

5.31.20 ~ 1Thessalonians 5:1-11, The Day of the Lord: Part Two

Last week we began by looking at **1Thessalonians 5:1-3**. We spent most of our time together studying the phrase “the day of the Lord.” But there are more phrases (**verses 2-3**) with deep eschatological importance, packed full of theological wealth, like a treasure chest full of precious jewels. I am excited to have the opportunity to unpack these powerful phrases for you, as we continue our study about “the day of the Lord.”

Notice in the beginning of **verse 2**, Paul reminds the Thessalonians that they know *full well*, meaning they know for certain, without any doubt, i.e., it is confirmed by their knowledge of Scripture that, “the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.” It doesn’t say that the Lord will come like a thief in the night, but that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night, i.e., unexpectedly, suddenly, without specific warning.

As I mentioned last week, the events that are included in *the day of the Lord* are set off by the Rapture of the Church, when we will be caught up to meet Christ in the air. After that event will come the Rise of the Antichrist, the Tribulation Period, the Second Coming of Christ, Armageddon, Satan’s Imprisonment, the Millennial Kingdom, Satan’s Release, Worldwide Rebellion, the White Throne Judgment, and the Destruction of the Heavens and the Earth; all of these occur during the period of time known as *the day of the Lord*, which (**5:1**) is made up of times “*Chronos*” (clock/calendar) and epochs “*Kairos*” (special events/periods of time].

There is a day called the Great Day of the Lord (cf. **Zephaniah 1:14**), that speaks of the Second Coming, at the end of the 7-year tribulation, when Christ returns to the earth (cf. **Revelation 19**) as a victorious warrior on a white stallion. He will render judgment on everyone alive (at that time) who rejects Him.

Note: When Jesus came to earth the first time, He was born to a virgin named Mary, in Judea, in Bethlehem. He was a helpless baby boy, yet He was given the Hebrew name Yeshua [Greek, *Jesus*] meaning *God’s Salvation*; and He was called (in Hebrew) *Immanuel* (cf. **Isaiah 7:14**), and in **Matthew 1:23**, we are told it means *God with us*. Jesus was raised in Galilee in obscurity, and at the age of 30 He began His mission (**John 1**) as the Lamb of God, with God the Father declaring from heaven that “this is My Son.” He was put to death three years later, as full payment to God for the sins of all people for all time. Most of the world rejects Him as God; His own people (the Jews) cried out for Him to be crucified, and so He was put to death, buried, and on the third day He rose from the grave, just like He had repeatedly told His followers He would. He also told them that He would return to take them to be with Him forever.

The timing of the Lord’s return in the air is unknown, but could happen at any time, as all things in Scripture have been fulfilled for the Rapture to occur.

But the Second Coming of Christ to the earth will come like a thief in the night, and it will be terrifying for those who are there who reject the Lord, for *the Day of the Lord* will catch unbelievers by surprise (**1Thessalonians 5:3**), "While they are saying, 'Peace and safety!' destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape."

Does the Bible use the imagery of a thief coming at night, anywhere else? Yes!

Please turn to **Matthew 24:42-44...** Christ's return should not surprise you like a thief breaking into your home. Think about that! If you are awakened at night to the sound of what you think is a thief in your house, it might cause you to become fearful; however, if you are awakened at night to the sound of what you believe is a loved one returning home from a long trip, you will most likely be joyful and happy, for you have been expecting them.

Jesus (when He was on earth) told His disciples that only the Father knows the timing of His return, but that they should be ready, and that there would be signs (times and epochs) that would lead up to His return to the earth.

Please look at **Matthew 24:4-5, 11...** It would seem that one of the first signs of Christ's Return, and of the end of the age, will be the appearance of many false Christ's and false prophets, who will mislead [deceive] many (**2Timothy 3:13**), "Evil men and imposters will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived."

In 1954, Sun Myung Moon started the Unification Church in Korea; it was believed by its members that at age 15 Jesus Himself anointed Moon as the Messiah to carry out God's unfinished work and become the father of all humanity. Moon did mass weddings, e.g., at Madison Square Garden in 1982, over 2,000 couples were married, becoming "Moonies," children of Moon. In 2004, in front of astonished members of Congress at a Capitol Hill luncheon, Moon had himself crowned "humanity's savior."

