

# SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

**1 THESS. 5:1** But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

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

**3** 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.

**4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.**

**5** Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

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

**7** For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

**8 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.**

**9** For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

**10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.**

**11** Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

## NOTES



# Be Ready

Lesson Text: I Thessalonians 5:1-11

Related Scriptures: Isaiah 13:3-16; Jeremiah 30:7-9;  
Matthew 24:36-41; Luke 21:34-36; Romans 13:11-14

TIME: A.D. 51

PLACE: from Corinth

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**GOLDEN TEXT**— “Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober”  
(I Thessalonians 5:6).

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## *Lesson Exposition*

### **COMING OF DIVINE WRATH— I Thess. 5:1-3**

**Unexpected arrival (I Thess. 5:1-2).** The Thessalonians already knew about the Day of the Lord. The “times and the seasons” are words associated with periods of time, likely the end times (Acts 3:19-21).

The Day of the Lord is a future period when the Lord will dramatically carry out His purposes. The Old Testament prophets saw this time as a period both of divine judgment and of salvation (Joel 2:28-32). It features the return of Christ. God will pour out His wrath on unbelievers (I Thess. 5:3, 9).

This period of divine wrath will catch most people by surprise (vs. 2). It will come unexpectedly, like a thief in the middle of the night.

**Sudden destruction (I Thess. 5:3).** Prior to the Day of the Lord, a false sense of security will lure people into spiritual lethargy. A state of peace will be presumed. But this will change dramatically with the onset of divine judgments. The sense of security will prove to be false and short-lived.

Paul stressed the suddenness of the change in world events. It will be an

abrupt unleashing of God’s wrath on the earth, plunging the unsaved into destruction. The utter ruin will come suddenly upon the unbelieving world (cf. II Thess. 1:9). This ruin points to the outcome of God’s judgments.

### **PREPARATION FOR DIVINE WRATH—I Thess. 5:4-8**

**Children of light (I Thess. 5:4-5).** Paul reassured the Thessalonians that they would not be distressed at the Day of the Lord (vs. 9). The Thessalonians needed to know how to apply the expectation of that time in daily living. Paul’s purpose was to instruct them regarding how they should live while waiting.

The children of the light and of the day are not of the night, or of the darkness. “Night” and “darkness” are both figurative terms for spiritual ignorance and evil. It is those who live in darkness who will be overtaken by the Day of the Lord, not those who live in the light.

**Proper conduct (I Thess. 5:6-7).** Believers should conduct themselves by living a lifestyle appropriate to their spiritual enlightenment. The words



“sleep,” “watch,” and “sober” were used figuratively.

A sober-minded Christian is spiritually alert and steady while anticipating the future (I Pet. 5:8). While the Day of the Lord will not overtake believers, they must live in accord with the light.

**Essential armor (I Thess. 5:8).** Believers belong to the realm of spiritual daylight and should therefore exercise spiritual sobriety.

The first piece of armor mentioned here is a breastplate. In Ephesians 6:14, Paul spoke of “the breastplate of righteousness.” In I Thessalonians 5:8 it is a “breastplate of faith and love.”

Faith and love, like defensive armor, protect our hearts and thoughts. Faith in God’s Word provides us with certainty in the promises of God and prompts us to do God’s work.

The second piece of armor mentioned in I Thessalonians 5:8 is the “helmet, the hope of salvation” (cf. Eph. 6:17). Our hope is the confident expectation of the completion of our salvation when Christ returns (Rom. 8:23-25; Col. 1:5). The helmet protects from attacks on our assurance of our salvation and the certainty of Christ’s return.

The helmet encourages us to continue to live for Christ while we confidently watch for His return (cf. II Pet. 3:11-12; I John 3:1-3).

## **DELIVERANCE FROM DIVINE WRATH—I Thess. 5:9-11**

**Appointed to salvation (I Thess. 5:9-10).** Believers have the hope of salvation because of God’s appointment (vs. 9). He has not assigned us to wrath, but rather deliverance from sin and judgment through Jesus Christ (cf. Eph. 1:4). We have been delivered from “the wrath to come” (I Thess. 1:10).

Christ provided for our salvation through His substitutionary death. He died in our place, for our benefit (cf. John 10:11; I Pet. 2:24). This is God’s

plan for our salvation, and it is the foundation for our commitment to worship and serve Him as Christians.

**Mutual encouragement (I Thess. 5:11).** Because of our assurance of deliverance from wrath, believers have been given two important commands. We are to encourage and to build up each other, as in constructing a house. This is one aspect of an extensive scriptural metaphor. Just as God dwelled in the Jerusalem temple (II Chr. 6:41—7:2), so today God dwells in His people, who are the temple of the Lord (I Cor. 3:9, 16-17).

Those imperatives are not one-time actions. We are to continually promote spiritual growth in each other (Eph. 4:12; Jude 1:20).

