

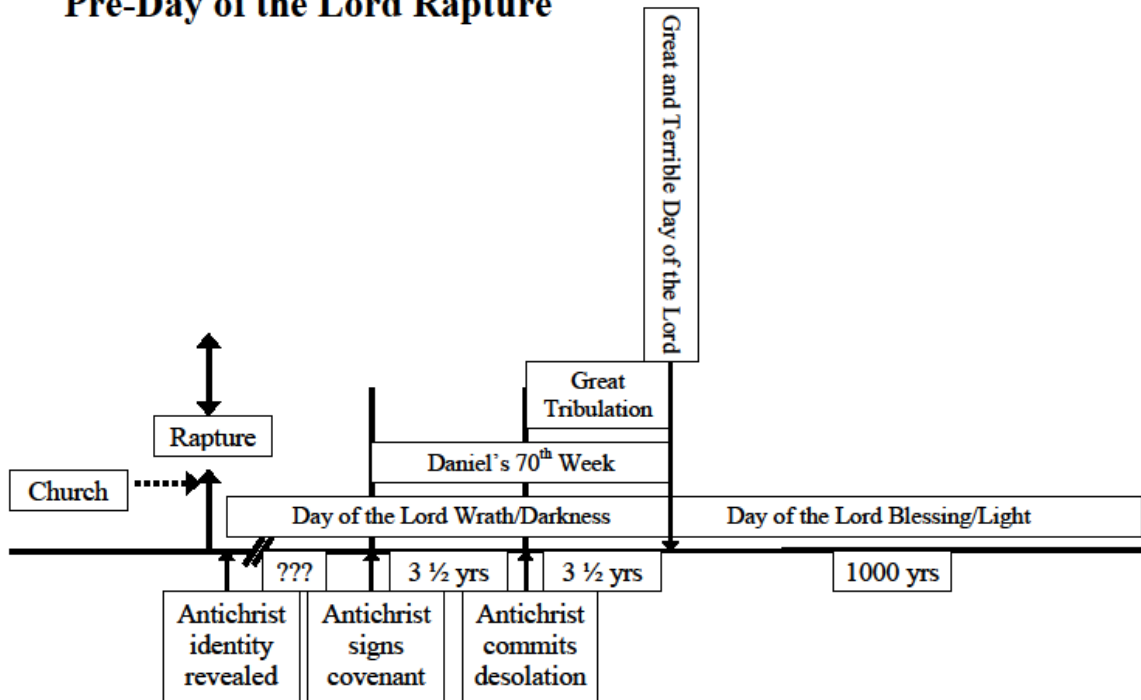
**Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas**  
**Fredericksburg Bible Church**

107 East Austin  
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624  
830-997-8834 jthomas@fbgbible.org

**A1111 – March 13, 2011 – 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11**  
**The Day Of The Lord**

Today we turn again to 1 Thessalonians 5. Last week we introduced the passage by filling in information regarding four major eschatological events; the Rapture, the day of the Lord, the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel and the Great Tribulation. These are four distinct eschatological events that should be on the chart in your bulletin.

**Pre-Day of the Lord Rapture**



The first event is Rapture which is the coming of Christ in the air for the Church. This event is imminent meaning it can happen at-any-moment. Since it can happen at-any-moment then we are to be looking for Christ at all moments. He is our daily focus. We are not watching for Anti-Christ. We are not calculating numbers of people's names to try and figure out if they're the Anti-Christ. We are looking for Christ. He arrives before Anti-Christ. The

second event is the Day of the Lord. We'll define it in a moment but for now know that it begins when Antichrist's Identity is Revealed, 2 Thess 2. When the restrainer is removed the number of his name can be calculated and he can be identified. The Day of the Lord has two phases; a phase of darkness or wrath followed by a phase of light or blessing. These two phases altogether last more than 1007 years. Dividing these two phases is the "great and terrible" day of the Lord which is the 24 hour period when Christ returns to earth, bodily, physically in His resurrection body. The third event is the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel and this is the final seven years of Israel's calendar. It begins when Antichrist Signs a Covenant with the leadership of Israel and lasts until Christ's return to earth. The fourth event is the Great Tribulation and it refers to the last half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. It begins when the Antichrist Commits the Abomination of Desolation in the Temple. When he does that it breaks the original covenant and he begins executing his policy of exterminating the Jewish people.

