

A Thief In The Night (part 2)

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1 Thessalonians 5:8 “But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.”

It should be noted that as we wait for the Day of the Lord, we are not just going to be sitting on our hands. With the knowledge that we have, who can possibly do nothing to prepare himself for this great day? Instead, the attitude of a warrior must be always on the forefront of our minds. Like soldiers, we are supposed to train ourselves and prepare our minds and bodies for spiritual warfare, having shod ourselves, as it states in Ephesians 6:15, *“with the preparation of the gospel of peace.”* Having studied daily and readied our minds for combat, we are then to take this gospel of peace and proclaim it boldly.

The verse in our text is important because it shows that we are not just witnesses to the Day of the Lord. We are active participants. As we wait for God to come in Judgment, we have a role to play that is essential; we have the role of preachers, every one of us. We have the job of proclaiming the Truth of the Gospel, on every subject, great or small. We have this responsibility! After all, what kind of person clothes himself in battle raiment and then just hides from the *battle*? If God did not want us to fight for Him, then He would not have requested that we clothe ourselves in such a way!

The battle will get ugly, so preparation is absolutely essential. We are not told that it will ever be easy. But if we prove our faith, and focus on the goal, the victory will be ours. As it explains in 2 Corinthians 10:3-6, we have a battle ahead of us – not an earthly one. Our warfare is a spiritual one, fought with words and scriptures, faith and love. Our weapon for this battle is the Word of God, like a two-edged sword, with the power to sink deep into a man’s soul (Hebrews 4:12). Our enemy is Satan, though he has agents implanted all around us (*“. . . the whole world lies in the power of the evil one”* [1 John 5:19]).

5:9 “For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,” 5:10 “who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him.”

“But we are not destined for wrath, but for obtaining salvation. . .” What is more hopeful than that? What most people fail to appreciate is that salvation is available to all, whenever, wherever, and to whomever! We do not need to worry about fire and brimstone and Hell if we only do what is righteous in the sight of God! That is what makes this scripture so valuable and encouraging! There is no dread of judgment for the Christian. There is no fear. I do not have to be anxious for the Day of the Lord because I will have nothing but joy at its coming. In fact, if I died right now, I would not miss this world too much because I would be with God in paradise! Paul makes the same sentiment in Philippians 1:21-24. What an attitude of faith and love – to regard life as only the necessary step toward Heaven! Certainly, while we are here we make the best of it and enjoy relationships and experiences that are wholesome. But this world offers nothing that can compare to the joys we will experience in heaven!

This is a passage about the hope of salvation for all of us. We have nothing to fear when it comes to the Day of the Lord – if we are found doing what is right. Notice what is written in 1 John 2:28, *“And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.”*

5:11 *“Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”*

It is important to note that the church in Thessalonica was *already* encouraging and building up each other. This was an activity that was not uncommon to them. It would be hard enough making it to Heaven with the help of our brethren. Just imagine how much more difficult it would be if we had to do it alone. The Day of the Lord is drawing near, and for many people it will be a day of great sadness disappointment. We sometimes cannot help but be anxious about it. We need the encouragement and love of one another to get us through the tough times! Notice all the times that Paul (yes, even Paul, as strong as he was spiritually) gained strength from the Church: 1 Thessalonians 3:6-8, Philippians 1:3-4, 4:1, 1 Corinthians 16:17-18, 2 Timothy 1:4.