—Jack Riggs

## **QUESTIONS**

1. What is the meaning of “the times and the seasons” (I Thess. 5:1)?
2. What is the “day of the Lord” (vs. 2)?
3. Why did Paul compare Christ’s coming to a “thief in the night” (vs. 2)?
4. What is the meaning of “destruction” (vs. 3)?
5. What instructions did the Thessalonians need regarding the Day of the Lord?
6. What is the meaning of “the children of light” (vs. 5)?
7. What is a sober-minded Christian?
8. What does the helmet of salvation provide for believers (vs. 8)?
9. What is included in God’s plan for our salvation?
10. What are ways in which believers can encourage each other? Give personal examples.

—Jack Riggs



## PRACTICAL POINTS

1. The Lord's coming is to be a present hope, not an abstract curiosity (I Thess. 5:1).
2. We must not be lulled to sleep by those who dismiss God's coming judgment (vss. 2-3).
3. The Day of the Lord will come suddenly and unexpectedly, but it should not surprise us (vss. 4-5).
4. We should not focus on what the world treasures but on the hope of Christ's return (vss. 6-7).
5. While awaiting the Lord, we prepare for spiritual conflict (vs. 8).
6. The sure hope of salvation is our comfort as the world awaits judgment (vss. 9-11).

—Jarl K. Waggoner

## RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. How do we as believers differ from unbelievers regarding the Day of the Lord (I Thess. 5:1-5)? How does this affect our attitude toward the future in general?
2. Why does the Bible urge us to be watchful and sober as we wait for Christ's return (vs. 6)? What practical value does this have?
3. If we have nothing to fear from the coming Day of the Lord, why do we need to put on the armor of faith, love, and hope (vss. 8-9)?
4. If God has not appointed us to wrath, why do we and other Christians suffer so greatly at times?
5. What should our attitude toward the Day of the Lord be?
6. How are these truths comforting (vs. 11)?

—Jarl K. Waggoner

## Golden Text Illuminated

**"Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (I Thessalonians 5:6).**

Burglary is not the sort of thing that is announced ahead of time. In the same way, we do not know the date for Christ's second coming (I Thess. 5:2).

When Jesus came, he brought light into the world. Indeed, Jesus *is* the Light of the World (John 8:12). He has called us out of the darkness, which is passing away, and into His glorious, everlasting light (I Pet. 2:9; I John 2:8).

Because of all this, our golden text urges us to stay awake and be sober. Both sleep and drunkenness indicate a state of unpreparedness.

What does it mean to keep awake and to be sober? It certainly is not a prohibition against ever sleeping! This is a call to be sober-minded. We are to live in view of the fact that Christ will return. Because Christ is coming again, we must live like it.

We should live lives of moral purity, seeking to follow the Lord's commands. Further, we should seek to warn others of Jesus' return. In both our actions and our words, we should clearly communicate to people the reality and seriousness of Christ's second coming.

We should not expect life to be easy. Paul mixes metaphors and talks about faith, love, and hope like they are armor. Life in this dark world may be difficult, but we can endure because we know that the morning has already dawned with the first coming of Jesus Christ, and His second coming is certain.

Let us think, feel, and act with a sober mind and in a way that is fitting for children of the light. Jesus is coming again!

—Tom Greene



# Daily Bible Readings for Home Study and Worship

(Readings are for the week previous to the lesson topics.)

## 1. June 1. Learn from Good Examples

M—Enoch Walks with God. Gen. 5:21-24.  
T—Noah Finds Favor. Gen. 6:9-22.  
W—Abram Is Called by God. Gen. 12:1-5.  
T—Abram's Shield and Reward. Gen. 15:1-6.  
F—Sarah—Mother of Nations. Gen. 17:15-22.  
S—Things Not Seen Are Eternal. II Cor. 4:16—5:7.  
S—Embrace the Promises. Heb. 11:1-2, 4-13.

## 2. June 8. Learn from Bad Examples

M—God's Wonders Forgotten. Ps. 78:9-17.  
T—Corruption in the Camp. Ex. 32:1-10.  
W—Doubting God's Provision. Ps. 78:18-31.  
T—Despising God's Provision. Num. 21:4-9.  
F—Rebellion Met with Compassion. Ps. 78:32-39.  
S—Israel Seduced. Num. 25:1-15.  
S—Israel's Failures Serve as Warnings. I Cor. 9:24—10:13.

## 3. June 15. Seek Godly Wisdom

M—Where Does One Find Wisdom? Job 28:12-28.  
T—Teach Them to Your Children. Deut. 11:18-23.  
W—Delight in God's Word. Ps. 1:1-6.  
T—The Lord Gives Wisdom. Prov. 2:1-9.  
F—Follow Parental Instruction. Prov. 6:20-23.  
S—Wisdom Preserves Us. Prov. 4:1-9.  
S—Godly Wisdom Brings Life. Prov. 4:10-15, 20-27.

## 4. June 22. Hold Fast to the Gospel

M—No One Is Righteous. Rom. 3:9-20.  
T—God Imputes Righteousness. Rom. 3:21-31.  
W—Justified by Grace. Titus 3:3-8.  
T—Israel Failing in Faith. Rom. 9:30—10:4.  
F—Faith in God's Promise. Rom. 4:13-25.  
S—Courage to Preserve the Gospel. Gal. 2:1-14.  
S—Justified by Faith in Christ. Gal. 2:15—3:5.

