

1 Thessalonians 5:1-28

The Day of the Lord

“Because the church saints will be removed from the earth by the rapture, they will be spared the horrible judgments of the Day of the Lord. Paul says the church was ‘uniformed’ about the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13), but believers were already aware of the Day of the Lord (5:1) because it is mentioned multiple times in the Old Testament. The Thessalonian congregation knew ‘full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night’ (verse 2).

Most of the Bible’s references to the Day of the Lord have to do with the seven-year Tribulation. There are seven main passages. This day will come upon the world (Isaiah 2:12-22), will fall upon the wicked (13:6-16), will devastate many of the nations of the Middle East (Ezekiel 30:1-9), will affect the vegetation of the earth (Joel 1:15-20), will bring ruin to Edom, or present-day southern Jordan (Obadiah 20), will be a time of darkness and distress (Zephaniah 1:14-28), and will come suddenly when the world will be saying ‘peace and safety’ (1 Thessalonians 5:3). When this awful period arrives, the church will be gone (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18).” Lahaye/Hindson

5:1 The level of teaching the Thessalonian believers received from Paul in their spiritual infancy shows that even as very young believers, they had been given the ability to know and understand end time prophecy. It seems that there was an urgency in informing them of what to expect. Unfortunately, many churches today minimize its importance much to the spiritual detriment of those who attend.

- In the short time Paul was with them, he taught about what to look for and what to expect prior to and after the rapture.

Chronos, denotes "a space of time," whether long or short:

Kairos, "a season, a time, a period" possessed of certain characteristics. Strong’s Concordance

- Chronos refers to chronological time. Kairos refers to time in terms of events, years, or seasons. Both nouns are plural meaning many different time periods and events will take place leading up to and during the time of the Day of the Lord.

“To know when the Day of the Lord will come would foster spiritual indifference if it were still a long way off, or panic if it were coming soon. Being spiritually prepared for the return of Christ does not involve date setting, clock-setting, or sign seeking. God has chosen not to reveal the specific time of end-time events so that all believers will live in constant anticipation of them.” MacArthur

“It does not refer to a single day, but to a season when God rapidly advances His agenda to the end of the age. The day of the Lord is a familiar Old Testament expression. It denotes the day when God intervenes in history to judge His enemies, deliver His people, and establish His kingdom.” (Hiebert)

5:2 *“That day begins immediately after the Rapture of the church and ends with the conclusion of the Millennium. This day is a major theme in prophecy with its fullest exposition in Revelation 6-19.” Walvoord*

- The occurrence of the Day of the Lord will come upon the world suddenly and without warning.

Matt. 24:43-44 *But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.*

"The 'Day of the Lord' concept has a considerable background in the O.T. There it appears quite consistently to refer to a time when the Lord manifests Himself in wrath.

Generally the Day of the Lord is associated with darkness, thick clouds, gloom, and strong manifestations of God's disfavor. However, in the dark clouds there is a silver lining for the remnant, the true spiritual people of God. In wrath God always remembers mercy. Among OT references to the Day of the Lord are the following:

Isaiah 13:6-11 -- "Wail, for the day of the Lord is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. Therefore all hands will fall limp. And every man's heart will melt. And they will be terrified, pains and anguish will take hold of them; they will writhe like a woman in labor, they will look at one another in astonishment, their faces aflame. Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; the sun will be dark when it rises, and the moon will not shed its light. Thus I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud, and abase the haughtiness of the ruthless."

Ezekiel 30:1-3 -- "The word of the Lord came again to me saying, Son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Wail, Alas for the day!" ' For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near; it will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations."

Joel 2:1-2a -- "Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming; surely it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness."

Zephaniah 1:14-18 -- "Near is the great day of the Lord, near and coming very quickly. Listen, the day of the Lord! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. A day of wrath is that day, a day of trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and battle cry, against the fortified cities and the high corner towers. And I will bring distress on men, so that they will walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the Lord; and their blood will be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them on the day of the Lord's wrath; and all the earth will be devoured in the fire of His jealousy. For He will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth."

Malachi 4:5 -- "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord."

Acts 2:18-20 -- "Even upon My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth My spirit and they shall prophesy. And I will grant wonders in the sky above, and signs on the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great day of the Lord shall come" (quoted from Joel 2:29-31)

I Thessalonians 5:1-5 -- "Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are

not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness;"

II Peter 3:10 -- "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the element, will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up."

