

I Thessalonians 4:17–5:5

I Thessalonians 4:17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

AFTER the dead have been raised, those who remain alive at Christ's return will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Because they have maintained faith in the Son of God, their reward will be that they meet Him upon His arrival to the earth. The manner in which saints will be caught up to meet Christ in the air is first seen in Enoch, who the Scriptures state walked with God *before* God took him: *And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.*¹ What started with Seth, when men began to call upon the Lord,² now found its fulfillment in Enoch and his exemplary walk with God. Enoch's fellowship with the Lord implies that where the Lord led him, he by faith followed. This is always the primary manifestation of true faith: obedience to the spoken and revealed will of God.

The reward for Enoch's obedience to the Lord was that he was lifted from the earth while still alive: *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death;*

*and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.*³ Such a man was Enoch, who because of his unique confidence and trust in the Lord, proven by his walking in God's will for his life, was miraculously lifted into heaven. There is no greater reward for faith than this, and even the great apostle Paul pursued such an end: *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*⁴ In recorded history rapture is rare, purposed only for the godliest of men.⁵ The rapture of present-day saints shows us the monumental work the Son of God has accomplished for His people, whereby, through His life and death, He makes men worthy of heavenly transformation. The basis for the Christian being lifted into heaven is found in Christ's perfect work to redeem him.⁶

Christ pleased God, and because of this, God has given Christ the power to receive into heaven all whom God wills should join Him there. *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*⁷ We the church have been given to Christ by God. Ultimately no man can

1 Gen. 5:24

2 Gen. 4:26 *And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.*

3 Heb. 11:5

4 Phil. 3:14b

5 II Kgs. 2:1 *And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.*

II Kgs. 2:11 *And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*

6 Gal. 4:4&5 *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law; ⁵To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

Titus 2:13&14 *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; ¹⁴Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

Rev. 5:9 *And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;*

Rev. 14:4 *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.*

7 John 17:2

enter heaven without divine election⁸ to share with His Son in heaven.⁹

Saints will be lifted from the earth by being *caught up*. This means that it will be through no ability of their own that they will be raised to meet the Lord in the air but rather solely by heavenly might and power being exerted upon them. As the word implies, this force will be quite sudden, will originate from above, and will surprise all who observe it.

(Barnes, *I Thess. 4:17*) *Shall be caught up* - The word here used implies that there will be the application of external force or power by which this will be done. It will not be by any power of ascending which they will themselves have; or by any tendency of their raised or changed bodies to ascend of their own accord, or even by any effort of their own will, but by a power applied to them which will cause them to rise.¹⁰

8 *John 15:16* *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*
9 *John 6:44* *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

Rom. 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

Rom. 9:11 *(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)*

Eph. 1:4 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

Eph. 1:11 *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*

I Thess. 1:4 *Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.*

I Pet. 2:9 *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;*

9 *Eph. 1:3&4* *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 'According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

10 *Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 4:17*

11 *John 6:56* *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*

John 15:4 *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

John 17:23 *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

12 *Matt. 16:27* *For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.*

Matt. 24:30&31 *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 'And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

Matt. 25:32 *And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:*

Mark 13:26&27 *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 'And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven*

13 *Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 4:17*

14 *John 15:19* *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

John 17:14-16 *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 'I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst*

The body of Christ is mystical, and because it is wholly spiritual in nature, once a man has Christ's spiritual life imparted into him, the state of his body, whether dead or alive, makes no difference. Ultimately the unity established on earth between Christ and His people will reach its purposed end when both the living and the dead are eternally joined to the Savior.¹¹ Some have speculated that the reason the saved will join Christ in the air is that the earth cannot contain such a great number of redeemed saints for such occasions as the church's final salvation and this world's judgment.¹²

(Barnes, *I Thess. 4:17*) The world would not be spacious enough to contain all the assembled living and dead, and hence the throne of judgment will be fixed in the ample space above it.¹³

