 1 John 4:1-3)

- This epistle was written early, well before the NT canon was completed

— During this time, until the completion of the NT canon, God was guiding the church through prophetic utterances (from God, to a prophet/apostle, to the church)

— Once John finished writing Revelation and the NT canon was complete, the Church Age believer has all of the information and insight they need to be equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17). This meant that the sporadic prophecies that God used in the first century are no longer necessary (Cf. Jude 3; Rev 22:18-19).

— Now that the canon of Scripture is complete, the "prophecies" described here are not sporadic utterances from God, given to prophets, then to the church...they are included in the completed canon of Scripture.

- How do we violate this command today?

- Anytime a church takes human wisdom (psychology, origins, etc.) and mixes it with the Bible, you despise a prophetic utterance
- Anytime something that is not biblical (community softball) is more important than church, you have despised a prophetic utterance
- Anytime the Word of God is being taught with authority and clarity and your mind is elsewhere, you have despised a prophetic utterance
- Anytime the Bible sits on your coffee table or your bookshelf as an ornament, and you're not actively spending time in it, you are despising a prophetic utterance
- Anytime your calendar/life is so crowded with peripheral things that it crowds out the Word of God, prayer, and fellowship with believers, you are despising a prophetic utterance

- Anytime a church does not teach God's Word with authority and power, and gives the congregation three points and a poem, that church is despising prophetic utterance

21 but examine everything; hold firmly to that which is good,

21 But examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good;

21 Instead, test everything. Hold on to what is good.

21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

- God has consistently, throughout Scripture, instructed His people to examine or test what they hear and compare it to the revealed Word of God to determine its truthfulness (Cf.

Deut 13:1-5; Acts 17:11; 1 Cor 14:29; 1 John 4:1; Rev 2:2)

— Many churches today, particularly in the charismatic movement, look to experiences or miracles as the basis for determining truth rather than the Word of God

— The problem with this is that experiences are not always wrought/originated by God.

There are a number of miracles that are documented in the Bible that God had nothing to do with (see Satanic/Demonic Miracles in Scripture).

— We are not to believe something just because someone in authority or someone we trust says it is true. We must screen everything through the grid of God's Word to see if it lines up.

— If the Bereans were smart enough to screen everything the Apostle Paul, who wrote one-third of the NT, said to them (Acts 17:11), then we must do the same thing with what we hear from pastors, teachers, ministry organizations, etc. before we "hold firmly" to it. If they did it with Paul, how much more do we need to be careful and do the same thing today.

— You can't figure out truth based on the size of the church, or the size of someone's online following because Satan can create big churches and create big followings online.

— This underlines the importance of knowing and understanding Scripture...if we don't know and understand Scripture, and if we're not growing in our knowledge daily, we're a sitting duck for a false teacher or false doctrine.

— If we blindly accept everything we see and hear, and are not testing the spirits against God's Word to see if they are from God, we are falling short of God's standard for your life and you cannot grow in the middle tense of your salvation

(c) Abstain from all evil (5:22)

22 abstain from every form of evil.

22 abstain from every form of evil.

22 Keep away from every kind of evil.

22 Abstain from **all appearance** of evil.

- "...all appearance" [KJV] - some translations (KJV/NKJV) say to abstain from "all appearance" of evil, however this is a misleading translation
- *This verse does not subject Christians to abstain from every interpretation of evil as given by others; rather it is calling believers to abstain from what is actually evil.*
- [Constable]
- People use this verse, and overall inaccurate Bible interpretation, as a billy club of legalism against other Christians as a means to control them. This verse does not say that a believer must submit to every single legalistic interpretation of what is or is not evil. It's a call for Christians to abstain from things that are actually, in reality, evil.

(C) Divine enablement for holy living (5:23-24)

23 Now may the **God of peace** Himself **sanctify** you **entirely**; and may your **spirit** and **soul** and **body** be kept complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

23 May the God of peace himself make you holy in every way. And may your whole being—spirit, soul, and body—remain blameless when our Lord Jesus, the Messiah, appears.

23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- "...God of peace" - *eirēnē*, we have peace with God in two ways:

(1) Positional peace - the war between me and God was called off (cease fire) the moment I put my faith in Christ (Cf. Rom 5:1,10; 8:7-8; Eph 2:1-3)

(2) Practical peace - the peace that Jesus described in the Upper Room, which is not the peace that the world gives (John 14:27). This peace cannot be given by the world, only by God Himself, because it is not based on our circumstances. It's not based on whether or not we got that new job, promotion, positive report from the doctor, etc.

- How do we know if we have this peace? John 14:27 says, Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. If we are troubled or fearful in our circumstances, we are not exercising the peace that God gives us. In this case, we're living beneath our privileges in Christ.
- God doesn't just want us to just have positional peace, which is unchangeable, but He wants us to walk through life's circumstances with internal peace. If we're not walking with internal peace, regardless of our circumstances, we're walking beneath our privileges.
- The world is searching for this peace in many different ways/places: alcohol, drugs, sex, materialism, pornography, partying, money, career, and many other places. But they'll never be able to attain it because it is only available in God.

