



The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians

The Walk of the Thessalonian Church

1 Thessalonians 5:1-28

- I. THEIR UNDERSTANDING (1 Thessalonians 5:1-5)
 - A. Of the Times and Seasons (1 Thessalonians 5:1)
 1. Introductory thoughts
 - a. Missing or ignoring the true context of First Thessalonians chapter 5 has caused many Bible teachers to make unscriptural and false assumptions.
 - b. Some well-meaning teachers criticize the chapter divisions stating that chapter 5 would more easily assimilate the thoughts of chapter 4 but for the “unfortunate” chapter division. However, the actual context of both chapters reflects a shift from chapter 4 rather than a continuation of its thoughts and teachings. Any argument concerning the chapter divisions serves as a smoke screen that effectively sidetracks the student’s focus.
 - c. While every chapter in First and Second Thessalonians references the Rapture, four of the chapters also either allude to or specifically address Daniel’s Seventieth Week or the coming Day of the Lord. The first chapter to mention the Day of the Lord by name occurs in First Thessalonians chapter 5.
 - d. Indiscriminately attaching First Thessalonians chapter 4 with chapter 5 reveals one of the most egregious eschatological errors. Those who erroneously place the Rapture’s timing within or after the Tribulation period consistently fail to distinguish the proper division between these two subjects. Yet, the shift from one chapter to the next is unmistakable for those who simply read the text within God’s intended context.
 2. A simple coordinating conjunction
 - a. Some confusion in end-times doctrine comes by modifying or ignoring the first word of 1 Thessalonians chapter 5.
 - b. A common practice is to simply modify the word *but* to be the word *and*. This change may seem insignificant but it assimilates two chapters or contexts rather than recognizing the coordinating conjunction for the particular purpose it serves. Paul used this coordinating conjunction (as he did in verses 4 and 8) to contrast two opposing applications.
 - c. While the coordinating conjunction *and* would serve to tie together two similar or connecting thoughts or ideas, the coordinating conjunction *but* in context is used to introduce a statement that contrasts the previously addressed thought or idea. In this case,



chapter 4 offers details of the Rapture, **BUT** chapter 5 delves into matters concerning the “day of the Lord.”

- d. If this is not bothersome, perhaps you too are somewhat confused regarding the Day of the Lord. This often occurs when people fail to recognize that the Day of the Lord **IS NOT** the Day of Christ (Philippians 1:10; Philippians 2:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:2). Additionally, the Day of the Lord **IS NOT**:
 - (1) The Day of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:8)
 - (2) The Day of the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:14)
 - (3) The Day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6)
 - (4) The Lord’s day (Revelation 1:10)
 - (5) The first three reference an event that occurs in conjunction with the Rapture of the Church. The DAY OF THE LORD, however, DOES NOT OCCUR IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH! They are two separate events—with approximately seven years separating the two.
3. A hinting phrase
 - a. According to Paul, there was no need for Christians to know about the issues reflected in the early verses of this chapter.
 - b. Instead, these “*times and . . . seasons*” applied to a *future time* involving a *different group of people*.
 - c. According to Acts 1:7, the times and seasons directly correlate to the establishment of Israel’s future Kingdom (Acts 1:6).

B. Of the Day of the Lord (1 Thessalonians 5:2-5)

1. Their knowledge of that day (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3)
 - a. The day of the Lord is an event predominately addressed in the Old Testament.
 - b. However, it is mentioned by name in three New Testament passages. Contextually, these New Testament references offer tremendous insight on the timing and circumstances of the day of the Lord.
 - c. Based upon a careful reading of Second Peter chapter 3, the day of the Lord lasts 1,000 years (2 Peter 3:8). This period is introduced with signs (Acts 2:20; Joel 2:31) just prior to the Lord’s second advent and ends with the burning up of the present heaven and earth (2 Peter 3:10).
 - d. Much like the Hebrew day (made up of evening and morning), spiritually speaking the day of the Lord begins with night.
 - (1) It is a time of darkness rather than light (Amos 5:18, 20).
 - (2) It begins with destruction (Isaiah 13:6) based upon God’s wrath and fierce anger (Isaiah 13:9) and is in response to the controversy of Zion (Isaiah 34:8).
 - (3) This Day commences with the outpouring of God’s vengeance upon His adversaries (Jeremiah 46:10).