This world was never meant to be the believer's home,¹⁴ and Christ will prove

this when He ushers him into Christ's own promised heavenly inheritance.¹⁵ Like their Master, Who died and after resurrection ascended into heaven, Christ's chosen have been born from above and will be equipped with new bodies to maintain spiritual existence beyond the earth.¹⁶ Just as the caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly, the Lord's people will be caught up and changed, preparing them for heavenly habitation and enjoyment. All this, as 1 Corinthians reveals, transpires in the twinkling of an eye: *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*¹⁷ The trumpet, as seen in 1 Corinthians and 1 Thessalonians, as well as many other records in Scripture,

is attached to the Lord's return, and it will call all God's people for their final gathering. Its triumphant sound signals the Lord's chosen to assemble themselves before God.¹⁸ Here its purpose will be to call those chosen by God now to inherit their spiritual destiny.¹⁹ However, it will not be upon a mount that God will come down to man, as He appeared to Israel.²⁰ Instead, the Son of God will appear in heaven and by supernatural power will raise His people to meet Him there. This transition from God descending to the earth to meet Israel to now the church being powerfully raised to meet Christ in the air marks a change of administrations, signifying that the earthly, all that is fleshly, is to be replaced by the spiritual and all that is heavenly. It is important to note that *change* is the optimal word to define the events that will transpire with the Son

keep them from the evil. ¹⁶*They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

1 Cor. 15:48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

Phil. 3:20&21 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

²¹*Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

¹⁵ *Matt. 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*

¹⁶ *John 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

1 Pet. 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

1 John 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

1 John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

¹⁷ *1 Cor. 15:51&52*

¹⁸ *Exod. 19:13 There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.*

Exod. 20:18 And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.

Lev. 25:9 Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.

Num. 10:4 And if they blow but with one trumpet, then the princes, which are heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee.

Josh. 6:20 So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

Judg. 3:27 And it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them.

Isa. 27:13 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

Zech. 9:14 And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the LORD God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south.

Rev. 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

¹⁹ *Matt. 24:31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

²⁰ *Exod. 19:11 And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.*

Exod. 19:20 And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.

of God's return. Here it is the changing of His people's bodies, but many other things will also be transformed by Christ. The entire world order will transition, from human governmental authority to divine spiritual authority contained in the person of God's Son.²¹ No longer will the descendants of the first Adam function according to their own human will, which has always resisted God's sovereignty over it, but now all will be governed according to God's will. Man, as we know him today in his fallen state, has lost the right to rule or be given stewardship over anything; therefore, a new race of men, created in the image and likeness of the Son of God,²² will replace him. These people, because of their new hearts, created in them by God, will forever remain loyal to God, faithfully keeping His laws and commandments.²³ Many other Old Testament prophecies will also be fulfilled, but the Christian's transformation provides great insight into the new glories to come.

Another vitally important reason that the rapture will take place in heaven is so the saved will be removed from the earthly judgments to come. The last trumpet

21 I Cor. 15:24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

Rev. 11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

22 I Cor. 15:49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Col. 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

23 Ezek. 36:26–28 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. ²⁸And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

24 Rev. 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

25 Isa. 13:9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

Isa. 13:13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.

Zeph. 1:15 That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness,

Zeph. 1:18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.

Zeph. 2:2 Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD's anger come upon you.

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;

Rev. 16:1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

Rev. 19:15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

26 II Pet. 3:7

27 Gen. 6:17 And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.

28 Benson Commentary, II Pet. 3:7

marks the beginning of the day of the Lord,²⁴ and once it is blown, God's wrath will be poured out from heaven.²⁵ Hence, once the saved are raised, the day of this world's judgment has arrived. *But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*²⁶ Because of its wickedness, the first world, as seen in the time of Noah, was destroyed by water;²⁷ the one we live in now, because of men's unbelief and rejection of God's Son, will be destroyed by fire.

(Benson, II Pet. 3:7) *are kept in store* — *Τεθησαυρισμενοι εισι πυρι τηρουμενοι, are treasured up and preserved for fire; that is, preserved from a deluge for the purpose of being burned. Therefore the earth is not always to remain, but is to suffer a destruction even more terrible than the former; at the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men* — The day when God will judge the world, and punish the ungodly with everlasting destruction.²⁸