- We will know that we're walking in practical peace when fear and internal anxiety is starting to take less and less of a role in your life (Phil 4:6-7).
- "...sanctify" - speaking of the middle tense of our salvation
- "...entirely" - it's not God's goal to get us to grow into 95% of what He wants for us, while we hold onto a small pocket of disobedience
 - God wants us to grow up in Him "entirely" meaning He wants me to grow up in every area in which I can possibly grow. He wants my thought life to mature, He wants the conversations that I have to mature, He wants my emotions to mature, He wants me to grow up in the manner in which I speak and communicate with others.
 - As a parent, your desire is that your children grow up and mature "entirely" (in every area of life)...that includes physically, emotionally, spiritually, vocationally, socially. As a parent, when you want your children to mature into functional human beings, you don't leave any area of maturity off the table. You want them to mature in every area of their life where they have the capacity to mature.
 - This is how God looks at us...as His children, He desires that we grow up/mature in every area of our lives, not just in some areas
- "...spirit" - *pneuma*, the part of our being by which we relate to God; it is the basic component of people that allows them to relate to God
 - In John 4:23-24 Jesus said that God is meant to be worshiped in spirit and in truth. We worship Him in truth because He is truth, He embodies what truth is. There is no truth outside of Him. And we worship Him in spirit because that is the part of us that relates to God. See notes on Gen 2:17.
- "...soul" - *psychē*, qualities about a person that you can't see visually: conscience, emotions, intellect, will, personality
 - The part of our being that is "soulish" (our soul) is the part of us that will live forever (Cf. Eccl 3:11)
- "...body" - *sōma*, relate to the physical world; our physical body and the qualities that you can see visibly: appearance, hair color, height, size, gender, etc.
 - It's also the part of our being that can see, feel, touch, taste, smell, hear, etc.
- What is outlined in this verse is the "trichotomous" view of man, that man is made up of three separate components, body, soul and spirit. This verse, along with Heb 4:12, are strong verses in favor of the trichotomous view of man.
 - However, as you read and study other passages (compare John 12:27 with 13:21), you start to see an overlap between the soul (*psychē*) and the spirit (*pneuma*). They start to become synonyms of each other, indicating that there is a material/physical part of man and a spiritual/non-physical/invisible part of man. So when you're talking about mankind, you have to see them in two parts: the exterior/physical body, and the internal soul/spirit.

- When God gave the command to Adam (Eve wasn't created yet) to not eat of the Tree of Life, God told Adam that if he did that, he would die. But after Adam sinned, he lived until the age of 930 years, so he didn't die right away. However, the physical aging process began, which led to his death, and he actually died that very day a spiritual sense.

— Death in the Bible means separation, and the very moment Adam sinned, he was separated from God. His "spirit" (the part of man that relates to God), died. He was alienated, separated from God. He didn't even seek God anymore...God had to seek after him. Adam died at a spiritual level because the life of God in him disappeared.

— When Paul talks about "the natural man" in 1 Cor 2:14, he's referring to someone who is alive at the body (*sōma*) level, alive at the soul (*psychē*) level, but dead (separated from God) at the spirit (*pneuma*) level. He goes on to say that this "natural man" cannot accept/understand the things of God. That is because the *pneuma*, the part of our being that relates to God, is dead.

— The "natural man" doesn't have much of an ability to understand the things of God. The Bible is a mystery to them. But once that person places their trust in Christ, their spirit becomes alive, along with their body and soul, and suddenly they begin to understand the things of God. Reading the Bible after you're saved is much different than reading the Bible before you're saved. After you're saved, you now have the Author of Scripture indwelling you, through the ministry of illumination.

- When Jesus told Nicodemus that he needed to be "born again," He was telling him that he needed a new birth of his "spirit" because it was dead due to sin. He needed the Holy Spirit to regenerate his spirit so that he could then relate to God.

- "...be kept complete" - Paul's description of the growth of the Christian

- "...without blame" - doesn't mean our sins are not forgiven; what Paul is doing here is opening the door that even though our sins are forgiven, there is still a judgment in our future and he wants his readers to have a favorable ruling at that judgment

— This judgment is the Bema Seat judgment of Christ, which is a judgment not of heaven or hell, but of reward for the works that we have done after putting our faith in Christ

— The rewards that believers will receive after our works are passed through the fire, are capacities to glorify God throughout eternity. Those who are rewarded well will have a greater capacity to glorify God than those who are less rewarded, or not rewarded at all.

— There are a number of passages that warn believers of possible embarrassment at this judgment, if our works do not make it through the fire (1 John 2:28; 3:2-3)

— Paul brings this topic up at the end of this letter because with his exhortations to his readers at the end about ministry imbalances (v12-15) and progressive sanctification (v16-22), he wants them to understand the heart of God so they will receive a favorable ruling and be rewarded at the Bema Seat judgment.