- (4) Though this night of suffering may seem long to those who endure it, God's wrath swiftly gives way to the rising of the Sun of righteousness (the Lord Jesus Christ) with healing in His wings (Malachi 4:2).
 - e. All things considered, the day of the Lord holds much more light and hope for Israel than despair. Though it opens with God's wrath, it swiftly moves to the Lord's deliverance and the establishment of His earthly and millennial kingdom. It is a day when the Lord is "in charge" on earth. He is the judge, the king, the prophet, and the priest.
2. Their safety from that day (1 Thessalonians 5:4-5)
 - a. Not only does the onset of the fifth chapter of First Thessalonians make a notable shift in context as it pertains to future events (from the rapture in chapter 4 to day of the Lord in chapter 5), but it also identifies a notable shift in applicable people groups.
 - b. The recipients of the epistle of First Thessalonians had no need that Paul write to them concerning the day of the Lord—the same people Paul warned that he "would not have to be ignorant" (1 Thessalonians 4:13) concerning the rapture.
 - c. However, chapter 5 **indirectly** addresses another group of people that desperately needed to understand Paul's writing concerning the day of the Lord.
 - (1) Paul refers to them as those who are "of the night" or "of darkness" (1 Thessalonians 5:5).
 - (2) Throughout chapter 5, Paul directly addresses the saved in the first person ("you") and refers to those of the night as "they" (who are the lost).
 - (3) It is important to realize that the saved are directly addressed while the lost are only indirectly addressed.
 - d. Though New Testament saints will take part in the day of the Lord, it will be in a much different role than that of the Jews or of unsaved Gentiles.
 - (1) We will return with the Lord Jesus as He comes to establish His kingdom.
 - (2) We will participate (with some believers reigning) in His millennial reign.
 - (3) We will certainly take part in the day of the Lord, but "that day" will not "overtake" us "as a thief" (1 Thessalonians 5:4).
 - e. The Bible is unlike any other piece of literature.
 - (1) When reading most literary works, the studious reader might be able to skim select paragraphs, sentences, or words and still comprehend the meaning of the literary work.
 - (2) As it pertains to scripture, the failure to carefully observe each word could lead to the acceptance of false doctrine or even heresy.
 - (3) This chapter serves as a great case in point.



- f. In First Thessalonians chapter 5, pronouns play a particularly important role in distinguishing between those who need not be ignorant concerning the rapture of chapter 4 and those who need not be ignorant concerning the day of the Lord of chapter 5.
 - (1) According to Paul, the “day of the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 5:2) pertains to the “they,” “them,” or “others” of 1 Thessalonians 5:3, 6, and 7, but not to the “ye,” “you,” “yourselves,” “us,” or “we” of 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2, 4-6, and 8-11.
 - (2) The whole context of the discussion is directed to Christians but also indirectly references those (“they”) who are not saved.
- g. The day of the Lord cannot “overtake” any Christian since Christians are not in darkness and the day of the Lord comes upon those in darkness.
 - (1) Why are Christians not in darkness—for the simple reason that Christians are the children of light!
 - (2) What if some Christian stops living like a child of light? Does he cease being one of the children of light? No, this individual is simply spiritually sleeping.
- h. It is important to emphasize that this chapter as the others always directly addresses the saved (the “you” of the passage), but repeatedly varies its focus from those in darkness (they and them) to the brethren (or ye).
 - (1) Who proclaims “Peace and safety”?
 - (2) Who suffers sudden destruction?
 - (3) Who does not escape this destruction?
 - (4) In each case, it is unmistakably not the brethren. It is the “them” mentioned—it is the lost.
- i. Interestingly, verse 4 begins with the same coordinating conjunction (but) as verse 1 which further emphasizes how this word contrasts two opposing groups in verse 4 or viewpoints in verse 1.
 - (1) In this case, the brethren (ye/you) are contrasted with those in the coming Tribulation (they/them).
 - (2) Verses 5 and 6 remain focused upon the believers (ye, we, and us).
- j. Those who overlook or ignore the intended contrast between the two groups of chapter 5 miss the entire import of what is taught.
 - (1) Who is it that needs to be concerned with the thief, the darkness, and the day of the Lord? It is certainly not the children of light!
 - (2) Our responsibility is to remain alert no matter the promises of God.
 - (3) Those teachers who disregard the distinctive divisions between these two groups are the same ones who fail to account for the difference between the rapture of the church (where Jesus calls believers up to Himself) and Jesus Christ returning to the Mount of Olives at the second coming.



