

Coach House Church BEACONS

11TH APRIL 2020

SALVATION IS GIFTED

1 Thessalonians Chapter 5, verses 1 to 11.

Just before this passage, in the previous chapter, Paul was just penning down a few thoughts of the event known as the Coming of the Lord, also known as Jesus' return or the Second Coming in other passages in the Bible. As we live our lives on Earth, Christians should remember that we have a very real hope and expectation that we will one day be together with Jesus, and there will be a large-scale remodeling of the world as we know it. This event will take place in the future, and Paul often describes how we should be prepared for such an event.

Yet, in 1 Thessalonians Chapter 5, Paul goes on to remind us that it is not the time and place we need to be concerned about, but why we should be concerned about the Coming of the Lord. Let's briefly read through 1 Thessalonians Chapter 5, verses 1 to 11 before going through some key points:

The Day of the Lord

5 Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ² for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

⁴ But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵ You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶ So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹ For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

This, at first glance, seems to be a rather scary message, but I believe this passage is a sign of encouragement. The theme here is that the day of the Lord comes unexpectedly, like a thief in the night, but Christians, who belong to the light, should not feel surprised when it does.

Paul here is writing to the church of the Thessalonians. The Thessalonians were exceptional learners and faithful to the Word, enduring persecution, and becoming role models for all neighbouring Greek churches at the time. They were familiar with all kinds of important prophetic teachings, and the idea of the day of the Lord was not new to them.

After all, it was the day that Jesus would judge the earth and return in full glory. Of course, as with many Old Testament expressions, a day meant more of a season, a period of time in which God advances His plans to establish His Kingdom and execute the final judgement.

it was the day that Jesus would judge the earth and return in full glory

Paul emphasises here that there is no need to discuss when this will all take place, because God has designed this event's time to be unexpected. Anyone who says otherwise, giving an exact time or date, ought to be questioned heavily.

But the day will happen, and it will come upon the world that is asleep like a thief in the night.

However, as Christians, we no longer belong to the darkness. When we believe in Jesus as our Lord, we are born once again, into the light. We receive the Holy Spirit, and this Spirit continually encourages us to be awake and mindful of the fallen state that surrounds us.

Salvation is gifted to all those who believe, like a helmet from on high. But we still have a duty to remain faithful to what we know is true, to avoid falling back into foolish slumber or sinful temptation. We have a duty to watch through the night, to study, learn, and grow in spirit.

we no longer belong to the darkness.

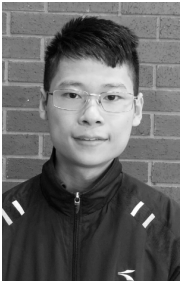
For this reason, while we do not know when the day of the Lord will come, it should not be a surprise to Christians when the day does come. If we know that we still have much to learn from God, if we do not become complacent with our relationship with God and settle for a mediocre Christianity, and if we acknowledge that there will never be enough opportunities in a single lifetime to perfect our understanding of God, then we can remain mindful throughout the night.

Like someone who holds a candle in the night and watches expectantly at a closed door, if we are awake and know the dangers of losing focus on God, then surely, we will not need to panic when the Lord of the house knocks at the dead of the night.

The world that fears the day of the Lord remains in the darkness

The world that fears the day of the Lord remains in the darkness, and they sink into a deep slumber, unable to help themselves, much less other people. But Christians are in a position to encourage and build up others, for we are called to keep watch and to watch out for others.

For these reasons, this passage is a sign of encouragement and a call to readiness in daily growth with Christ. Amen.



DANIEL LAM



Coach House Church

leadership@coachhousechurch.org // 0161 432 5604

the coach house church, 222 wellington road north, stockport sk4 2qn