- "...at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" - yet another reference at the end of a chapter in this epistle to the future coming of Christ. The dominate thought on Paul's mind as he wrote both 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians, very early in his ministry was the return of Christ.

— One of the unique aspects of this epistle is that Paul ends each chapter with a reference to the return of Christ (Cf. 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:23)

— This is important context, especially when you get to 2 Thess 2:3, where it talks of a "departure" first. Many Bible translations and commentators regard this "departure" as a doctrinal departure of the church. However, that is not the context of either epistle to the Thessalonians, so a better translation for the "departure" is the Rapture of the Church.

— It's not that Paul isn't concerned about the doctrinal departure of the church, but he isn't concerned with it and it's never a topic in the letters to the Thessalonians. Paul covers that topic 13-15 years later in his two letters to Timothy (esp 1 Tim 4).

Scripture's Four Judgments				
NAME	SHEEP AND GOAT	JUDGMENT OF THE JEWS	BEMA SEAT	GREAT WHITE THRONE
SCRIPTURE	Matt 25:31-46	Ezek 20:33-44	1 Cor 3:10-15	Rev 20:11-15
PLACE	Earth, Jerusalem	Earth, wilderness	Heaven	Earth
AUDIENCE	Gentile Tribulation survivors	Jewish Tribulation survivors	Church Age believers	All unsaved
WHEN	After Tribulation	After Tribulation	After rapture	After Millennium
PURPOSE	Saved Gentiles enter kingdom	Saved Jews enter kingdom	Reward believers	Degree of punishment in hell
EVALUATION	Treatment of Christ's brethren	Passing under shepherd's rod	Works taken through fire	Not in the book; judged by books

24 Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will do **it**.

24 Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

24 The one who calls you is faithful, and he will continue to be faithful.

24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

- "...it" - the antecedent is their sanctification and preservation, not the return of Christ

- God is faithful to His promises 100% of the time, and He has promised us that we are on a fast track to glory

III. Conclusion (1 Thess 5:25-28)

(1) Personal requests (5:25-27)

(A) Prayer (5:25)

25 Brothers *and sisters*, **pray** for **us**.

25 Brethren, pray for us.

25 Brothers, pray for us.

25 Brethren, pray for us.

- "...pray" - Paul believed that intercessory prayer would move God to do things that He would not do otherwise (Cf. James 4:2)

— Notice that Paul doesn't say that he wants the Thessalonians to send money for his support or for his ministry to them. Instead, he coveted their prayers.

- "...us" - the missionary team, which included Paul, Silvanus (Silas), and Timothy (2 Thess 1:1)

— Paul was probably the greatest theologian the world has ever known, yet it's clear that he could not rely on that reality because he asked the recipients of his letters for their prayers (Cf. Eph 6:19 [see notes there])

— If Paul was that dependent upon prayer for his ministry, how dependent upon prayer should we be in our various ministries?

(B) Greet the brethren (5:26)

26 Greet **all** the brothers *and sisters* with **a holy kiss**.

26 Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.

26 Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.

26 Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.

- "...all" - even the fellow believers that you don't like; Paul showed no favoritism in his ministry

- "...a holy kiss" - an appropriate way, in the 1st century, to greet another person (Cf Rom 16:16)

— A kiss is not a cultural way that people greet one another in 21st century America, so a handshake, a pat on the back, or a hug will suffice

(C) Read the letter aloud (5:27)

27 I put you under oath by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers *and sisters*.

27 I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren.

27 I order you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.

27 I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

- Paul could instruct the church at Thessalonica to read this epistle to the entire congregation because he was functioning in the office of apostle

— Paul understood in his role as an apostle that when he was speaking, God was speaking; God was speaking through Paul. You could take Paul's writings and speech and put it on par with all other Scripture, including the very words of Christ.

— This command becomes the basis for expository preaching of God's Word. If you don't have the preaching of God's Word in your church, you don't have teaching, you don't have rebuke, you don't have correction, and you don't have training in righteousness (2 Tim 3:16).

- Today the buzzword in the church is revival. There were two major revivals in the Bible, and both were centered on the Word of God. Biblical revival is *always* centered on God's Word:

(1) Josiah (2 Kings 22:8-13) - workmen located the Book of the Law in the temple while doing some cleanup and repair. They brought the Law to Josiah, who had it read to him and tore his clothes, wishing that his forefathers would have read and adhered to the Law because if they did, Israel would be in a much better situation than they were at that time.

(2) Nehemiah (Neh 8:1-9) - Ezra read the Law while the priests translated the Law into the language of the people. When the people heard the Law translated, they began to weep.

[1 Tim 4:13]

(2) Benediction (5:28)

28 May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

28 May the grace of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah, be with you! Amen.

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

- Paul's trademark benediction; identical to the ones in Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 16:23