

GETTING PREPARED FOR THE DAY OF THE LORD (1 THESSALONIANS 5)

1 Thessalonians (as well as **2 Thessalonians**) are epistles or letters that were written by the Apostle Paul to the church at Thessalonica. Thessalonica, presently referred to as Thessaloniki (Thess-uh-loan-icky) is a port city off the Aegean Sea and is located in northern Greece, just north of Mt. Olympus. Mt. Olympus, in Greek mythology was regarded as the abode of the gods and the site of the throne of Zeus. Yet as we know, and believe, according to the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures, as **Psalms 24** tells us, "The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein. For He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters. Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord [YHWH, Yehovah]? [referring to Mt. Zion] Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." (**Psalms 24:1-5**) **Psalms 24:1** is usually all that gets quoted from that (at least by me), but I included what follows in the next four verses because it speaks of the King of kings not just on Mt. Zion in the Holy Land but in all the earth, including Mt. Olympus. And then also, of our need to have a right heart before God to "receive blessing from the Lord" and His Righteousness and His Salvation. For it is through Christ Jesus, as the Apostle Paul stated in **1 Corinthians 1:30**, that we receive wisdom from God, Righteousness from God, Sanctification from God, and our Redemption from God, all through Christ Jesus, our Savior and our Lord. We are led by the Holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ (**Romans 8:9**), to believe on Christ Jesus, and we are led to repent of our sins against God, as (the goodness of God leads us to repentance-**Romans 2:4; Romans 3:23**). So we are believing on Christ, having a heart and mind of repentance to then receive His Spirit into our hearts, as He "set[s] His seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come." (**2 Corinthians 1:22 NIV**)

Yet the having clean hands speaks of the continuing relationship that we have with God in Christ. Jesus washed the disciples feet, that you can read of that story in **John 13**. "Then He [Jesus] came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this." Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean." The symbolism that Jesus was giving to His disciples was a visible analogy. He was saying that they were already bathed, already Christ's disciples,

just as we are buried with Christ in the baptism, speaking of the receiving of the Holy Spirit, and we are raised up with Christ into the new life we have in Him. Yet, as we traverse this world, we tend to get our feet dirty, so to speak, and Jesus then washes our feet, symbolically meaning the sanctifying power of Christ through the working of the Holy Spirit and our obedience to the will of God.

That ties in then with what Jesus told His disciples, "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever." (John 14:15-16) While Jesus may have been speaking about the promise of the pouring out of God's Spirit that would come on the day of Pentecost, He is also speaking of the need for having a heart of repentance and a willingness of obedience, like the Apostle Peter. Right after that Jesus continued, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me." (John 14:21-24)

Repentance (metanoeo, having a change of mind to recognize a need for change, and then heeding to that need for change) was the first recorded Words of Jesus' preaching to the people by saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17), just as John the Baptist preached before Him. (Matthew 3:2) So then, not only does all of creation belong to God, we are also all therefore accountable to Him. The Apostle Paul speaks of a great mystery that is revealed to us, by saying in 1 Timothy 3:16, "without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God [who] was manifested in the flesh (John 1:1, 14), justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles [ethnesin], believed on in the world [kosmo], received up in glory." Another mystery in Christ that is revealed to us as Paul tells us, "For by Him [Christ Jesus] all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him." (Colossians 1:16) That agrees with the Apostle John saying, "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made." (John 1:3) As I've said before, the Word of God always complements the Word of God, makes up a whole, or brings to perfection¹, and there is absolutely nothing more important for you to have than the WORD OF GOD! The "Word of God" has a two-fold meaning for us. The Word is the inspired by God and written Word of what God our Creator wants us to know about Himself and His plan and purpose for His creation and in how we then

1 <https://www.wordnik.com/words/complement>

respond to Him accordingly, and then, in the words of the Apostle John, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (**John 1:14**). I'm not just throwing out a lot of Scripture to impress or confuse anyone, it's to help us see the big, beautiful picture of God's redemptive plan for us and of His love for us.