Now that we have clarified these four eschatological milestones we want to narrow in on the one called the day of the Lord. I gave you a thumbnail sketch of the day of the Lord last week and this week I want to develop that sketch. But let me say before we get too far into it that the day of the Lord is a very practical doctrine. If you paid attention when we read through 1 Thess 5:1-11 then you know it is very practical so far as promoting godly living. Knowing the details of eschatology is not just for the sake of knowing the details. They are for practical living. So know that it matters very much what you think about the day of the Lord and know that Paul used it to encourage godly living.

Let's look at 1 Thess 5:1-3. I thought I would be able to get through all 11 verses this week, I've done all the exegetical legwork two weeks ago, but I found so much crammed in here that has to be explained so we won't be able to get through it all today **Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. <sup>2</sup>For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup>When they are saying, "Peace and security!" then sudden destruction will come upon them like birth pangs upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.** Now the subject is very obviously **the times and the epochs** which involves **the day of the Lord**

and how it will come. And Paul says they know it full well. Actually the Greek means “with precision, with exactness.”

I want to talk about both of these expressions, **the times and the epochs** and **the day of the Lord**. These are close, close, close related. They both refer to the same thing. And the easiest way to see what they refer to is to figure out what **the times and the epochs** refers to then move to the **day of the Lord**.

The first expression, **the times and the epochs** is used in two other places in the Bible; Dan 2:21 and Acts 1:7. Let’s go to Daniel 2. Now the expression times and epochs has clearly to do with history, historic periods, times and seasons but it’s more specific than that. Dan 2 is where Nebuchadnezzar has his dream and he can’t interpret the dream and so he calls his master astrologers and sorcerers and requires them to tell him the dream and the interpretation. None of them can so he’s going to kill them all but in the midst of this comes Daniel. He and his friends pray for the Lord to reveal the dream and in v 19 the dream is revealed and so Daniel begins to praise the Lord. Now the dream was that there would arise four Gentile kingdoms followed by a fifth Jewish kingdom that would fill the whole earth. And in Daniel’s praise of verse 21 he says, “It is He who changes the times and the epochs, He removes kings and establishes kings.” And what Daniel is saying is that God is the one in charge of kingdoms, when kingdoms rise and when kingdoms fall, He’s sovereign over the kingdoms of the earth, the times and the epochs of their rise and fall. So in its first usage **the times and the epochs** refers to kingdom issues, the rise and fall of kingdoms.

For the second usage turn to Acts 1:7. After the resurrection the apostles spent 40 days with Jesus and in v 3 you see that He was teaching them about the kingdom. So in Acts 1:5 they were bugging him, asking Him over and over, it’s the imperfect tense, “Lord, is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by his own authority, but you will receive power;” and He goes on to give them their commission. So again **times and epochs** has to do with what? The kingdom, the rise of the Jewish kingdom that will replace Gentile kingdoms on the earth. So it’s the same thing Daniel spoke about, the times and the epochs refers to the rise and fall of Daniel’s kingdoms and the fact that God is sovereign over the rise and fall of

kingdoms. So it's very hard to abandon the kingdom ideas in 1 Thess 5. When Paul says, **Now as to the times and the epochs** he means what? Now as to the rise and fall of kingdoms. So right off the bat Paul alerts us to the biblical teaching that the Gentile kingdoms would fall and a Jewish kingdom would arise and fill the whole earth. And he says, with respect to this teaching **you have no need of anything to be written to you.** And then he mentions **the day of the Lord** and how it **will come just like a thief in the night.** So it is clear that the day of the Lord is very closely associated to the fall of Gentile kingdoms and the rise of the Jewish kingdom, the kingdom of Messiah. And the relationship is this. The day of the Lord, this darkness phase of wrath is the means by which the Gentile kingdoms are destroyed and the Jewish kingdom is established. So we have this relationship between the times and the epochs and the day of the Lord. We are also told that when the day of the Lord comes it will come like a thief and that is very important because Peter says the same thing and in the Gospels Jesus teaches something similar and so ultimately they both got this from Jesus. So ultimately we have to find out what Jesus taught about the day of the Lord. But whatever He taught we know from Paul that the day of the Lord is the means by which the Kingdom of God is established on earth.