In 1978, Jim Jones convinced his followers, from the People's Temple, to drink Kool-aid laced with cyanide: 913 adults and children died, including Jones, who declared that he was the reincarnated Christ; yet, his body remains in the mass grave where it was buried in Oakland, CA.

In 1993, David Koresh was the leader of a group of 76 Branch Davidian members (including 28 children), who lived at a ranch near Waco, Texas, where they would all die with him, believing he was the Christ, the Anointed One to Whom the Seven Seals in the Book of Revelation was given.

In 1995, Marshall Applewhite posted an internet message saying, "I [AM], Jesus —Son of God," referring to himself as the Second Coming of Christ. On March 26, 1997, 39 members of Applewhite's Heaven's Gate cult committed suicide, so their souls might supposedly rendezvous with a spaceship, said to be following the Hale-Bopp comet, that would take them to heaven.

We should not be surprised that many have already come who claimed to be Christ, for Jesus told us this would happen; but everyone of those so-called Christ's is dead and their bodies remain in the graves.

Let's take a look some more times and epochs that will lead up to the time of Christ's return to the earth, at the end of the Tribulation Period.

Please look at **Matthew 24:6-7...** Worldwide chaos will continue to become more and more intense, expressed by wars, famines, earthquakes, etc. Listen to this quote from the World Meteorological Organization in Geneva: "Floods, heat, cold and other extreme weather changes are [consistently] increasing in intensity as well as frequency," and have been doing so decade by decade, since the 1950's.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology states, "storms are lasting longer at higher intensity than they were 30 years ago; hurricane durations have increased by about 60% since 1949, and the average peak storm wind speeds have increased about 50% since the 1970s."

Now, please look at **Matthew 24:8**. Do you see that? All these things are said to merely be the beginning of birthing pains, as sin takes its toll on this planet: famines, earthquakes, floods, draughts, tornadoes, hurricanes, tsunamis, rising heat and freezing temperatures, are on the increase worldwide; not to mention new viruses that are killing hundreds of thousands of people.

Sin is taking its toll on the people of this planet: calamities and confusion have led to an escalating spiritual and mental health crisis; unspeakable crimes are committed against adults and children, our prisons are overcrowded, and people are stressed out and weary: psychologically, physiologically, and emotionally.

2Timothy 3:1-5, *"Realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."* "...Avoid such men as these."

No one escapes consequences in a world like that, but the people of God have been equipped to endure in the midst of the chaos and destruction in this world.

Philippians 4:6-7, *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* **13**, *"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."* **19**, *"And my God will supply [all] your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."*

Romans 12:17-18, *"Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."*

See again **1Thessalonians 5:3**, "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."

Arabs and Jews have been warring and killing one another for 4000 years; and yet after the rapture of the Church, when the Antichrist rises to power, he will broker a 7-year peace treaty between Israel and the Arab nations, and there will be a short-lived time of "peace" between them, unlike anything that has ever happened in history.

Daniel 9:27, "He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering."

We are told that 3.5 years into the 7-year peace treaty, the Jews are offering sacrifices in their temple, on the same site as the Dome of the Rock (the Islamic shrine located on the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem, where the Jewish Temple used to be until AD 70, when it was torn down and destroyed.

The Antichrist [the abomination that causes desolation, **Daniel 9:27; 12:11; Matthew 24:15**] will stand in the Holy of Holies in the Temple and he will put a stop to all sacrifice and worship of both the God of Judaism and the god of the Islam, demanding that he alone is to be worshipped.

This event leads to worldwide confusion and chaos, destruction and death, during the last 3.5 years of the Tribulation, known as the Great Tribulation, a time when God's wrath will be poured out like never before, and never again (**Matthew 24:21**), "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will."

What you need to know and to make sure of today, is this: If you have not repented of your sins and trusted in Jesus Christ for Salvation, you need to do that right now, right here.

Why is salvation through God's Son the most important heart/mind decision you will ever make? I'm so glad you asked (**Romans 3:10-12, 23-24; 5:8; 6:23; 10:9-10; 8:1; Acts 2:21; 4:12**).

As a Christian, a believer and follower of Christ, you are granted forgiveness for all your sins (past, present, future), and eternal life; therefore you should seek to live for Christ, and until we die or He returns for us, we are to be living out and proclaiming with urgency, compassion, boldness, and humility the Good News of Jesus Christ [crucified, resurrected, and coming again], so that others might be saved.

Pastor Mike
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