The Greek word for *ungodly* is #765 “*asebēs* (an adjective which is the negation of 4576 */sébomai*, ‘to respect’) – properly,

lack of reverence ('without due respect'), i.e. failing to honor what is sacred – especially in the outward (ceremonial) sense.²⁹ This definition teaches us that God demands reverence and respect for what is sacred. When men do not respect or have a high regard for that which is holy, they prove themselves ripe for judgment. The two greatest sins in man, aside from blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,³⁰ are unbelief³¹ and ungodliness.³² These sins are committed directly against a holy God and as such are worthy of divine judgment. The day of the Lord will prove how distasteful God finds the pride and the insolence of man to be. The Scriptures also teach us that now, that is today, even before this great day of judgment, a portion of God's anger toward sin is being revealed in the earth. Thus, if men do not believe that divine

judgment for sin will come in the future, they need only to observe a small amount of God's judgment being revealed toward sinners in the present. *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.*³³

(Jamieson-Faucet-Brown, *Rom. 1:18*) This Wrath of God, Revealed against All Iniquity, Overhangs the Whole Heathen World.³⁴

Whereas today God's wrath and anger are measured, at Christ's return, marking the day of the Lord, neither will be. It is this final judgment of God upon the world that Jesus came to save sinners from.³⁵ Just as Lot was rescued from Sodom and Gomorrah and led out by angels from whence judgment was promised,³⁶ the

²⁹ HELPS Word-studies

³⁰ Mark 3:29 *But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.*

³¹ Num. 20:12 *And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.* II Kgs. 17:13–15 *Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.* ¹⁴*Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.* ¹⁵*And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them.*

Ps. 78:21&22 *Therefore the LORD heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel;* ²²*Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation:*

Ps. 78:31&32 *The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel.* ³²*For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works.*

Mark 16:16 *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

John 3:18 *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

II Thess. 2:12 *That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

Heb. 3:17–19 *But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? ¹⁹So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

³² Ps. 1:6 *For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.*

I Tim. 1:9 *Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,*

II Pet. 2:5 *And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;*

II Pet. 3:7 *But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*

Jude 1:15 *To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.*

³³ Rom. 1:18

³⁴ Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Rom. 1:18

³⁵ Rom. 5:9 *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

I Thess. 1:10 *And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.*

³⁶ Gen 19:12–26 *12 And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: ¹³For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it. ¹⁴And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place;*

Lord will rescue the righteous and catch them up into heaven before His vengeance is fully let loose upon an ungodly world.³⁷

And so shall we ever be with the Lord. Once raptured by the Son of God, the saved will never again be separate from Him. It is common today for those who possess the Spirit that any separation from God, no matter how brief, causes pain to the soul. Whether because of personal sin or simply the trials of life, nothing disturbs and causes inner consternation more than when spiritual fellowship with our heavenly Father is damaged. This is why once the believer is joined to the Lord Jesus, all such fear will be eternally removed. Our spiritual hearts remaining at peace simply because of our proximity to the Lord of peace.³⁸ In God's presence is fullness of joy,³⁹ and this joy will be exceedingly felt in the saved once they join Jesus in heaven.

I Thessalonians 4:18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. ¹⁵And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. ¹⁶And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. ¹⁷And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. ¹⁸And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my LORD: ¹⁹Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: ²⁰Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. ²¹And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. ²²Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. ²³The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. ²⁴Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; ²⁵And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. ²⁶But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

II Pet. 2:6&7 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; ⁷And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

37 II Thess. 1:7-9 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, ⁸In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: ⁹Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

38 II Thess. 3:16 Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.

39 Ps. 16:11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

40 Acts 4:12

41 II Cor. 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Phil. 3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

Col. 2:2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

42 Rom. 8:10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. Eph. 3:17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

43 Col. 1:27

This verse teaches that there can be no real comfort, nor any sustainable hope regarding good expectations for the dead, without their having had relationship with the Son of God. There is but one name given under heaven through which men can be saved, and only One that can bring comfort when a man is either facing death or his body has entered the grave. *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*⁴⁰ All salvation, both of the soul and body, is tied to the Son of God. This is why that if a man does not have true relationship with Christ, he possesses no real hope beyond the grave. For comfort therefore to manifest itself in the heart, a man must be found in Christ,⁴¹ and Christ must be found in him.⁴² *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*⁴³ Before Jesus Christ's entrance into the world and His resurrection from the dead, men knew little to nothing of the

concept of spiritual immortality.⁴⁴ Today, because of the revelation given to Paul by the Lord Jesus, we know much more.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, *II Tim. 1:10*)
Before the Gospel revelation from God, man, by the light of nature, under the most favorable circumstances, had but a glimmering idea of the possibility of a future being of the soul, but not the faintest idea of the resurrection of the body...⁴⁵

