

# Don't Walk In Your Sleep!

## PART 1



**EVERY**

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NEW MERCIES CHRISTIAN CHURCH | JOHN 4: 28-30

Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary, vol. 2  
(Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996)

# 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11 (NKJV)

1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.

2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

3 For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

8 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.

9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

# Jesus Christ Both Unites And Divides

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Jesus Christ both unites and divides. Those who have trusted Him as Saviour are united in Christ as God's children.

We are members of His body and “all one in Christ Jesus” (*Gal. 3:28*).

# Jesus Christ Both Unites And Divides

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When Jesus Christ returns in the air, we shall be “*caught up together*” (1 Thes. 4:17) never to be separated again.

But Christ is also a divider. “So there was a division among the people because of Him” (John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19).

Faith in Jesus Christ not only unites us to other believers; it also separates us spiritually from the rest of the world.

Jesus said, *“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world”* (John 17:16).

There is a difference between believers who are looking for the Lord's return and the people of the world; it is this theme that Paul developed in this section.

His purpose was to encourage the believers to live holy lives in the midst of their pagan surroundings. He did this by pointing out the contrasts between believers and unbelievers.

# Knowledge & Ignorance (1 Thess.5:1-2)

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## 1 Thessalonians 5:1–2 (NKJV)

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# Knowledge & Ignorance (1 Thess.5:1-2)

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Three phrases in these verses need careful consideration:

1. “Time and seasons”
2. “The Day of the Lord”
3. “Thief in the night”

# *“Times & Seasons”*

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“Times and seasons.” This phrase is found only three times in the Bible, and refers primarily to God’s plans for Israel.

This is the way Daniel stated it when God gave him understanding of the king’s dream (Dan. 2:21). Our Lord’s use of the phrase in Acts 1:7 indicates that times and seasons relate primarily to Israel.

# ***“Times & Seasons”***

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## **Daniel 2:21 (NKJV)**

And **He changes the times and the seasons;**  
He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives  
wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who  
have understanding.

## **Acts 1:7 (NKJV)**

And He said to them, **“It is not for you to know  
times or seasons which the Father has put in  
His own authority.”**

God has a definite plan for the nations of the world (*Acts 17:26*), and Israel is the key nation. Dr. A.T. Pierson used to say, “*History is His story.*”

## **Acts 17:26** (NKJV)

And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,

God has ordained times and seasons for the nations on earth, particularly Israel; and all of this will culminate in a terrible time called “the Day of the Lord.”

# ***“The Day Of The Lord.”***

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The Day of the Lord is that time when God will judge the world and punish the nations. At the same time, God will prepare His people for the return of Jesus Christ to the earth to establish His kingdom.

## **Amos 5:18** (NKJV)

18 Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! For what good is the day of the LORD to you? It will be darkness, and not light.

# ***“The Day Of The Lord.”***

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## **Joel 2:1 (NKJV)**

1 Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the LORD is coming, For it is at hand:

## Zephaniah 1:14–18 (NKJV)

14 The great day of the LORD is near; It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out.

15 That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness,

16 A day of trumpet and alarm Against the fortified cities And against the high towers.



17 “I will bring distress upon men, And they shall walk like blind men, Because they have sinned against the LORD; Their blood shall be poured out like dust, And their flesh like refuse.”

18 Neither their silver nor their gold Shall be able to deliver them In the day of the LORD’s wrath; But the whole land shall be devoured By the fire of His jealousy, For He will make speedy riddance Of all those who dwell in the land.

Also, Isaiah 2:12–21 for a description of this great period.

Another term for this period is “the time of Jacob’s trouble”.

## **Jeremiah 30:7** (NKJV)

Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it;  
And it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, But he shall  
be saved out of it.

Also called the Tribulation and point to Revelation chapters 6–19 as the Scripture that most vividly describes this event.

# ***“Thief In The Night.”***

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*“Thief in the night.”* Our Lord used this image in His own teaching.

## **Matthew 24:42–43** (NKJV)

42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.

## Luke 12:35–40 (NKJV)

35 “Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning;

36 and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately.

37 Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them.

38 And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

39 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.

40 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

It describes the suddenness and the surprise involved in the coming of the Day of the Lord.