So let's define the day of the Lord. When you see the word "day" don't limit yourself to a 24 hour period. In many contexts it refers to a 24 hour period, for example in creation week, but there are times when it refers to less than a 24 hour period, for example, only the daylight portion of a day, it is used that way. And it can also be used of a period greater than 24 hours. And "day of the Lord" is used of both a 24 hour period and a greater than 24-hour period. The context determines. So don't get tied around the word "day." It has the same meanings we have in the English language. We use it for the daylight portion of a day, we use it for the 24 hour day and we use it for longer periods of time, for example, "back in the day."

So we want a working definition and then we'll turn to the OT usage. This phrase arose in the ancient near east to refer to a great warrior king who could consummate an entire military campaign in a single day. So it's a military term for a great warrior king in battle. In the Scriptures it came to be used of God as a great warrior king who would catastrophically intervene in history to establish His purpose. So the fundamental idea is a special catastrophic intervention by God to alter significantly the course of history.

What's the course of history at this present time? Daniel's Gentile kingdoms. We've seen Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. Rome has two phases, we've seen phase one, phase two is being formed. So God is going to catastrophically intervene as a great warrior king and significantly alter the course of history bringing in the Jewish kingdom, the kingdom of Messiah. Every usage of day of the Lord contains this fundamental idea.

So turn to Obad 15, the very first reference. If you don't know where Obadiah is don't be embarrassed to use your table of contents. It is only one page in the entire Old Testament. And what we're going to do is just start with the first reference and then the progress of revelation of this doctrine. And you'll see the advantage of exploring it this way in terms of the shaping your understanding of the day of the Lord. Obadiah is a book about anti-Semitism and particularly the anti-Semitism of Esau and his descendants against Jacob and his descendants. Jacob and Esau were brothers and Esau should have loved his brother Jacob but rather he hated his brother Jacob and constantly warred against him. Since God pronounced a curse in Genesis 12:3 upon all who would curse Israel so a curse will be pronounced upon all Esau and all anti-Semitic nations. Pick up in Obad 13, "Do not enter the gate of My people In the day of their disaster. Yes, you, do not gloat over their calamity In the day of their disaster. And do not loot their wealth In the day of their disaster. <sup>14</sup>"Do not stand at the fork of the road To cut down their fugitives; And do not imprison their survivors In the day of their distress. <sup>15</sup>"For the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations." There's the first usage and it relates not just to the descendants of Esau but to all nations. "As you have done," to Israel, "it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head. <sup>16</sup>"Because just as you drank on My holy mountain, All the nations will drink continually. They will drink and swallow And become as if they had never existed." So there is destruction upon the nations for their treatment of Israel. <sup>17</sup>"But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape, And it will be holy. And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions. <sup>18</sup>"Then the house of Jacob will be a fire And the house of Joseph a flame; But the house of Esau *will be* as stubble. And they will set them on fire and consume them, So that there will be no survivor of the house of Esau," For the LORD has spoken." So if you're a Jew and you're reading Obadiah your view of the day of the Lord is that it is a day of destruction of all enemy kingdoms and the establishment of a Jewish kingdom.