Among these OT (and a few NT) references to the Day of the Lord should also be included Isaiah 34:1-8; 5:18-20; Obadiah 15-21; and Zephaniah 1:7-13 and 2:1-3. In all these references it is interesting to note that God's wrath upon mankind includes both temporal and eternal expressions of wrath. Punishment for iniquity includes both temporal punishment (i.e., punishments here on earth) and eternal punishment (in the eternal state)." Robert Duzweiler

5:3 Paul refers to those who are caught off guard as "**they**," meaning unbelievers. He also uses a double negative "**(oú ou, no/not) they will (μή μέ, not) escape**" to emphasize that no one on earth will escape the Day of the Lord. When it happens, it will catch everyone off guard, especially Israel.

"Israel's state of security and rest is a precondition for the Ezekiel invasion (Ezek. 38:1-11). It is entirely possible that this invasion may take place sometime after the rapture but before the beginning of the tribulation. Keep in mind that the tribulation period does not begin immediately after the rapture. There may be some years between the rapture and the beginning of the tribulation period. The covenant the antichrist signs with Israel represents the actual beginning of the tribulation period (Daniel 9:27)." Ron Rhodes

Ezek. 38:1-11 *The word of the Lord came to me: 2 "Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshek and Tubal; prophesy against him 3 and say: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against you, Gog, chief prince of Meshek and Tubal. 4 I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws and bring you out with your whole army—your horses, your horsemen fully armed, and a great horde with large and small shields, all of them brandishing their swords. 5 Persia, Cush and Put will be with them, all with shields and helmets, 6 also Gomer with all its troops, and Beth Togarmah from the far north with all its troops—the many nations with you. 7 "Get ready; be prepared, you and all the hordes gathered about you, and take command of them. 8 After many days you will be called to arms. In future years you will invade a land that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate. They had been brought out from the nations, and now all of them live in safety. 9 You and all your troops and the many nations with you will go up, advancing like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land. 10 "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: On that day thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil scheme. 11 You will say, "I will invade a land of unwalled villages; I will attack a peaceful and unsuspecting people—all of them living without walls and without gates and bars.*

Identifying God, Magog, and the Kings of the North and South:

"Ezekiel 38:1-2: The word of the Lord came to me: 'Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal;

-Magog, Meshech, and Tubal were all sons of Japheth, who was one of the three sons of Noah. Japheth and his family migrated to the area of modern-day Russia (Genesis 10:2-3).

-Gog is a person who rules over the land of Magog (Russia).

-Magog means the 'Prince of Rosh.' (Gog) Rosh is the old root word for the land of Russia.

-God informs Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38:15, 'You will come from your place in the far North' (the --- Hebrew word means "the uttermost part of the North.')

What's north of Jerusalem? Moscow. What is north Russia? Nothing.

-Meshech is the old name for the capital of Western Russia, which is known today as Moscow.

-Tubal is identified as a city in Siberia.

-Gog (Russia) is the King of the North. The King of the South is an Arab-African coalition.

-Ezekiel 38:5-6 identifies the rest of the nations that are dragged into battle between Gog and Magog, versus the Kings of the South: Persia, 'Cush and Put will be with them, all with shields and helmets, also Gomer with all its troops, and Beth Togarmah from the far north with all its troops—the many nations with you.'

-Persia is a reference to modern-day Iran.

-Cush describes present-day Ethiopia and the black nations of Central Africa.

-Put and Libya are located in northern Africa.

-Gomer is the people who settled in Germany.

-Beth Togarmah is Asia Minor and Turkey." (crosswalk.com)

5:4 Paul reminds us that we are not of the group surprised by the Day of the Lord. We are not in the dark about when it occurs because we, as children of God, live in the light of the truth of God's Word, which keeps us aware of what is yet to be fulfilled on God's prophetic calendar.

Colossians 1:13 *For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,*

5:5 *"In Semitic languages (such as Hebrew) to be the 'son of' a quality meant to be characterized by that quality. Christians don't simply live in the light; they are characterized by the light." NIV ft. note*

- The difference between a believer and a nonbeliever in the choices made morally, spiritually, and emotionally should be as noticeable as the difference between night and day.