In Revelation, He used this image to warn believers not to be caught napping.

## **Revelation 3:3** (NKJV)

Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

## Revelation 16:15 (NKJV)

“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”

Since we do not know when the Lord will return for His people, we must live in a constant attitude of watching and waiting, while we are busy working and witnessing.

Now we can put these three concepts together and discover what Paul wanted to teach his troubled friends in Thessalonica.

He had already told them about the coming of Christ for the church, the event described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18.



He had told them that there would be a period of intense suffering and Tribulation on the earth following this Rapture of the church.

He may come at any time, and this will usher in the Day of the Lord.

The suddenness of these events will reveal to the world its ignorance of divine truth.

# Expectancy and Surprise

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## 1 Thessalonians 5:3–5 (NKJV)

3 For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

# Peace & Safety

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The unsaved world will be enjoying a time of false peace and security just before these cataclysmic events occur. Note carefully the contrast between “they” and “you” (or “us”) throughout this entire section, “they” referring to the unsaved. They will say, “Peace and safety!” but we will say, “Jesus is coming, and judgment is coming!”

The world is caught by surprise because men will not hear God’s Word or heed God’s warning.

God warned that the Flood was coming, yet only eight people believed and were saved.

## **1 Peter 3:20** (NKJV)

who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

Lot warned his family that the city would be destroyed, but they would not listen.

## Genesis 19:12–14 (NKJV)

12 Then the men said to Lot, “Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city—take them out of this place!

13 For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it.”

14 So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, “Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!” But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking.

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In fact, Jesus used the Flood and the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah as examples.

## **Matthew 24:37–39** (NKJV)

37 But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

38 For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,

39 and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

## Luke 17:26–30 (NKJV)

26 And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:

27 They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

28 Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built;

29 but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

30 Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

People in those days were going about their regular daily activities—eating, drinking, getting married—and never considering that judgment was around the corner.

Well-meaning people have tried to set dates for our Lord's return, only to be embarrassed by their failures.

However, it is possible to expect His coming without setting a specific time. No “signs” must be fulfilled before He can return for His church.



Christians are “sons of the light” and therefore are not “in the dark” when it comes to future events.

Unbelievers ridicule the idea of Christ’s return.

## 2 Peter 3:3–4 (NKJV)

3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, **“Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.”**

Twenty centuries have come and gone since our Lord gave the promise of His return, and He has not returned yet.

This does not mean that God does not keep His promises.

It simply means that God does not follow our calendar.

## **2 Peter 3:8** (NKJV)

But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord **one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.**

Paul compared the coming judgment to “*travail upon a woman with child*” (1 Thes. 5:3).

Even with our modern medical skills, birth pangs are very real and very painful. They accompany the muscle contractions that enable the mother to give birth to the baby.

The Prophet Isaiah used this same picture when he described the coming “*Day of the Lord*” (*Isa. 13:6–13*).

The early part of this Day of the Lord was called “*the beginning of sorrows*” by the Lord Jesus (*Matt. 24:8*); and the Greek word translated “*sorrows*” actually means “*birth pangs*.”

What truth do Isaiah, Jesus, and Paul teach us?  
The truth that out of the Day of the Lord will  
come the birth of the kingdom.

When God's judgments are finished, God's Son  
will return "*with power and great glory*" (Matt. 24:30).

Paul described this event in his second Letter to  
the Thessalonian Christians.

Live expectantly. This does not mean putting on a white sheet and sitting atop a mountain.

That is the very attitude God condemned.

## **Acts 1:10–11** (NKJV)

10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel,

11 who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”

But it does mean living in the light of His return, realizing that our works will be judged and that our opportunities for service on earth will end. It means to live “with eternity’s values in view.”

There is a difference between being ready to go to heaven and being ready to meet the Lord. Anyone who has sincerely trusted Christ for salvation is ready to go to heaven.

Christ's sacrifice on the cross has taken care of that. But to be ready to meet the Lord at the Judgment Seat of Christ is quite another matter. Scripture indicates that some believers will not be happy to see Jesus Christ!



# 1 John 2:28 (NKJV)

And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

Believers who live in the expectation of the Lord's return will certainly enjoy a better life than Christians who compromise with the world.

# Let's Not Sleep Walk!

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