

THE EPIC LIFE - BOB HALLMAN

Heads Up!

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

2010

Introduction

Paul had taught the Thessalonians about the coming of the Lord, and they had at least some basic understanding of it, but they were confused about several issues that Paul addresses in 1 Thessalonians 4-5:

1. The disposition of recently deceased believers - 4:13-18
2. The timing of the Day of the Lord
3. The confidence of the believers in light of His coming
4. The lifestyle of the believers in light of the Day of the Lord

Humor: After church a Mom asked her very young daughter what the lesson was about. The daughter answered, "Don't be scared, you'll get your quilt." Needless to say, the Mom was perplexed. Later in the day, the pastor stopped by for visit and the Mom asked him what that morning's Sunday school lesson was about. He said, "Be not afraid, thy *comforter* is coming."

I Paul's Warning to the Church

A. The futility of setting **times** and dates [Verse 1]

Times = Chronos = "Time in general" elapsed time or duration of time

Dates = Kairos = "A set time or occasion"

There has always been a curiosity regarding the timing of Christ's 2nd Coming:

1. Job asked that question in Job 24:1
Job 24:1 "Why does the Almighty not set times for judgment? Why must those who know him look in vain for such days?"
2. Jesus' disciples asked that question in Matthew 24:3
Jesus confessed that only the Father knew the "day or the hour": Mt 24:36
So any attempts to set dates is not only futile, but also a potential distraction from the mission of the church - *The Great Commission!*
Acts 1:7-8 "He said to them: **It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.**"

So why is it such a big secret?

1. To keep us on our toes (same reason a company does surprise inspections)
2. To fill us with anticipation as the Bride of Christ
3. To keep Satan (the ruler of the kingdom of the air - Eph 2:2) in the dark
Jesus will come directly through enemy territory, call up His Bride into

the realm of the enemy and lead her safely and triumphantly through the devil's domain as a display of His power and victory over Satan!

B. The suddenness of the day of the Lord: [Verse 2-3]

Quote: William Barclay

“To the Jew all time was divided into two ages. There was this *present age*, which was wholly and incurably bad. There was the *age to come*, which would be the golden age of God. In between there was the Day of the Lord (Amos 5:18-20; Obadiah 15; Joel 1:15; Malachi 4:5).

Facts About the Day of the Lord:

1. The day of the Lord is also known by the terms: - Rev 6-19
 - a. “The time of Jacob’s distress” (Jer 30:7)
 - b. “Daniel’s seventieth week” (Daniel 9:24-29).
 - c. The “Tribulation” (Matt 24:9,21,29; Mark 13:19; Rev 7:14)
 - d. “The day of Christ” (Phil. 1:10), “the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6), “the day of our Lord Jesus” (2 Cor. 1:14), “the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:8)
 - e. “The day” (Rom. 13:12), and “that day” (2 Thess. 1:10)
 2. It includes a time of great judgment and wrath on all the nations of the earth (Is 2:12-21; 13:9-16; 34:1-8; Joel 1:15-2:11, 28-32; 3:9-12; Amos 5:18-20; Obadiah 15-17; Zephaniah 1:7-18)
 3. It is associated with the overthrow of God’s enemies (Is 2:12)
 4. It is God’s instrument of wrath to purge out the rebels from Israel and results in Israel’s return to the Lord (Ezek 20:33-39)
 5. While it begins with judgment to defeat the enemies of God, it ushers in a time of great blessing called the Millennium in which Christ will reign with the church, the body of Christ (Zeph 1:7-18; 3:14-17)
1. He will come like a **thief** in the night

Thief = Kleptes = “A robber or burglar”

2 Peter 3:10 “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.

Characteristics of a thief:

1. They prefer to work under the cover of darkness
2. They rely on the element of surprise
3. They come unannounced and unexpectedly
4. They intend to do harm

Matt 24:42-44 “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. 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. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

2. While people are saying peace and safety:

a. **Destruction** will come on them suddenly

Destruction = Olothros = “Ruin, death, punishment”

Matt 24:37-44 “As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”

b. As labor pains on a pregnant woman

Labor pains = Odin = “Travail or pain”

Isa 13:6-9 “Wail, for the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty. Because of this, all hands will go limp, every man's heart will melt. Terror will seize them, pain and anguish will grip them; they will writhe like a woman in labor. They will look aghast at each other, their faces aflame. See, the day of the Lord is coming - a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger - to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it.”