## 5. June 29. Affection for Those in Christ

M—God's Love in Our Hearts. Rom. 5:1-8.  
T—Love One Another. John 13:31-35.  
W—Honor One Another. Rom. 12:9-21.  
T—Unity in Christ. John 17:20-23.  
F—Strengthen One Another. Rom. 15:1-7.  
S—Love in Deed and Truth. I John 3:11-24.  
S—God's Love Begets Our Love. I John 4:7-21.

## 6. July 6. Affection for Christ's Church

M—One Body, Many Members. I Cor. 12:4-13.  
T—Edifying the Church. I Cor. 14:1-5.  
W—Unity of the Spirit. Eph. 4:1-6.  
T—Submit One to Another. Eph. 5:15-21.  
F—Do Not Forsake Fellowship. Heb. 10:19-25.  
S—The Lord's Love for His Church. Eph. 5:25-32.  
S—Esteem One Another. Phil. 2:1-13.

## 7. July 13. Affection for Things Above

M—Future Redemption of Our Bodies. Rom. 8:18-25.  
T—Future Inheritance. Eph. 1:3-14.  
W—The Faithful Are Preserved. Ps. 31:19-24.  
T—Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ. Rom. 6:1-14.  
F—Children of Light. Eph. 5:1-10.  
S—Walk in the Spirit. Gal. 5:16-26.  
S—Put on the New Man. Col. 3:1-17.

## 8. July 20. Humility Before God

M—The Lord Sees the Lowly. Ps. 138:4-6.  
T—Be Clothed in Humility. I Pet. 5:5-7.  
W—Humility Brings Exaltation. Luke 18:9-14.

T—God Revives the Heart of the Humble. Isa. 57:13-21.

F—Self-exaltation Brings Humiliation. Luke 14:7-11.

S—Be Rich Toward God. Luke 12:13-21.

S—Submit to God. Jas. 4:1-10, 13-17.

## 9. July 27. Be Doers of the Word

M—Restrained Speech Is Wise. Prov. 10:19-21.

T—Wisdom Shown in Our Words. Prov. 15:1-4.

W—Wisdom in Silence. Prov. 17:27-28.

T—Strength in Controlling Anger. Prov. 16:32; 19:11.

F—Carry out God's Justice. Jer. 7:1-7.

S—Godly Care for Widows. I Tim. 5:3-16.

S—Practice Pure Religion. Jas. 1:19-27.

## 10. August 3. Pray for Peace

M—The Lord Hears Our Prayers. Ps. 28:1-9.

T—The Spirit Helps Us Pray. Rom. 8:26-28.

W—God's Mercy Is Everlasting. Ps. 100:1-5.

T—Kept by God's Peace. Phil. 4:4-7.

F—Be Peaceable to All Men. Titus 3:1-2.

S—Jesus, Our Mediator. Heb. 9:15-28.

S—Pray for the Success of the Gospel. I Tim. 2:1-8.

## 11. August 10. Live in Light of the Gospel

M—Serve as Serving Christ. Eph. 6:5-9.

T—Watch and Pray. Mark 14:37-41.

W—An Open Door to Preach. II Cor. 2:12-17.

T—Lives Directed by God. II Thess. 3:1-5.

F—The Mystery of the Gospel. Col. 1:21-29.

S—Be Salt and Light in the World. Matt. 5:13-16.

S—Wisdom in Sharing the Gospel. Col. 4:1-6.

## 12. August 17. Trust the Lord

M—God's Word Is Near. Deut. 30:11-16.

T—The Lord Leads Us in His Truth. Ps. 25:4-10.

W—The Lord Is Gracious. Ps. 111:1-10.

T—Firstfruits for the Levites. Deut. 18:1-5.

F—Trusting God Brings Blessings. Deut. 28:1-14.

S—Righteousness Through Chastening. Heb. 12:5-11.

S—God Directs All Who Trust Him. Prov. 3:1-12.

## 13. August 24. Be Vigilant

M—The Flesh Wars Against the Spirit. Rom. 7:14-25.

T—Hated Because of Christ. Matt. 10:16-22.

W—Correct Others in Meekness. II Tim. 2:22-25.

T—Differing Gifts by God's Grace. Rom. 12:3-8.

F—The Righteous Are Not Forsaken. Ps. 37:23-34.

S—Perfectly Equipped for God's Service. Heb. 13:20-21.

S—Watch, For the End Is Near. I Pet. 2:11-12; 3:13-17; 4:7-11; 5:8-10.

## 14. August 31. Be Ready

M—The Day of the Lord Brings Destruction. Isa. 13:6-16.

T—The Father Alone Knows When. Matt. 24:36-41.

W—Do Not Be Caught Unawares. Luke 21:34-36.

T—The Time of Jacob's Trouble. Jer. 30:7-9.

F—The Approaching Day of the Lord. Rom. 13:11-14.

S—Chosen for Salvation. II Thess. 2:13-17.

S—Appointed to Life with Christ. I Thess. 5:1-11.