I Thessalonians 5:1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

Regarding the time of the advent of Christ and the rapture of His saints, the apostle now states that it makes no difference as to when these things will take place but only that they will. This teaches us that men can get easily distracted about when something will be, when in fact they should be concerned only that it shall be.⁴⁶ Curiosity, though common in man, is not a heavenly virtue. The secret things belong to the Lord,⁴⁷ and that which He says should remain hidden cannot be discovered by human effort. Jesus's words to the disciples before His ascension reveal the proper behavior saints should exhibit while patiently waiting for Christ's return to the earth.

Acts 1:6–8 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

⁷ And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

⁸ But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye

shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The disciples sought to know about the unknown future of the restoration of Israel; instead, Jesus directed them to a very near event, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.⁴⁸ If men wonder if Jesus will return to the earth and transform the bodies of both the living and the dead, they really need only to look at the power of God already present on the earth in the form the His Holy Spirit. Hence, instead of speculating as to the timing of future events, like Israel's restoration, true believers should pursue walking in the power of the Holy Spirit, which itself testifies to the reality of the Son of God. This witness, the witness of the Holy Spirit, assures men of the truth of God's Word and the sureness of His Son's return to the earth.

I Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

The reason believers are instructed not to speculate on the day of the Lord is that it will come upon the world unexpectedly, as a thief in the night.

(Ellicott, *I Thess. 5:2*) *The day of the Lord.*— Here "the Lord" (as usual in the New Testament) means Jesus Christ; and this day can mean nothing else than the great day of His return to judgment. The expression is taken from the Old Testament, where, of course, it does not primarily mean what we call "the Day of Judgment," but the set time which God has fixed for any great visitation. Thus in Joel 2:1,⁴⁹ et seq., it means the time

⁴⁴ *II Tim. 1:10* But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

⁴⁵ Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, *II Tim. 1:10*

⁴⁶ *Matt 24:36* But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Mark 13:32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

Acts 1:7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

⁴⁷ *Deut. 29:29* The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

⁴⁸ *Acts 2:1–4* And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. ³And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

⁴⁹ *Joel 2:1* Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;

appointed for the plague of locusts; in Ezekiel 13:5,⁵⁰ generally, any day when God visits His people; in Joel 3:14,⁵¹ the fixed time for vengeance to be taken upon the heathen for persecuting the Church; which, in Isaiah 2:12⁵² (a passage largely influenced by recollections of Joel), seems to widen into a general day of judgment for mankind.⁵³

The *day of the Lord* is that day when Jesus Christ will be openly manifested to the world. It is that future time referred to in the book of Revelation as *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*.⁵⁴ As in Thessalonians, the book of Revelation reveals that God's Son will come with clouds. *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.*⁵⁵ It is stated that Jesus's return and His appearance to the world will cause many to wail. This wailing will be by all who have rejected God's sovereignty and have now become aware that divine judgment is ready to be revealed upon them. All the previous rejoicing of sinners will cease once they realize that God's authority has returned to rule the world, through the person of His Son. What a contrast this is to when Jesus was crucified and His followers mourned and wept for His absence!⁵⁶ The completely opposite scene is described here, for now it is sinners who cry because heavenly authority has arrived. How different also are sinners from saints; whereas sinners rejoice when sin spreads, saints rejoice when divine power comes to remove it.

⁵⁰ Ezek. 13:5 *Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD.*

⁵¹ Joel 3:14 *Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.*

⁵² Isa. 2:12 *For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:*

⁵³ *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, 1 Thess. 5:2*

⁵⁴ Rev. 1:1 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:*

⁵⁵ Rev. 1:7

⁵⁶ Mark 16:9&10 *Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. ¹⁰And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.*

⁵⁷ *Benson Commentary, Rev. 1:7*

⁵⁸ Matt. 24:30 *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

Mark 13:26 *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.*

Luke 21:27 *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*

⁵⁹ Ps. 96:13 *Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.*

Ps. 98:9 *Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.*

(Benson, *Rev. 1:7*) *Shall wail because of him* — For terror and pain, if they did not wail before by true repentance; even all who have rejected his government and opposed his interest, shall lament the fatal opposition, by which, instead of prevailing in the least against him, they have only effected their own destruction. In this verse is prefixed the great moral, which the whole book is designed to illustrate; namely, that though there should be great opposition made against the cause and kingdom of Christ, yet it should be utterly in vain, and his kingdom should triumph in the most illustrious manner, so that all who opposed it should have the greatest reason to mourn.⁵⁷