Let's turn to the second usage in Joel 2. Joel 1:15 is actually the next usage but it refers to a past day of the Lord and our theme is the future day of the Lord. There were past days of the Lord and these are foreshadowings of the future day of the Lord. The theme of Joel is the day of the Lord so Joel develops the doctrine. In 2:1-2, "Blow a trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the day of the LORD is coming; Surely it is near, <sup>2</sup>A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn is spread over the mountains, So there is a great and mighty people; There has never been *anything* like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations." So the day of the Lord in this context is a period of unparalleled judgment, a day of darkness and gloom. It looks like an attack on Israel. And come down to verse 11, "The LORD utters His voice before His army; Surely His camp is very great, For strong is he who carries out His word. The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome, And who can endure it?" So this is the great and terrible day of the Lord. Observe the two adjectives that modify day of the Lord here, great and very awesome or terrible. I'll argue that refers to the exact 24 hour period when Christ returns to earth. Come on down to verse 31, pick up in verse 30, "I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke. <sup>31</sup>"The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes." So here we have geophysical and astrophysical judgments coming before the exact 24 hour period when Christ returns to the earth. Now turn to chapter 3, verse 14 for the last usage in Joel. "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness." Again there are astrophysical effects, it's a great day of darkness and judgment of the Lord. So I think we can say with safety that the day of the Lord is a day where God directly intervenes in human affairs with catastrophic judgments. But you'll notice that the result of this great judgment on Gentile kingdoms is salvation for Israel. For example, v 16, "The LORD is a refuge for His people And a stronghold to the sons of Israel." So if you're an Israelite living in the ninth century BC in your view of the day of the Lord is, again, that it is going to be destruction upon all enemy nations in salvation of Israel. Now turn to Isaiah 13:6, we're just marching down through the sequence of Israel's history. We start with Obadiah in the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC, we turned to Joel who really develops the concept of the day of the Lord, also in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, it's all God changing the times and the epochs, the rise and fall of kingdoms, now



Isaiah in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. "Wail, for the day of the LORD is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty." Observe that word "near" because it carries the idea of suddenness, not so much nearness in time, but suddenness of arrival. You'll see that a lot of this language in 1 Thess 5. Try to pick up on it. "Wail, for the day of the Lord is sudden! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. <sup>7</sup>Therefore all hands will fall limp, And every man's heart will melt. <sup>8</sup>They will be terrified, Pains and anguish will take hold of *them*; They will writhe like a woman in labor," again notice the language, the birth pangs because you're going to see that again and again and also in 1 Thess 5. Verse 8, "They will look at one another in astonishment, Their faces aflame.

<sup>9</sup>Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it.

<sup>10</sup>For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises And the moon will not shed its light."

So again it's a day of darkness and judgment. "Thus I will punish the world for its evil And the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud And abase the haughtiness of the ruthless." Again it's the overturn of kingdoms, a new kingdom is coming and there are no sinners in it. Verse 12, "I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold And mankind than the gold of Ophir. <sup>13</sup>Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, And the earth will be shaken from its place" Notice heavens and earth: he's describing the fact that the day of the Lord is the destruction of the present heavens and earth and the establishment of a new heavens and new earth. That is very important. The Jewish kingdom is so radically different from all prior Gentile kingdoms that it is a new heaven and new earth. "At the fury of the LORD of hosts In the day of His burning anger." Now turn to Zeph 1. We could look at vv 7 and 8, but I'll leave those for you later, let's come on down to verse 14,

"Near is the great day of the LORD, Near and coming very quickly; Listen, the day of the LORD! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. <sup>15</sup>A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness, <sup>16</sup>A day of trumpet and battle cry Against the fortified cities And the high corner towers.

<sup>17</sup>I will bring distress on men," the Hebrew word there, "distress" is a word used of a woman having birth pangs. We see that in Isaiah, we see that in 1 Thess 5. "So that they will walk like the blind, Because they have sinned against the LORD; And their blood will be poured out like dust And their flesh like dung. <sup>18</sup>Neither their silver nor their gold Will be able to deliver them On the day of the LORD'S wrath;" notice there the day of the Lord is described as

“wrath” we see that in 1 Thess 5. “And all the earth will be devoured In the fire of His jealousy, For He will make a complete end, Indeed a terrifying one, Of all the inhabitants of the earth.” It's obviously a day of amazing destruction and alteration in kingdoms. Let's look at Zechariah 14. Zechariah is a post exilic prophet. Zechariah 14:3, “The Lord will go forth and fight against the nations that come up against Jerusalem, and certain Jews will flee.” What did we say the day of the Lord is? A day when God as a warrior king goes forth to do battle. Notice verse 6, “In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. <sup>7</sup>For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light.” So here we want to point out that after the day of darkness and judgment, there would be a day of light and blessing. This theme is less prominent than the darkness and judgment, but it is noted in some contexts as immediately following. We could go back to Joel 3 and show that there is a time of light and blessing that follows but for the sake of time let's move on. That is just a sampling of the OT teaching on the day of the Lord.