II. THEIR SOBRIETY (1 Thessalonians 5:6-10)

A. The Call for Sobriety (1 Thessalonians 5:6)

1. The purification
 - a. The word *therefore* reminds us that the doctrinal understanding of the end-times is given with the end desire of purifying one's personal walk.
 - b. This is confirmed in a whole host of other passages (Titus 2:11-14; 2 Peter 3:8-12; 1 John 3:1-3).
2. The call
 - a. Let us not sleep, as do others.
 - b. Instead, let us
 - (1) Watch
 - (2) Be sober

B. The Call for Separation (1 Thessalonians 5:7)

1. The shift
 - a. Verse 7 again shifts the focus from *us* (the children of the day—the saved) to *they* (the children of the night—the lost).
 - b. In the next verse, the Bible again incorporates the coordinating conjunction (*but*) in order to identify a shift back from *they* (1 Thessalonians 5:7) to *us* (1 Thessalonians 5:8).
 - c. These distinctions are purposeful, necessary, and imperative for a proper understanding.
2. The two characters
 - a. The sleeping or drunken sinner
 - (1) **THEY** that sleep sleep in the night (we are not of the night).
 - (2) **THEY** that be drunken are drunken in the night (we are not of the night).
 - b. The sober saint

C. The Practice of Sobriety (1 Thessalonians 5:8)

1. The shift
 - a. Once again, the people in verse 7 are contrasted with those in verse 8, similar to how the primary event covered in chapter 4 is contrasted with the onset of chapter 5.
 - b. The next three verses of chapter 5 (verses 9 through 11) continue addressing the group of verse 8 (the children of the day or of the light—the saved).
2. The exercise of sobriety
 - a. Putting on the breastplate of faith and love
 - b. Putting on for a helmet, the hope of salvation; Note: The salvation mentioned here is the adoption or the salvation of the body.



Chapter 5: Consider the Pronouns (written to the brethren)	
1 Thessalonians 5:1 (the brethren)	"But of the times and the seasons, brethren , ye have no need that I write unto you."
1 Thessalonians 5:2 (the brethren)	"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night."
1 Thessalonians 5:3 (the Lost)	"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them , as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."
1 Thessalonians 5:4 (the brethren)	"But ye, brethren , are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."
1 Thessalonians 5:5 (the brethren)	" Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness."
1 Thessalonians 5:6 (the brethren)	"Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."
1 Thessalonians 5:7 (the Lost)	"For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night."
1 Thessalonians 5:8 (the brethren)	"But let us , who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation."
1 Thessalonians 5:9 (the brethren)	"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,"
1 Thessalonians 5:10 (the brethren)	"Who died for us , that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him."
1 Thessalonians 5:11 (the brethren)	"Wherefore comfort yourselves together , and edify one another, even as also ye do."
1 Thessalonians 5:23 (the brethren)	"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

[Chart 1.51]

D. The Appointment of Salvation (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10)

1. This passage verifies the fact that the church will not remain on earth for any part of Daniel's Seventieth Week.
2. The church will leave at the rapture and be supernaturally spared from any future wrath.
3. Instead of wrath, we have *the hope of salvation* (1 Thessalonians 5:8).
4. This is the blessed hope (Titus 2:13) and the salvation is a deliverance which involves living *together with him* (1 Thessalonians 5:10).
5. This salvation comes by our Lord Jesus Christ and is the salvation said to be "*nearer than when we believed*" (Romans 13:11).



- III. THEIR FELLOWSHIP (1 Thessalonians 5:11-15)
- A. The Need for Mutual Comfort (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
1. The challenge
 - a. Comfort yourselves together; the word comfort is a compound word meaning strength that you carry with you
 - b. Edify one another; to edify means to build up
 2. The commendation—“even as also ye do”
- B. The Need for Mutual Esteem (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13)
1. The challenge to know (1 Thessalonians 5:12)
 - a. The pleading of the apostle—“we beseech you, brethren”
 - b. The admonition of the apostle
 - (1) Know them which labour among you.
 - (2) Know them which are over you in the Lord (see Hebrews 13:17.
 - (3) Know them which admonish you.
 2. The challenge to esteem (1 Thessalonians 5:13)
 - a. The manner of treatment
 - (1) Esteem them
 - a) To esteem means to value (Ephesians 4:8, 11-16)
 - b) Ministers of the gospel were to be viewed as God’s gift
 - (2) Very highly
 - b. The motive of treatment
 - (1) In love
 - (2) For their work’s sake
 - c. The outcome of treatment—“be at peace among yourselves”
- C. The Need for Mutual Care (1 Thessalonians 5:14)
1. The manner of the apostle’s communication—“we exhort you”
 2. The content of the apostle’s communication
 - a. Individually
 - (1) Warn them that are unruly.
 - (2) Comfort the feebleminded.
 - (3) Support the weak.
 - b. Collectively
 - (1) Be patient
 - (2) Toward all men
- D. The Need for Mutual Compassion (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
1. The negative response avoided—“see that none render evil for evil unto any man”
 2. The positive response admonished—“ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men”