With that knowledge and understanding, isn't it just incredibly silly to have any other gods before Him, which was/is His first of the ten commandments given to Moses on Mt. Sinai, for God's people, the nation of Israel, as well as for us. (**Deuteronomy 5:7**) Yet as Paul said to the people of Corinth, which is a southern port city in Greece, "But even if our gospel [the good news of Christ Jesus] is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God [Theos], should shine on them." (**2 Corinthians 4:3-4**) He then says "For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (**2 Corinthians 4:6**) For He is the "Light of the World"! (**John 8:12**) We are in the time of Christ Jesus shining His light as He HAS poured out His Spirit and is leading us to believe, repent, and receive Him, to be "born-again" as Jesus said we must be. (**John 3:3**)

The Apostle Paul begins his letter in **1 Thessalonians** speaking of what is called the three tenses of salvation. In **chapter 1 verse 9**, Paul mentioned the past tense, where they "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" and the present in **chapter 1 verse 3-4**, mentioning their "work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God." Then of the future tense in **chapter 1 verse 10**, "to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come." He is calling us out of the darkness and into His marvelous light (**1 Peter 2:9**), which is the past and the present, and then we will be joint-heirs with Jesus (**Romans 8:17**) and "if we endure, We shall also reign with Him." (**2 Timothy 2:12**) You can certainly read the first four chapters on your own time and for the sake of our time now we are going to look at the final chapter of **1 Thessalonians 5**.

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1 Thessalonians 5 (The Day of the Lord)

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. [just cling to Jesus and you'll be ok] For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" [eat, drink, and be merry] then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, **brethren, are not in darkness**, so that this Day should overtake

you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. [sober: Greek "nepho" (nay-pho), "Derived from a primary verb meaning "to abstain from wine" (literally or figuratively, which then "means to be sober-minded or self-controlled.)²For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. [He is saying, there's a time of watching being sober and then of getting one's sleep.] 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. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing. [Just as we are today, encouraging one another to keep the faith and hope that we have in Christ Jesus.]

Various Exhortations

And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. [What can be added to that, for all of us who are God's children, the Apostle Paul said to the folks at Philippi, "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." (**Philippians 2:3-4**) In other words we are not puffing ourselves or one another up in pride, but encouraging one another and helping one another in our faith that is in Christ Jesus.] Be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you [(para, "beside" and kaleo, "to call"), same as parakletos-our Advocate, the Holy Spirit], brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. [That should sound familiar to us from what Paul said also to the Philippians, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (**Philippians 4:4-7**)] Do not quench the Spirit. [Quench is "The Greek verb "sbennumi" (sben'-noo-mee) primarily means to quench or extinguish, often used in the context of putting out a fire or stopping something from continuing. In the New Testament, it is used metaphorically to describe the act of suppressing or stifling something, such as the Spirit or spiritual gifts."³ As Paul

2 <https://biblehub.com/greek/3525.htm>

3 <https://biblehub.com/greek/4570.htm>

continues by saying,] Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good. **Abstain from every form of evil.**

[In **chapter 4 verses 3-8**, Paul had elaborated on that by saying that we, as children of God, are called to a life of holiness. He says, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification [being set apart in His holiness]: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.]

[Blessing and Admonition [Counsel, urge, warn. Let this be a prayer for us as well...]

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it. Brethren, pray for us. Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. [That's not really a custom of ours but we do hug one another, pat one another on the back, shake hands.] I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

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It is most important then for us to continue to encourage and uplift one another in Christ. We all should be praying for each other, and we also should have a heart and mind to not want to cause harm or damage to the body of Christ but to be a faithful testimony of Christ Jesus and to be a blessing to one another, to not be a wet blanket that quenches but a willing instrument to carry the fire of the Holy Spirit that may set us ablaze in the glory of God, here and in our community, our workplaces, with our families. The past is past, yet we are blessed in this present time, to be a part of God's building of His eternal kingdom. May we have the sureness of hope in Christ Jesus to where we are looking toward to the future to where His resting place will be glorious (**Isaiah 11:10**) as we are with our Lord, God and Savior and with all of His host of heaven for all of eternity. Praise the Lord! We are then letting go of the past, letting Him work in us and through us in the present, to be with Him in the future, forever!