

'RIGHT & READY'
(Sunday Bible Study Series: 'Ready or Not, Jesus Is Coming!')
Studies in 1 Thessalonians

"On Stand-by While We Wait Jesus' Coming!"

The new church at Thessalonica was excited about the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Although they weren't yet a year old, 'the blessed hope' of the rapture of the church followed by the 2nd coming of Christ was an imminent expectation. *The Thessalonian letters* were written by the apostle Paul from Corinth in AD 50 or 51 to help them establish a stable Christian life while they waited evacuation to the clouds above the earth (*1 Thessalonians 4:16-18*). The thrill of their imminent departure was to be accompanied by a normal, godly lifestyle of daily submission to God. This stable, joyful anticipation would encourage growth in grace in the church and was attractive to non-Christians watching their exemplary lifestyle.

Obviously, the Savior did not return during the lives of those first Century believers, but all successive generations of Christians are wise to follow the wisdom given in the *Thessalonian letters*. Twenty centuries have come and gone without hearing the voice of the archangel, the trumpet of God, and the call of Christ evacuating His bride, the Church, from the wrath of the coming Tribulation. Of what may be the last generation, we Christians have more reason than ever to think Jesus is coming soon:

1. The return of Jews from exile to Palestine in the 20th Century- Zionist Movement 1898 (*Ezekiel 37*)
2. The formation of the State of Israel in 1948 (*Luke 21:29-31*)
3. The Jewish control of Jerusalem in May 1967 (*Daniel 9:24-27*)
4. The ecumenical movement to unite all religion 1949 (*Revelation 13*)
5. The revival of the old Roman Empire as the E.U since 1949 (*Daniel 2, Revelation 17*)
6. The start of apostasy toward humanistic Christendom (*2 Timothy 4:1-4, Revelation 3:14-21*)
7. The shocking moral debauchery and lustfulness in society (*2 Timothy 3:1-5*)
8. The escalating social and natural disasters at one time, globally (*Matthew 24:7*)
9. The opening of the seal judgments of Revelation 6 in this century.
10. The Jewish holiday calendar (The Year of Jubilee in 2017 – 50 years since #3).
11. The current pressure for Israel to sign an international treaty with Palestinians (*Daniel 9:27*)

Christians in our day not only have the certainty of being 20 centuries closer to 'the day' of our Lord's imminent return, but the 'hand-writing' is on the wall – Jesus is coming soon. While we wait, God's people are to have composure, grace, and stability in our daily lives fueled by an inner thrill that someday soon we will be 'caught up...into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air' (*1 Thessalonians 4:17*).

Rapture (imminent)

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

The snatching away of believers from the earth concluding the Church Age that began at Pentecost (*Acts 2*).

Tribulation (imminent)

1 Thessalonians 5:1-5

The beginning of the Day of The Lord (7-Year Tribulation Period)

- 'Brethren'/ believers are not part of this dark period of God's wrath (see *1:10 & 5:9*) – non-believers, called 'sons of night or darkness,' are of it.
- Believers are 'sons of the day' or the Millennial Kingdom, Jesus will begin at His second coming, where He is called 'the Morning Star'. The 'raptured' believers (*Revelation 7:9-17*) will return with Him at the end of the 7-year Tribulation Period – *Revelation 19:7-16*)

‘CHURCH AGE’ BEFORE THE ‘DAY OF THE LORD’ DARKNESS

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Definitions: - **‘day’** In the biblical understanding (written from the Jewish mind-set) a ‘day’ begins at sundown one day and concludes at the following time of dusk.

‘Day of The LORD’ is a biblical term for a period of time where God executes His last and awesome judgments upon unrepentant, lawless humanity (**OT** references: *Isaiah 2:12-22, Jeremiah 46:10, Joel 2, Amos 5:18-20, Zephaniah 1:14-18, Zechariah 14, Malachi 4*)

NT references: *Acts 2:20, 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 2 Thessalonians 2:2, 2 Peter 3:10*. The ‘Day of The LORD’ is called the ‘Tribulation Period’. It is described in detail in *Revelation 4-19*.

Prophetic scenario for the Day of The LORD:

- 1) **The Church Age** (Pentecost - The Rapture) ends in spiritual dusk of apostasy (defection from Bible truth) (*Matthew 24:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 1 Timothy 4:1-2; 2 Timothy 3:1-9, 4:1-5; 2 Peter 2 & 3; 1 John 2:18-19; Jude*)
- 2) **The Rapture** (snatching away of believers) (*1 Corinthians 15:51-53, Philippians 3:20-21, Colossians 3:4, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, Revelation 2:10*)
- 3) **‘The Day of The Lord’** begins in the darkness of the 7-year Tribulation (*Revelation 4-19*), continues with dawning of a new age as Christ returns to earth (*Revelation 22:16*) and establishes His earthly 1000-year reign as Messiah King on earth (*Revelation 20:1-6*), then concludes in the darkness of final adjudication of the lost at the Great White Throne Judgment (*Revelation 20:7-20*)
- 4) **The eternal state** begins with creation of the “new heavens and earth” (*2 Peter 3:12-13*) and is called “the Day of God.”

‘Twilight Christianity’

(Turning on the Porch Lights as ‘Last Days’ Darkness Falls)

1 Thessalonians 5:8-15

Twilight Discipleship (your security lights)

(Personal vigilance of your heart, mind & speech)

“But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and as a helmet the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another just as you also are doing.” Vs. 8-11

Twilight Fellowship (our head lights)

(Respectful support of leaders & peaceful service unto each other)

“And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the faint-hearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. See, that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.” Vs. 12-15

Twilight Worship (His spot lights)

(Sincere, reverent praise, prayer and thanksgiving)

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” Vs. 16-18