Let's put together what we've seen from the Old Testament, which is what Paul taught the Thessalonians. First, the majority of the references describe it as a time of darkness upon the earth when God's wrath is poured out in judgment upon the earth to cleanse it from sinners and establish His kingdom of righteousness. This wrath is described by birth pangs and other distressing events. Second, some of the references describe a time of light immediately following the darkness upon earth when God's blessing is poured out upon the earth. Third there are a few references where day of the Lord is modified by the adjective great and awesome or great and terrible and these refer to the actual 24 hour period when the Messiah will return to earth.

Coupling this with what we know about **the times and the epochs** from Dan 2 and Acts 1 we know that the day of the Lord is the means by which God destroys all Gentile kingdoms and establishes His Jewish kingdom on earth.

So, having gone through the OT passages let's see what Paul has to say about it in 1 Thess 5 and see if it doesn't sound strikingly like the OT. See if you can spot the words and phrases from the OT that he's picking up and using.



**Now as to the times and the epochs**, where did he get that from? Times and epochs? Dan 2, it always relates to kingdom alterations. So read it that way, **Now as to kingdom alterations, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you.** <sup>2</sup>**For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.** What did the OT say over and over? It was near, near is the day of the Lord, and we said that means it will come suddenly. Paul says, like a thief. How does a thief come? Suddenly. Verse 3, <sup>3</sup>**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.** Did we read anything about destruction coming? Lots. What about birth pangs? Lots. Where is Paul getting all this? The OT passages we read. Verse 4, **But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief;** <sup>5</sup>**for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness;** Did Paul talk about darkness and light? You bet he did, over and over in the passages we read. It’s so pervasive that John the apostle picks this up and uses it in the fellowship passage we read every week, <sup>6</sup>“If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; <sup>7</sup>but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.” Where did all that language come from? Day of the Lord passages.

Okay, I think we’ve pretty much squared away that when Paul says I taught you about **the times and the epochs**, that’s kingdom related, and that **the day of the Lord** will come to initiate this major change in world kingdoms from Gentile to Jewish. But then he says at the end of verse 2 that when the day of the Lord comes and initiates these changes it will come just like a **thief in the night**. Verse 3 says the world will **be saying “Peace and safety!”** when it comes. That’s global peace and security. And they’re not crying out that they want it, they’re crying out that they’ve finally achieved it. Now can global peace and security be achieved inside the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel somewhere? Emphatically no. Have you read the 21 judgments of Revelation? The seals, trumpets and bowls? It’s not global peace and security, it’s global destruction and chaos. Therefore when the word is saying “Peace and safety!” has to be before the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel. It’s a time when everyone is relaxed and enjoying life, then at that time the day of the Lord will come just like a **thief in the night** and they will not escape.

Now we want to look at this imagery, **thief in the night** because its obviously not the rapture, has nothing to do with the rapture, never did, never will, the rapture is a rescue, but it does have everything to do with the day of the Lord, always has, always will, the day of the Lord is wrath. Now this figure was used by Jesus to describe how the day of the Lord will come.

Actually two figures are used and I want to show you both of them in Matt 24, the Olivet Discourse. I told you we'd go back to Jesus so that's what we're doing now. There's a lot of confusion over Matt 24 and I don't have time to go through it all today. What I am going to contend is that Matt 24:1-34 says there are *signs* that indicate the day of the Son of Man's return but that Matt 24:35-44 say there are *no signs* that indicate the day of the Son of Man's return. It sounds like a contradiction but I'm going to show you why it's not.

First, the signs in Matt 24:1-34 indicate the nearness of the Son of Man's return. These signs are wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines, false Christ's, false prophets, etc...these things are common enough today but I mean on an unprecedented scale. These are birth pangs of the Messiah, meaning convulsion-like judgments that result in the birth of the Messiah. Probably 24:32-33 describes this most precisely. Notice how Jesus uses the fig tree to teach this lesson, "Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near;" see those are signs, you know, follow the signs He's saying, verse 33, "so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door." So you see there are many signs that indicate the nearness of the Son of Man's return.

But then in vv 35-44 we have a most strange section. Now he says there are *no signs* that indicate the day of the Son of Man's return; that there absolutely are no signs. Probably v 42-43 represent this best. "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert," and this is where Paul got the idea for what? Coming as a thief in the night. The day of the Lord. But you want to observe no signs indicating the nearness of the Son of Man's coming. So how can this be? How can there be signs and no signs?