The characteristics of labor pains:

1. They will eventually come – whether you like it or not
2. They seem like the time will never arrive
3. They always are a surprise when they finally come
4. They are accompanied by pulsating contractions that increase in frequency and severity
5. They produce something expected – the righteous judgment of the world (Acts 10:42)!

3. They will not **escape**

There will be no means of deliverance for those destined for God’s wrath!

Amos 9:1-4 “Not one will get away, none will escape. Though they dig down to the depths of the grave, from there my hand will take them. Though they climb up to the heavens, from there I will bring them down. Though they hide themselves on the top of Carmel, there I will hunt them down and seize them. Though they hide from me at the bottom of the sea, there I will command the serpent to bite them. Though they are driven into exile by their enemies, there I will command the sword to slay them. I will fix my eyes upon them for evil and not for good.”

Application: *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*” by Jonathan Edwards

II Paul’s Affirmation to the Church

A. You are not in the **darkness**: [Verse 4]

Darkness = Skotos = “Shadiness or obscurity”

Characteristics of darkness (our life before Christ):

1. You can't see or navigate well
2. You can easily become disoriented
3. You are prone to stumble and fall
4. You tend to be far more vulnerable

Col 1:13-14 “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

1. So that this day should surprise you like a thief
Surprise = Katalambano = “To overtake unexpectedly”

2 reasons to not be surprised:

1. The scripture forewarns us!
 - a. Noah and his family were warned - 1 Peter 3:20
 - b. Sodom and Gomorrah were warned - Genesis 19:12-14
2. The church will have already been raptured!

Illustration: Hurricane Preparation

We know signs and seasons (May-Nov), but not dates!

The *akamai ones* (wise ones) prepare for that eventuality!

- B. You are all sons of the **light** and sons of the day [Verse 5]

Light = Phos = “To shine, manifest or be luminous”

John 8:12 “[Jesus said], **“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”**”

Matt 5:14 **“You are the light of the world.”**

1. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness

Eph 5:8-10 “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.

- C. Let us not be like others who are **asleep** [Verse 6a]

Asleep = Katheudo = “To lie down to rest”

In chapter 4, the word for sleep, koimao, referred to physical death.

Here, “sleep” (*katheudo*) refers to spiritual lethargy, insensitivity and negligence.

Rom 13:11-14 “And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather,

clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”

Eph 5:14 “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

Rev 3:3 “**But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.**”

Characteristics of sleep:

1. Lack of conscious awareness
2. Vulnerable to attack
 - a. Sowing tares into the wheat - Matt 13:25
 - b. Being robbed -
3. Susceptible to strange thoughts and dreams
4. Being unprepared

Mark 13:35-37 “**Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back -- whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'**”

D. Let us be **alert** and self-controlled for: [Verse 6b-7]

Alert = Gregoreuo = “To keep awake, be vigilant or watch”

Self-controlled = Nepho = “To abstain from wine, to be sober, discreet”

Combined, it means to pay attention and be vigilant to what is going on.

Illustration: Post-9/11 travel precautions! We’re still on high alert!

1. We should be alert to God’s commands
2. We should be alert to false teachers
3. We should be alert to sin and temptation
4. We should be alert to spiritual warfare
 - 1 Peter 5:8-9 “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith ...”

Characteristics of Christian “alertness”:

1. He is not complacent, but neither is he frustrated and afraid.
2. He hears tragic news of the day, yet he does not lose heart.
3. He experiences the difficulties of life, but he does not give up.
4. He knows his future is secure in God’s hands, so he lives each day creatively, calmly, and obediently.

