

DAILY BIBLE STUDIES

“...As a Thief in the Night”

1 Thessalonians 5:1 - 4

JULY 13 – JULY 19, 2008

THE LORD'S DAY – This week we begin our study of the final chapter of **1 Thessalonians**. The Apostle is wrapping up his thoughts concerning the return of Jesus before he shifts to some various practical exhortations on how we need to be living in light of these coming realities. This week we will focus on the first **4 verses** of the chapter as Paul wraps up his thoughts concerning Jesus’ return saying among other things that, *“the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night”*. Read **1 Thessalonians 5:1-4**.

What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: Ask God to teach you from His Word this week.

MONDAY –To begin this week, let me quote from John Gill (1697-1771), an English Baptist pastor and scholar, who sets up our study, “In this chapter the apostle discourses concerning the suddenness of Christ's coming, and the necessity of sobriety and watchfulness, and being on our guard with respect unto it. Having spoken of the coming of Christ in the preceding chapter, the apostle signifies he had no need to write of the time and season of it; since it was a well known thing that it would be sudden, and at an unawares, like the coming of a thief in the night, and the travail of a woman with child, though certain and inevitable; and would bring sure destruction on wicked men, unthought-of by them (**5:1**), but such was the state and condition of the saints, being not in the night of nature's darkness and unregeneracy, but enlightened by the spirit of God, that they were not ignorant of these things, nor liable to be surprised unawares hereby (**5:4**.” Gill gives us the main thrust of the first four verses; namely, that *“The Day of The Lord”* will come with sudden and terrible judgment for the unbeliever while at the same time be a welcomed comfort for those true believers, who are in Christ. Read **Mark 13:29, Luke 21:28**.

What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: Jesus thanks for Your promise to return to earth both to bring judgment but also the fullness of salvation to us who eagerly await You.

TUESDAY –In this weeks passage there is a phrase used which is used throughout Scripture and it is “The Day of The Lord”. What exactly is the Day of The Lord? For some explanation I quote R.C. Sproul in “The Last Days According to Jesus” as he comments, “The idea of God visiting His people is closely linked to the coming “day of the Lord”. The phrase “day of the Lord” figures heavily in Old Testament prophecy. Originally it was a day of redemption that the people

W @ K L J P r a J @ r J O U r n a l

Praise & Prayer	ADORATION Hallowed be Your name. (6:9)	AUTHORITY Your Kingdom come... (6:10)	APPEAL Give us this day... (6:11)	AQUITTAL Forgive us our debts... (6:12)	ASSISTANCE Deliver us from evil. (6:13a)	ADMIRATION For Yours is the Kingdom... (6:13)
Lord's Day						
Mon						
Tue						
Wed						
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M a t t h @ W 6: 9-13

anticipated with great joy. As the faith and practice of the nation of Israel degenerates, the phrase undergoes a development. It becomes loaded more and more with forecasts of doom and judgment. Yet it also retains a note of hope for the faithful.” Many have seen “The Day of the Lord” as a period of time or seen it in phases although Scripture is clear as it points forward to this culminating in one “day”. Scripture points to this idea of one, final day in the very first time the phrase *Day of the Lord* is mentioned in the Bible. In **Isaiah 2** the prophet wrote that “*the Lord alone will be exalted in that day*” and that He will abolish idols as they will “*utterly vanish*”. This is an exclusive statement. We read in Scripture that in the final tribulation days of this earth both the Antichrist and other idols will be worshipped as God. These two things (Christ *alone* being exalted and the worship of idols and a false Christ) cannot happen at the same time according to Isaiah’s prophecy in Scripture. Nothing, including The Antichrist can be worshipped in the Day of the Lord, since Isaiah says the Lord ALONE will be exalted. Read **Isaiah 2:10-22**.

