

I. James c. AD 45-48

- Probably the first NT book written

A. James 1.12

1. Blessed is the man who is enduring temptation (in an enviable position)
2. Because when he has become approved (tried and proved genuine), he will receive the crown of life
 - a. This crown of life is surely equal to eternal life (“the crown which is life”)
 - b. But it may refer to a distinct set of rewards in heaven for some (but not all) believers
 - c. This crown is the promise to those who love Him, demonstrated especially by enduring trials

B. James 2.5

1. The epistle is here speaking especially to the poor, those often looked down on by the rich and powerful
2. Yet God chose the poor for two blessings
 - a. To be rich in faith (a present possession)
 - b. To be heirs of the kingdom (a promising future)
3. The interesting thing about this passage is the mention of the Kingdom
 - a. It is still future (heirs wait for their inheritance)
 - b. It is the same as the many mentions of the Kingdom in the OT: the eschatological kingdom
4. Some conclusions
 - a. If we are heirs of the Kingdom, this aspect of it has not yet occurred
 - b. The epistles, like the other parts of the Bible, remain interested in teaching the Kingdom

C. James 5.1-9

1. James warns rich men against heaping up treasure and oppressing the poor (1-6)
 - a. The reason: they heap up their treasure in the last days (3)
 - b. The Bible refers to all days since the Lord's departure as "the last days"
 - c. In addition, for every man, these days are "last days" since we have so few days
2. He exhorts the brethren to be patient unto the coming of the Lord (7)
 - a. The farmer waits patiently because he expects a crop, likewise the brethren are to wait in patient expectation
 - b. Our reasons:
 - 1) "The coming of the Lord has drawn near" (8)
 - 2) "The Judge stands before the doors" (9)
3. The passage thus emphasizes the imminency of Christ's return

II. 1 Thessalonians. c. ad 50-51

- This is the first of Paul 's epistles
- Paul wrote after only a few weeks of ministry
- These disciples understood much eschatology despite their brief discipleship (Ac 17.1-4)

A. 1 Thess 1.9-10

1. Paul compliments these. disciples on how they turned to God for two purposes:
 - a. To serve the true God
 - b. To wait for His Son from the heavens
2. They were not waiting for any other events except the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ
3. This is the same Jesus who is delivering us out of "the wrath which is coming," a phrase that implies the pretribulation rapture

B. 1 Thess 2.11-12

1. Paul exhorts us to walk worthy of God who calls us into His Kingdom and glory
2. Thus, we see another reference to the glorious coming eschatological Kingdom

C. 1 Thess 2.19-20

1. Paul asks what is his hope, joy, and crown of glorying
2. He answers that the disciples will be before the Lord Jesus Christ in His coming (parousia = coming in glory at the end of the Tribulation)
3. Revelation 19 teaches that when the Lord comes in glory, his saints will accompany him
4. The implication is that those souls you win will be your own special joy in that day

D. 1 Thess 3.12-13

1. Paul prays that the disciples may abound in love toward one another
2. The prayer is for their spiritual stability in preparation for the coming of the Lord with all his saints
3. This also refers to the coming in glory with the saints (Rev 19)

E. 1 Thess 4.13-18

1. Just as surely as Christ died and rose again, God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Jesus (13-14). This appears to be related to the coming in glory.
2. The reason we can have assurance of this:
 - a. By the word of the Lord, Paul assures us that those who live and remain unto the coming of the Lord will not precede [rise before] the ones who have fallen asleep (died) (15)
 - b. The resurrection of the saints will occur like this (16-17)
 - 1) The Lord will descend from heaven with signs
 - a) A shout
 - b) The voice of the archangel
 - c) The trumpet of God

- 2) The dead in Christ will rise first
 - 3) Then the living saints will be “caught up together with them”
 - 4) The whole body will meet the Lord in the air
3. Then we shall always be with the Lord from that point on
- a. Note: the Lord doesn’t descend to the earth, only from heaven to meet the saints in the air
 - b. The saints join the Lord and accompany him when he returns again to the earth (Rev 19)
4. This is the most detailed exposition of the Rapture in the Bible

F. 1 Thess 5.1-9

1. The Day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night
 - a. The beginning of the Tribulation Period is first in the Day of the Lord
 - b. There are no signs prophesied before this day comes, except the Rapture
 - c. The Rapture marks the beginning of the Tribulation Period, it is a sign for those left behind
 - d. For more on the Day of the Lord, see Joel 2.1-11, esp. v. 2
2. When men say, “Peace and Safety,” sudden destruction will come upon them (3)
 - a. The Covid crisis demonstrates how much people will give up for peace and safety
 - b. The coming antichrist will promise peace and safety in a coming crisis — but destruction will soon follow
3. Believers are not in darkness that that day (the Tribulation) should overtake them as a thief
4. We are not of the night; therefore, let us be watching and be sober

5. God has not appointed us unto wrath, but unto obtaining salvation (9)
 - a. Since the Tribulation Period is wrath, we should escape it (Rev. 6.17)
 - b. Posttribulationists must show that the wrath of the Tribulation is not God's wrath
6. The order of these passages is a strong point for the Pretribulation Rapture position

G. 1 Thess 5.23-24

Paul prays that the disciples may be sanctified wholly, and may be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.