Eph. 5:8-10 *8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), 10 and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.*

1 Jn. 1:5-7 *This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*

5:6-7 The exhortation to be alert and self-controlled means that we are to keep ourselves from being sucked into the godless ways of the world. It's easy to get drawn in, that's why we are exhorted to be careful about its deceptive allurements especially with the rise of A.I., the influence of social media, the pressure to accept insidious wokeism, and the constant occurrence of lies and scams meant to trap and ensnare us to the evil, godless ways of the world.

Titus 2:11-13 For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. 12 It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

5:8-11 Our identity is in Christ. He is the one who defines us, not the way we were raised, or the sins of the past no matter how egregious, nor our jobs, financial status, or anything else for that matter. Therefore, we are to do everything in His power to protect being conformed into His likeness. Paul uses the metaphor of a soldier to show us how we are to dress to safeguard our identity in Christ.

Gal. 3:27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

What a soldier in Christ is to put on daily:

1. The breastplate of faith and love.

- The **breastplate** of a Roman soldier covered him from neck to waist to protect his vital organs. It kept him alive in one-to-one combat.

“Faith in God protects inwardly and love for people protects outwardly. These two graces cannot be separated.” Walvoord

- **Faith** equates to putting our trust in God and His ways, not in the world and its ways. What we are to ask ourselves is, is this God’s will, is this what He wants for me, am I willing to trust Him to provide a solution to my problems?
- **Love** is an *agape love*. It goes hand and hand with faith and is meant to keep us from being so self-centered that we fail to let the fruit of the Spirit bless others through us. Satan’s ways will keep us fearful, divided, self-protective, apathetic and angry, which leaves little room for God’s love, grace, and mercy to be shown toward others let alone ourselves.

2. The **helmet of hope**.

- A Roman Soldier’s helmet protected him from receiving a devastating head wound.

“the hope of salvation guards our heads from attacks on our thinking.” Walvoord

Hebrews 6:18-20 God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. 19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, 20 where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

5:9 The word “**for, since, because**” gives us another reason why we must be prepared for the rapture. When we hear the Lord’s loud command, the voice of the arch angel and the trumpet call of God, we will immediately leave this earth regardless of what we might be doing.

Phil. 1:27-28 27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel 28 without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God.

1 John 2:28 *And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.*

- 1 Thess. 5:9 understood in the context of 1 Thess. 4 & 5 gives us good reason to believe that the church will be spared from the day of the Lord. The salvation we received spares us from God's wrath against our sin, but also from experiencing His wrath against the world and its sinful ways. We are not destined to receive His wrath in any way.

Romans 5:9 *Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.*

- The tribulation that God's wrath brings upon the world starts at the beginning of the Day of the Lord, not halfway through.

First Thessalonians 5:9 says that the church has not been appointed "to suffer wrath but to receive salvation." This would seem to indicate that believers will not experience the tribulation. However, midtribulationism interprets "wrath" as only referring to the second half of the tribulation—specifically, the bowl judgments. Limiting the word in such a way seems unwarranted, however. Surely the terrible judgments contained in the seals and trumpets—including famine, poisoned rivers, a darkened moon, bloodshed, earthquakes, and torment—could also be considered the wrath of God.

Midtribulationism places the rapture in Revelation 11, prior to the start of the great tribulation. There are two problems with this placement in the chronology of Revelation. First, the only occurrence of the term "great tribulation" in the entire book of Revelation is in 7:14, before the opening of the seventh seal. Second, the only reference to a "great day of wrath" is in Revelation 6:17, during the events of the sixth seal. Both of these references come too early for a midtribulational rapture, which is timed according to the seventh trumpet. gotquestions.org

5:10 To be awake or asleep refers to believers who are either dead or alive in Christ (4:13-18). It also refers to those who are either spiritually alert or spiritually dull (5:6). He died for us no matter what state we might be in when He returns for us.

- He uses the same words for "awake" and "asleep" in verse 6.

5:11 It is the responsibility of the body of Christ to encourage and build one another up. It is something we are to all share in. Anticipation for His return is a key part of that.

5:12-28 In Paul's closing remarks, he gives instructions on how to encourage one another and build one another up in the Lord. It is what God expects, and it is our responsibility to do so. How we treat one another reflects greatly on our understanding of the faith, love and hope we've been given in Christ.

1 Peter 3:8-14 *8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. 11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! 13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*