What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: *Father, thank You that there is a day coming when Jesus Christ ALONE will be worshipped and we as His Your people will be with You.*

WEDNESDAY –Paul begins **verse 1** saying he does not need to write to the Thessalonians “*concerning the times and the seasons...*” This again brings us to the question of “timing” concerning Jesus’ return? Paul gives some answers in the verses which follow. There has been much discussion from some scholars in attempt to separate the theme of chapter **4:13-18** (the “parousia”) from the theme of chapter **5:1-11**(The Day of The Lord). Just on the surface by reading the text, it appears obvious to me that the apostle flows on in the same thoughts he has just been explaining. The ease in which Paul moves between the parousia and The Day of the Lord without explanation or differentiation argues strongly for their identification. The word “*but*” which opens **chapter 5** (remember there where no chapter breaks in the original letter) is the Greek particle *de*. It is a conjunction which is continuative and adversative. As Robert Gundry states citing Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich in their Greek Lexicon, “the particle implies a shift in thought, but not without close connection with the foregoing thought. Sometimes the adversative sense drops out altogether.” It would seem without question that the verses of **chapter 5** are a continuation of the subject of the coming of the Lord as the Apostle here links the return of Jesus with the time when judgment will fall on unbelievers and “*they will not escape*”. While he at the very same time tells believers to look for the signs and be comforted in knowing they are not “*appointed to wrath*” but instead for salvation and will not be caught unprepared at Christ’s return. This however provides a problem for those who would argue for a secret, pre-tribulational rapture of the church. Scripture gives clear, divinely appointed signs which inform believers to look and see that Christ, “*the judge*”, is “*at the door*”. Read **2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, James 5:7-9**.

What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: *Father, thanks for giving us Your Word & Spirit to guide us & teach us that we can live prepared for all things including Christ’s return.*

THURSDAY –Commenting on **verse 2** I again quote John Gill from his “Exposition of the Bible”, “For yourselves know perfectly ... With great exactness and accuracy, with great clearness and perspicuity, as a certain truth, which was made plain and evident to them, and about which there could be no question; and which perfect knowledge they had, either from the words of Christ, or from the ministration of the apostle and his fellow labourers, when among them: that the day of the Lord; of the Lord Jesus, when he will show himself to be King of kings, and Lord of lords, and the Judge of the whole earth; and which is sometimes styled the day of the Son of man, and the day of God, for Christ will appear then most gloriously, both in his divine and human nature; the day of redemption, that is, of the body from the grave, and from corruption and mortality; and the last day in which will be the resurrection of the dead, and the day of judgment, in which Christ will come to judge the quick and dead: and which so cometh as a thief in the night; at an unawares, and the Lord himself in that day will so come. Respect is had not to the character of the thief, nor to the end of his coming; but to the manner of it, in the dark, indiscernibly, suddenly, and when not thought of and looked for; and such will be the coming of Christ, it will be sudden, and unknown before hand, and when least thought of and expected: and since the Thessalonians knew this full well, it was needless for the apostle to write about the time and season of it; which they were sensible of, could no more be known and fixed, than the coming of a thief into anyone of their houses.” Read **Luke 12:39-40**.

What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: *God, help me to study and “know perfectly” Your Word.*

FRIDAY –We see in **verses 3-4** as well as other Scriptures that it is the ungodly, wicked, and unbelieving that find themselves caught by the sudden coming of the Lord as a thief. We will deal with this in more detail this upcoming Lord’s Day. Read **2 Peter 3:10, Revelation 3:3, 16:15**.

What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: *Jesus, help me preach the gospel to those unprepared.*

SATURDAY –We find great hope as believers in **verse 4** and we will pick up here next time. Briefly, we see in this verse that believers are not in darkness so that this day “*should overtake you as a thief*.” Instead of being overtaken, we are “*sons of light*” and are to live prepared, unashamed, and expectant of Jesus’ return. Read **Ephesians 5:8, 1 John 2:8**.

What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: *Father, help me to live as a “son of light”, prepared for Jesus’ return.*