

STANDING FIRM

Part Six: *aware, alert, sober*

October 8, 2023

This fall, we're studying the Apostle Paul's letters to the Thessalonians to learn how to stand firm in the Lord. Last Sunday, we looked at 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 where Paul teaches the Thessalonians about the Rapture. Today, we are going to study 5:1-11 where Paul tells the Thessalonians to be aware, alert, and sober because the Day of the Lord is coming.

Paul begins a new subject in 1 Thessalonians 5:1.

It is obvious that Paul is changing subjects in 5:1 because he uses the transitional phrase "*Now concerning*" (1 Cor. 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12). Having answered their questions about the Rapture in 4:13-18, Paul is now going to answer the Thessalonians' questions about other end-time events. Paul's answer at the end of verse one would be better translated as "*God does not want you to know when end-time events will occur*" (Acts 1:7).

Why doesn't God want Christians to know when the end-time events would occur?

- God knows some Christians would stop working, witnessing, and waiting for the Lord Jesus if they knew end-time events were a long way off.

In 5:2-3, Paul reminds the Thessalonians that the Day of the Lord will come unexpectedly.

The word *return* in Vs. 2 was added by the NLT translators. Literal Bible translations interpret Vs. 2 as "*For you know full well that the Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.*"

What is the Day of the Lord?

- The Day of the Lord refers to when God will pour out His wrath on unbelievers before, during, and after the 2nd Coming of Christ.

The Day of the Lord is not a 24-hour day; it is a period when God pours His wrath on those who have rejected His Son. The many judgment-type events that take place during the Day of the Lord will take place during the seven-year Tribulation period, Jesus' second coming, and at the conclusion of His 1000-year Millennium reign (Matt. Chapters 24-25; Rev. Chapters 6-21:1; 2 Peter Chapter 3).

In 5:4-5, Paul tells the Thessalonians they are not in the dark about when the end times will occur.

The Tribulation period, the 2nd Coming of Christ, and the judgments that occur during those events will surprise unbelievers but not God's children. The Bible reveals several signs that signal the Day of the Lord is close.

In 5:6-8, Paul tells the Thessalonians how they should live as children of the light.

Paul says children of the day should...

- Be aware.

Non-Christians don't see how Satan is tempting them to love the things of the world rather than God (2 Cor. 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17), but Christians see the Devil and his evil schemes. Christians know they are at war with a powerful enemy that wants to devour them (1 Peter 5:8-9)!

- Be alert.

Aware means to know you have an enemy that wants to kill you. Alert means to take steps to be prepared for the enemy's attack (2 Tim 2:3-4; 1 Peter 1:13).

- Be sober-minded.

Sober means to be free from the influence of intoxicants. A sober person is in control of their mind, body, and will. Sober Christians do not live thoughtlessly but understand what the Lord wants them to do (Eph. 5:15-20).

- Live in faith, love, and hope.

As soldiers of Jesus Christ, Christians must wear armor to protect themselves from the wiles of the Devil (Eph. 6:10-18; Romans 13:8-14). At the end of verse eight, Paul tells Christians to protect themselves with two important pieces of armor - the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet of the hope of salvation. Faith in God and love for Him protect a Christian from the Devil's temptations, and the hope of salvation assures a Christian that he will be delivered from the wrath of God.

In 5:9-11, Paul tells the Thessalonians they will be saved from God's wrath.

In verses 6-8, Paul tells Christians to live *aware, alert, sober, and in armor* because they are children of the light. In verses 9-11, Paul tells Christians to live for Jesus because He is going to save them from God's wrath. Christians will not face God's wrath on the Day of the Lord (Rev. 6:17), nor His eternal wrath in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:11-15) because Jesus is going to take them to Heaven.

Takeaways...

1. God wants us to live in constant expectation of end-time events.
2. We do not have a specific date for end-time events, but the Bible gives us several signs that signal when the Day of the Lord is near.
3. Christians should be aware, alert, sober-minded, and live in faith, love, and hope.
4. Christians have no need to fear God's wrath (Romans 5:1; 8:1).