

1 Thessalonians 5:4-11

Light vs Dark - 3

1

Introduction

The world is filled with all sorts of people and cultures, yet they can be divided into two distinct groups. There are believers and unbelievers; the redeemed and the unredeemed; the saved and the lost; those in God's kingdom of light and those in the kingdom of darkness. These two groups are easily recognized by the values, beliefs, and behavior. These are manifested in how they live their lives.

Three distinctive characteristics set day people (believers) apart from night people (unbelievers): their nature, behavior, and destiny.

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1 Thessalonians 5:4-11

But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. ⁸But 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. ⁹For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. ¹¹Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

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The Believer's Nature

1 Thessalonians 5:4-5

But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

Previously, we contrasted the nature of the believer and the unbeliever. Believers are “sons of light and sons of the day”. Unbelievers are trapped in intellectual, moral, and spiritual darkness.

Believers are to walk as Sons of the Day!

4

The Believer's Behavior

1 Thessalonians 5:6-8

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.

Believers are children of the day. We should not live like or imitate the things of the world. The world is at war with God and is under His judgment. Therefore, we must be alert and watching to serve Christ and look for His coming.

We must guard our hearts with faith and love, and our minds with the hope of our salvation!

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The Believer's Destiny

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

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One of the most sobering truths in Scripture is that God will judge the wicked and sentence them to eternal hell.

Matthew 13:40-42

Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, ⁴² and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

(Matt. 3:12; 13:40–42, 50; 18:8; 25:41, 46; John 3:36; 5:29; Acts 24:25; Rom. 2:5, 8; 9:22; 2 Thess. 1:9; Heb. 6:2; 10:26–27; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:7; Rev. 14:9–11; 20:11–15; 21:8).

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This judgment is because man has sinned. He has rebelled against his Creator. God designed us to live holy and in a relationship with Him. Man chose and still chooses to do what is right in his own eyes. We are told that we are **all** sinners (Romans 3:23) and that the consequences for our disobedience is **death**. Physical death is a reminder of the consequences of sin and that there is a greater death where one is separated from God and all that is good and cast into hell forever.

Jesus came as the perfect final sacrifice. He paid the debt for our sin with His own life. He died, was buried, and rose again so we can have newness of life. Jesus gives us freedom of choice. We can come to him for forgiveness and become children of light, or to reject Him and remain in darkness.

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In contrast to the judgment of the wicked, the blessed truth for believers is that **God did not appoint us for wrath** (cf. 1:10; John 3:18, 36; 5:24; Rom. 5:1, 9; 8:1, 33–34). The believer's nature, established in the past at salvation, and their present pattern of obedience, day people's future destiny sets them apart from night people. **Believers will not experience the wrath God** will pour out on unbelievers on the Day of the Lord, and for eternity in hell.

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The word "appoint" expresses the outworking of God's sovereign plan for the believer. In Matthew 25:34 Jesus promised that believers will "inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." To the Ephesians Paul wrote, "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him" (Eph. 1:4), while in 2 Timothy 1:9 he added, "[God] has saved us and called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began."

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The word "wrath" does not refer to a momentary outburst of rage, but to "an abiding and settled habit of mind." It is a general reference to the final judgment, when God's wrath will be poured out on the wicked. But God's wrath here must also include the Day of the Lord, since that was the Thessalonians' primary concern. Paul assured them that they would face neither temporal wrath on the Day of the Lord (cf. Rev. 6:17), nor eternal wrath in hell.

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But contrasts the wrath that will be poured out on the night people in contrast to his purpose for the children of light.

God has destined believers to obtain (lit., “gain,” or “acquire”) salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is referring to the future fulfillment of the believers’ salvation – their glorification. But all three aspects of salvation—justification, sanctification, and glorification come only through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Look at this simple, yet profound phrase who died for us. The word “**for**” can be translated “on our behalf”; “with reference to us”; “in our place”; “as our substitute”). This phrase expresses the sole basis for believers’ salvation. God “made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21); “He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed” (1 Peter 2:24).

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The glorious message of the gospel is that Christ's substitutionary death paid in full the penalty for believers' sins and therefore believers will not face God's judgment. In John 5:24 Jesus declared, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life." Nor will they face His condemnation, because "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

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Christ's death on their behalf sets all day people—both those who are **awake** (alive) and those who are **asleep** (dead) apart from night people. The marvelous reality is that all believers **will live together with Him,** as Jesus Himself promised:

Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. (John 14:1–3)

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Like Paul did with his discussion of the Rapture, he uses the same word translated "**comfort**" to conclude his discussion of the Day of the Lord. He exhorting the Thessalonians **comfort each other and edify one another**. Based on the truth he had given them, they were to reassure the anxious and fearful that they would not experience the Day of the Lord. His concluding phrase, **just as you also are doing**, affirms that they were already committed to encouragement.

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So What...

One of two possible destinies awaits every member of the human race. Those who stubbornly remain in spiritual darkness will ultimately "be cast out into the outer darkness" of eternal hell (Matt. 8:12; cf. 22:13; 25:30). But those who through faith in Jesus Christ come to the light of salvation (Acts 13:47; cf. John 8:12; 9:5; 11:9; 12:46) will "share in the inheritance of the saints in Light" (Col. 1:12). They will live forever in God's glorious presence, where "there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever" (Rev. 22:5).

Which path are you on?

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