

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### 1 Thessalonians: Discipling Afflicted New Christians

#### Part VII: Encouraging Afflicted New Believers By Teaching On Their Deliverance From The Tribulation (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11)

##### I. Introduction

- A. Current events raise questions on what the future holds not only for the world, but even for us Christians, especially regarding whether we will suffer under the Great Tribulation trials and the antichrist.
- B. This would concern the new converts Paul evangelized in Thessalonica, so he taught them about the Great Tribulation with comments on the Christian's relationship to it in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 (as follows):

##### II. Encouraging Afflicted New Believers By Teaching On Their Deliverance From The Tribulation.

- A. Paul's reference to the "times and the seasons" in 1 Thess. 5:1a KJV uses the same Greek words Jesus used in Acts 1:7 regarding the era(s) his disciples would not know, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 705, 354.
- B. Also, these "times and seasons" refer to the era of "the day of the Lord" (1 Thess. 5:2), which period of time is extensively predicted in Old Testament prophecies, and deals with the judgment of the Great Tribulation and the blessing of God to follow in the Messianic Kingdom and the final Eternal State.
- C. Third, Paul consistently refers to those who suffer in this "times and seasons" and "day of the Lord" era in the third person, implying that Christians would not experience such sufferings, cf. 1 Thess. 5:3a,b,c.
- D. Indeed, Paul claimed this time of suffering would not come on his readers, 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5.
- E. Accordingly, we believe the sufferings of the "times and the seasons" the disciples were not to know in Acts 1:7 with the sufferings of the "day of the Lord" refer to the Great Tribulation Period, meaning the Church will be raptured out of the earth **before** that era of suffering **begins**.
- F. Accordingly, we interpreted the message of 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 within the Premillennial, Pretribulational theological framework (as follows):
  - 1. After informing his new Christian readers of the blessings of the rapture of the Church, Paul explained that they had no need for him to tell them about the "times and the seasons" or the "day of the Lord," 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2. This was because these believers would not experience the start of this era, which start would be marked by trouble and suffering, for the rapture was Pretribulational!
  - 2. After the rapture, the lost world will be saying "peace and safety" when the antichrist makes a peace treaty with Israel at the start of the 70th week of Daniel 9:27; 1 Thessalonians 5:3a.
  - 3. However, the inescapable wrath of God will suddenly come upon them as birth pangs on a woman in labor, and it will begin to destroy many people as predicted in Revelation 6:1-19:21; 1 Thess. 5:3b.
  - 4. In contrast to this experience, Paul affirmed that his Christian readers were not of the world of darkness that that day of the Lord with its initial time of trouble should overtake them as a thief, 1 Thess. 5:4.
  - 5. Rather, as children of light and of the day of God's righteousness, they were not to "sleep" in amoral evil like the lost, spiritually blind world, but watch and be "self-controlled", 1 Thess. 5:5-6 NIV.
  - 6. Those that sleep in spiritual blindness of the world sleep as do drunkards who usually sleep in the night, but we who are of the day of God's righteousness are to be self-controlled, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and the helmet of the hope of salvation, 1 Thessalonians 5:7-8 NIV.
  - 7. This contrast between the Christian community and the lost world is necessary as God did not appoint the Church to the time of His wrath on the world in the Great Tribulation, but to the obtaining of the salvation of Christ, namely the Pretribulation deliverance of the Church in the rapture, 1 Thess. 5:9.
  - 8. Paul then noted that Christ died for the Christian believer that, whether he wakes or sleeps, he should live together with Him. The "sleep" and "wake" themes in this context deal with ungodly (sleep) and godly (awake) living (5:5-8), so Paul in verse 10 claimed the rapture would take godly and ungodly believers to heaven versus the Partial Rapture view that only the godly will be raptured! (1 Thess. 5:10)
  - 9. Thus, we should use these words to comfort and edify one another unto godly living, 1 Thess. 5:11.

***Lesson:*** *In both the immediate as well as the broad Scripture contexts, Paul's 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 words direct us believers are not destined by God to experience the Great Tribulation Period. Thus, we should live in godliness unlike the ungodly world that will experience God's wrath for its sin!*

***Application:*** *May we hold to the Premillennial, Pretribulational Rapture view, and live godly lives!*