It is worth noting that sinners will mourn *because of him* (Christ). The sight of the Son of God coming in glory will awaken in even the dullest of men the authority of God.⁵⁸ The world's inhabitants, knowing they are unworthy of Christ's company, will wail at His coming. The great majority of this world both have, and even do now, seek to evade God's rule, but with the Son of God's appearance, because of the power given to the Son, divine sovereignty cannot be avoided. The time of sin will have passed, and the time of righteousness being executed on the earth has begun.⁵⁹

1 Thessalonians 5:3 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.

Before judgment comes, the world will think itself in *peace and safety*. But consistent with Christ's unexpected return to the earth and believers miraculously being caught up to meet Him in the air, we now observe the sudden destruction of the ungodly. Divine deliverance, as well as divine justice, therefore, will be swift as the Lord will not hesitate in transforming the saved, nor will He delay in executing His wrath upon those who are not. All fates have been settled, all choices made, and no time is needed before justice is served. In short, the world has waited long enough for this glorious day, and it need not wait any longer. This is why the believer's full salvation and the unbeliever's final judgment will be both quick and prompt.

(Barnes, *I Thess.* 5:3) *And they shall not escape* - That is, the destruction, or punishment. They calculated on impunity, but now the time will have come when none of these refuges will avail them, and no rocks will cover them from the "wrath to come."⁶⁰

Sinners have foolishly surmised for millenniums that they can reject living under divine rule and evade any future judgment for doing so. This false human reasoning will be proven wrong. It is a predominant characteristic of the ungodly that they wrongly estimate the danger of sin, as well as God's final judgment for it. Because of thinking themselves as wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight, sinners cannot perceive their final end. *Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!*⁶¹

(Barnes, *Isa.* 5:21) *Wo unto them that are wise ...* - This is the fifth crime specified. It refers to those who are inflated with a false opinion of their own knowledge, and who are, therefore, self-confident and vain.

This is expressly forbidden; Proverbs 3:7.⁶² 'Be not wise in thine own eyes,' compare Proverbs 26:12.⁶³

In their own eyes - In their own opinion, or estimation.

And prudent - Knowing; self-conceited. This was, doubtless, one characteristic of the times of Isaiah. It is known to have been strikingly the characteristic of the Jews - particularly the Pharisees - in the time of our Saviour. The evil of this was,

- (1) That it evinced and fostered "pride."
- (2) That it rendered them unwilling to be instructed, and especially by the prophets.

As they supposed that they were already wise enough, they refused to listen to others.⁶⁴

Ultimately the world will see itself as vastly mistaken for not recognizing and revering the Son of God. It will realize that He Who was rejected by man has been made ruler of all men and the final judge of all those born of the flesh.⁶⁵

The wiser a man believes himself to be, the less he will rely on heavenly prophecy. This is why those who trust in their own thoughts and reasonings have little to no use for God's Word. Foolishly believing that truth comes from themselves and the small intellect they possess, unbelievers will be wildly surprised at Christ's coming, ultimately proving that the carnal mind has absolutely no perception of God,⁶⁶ nor can it perceive God's final judgment toward sin.

(Pulpit Comm., *Isa.* 5:21) *Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes.* The fifth woe. Self-conceit is the antithesis of humility; and as humility is, in a certain sense, the crowning virtue, so self-conceit is a sort of finishing touch put to vice. While a man thinks humbly of himself, there is a chance that he may repent and amend. When he is "wise in his own eyes," he does not see why he should change.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ Barnes' *Notes on the Bible*, I Thess. 5:3