1. Those who sleep, sleep at night

Sleep = Katheudo = “To lie down to rest”

2. Those who get **drunk**, get drunk at night

Drunk = Methusko = “To drink to the point of intoxication”

- a. Drunkenness impairs judgment and the ability to make wise decisions.

- b. Drunkenness distorts and dulls a person's perception.
- c. Drunkenness gives a person a false sense of invincibility

Luke 21:34-36 “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”

E. But since we belong to the day: [Verse 8]

1. Let us be self-controlled

Self-controlled = Nepho = “To abstain from wine, to be sober, discreet”

1 Peter 1:13; 4:7 “Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed ... The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear-minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.”

2. Let us put on:

a. Faith and love as a breastplate

Breastplate = Thorax = “The chest area”

This piece of armor guards the heart!

Isa 59:17 “He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.”

Faith and love are represented by the breastplate because the breastplate covers the vital organs. No soldier would ever go to battle without his breastplate, and no Christian is equipped to live the Christian life without faith and love.

b. The hope of salvation as a helmet

Helmet = Perikephalaia = “Encirclement of the head”

This second piece of armor guards the believer's mind.

What is the “hope of salvation?”

1. That if we die before the rapture, we will go directly to heaven.
2. If we live until Christ's return, we will meet Him in the air.

Eph 6:13 “Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

III Paul's Encouragement to the Church

A. God did not appoint us to suffer wrath [Verse 9a]

Appoint = Tithemi = “To place, ordain, set”

Wrath = Orge = “Anger, punishment, indignation, vengeance”

Every man, woman and child has an appoint with God:

1. Either the wrath of God on the Day of the Lord
 - a. Because of Adam’s sin as our federal head - Romans 5:14-19
 - b. Because of our own sin: “Each is to die for his own sin!” Ezek 18:20-24

2. Or the salvation of God at the rapture of the church
 - 1 Thess 1:9-10 “They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead -- Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.”
 - John 3:36 “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.”

B. God appointed us to receive **salvation** through our Lord JC [Verse 9b-10]

Appointed = Tasso = “To ordain or assign to a certain position or outcome”

- 2 Thess 2:13-15 “But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because **from the beginning God chose you to be saved** through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.”

When it comes to salvation:

- a. Some emphasize the doctrine of election - John 6:44; 6:65; Eph 1:3-6
- b. Others emphasize the doctrine of free will - John 3:16; Romans 10:9-10

What we know is that the Bible teaches:

- a. That God knows who will be saved - Romans 8:29; 1 Peter 1:2
- b. That God chooses who will be saved - Rom 8:33; 11:5; Eph 1:11; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; 1 Pt 1:2; 2:9
- c. That we must choose Christ in order to be saved - Jn 3:16; Rom 10:9-10

1. He died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep:

Awake = Gregoreuo = “To keep awake, be vigilant or watch”

Asleep = Katheudo = “To lie down to rest”

When Jesus died on the cross, He stood in our place in our appointment to wrath, and "re-schedules" us with an appointment to obtain salvation.

- a. We may live together with him

1 Peter 3:18 “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.”

C. Therefore, keep doing what you're doing: [Verse 11]

1. **Encourage** one another

Encourage = Parakaleo = "To call near, exhort, console, give aid"

Paul uses this word 8 times in 1 Thess (2:12; 3:2, 7; 4:1, 10, 18; 5:11, 14).

Heb 10:24-25 "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another -- and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

2. **Build** each other up

Build up = Oikodomeo = "To construct, erect, restore or strengthen"

Rom 14:19 "Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification."

Note: The verb form for *encourage* and *build up* are identical:

- a. It is in the command form: It is not optional
- b. It is in the present tense: It implies continuous action

Application: Make disciples!

1. Lay a foundation of discipleship
2. Construct a life built upon the Word of God

Conclusion: Heads up!

1. Look up to the cross for salvation

John 3:14-16 "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

2. Look up to the throne of God

Col 3:1-4 "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory"

3. Look up in anticipation of the Messiah

Luke 21:28 "When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

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