Answer: it is very simple, there are two arrivals being referred to. The first arrival is the narrow day the Son of Man will return, the narrow 24 hour period we've called "the great and terrible day of the Lord." That is what Matt 24:29-31 is describing. There are many signs that point to this arrival. But the second arrival being spoken of is the general day of the Son of Man will return, the general period we've called "the day of the Lord." That is what Matt 24:35-44 is describing. There are no signs that point to this arrival.

This you will see solves a whole host of problems. For one it solves how the Son of Man's return can have signs and no signs. For two it solves verse 36. "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son," in His humanity of course, "but the Father alone." Now people say, well, how can no one know the day or the hour of Jesus' Second Coming. First of all, the signs listed point to the general time. Second, we have the time table of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel. When Antichrist makes the covenant with Israel then that starts a seven year calendar so all we have to do is add seven years to that day and we know the exact day of Christ's arrival. Third, even if you miss that, the Antichrist will commit the Abomination of Desolation in the middle of the seven years so just add three and one half years to that day and again you know the exact day of Christ's arrival. For three it solves how the coming of the Son of Man in v 37 is just like the days of Noah. And the Greek means "identical," not similar, there is an absolute correspondence between the general period when the Son of Man returns and the days of Noah. This will be startling. For four, it solves the related problem of verse 38, the eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. How can these activities, normal activities of every day life, be carried out during the sign judgments of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel? You're talking about a period where you have 90%+ death rate of the world's population. I do not hesitate to tell you that is a serious problem if you put these verses inside of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week. People will not be doing those things. For five, it pays much more attention to verse 35 as the immediately preceding context which shifts the discussion to a more general period being in view.

Now, what I'm going to teach you is amazingly clear to me but it's not the majority position, I'll grant that, and if this is a pet heresy then so be it; every Bible teacher has his pet heresies. Dr Pentecost at Dallas Theological Seminary has them, but when he has them he says, look, it's in the text. And

that's what I'm going to show you, it's in the text. Paul knew about it, Peter knew about it and they're going to teach exactly the same thing. But the first person to teach it was Jesus Christ.

And what He's teaching is that the day of the Lord will come upon the world like a thief in the night, totally unexpected, no signs, when people are going about life as normal, suddenly, without warning the present heavens and earth will be swept away. So notice verse 35, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone." What day and hour does no one know? The day when the present heaven and earth will pass away. That's the day no one knows. Not the narrow, 24 hour day when the Son of Man returns. That can be calculated once the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel begins. But the day and hour when the Son of Man comes to destroy this present heaven and earth no one knows, no one can calculate. And by the way, "day and hour" when used in Matthew do not refer to 24 hour days and 60 minute hours, they refer to broader time periods. (I cite Matt 7:22; 10:19; 24:42, 44, 50; 25:13; 26:45). He then explains by using an exact parallel in v 37. "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah." Thomas Ice states, "The intensive particle...combined with the demonstrative adverb...is saying that the days of Noah were exactly the same as will be the time of Christ's return." If this is the case then you better look very closely at the days of Noah because they will be exactly paralleled in the days of the Son of Man. And the way they exactly parallel one another is that each marks the passing of an entire heavens and earth and establishment of a new heavens and earth. So let's look at what aspects of the days of Noah we're supposed to find an exact parallel to in the days of the Son of Man. Verse 38, "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away, so will the coming of the Son of Man be." Alright, let's talk this through. On one hand we have the days of Noah, on the other hand the days of the Son of Man. In the days before the Flood people lived in the first heavens and earth. And in the days before the Flood what were people doing? Eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. Noah was preaching the gospel. They didn't care. Then God told Noah and his family and the animals and birds to get on the ark. They did. Then what happened? God shut the door. At that point the world outside was doomed to destruction. But for seven more