⁶¹ *Isa.* 5:21

⁶² *Prov.* 3:7 *Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.*

⁶³ *Prov.* 26:12 *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.*

⁶⁴ Barnes' *Notes on the Bible*, *Isa.* 5:21

⁶⁵ *John* 17:2 *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

⁶⁶ *Rom.* 8:6-7 *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

⁶⁷ *Pulpit Commentary*, *Isa.* 5:21

They shall not escape. Just as Adam and Eve hid⁶⁸ to avoid giving account for their sin, yet God found them,⁶⁹ so those who have resisted God's rule will attempt to flee yet find no escape from God's wrath. The earth, though vast in human estimation, is small to God, so that when divine judgment is brought upon her, there will be found no place for sinners to escape. Whereas the unrighteous once freely sinned upon the earth without any thought of divine intervention, now the earth has become their prison. *They shall not escape*, simply because there will be no place to hide. And though sinners will wish that the hills could cover them,⁷⁰ this hope, like the lives they lived, will be in vain. God's righteousness and His judgment will sweep the entire ungodly world, allowing no one who has rejected Christ's rule to escape divine punishment.

1 Thessalonians 5:4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

Because God has illuminated the saved through the Spirit of God given to them,⁷¹ they will find themselves prepared for Jesus's return. *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*⁷²

(Barnes, *II Cor. 4:6*) *Hath shined in our hearts* - Margin, "It is he who hath." This is more in accordance with the Greek, and the sense is, "The God who at the creation bade the light to shine out of darkness, is he who has shined into our hearts; or it is the same God who has

illuminated us, who commanded the light to shine at the creation." "Light" is every where in the Bible the emblem of knowledge, purity, and truth; as darkness is the emblem of ignorance, error, sin, and wretchedness. See note, John 1:4-5.⁷³ And the sense here is, that God had removed this ignorance, and poured a flood of light and truth on their minds. This passage teaches, therefore, the following important truths in regard to Christians - since it is as applicable to all Christians, as it was to the apostles:

(1) That the mind is by nature ignorant and benighted - to an extent which may be properly compared with the darkness which prevailed before God commanded the light to shine. Indeed, the darkness which prevailed before the light was formed, was a most striking emblem of the darkness which exists in the mind of man before it is enlightened by revelation, and by the Holy Spirit. For:

(a) In all minds by nature there is deep ignorance of God, of His Law, and His requirements; and,

(b) This is often greatly deepened by the course of life which people lead; by their education; or by their indulgence in sin, and by their plans of life; and especially by the indulgence of evil passions.

The tendency of man if left to himself is to plunge into deeper darkness, and to involve his mind more entirely in the obscurity of moral midnight. "Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," John 3:19.⁷⁴

(2) this verse teaches the fact, that the minds of Christians are illuminated. They are enabled to see things as they are. This fact is often taught in the Scriptures; see 1 John 2:20;

68 Gen. 3:8 *And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.*

69 Gen. 3:9&10 *And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? ¹⁰And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.*

70 Hos. 10:8 *The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us.*

Luke 23:30 *Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.*

71 I Cor. 2:9-12 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. ¹⁰But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. ¹¹For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. ¹²Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*

72 II Cor. 4:6

73 John 1:4&5 *In him was life; and the life was the light of men. ⁵And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*

74 John 3:19 *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

1 Corinthians 2:12–15.⁷⁵ They have different views of things from their fellow-men, and different from what they once had. They perceive a beauty in religion which others do not see, and a glory in truth, and in the Saviour, and in the promises of the gospel, which they did not see before they were converted. This does not mean:

(a) That they are superior in their powers of understanding to other people - for the reverse is often the fact; nor,

(b) That the effect of religion is at once to enlarge their own intellectual powers, and make them different from what they were before in this respect.⁷⁶

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

(Barnes, *I Thess. 5:5*) *Ye are all the children of light* - All who are Christians. The phrase “children of light” is a Hebraism, meaning that they were the enlightened children of God⁷⁷

By instructing and reminding the Thessalonians who they were, the apostle sought to remove any fear they might have of the day of the Lord. It is those who chose darkness who need fear, not those who have made Jesus their Lord. It is important, then, for saints to think of themselves as they properly are, lest they forget the great distinction and separation that God has put between them and those who have by personal choice rejected God. Because of being born of God, the saved are now aptly designated as the *children of light*, children of the *Father of lights*⁷⁸ *with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

⁷⁵ *I John 2:20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

I Cor. 2:12–15 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. ¹³Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

⁷⁶ *Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Cor. 4:6*

⁷⁷ *Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 5:5*

⁷⁸ *Jas. 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