IV. THEIR PERFECTION (1 Thessalonians 5:16-22)

A. Maintaining a Proper Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:16-20)

1. Rejoicing evermore (1 Thessalonians 5:16)
 - a. The command—rejoice
 - b. The extent—evermore
2. Praying without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
 - a. The command—praying
 - b. The extent—without ceasing
3. Giving of thanks (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
 - a. In every thing; Not only are we to give thanks in every thing, but the Bible also makes it clear that we are to give thanks to God for every thing (Ephesians 5:20)
 - b. For this is the will of God
4. Quenching not the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19)
 - a. The workings of the Spirit
 - (1) He teaches (John 14:26).
 - (2) He guides (John 16:13).
 - (3) He comforts (John 14:16, 18, 26; John 15:26; John 16:7).
 - (4) He reproves (John 16:7-11).
 - b. The hindrances of the Spirit (Galatians 5:17)
 - (1) Resisting the Spirit (Acts 7:51)
 - (2) Vexing the Spirit (Isaiah 63:10)
 - (3) Grieving the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30)
 - c. The fruit of Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)
5. Despising not prophesyings (1 Thessalonians 5:20)
 - a. While we would like to relegate this to preaching, the Lord knew how to speak of preaching and did so in other passages (1 Corinthians 1:21).
 - b. Being one of the early epistles of the apostle Paul, this letter was written at a time when the apostolic gifts were still very much in use. Prophecy is the work of the prophet (Acts 2:17, 18; Acts 19:6; Acts 21:9; Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 14:6; 1 Peter 1:10).
 - c. That being said, the early church was built on prophecy. Having no complete canon of scripture, every truth was dictated to them in this manner. They were not to despise the revelation of truth given by the prophetic voice of the apostles.
 - d. Comparably, if we want to maintain a right spirit, we must have a right heart toward the word of God.

B. Maintaining a Proper Walk (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22)

1. Prove all things (1 Thessalonians 5:21).
2. After proving all things, hold fast that which is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21).
3. Then, abstain from all appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22).



- V. THEIR PARTING WORDS (1 Thessalonians 5:23-28)
- A. Paul's Prayer for the Saints (1 Thessalonians 5:23)
1. The wholeness of man
 - a. Spirit
 - b. Soul
 - c. Body
 2. The sanctifier of man—"the very God of peace"
 3. The preservation of man
 - a. According to 1 Corinthians 1:8, the Lord Jesus Christ "shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - b. How is this accomplished?
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 5:23 offers the answer when it mentions being "preserved blameless." Fortunately, this preservation has nothing to do with man's efforts but only the work of Christ.
- B. Paul's Promise to the Saints (1 Thessalonians 5:24)
1. The nature of the One who called—"Faithful is he that calleth you"
 2. The practice of the One who called—"who also will do it"
- C. Paul's Requests of the Saints (1 Thessalonians 5:25-26)
1. The request for self—"pray for us" (1 Thessalonians 5:25)
 2. The request for others—"Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss" (1 Thessalonians 5:26); Note: This is a good reason for us to understand rightly dividing the word of truth and the literal nature of the epistles and the churches to whom they were addressed.
 - a. "Salute one another with an holy kiss" (Romans 16:16)
 - b. "Greet ye one another with an holy kiss" (1 Corinthians 16:20)
 - c. "Greet one another with an holy kiss" (2 Corinthians 13:12)
 - d. "Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity" (1 Peter 5:14)
- D. Paul's Charge to the Saints (1 Thessalonians 5:27)
1. The authority of the charge—"by the Lord"
 2. The fulfillment of the charge
 - a. This epistle be read
 - b. Unto all the holy brethren
- E. Paul's Salutation to the Saints (1 Thessalonians 5:28)
1. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
 2. Be with you
 3. Amen