days there wasn't a single drop of rain, no signs of a coming flood, just blue skies. Then suddenly, without warning, the fountains of the deep burst forth and it rained torrentially for forty days and forty nights. People began to understand and the waters rose higher and higher and they gradually swept everyone away. When Noah and his family got off the ark it was a different heaven and earth, the second heaven and earth. Jesus says, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. It will be exactly like this. So, how will it be? We live in the second heaven and earth. And in the days before the coming of the Son of Man what will people be doing? Eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. What are we doing? Preaching the gospel. People don't care. Then God is going to rescue His church from the wrath to come as He rescued Noah from the wrath to come by telling him to get on the ark. If you didn't get raptured you're already doomed to enter the wrath, you can't escape. But there may be some time between the rapture and when the sudden destruction comes. But suddenly, without warning, the seal judgments will begin then the trumpets then the bowls. People will begin to understand as the judgments progress and eventually only those who believe and survive will be left. And the present heaven and earth will have passed away and the third heaven and earth will have come.

Then in v 42 he gives an exhortation based on this exact parallelism between the days of Noah and the days of the Son of Man. "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. 43 But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 44 For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will." Again, there are no signs of this arrival. It will come like a thief in the night upon the world.

So what Jesus is saying is that the great and terrible day of the Lord is preceded by signs but the day of the Lord is not. This is a basic teaching of the word of God that is critical but which I and many others have missed. That's not to say all students of the word of God have missed it. Davies and Allison recognize this in their commentary. Blomberg recognizes it in his. And a similar view is recognized by Robert Thomas.

Now turn to 2 Pet 3 and see how he teaches the exact same thing then we'll go back to Paul and see how he teaches the exact same thing. Both Peter and Paul got their teaching on the day of the Lord from the OT and it's coming as a thief from Jesus in the Olivet Discourse.

In vv 3-9 Peter is describing what? Mocking in the last days. People mocking Christianity and saying, you Christians say Jesus is coming back and He's going to disrupt our kingdom building program. Ha, I don't see any Jesus coming back. There are no major disruptions. Everything continues just as it has from the beginning. Then he says in verse 5 that it escapes their notice; that the kingdom building before the Flood was suddenly destroyed by being flooded with water. And that they should learn the lesson from history that God does intervene. Just as in that day everyone was going along like things were hunky dory and then suddenly destruction fell upon them, so it will be in the day of the Lord. Verse 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." He's comparing it to the heaven and earth before the Flood and in the same way that the heaven and earth before the Flood was suddenly destroyed by water so the present heaven and earth will be suddenly taken by surprise by the day of the Lord destruction of fire, the fiery seal, trumpet and bowl judgments. I bet you thought this verse happened after the kingdom.

Nonsense. This is the day of the Lord Jesus spoke of as having no signs, as coming like a thief and destroying the present heavens and earth. Then Peter goes on to give practical instruction on godliness. Since we are not of that day we should not live as that day.

Now let's go back to Paul in 1 Thess 5 and see how simple this all is. Paul is teaching the exact same things, the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night, no signs. Jesus taught this, Paul taught this and Peter taught this. **Now as to the times and the epochs**, that's kingdoms, shifts in kingdoms, Dan 2:21, Acts 1:7, **brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. <sup>2</sup>For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.** The general day of the Lord, not the great and terrible day of the Lord, there are signs and warnings of that, but of the general day of the Lord, there are no signs, no warnings, it's just like the days of Noah, **<sup>3</sup>While they are saying, "Peace and safety!"** it's the time when they are eating and drinking, marrying and giving in



marriage, you do those things on a global scale when you have global peace and security. But it's already too late Paul says, they are already in the wrath. **then sudden destruction will come upon them like birth pangs upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.** And you will not be in this if you are a Christian, you cannot be in this if you are a Christian. If you are not a Christian you better believe today. But if you are a Christian you are a son of light not of darkness and by the nature of the position you have as a son of light you cannot enter the day of the Lord. The pre-day of the Lord rapture.

Now what have we said? We've said that the rapture is pre-day of the Lord. After the rapture escape then the world will enter a period of global peace and security. At that time the day of the Lord will come upon them like a thief in the night. They will not be expecting it. When it comes they will in no way escape because the only escape is the rapture. While the day of the Lord will come as a thief, the great and terrible day of the Lord will not come like a thief. It will have many signs that point out that He is near, even at the door. Since we are children of the day and not of the night, sons of light and not of darkness we should live as children of the day and as sons of light. We should be alert, live an alert Christian life, expecting His return for us.

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