

Escape: A Comforting Word (1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11)

Part 2 of Rapture: Ready or Not

The Pastor and the Professor September 26, 2017

John H. Niemelä

Introduction

Historical Background

How long was Paul in Thessalonica to plant the church? Acts 17:2

Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them [a synagogue in Thessalonica], and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Outline Statement for 1 Thessalonians (1:9-10)

For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, (1:9a)	2:1-12
and how you turned to God from idols (1:9b)	2:13–3:13
to serve the living and true God, (1:9c)	4:1-12
¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, <i>even</i> Jesus who <u>delivers</u> us from the <u>wrath</u> to come. (1:10)	4:13–5:11

The coming wrath is _____, not _____ (____:____)

Paul Answers Three Questions (not two) in 4:9–5:11

1. <u>But concerning</u> brotherly love, you have no need that I should write to you...	4:9
2. <u>But</u> I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, <u>concerning</u> those who have fallen asleep...	4:13
3. <u>But concerning</u> the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.	5:1

Non pre-Tribulation authors/speakers pretend that 4:13–5:11 discusses only one topic.

Evidence that 5:1 introduces a third question:

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| A. but concerning... | but concerning... | but concerning... |
| B. no need... | ignorant... | no need... |
| C. ----- | brethren... | brethren... |

+AWOL (All-Together with our Lord) in the Clouds (4:13-18)

We should grieve with expectant hope for believers who sleep (die: *koimaō*)
Paul uses *koimaō* in 4:13-15 to describe believers' death as sleep.
He uses a different word in 5:6-10 with a different connotation.

–AWOL [Alienated (hopeless unbelievers) will be w/o the Lord] (4:13b)
They will not be raised until the Great White Throne (Rev 20:11-15)

Those alive and those asleep (dead) will rise when Jesus raptures the Church.

Sequence of Rapture events

The Lord descends to the clouds

The dead (asleep ones) will rise a moment before those who are alive

Those who are alive and remain will be raised a moment later.

+AWOL (All-Together with our Lord) in the Clouds

Encourage one another with these words, +AWOL (4:18)

Concerning Times +AWOL (All-Together with our Lord) should not live a –AWOL life (5:1-11)

–AWOL = A-slumbering-lifestyle w/o the Lord

They knew the Day of the Lord would be w/o warning [soon after the rapture] (5:2-3)

Perhaps, some worried that the Day of the Lord had begun, because some of the Thessalonians had died after Paul escaped the city by night (Acts 17:10)

They were of the light (+AWOL), so the Day (of the Lord) would not overtake them (5:4)

Non-pre-Trib writers/speakers think that the Day will overtake the Church, but that it will not overtake them as a thief (because they would be watching).

Problem: There are no signs preceding it, so they would watch in vain.

Instead, Paul sets forth the idea that the Church will not be overtaken.

+AWOL people should not live like –AWOL (5:5-8)

The Church is not appointed to wrath:

Wrath does not refer to the lake of fire, but to the tribulation.

The entire tribulation is a time of God's wrath.

Mid-Trib advocates say that only the last half is God's wrath.

$\frac{3}{4}$ -Trib (the so-called pre-wrath view) says that only the last quarter is God's wrath.

Post-Trib says that only the very end is God's wrath.

However, Revelation 6 shows that Jesus is the One who unleashes all of the judgments of the entire seven years, so how can it not be God's wrath from the very beginning? (We will discuss this further later)

Which model meets the "encouragement" test (5:11)?

Even +AWOL people who live like –AWOL people will live together with the Lord (5:10)
The pre-trib rapture is all about grace.

Encourage one another with these words +AWOL even for –AWOL lifestyle beliefs (5:11)

Conclusion