

2 Thessalonians 5:30 - "Peace And Safety" ?

Post by "Don" of October 7, 2023 at 8:41 PM

I would find this an interesting thread and plan to contribute as I'm able. I want to start with just one point of Dewitt's: That the "Peace and Safety" in 2 Thessalonians 5:30 identifies the group speaking as Epicureans.

Here's the verse in context:

Quote from 2 Thessalonians 5:3 NRSV

5 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! 4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; 5 for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. 6 So, then, let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober, 7 for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night.

Here is where for the first time in the St. Paul book that Dewitt declares "Peace and Safety" are Epicurean "catchwords." :

By good luck he arrived safely at the refuge of his choice, the city of Lampsacus on the Hellespont, now the Dardanelles; but on the way he was in danger of death by exposure or of capture by pirates, and he narrowly escaped shipwreck. This painful experience was taken to heart. Never again did he invite persecution.

Instead he took the determination to confine himself to peaceful methods and even prescribed rules of safety for his followers in his Authorized Doctrines. Thus the words **Peace** and Safety became catchwords of his sect and unless we are aware of this fact we shall fail to recognize the meaning of Paul in First Thessalonians 5:3: "For when they shall say **Peace** and Safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them." This version, however, leaves something to be desired; it would be more accurate to read: "For at the very time that the words **Peace** and Safety are on their lips, sudden destruction is hanging over them."

I'll admit I was guilty using them as a salutation on them forum when I first started posting here.

However, Dewitt's assertion is simply that: an assertion. Paul is simply saying that when people think "There's peace and safety" they can be wrong, they are wrong. Just when they think it's safe, "sudden destruction will come upon them."

Here are some commentaries:

[1 Thessalonians 5:3 Commentaries: 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.](#)

Quote from Selection from those commentaries linked above

Peace and safety.—Carrying on the thought suggested by the word “night; they are taking their repose in security, without dreaming of any interruption to their slumbers. Is it possible that there may here be a faint recollection of the parable related in Matthew 25:1-13? (Parable of Ten Virgins and their lamps)

...

[ὅταν λέγωσιν] when they shall say, when it is said. As the subject of the verb, the apostle naturally thinks not on the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Harduin), but, as is evident from the nature of the expression of opinion added, and from the apodosis, unbelievers and merely nominal Christians, the children of this world; comp. Matthew 24:38 ff.; Luke 17:26 ff. For the pious and true Christian never abandons himself to the feeling of security, but is always mindful of his salvation with fear and trembling; comp. Php 2:12.

[εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια] {peace and safety) sc. ἐστίν; comp. Ezekiel 13:10. {Because, in truth, because they have misled my people, saying, “Peace,” when there is no peace; and because, when the people build a wall, these prophets smear whitewash on it.}

...

3. For when they shall say] Rather, when they are saying (R. V.). In the very act of their saying “Peace and safety”—just when men of the world pronounce everything secure and quiet—then the thief comes, who steals from them the possessions they imagined safe from all attack. A reminiscence of Ezekiel 13:10, “Saying Peace, and there was no peace!” Such times of security are pregnant with judgement to the wicked, and premonitory of some “day of the Lord.”

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I see no reason in the context of 1 Thessalonians 5:3 to assert that Epicureans are the ones to whom Paul is ascribing "Peace and Safety" as some kind of catchword or greeting or anything.