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“For when they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief” (1 Thessalonians 5:3-4).

Right now, the world is in such turmoil that people are asking, “Is the world spinning out of control? Are we seeing the winding up of history?” We now understand what Jesus meant when he said: “There will be a distress of nations; no one can escape. The powers of the heavens will be shaken” (Luke 21:25-26).

When Jesus gave that warning, he added this statement: “Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near” (21:27-28).

All the terrifying things we see coming upon the earth right now have to do with the coming of Christ. Beyond all the gross darkness covering the earth, a cloud is being formed in heaven, and one day soon Christ is going to enter that cloud and reveal himself to the whole world. “When you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near” (21:31).

The Christians in Paul’s day wanted him to write about prophetic times and Paul responded that “the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God” (1 Thessalonians 4:16). He went on to further describe the event and then he said, “Therefore comfort one another with these words” (4:18).

Paul’s exhortation was meant to be an encouragement. Likewise, today, we are not to fret or be overly concerned over current events because we well know that it is all signaling the coming of the Lord Jesus to take away his people.

When Jesus said, “Look up” (Luke 21:28), he was telling us to keep our focus on him and his soon return! Truly, this is our wonderful hope!