

## Introduction

When I was the General Manager of an environmental graphics company in Atlanta, I learned the various laws pertaining to signs. There were certain laws written in the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) that must be complied with. Here is partial list of some of those rules.

- Interior door signs must be placed adjacent to the latch side of the door.
- Signs should be mounted forty-eight to sixty inches from the ground. (The center of the sign had to be sixty inches high while I was in that industry.)
- Signs must have tactile lettering (braille).
- Signs must have a 70% light/dark contrast between the letters and the background.

Contrasts make the sign message easy to read. In general, contrasts in most things help things stand out. In our Christian walks, God wants our lives to be a contrast to the world. We are to walk in the light as He Himself walked in the light. This is a contrast to the world, that walks in darkness. The apostle John wrote an entire letter giving the contrasts between believers and unbelievers. In chapter three he wrote, “No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious; anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.” Walking in light and walking in love were two ways that believers are in sharp contrast to those in the world. Our lives should be ADA compliant signs.

(1 Jn 3:9–10) “No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. {10} By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.”

Our passage today is about contrasts, and in particular, three contrasts between believers and unbelievers in regards to the Day of the Lord. The first contrast is about the awareness of the Day of the Lord. Believers are to be aware of the Day of the Lord, and to be ready and alert. Unbelievers are unaware of it and it will come like a thief in the night. The second contrast is in the lives of the believers and unbelievers. Because believers are expecting and anticipating the Day of the Lord, they live their lives in the light. They put on the breastplate of love and faith, the helmet of salvation. On the other hand, unbelievers live in the dark, and get drunk at night. The third contrast is in the destiny of believers and unbelievers. Believers are not destined to wrath, but for obtaining salvation. Unbelievers are destined for destruction and wrath. This passage gives three contrasts between unbelievers and believers in regard to the Day of the Lord.

## Three Contrasts in the Day of the Lord

1. Awareness
  - a. Unbeliever
  - b. Believer
2. Life
  - a. Unbeliever
  - b. Believer
3. Destiny
  - a. Unbeliever
  - b. Believer

(1 Th 5:1–11) “Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. {2} For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. {3} While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. {4} But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; {5} for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; {6} so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. {7} For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. {8} But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. {9} For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, {10} who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. {11} Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”

## 1. Awareness

### a. Unbeliever

The first contrast concerns the awareness of the Day of the Lord. Unbelievers are not aware of the word of God and what has been written. The Day of the Lord is going to be like a thief in the night, at a time that they are not expecting it. If someone knew when a thief was going to come, they would be waiting for the thief, and the thief would not get away with the crime. But thieves come when you are not expecting them.

(1 Th 5:1–2) “Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. {2} For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.”

One year my parents had another family visiting them, and after everyone had gone to bed that night, thieves broke into the house. They had not had any thieves come before, and were not expecting thieves. Furthermore, with extra house guests, there was even more reason to believe that nobody would try to break in. But the thieves broke into their house when nobody was expecting them. That is the way the Day of the Lord will happen to unbelievers; they will not be expecting it.

Unbelievers will be living their lives like nothing is going to happen. They will be saying, “Peace and safety!” They think everything is going well, and they are safe. They are unaware that destruction is about to hit. If the U.S. had been on the alert at Pearl Harbor, thousands of lives would have been saved. They could have been armed and ready, and taken out the Japanese attackers. However, they were not expecting it, and there was massive destruction and loss of lives when the surprise attack occurred. In the same way, when the Day of the Lord comes, the unbelievers will be unaware and unprepared for what is going to happen, and destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child and they will not escape. When labor pains come on an expecting mother, there is no stopping. The labor pains are going to get more intense until the baby is birthed. When the Day of the Lord suddenly comes, there will be nothing stopping it, and they will not escape.

(1 Th 5:3) “While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.”

## b. Believer

Believers, on the other hand, have the instructions of the scriptures. We do not need anything additional to be written to us to give us warning about what is about to take place. We know full well that the Day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. We are not in darkness, that the day would overtake us like a thief.

(1 Th 5:1–2) “Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. {2} For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.”

(1 Th 5:4) “But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief;

When I began studying this passage, I made a comment to my wife that I think I need more to be written to us. There is a lot of unknowns about the Day of the Lord. Furthermore, in Acts 1, the apostles asked the Lord, “Is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” The Lord told His apostles that it was not for them to know the times or epochs when the Father has fixed. He told them to focus on receiving the Holy Spirit and being His witnesses. None of us know the times and epochs of when the Day of the Lord is coming. However, I don’t think that is what Paul, Silas, and Timothy meant when they wrote that the Thessalonians did not have need of anything to be written to them. The Thessalonians, like all believers, are instructed by the word of God that the Day of the Lord is coming. Since the Thessalonians received the word of God, not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, they had instructions and warnings about the Day of the Lord. They knew the Day of the Lord was coming.

(Ac 1:6–8) “So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” {7} He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; {8} but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

There are two words used that are worth looking at. The first word is times and the second is epochs. The Greek word for times is *chronos* (Strong’s G5550), which refers to a specific time, or a space of time. We get our English word, *chronology*, from that Greek word. *Chronology* is the arrangement of events or dates in the order of their occurrence. Webster defines it as, “the science that deals with measuring time by regular division and that assigns to events their proper dates.” As believers, we do not know the specific time, but we know that there is a specific time set aside for this event. It is going to happen. There is a date set for it.

(1 Th 5:1) “Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you.”

The Greek word for epochs is *kairos* (Strong’s G2540), and it refers to the characteristics of the time. If we talk about the leaves turning colors and falling, we know that the season is fall. If we talk about blossoms on trees, and leaves beginning to bud, we know that the season is spring.

These are characteristics of the season. Believers know that there is a specific time for the Day of the Lord, and we have a sense of the order of that time. Furthermore, we have been given characteristics of this season. Therefore, we do not need anyone to write us about that.

What are some of those characteristics of the Day of the Lord. In Mark 13, we have a whole chapter devoted to the things that Jesus said about His return. In verses seven and eight that there will be wars between nations, earthquakes, and famines, and that these are just the beginnings of birth pangs.

(Mk 13:7–8) “When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; *those things* must take place; but *that is* not yet the end. {8} “For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will *also* be famines. These things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs.”

In verses nine through thirteen, He spoke about the gospel being preached to all nations, and about the persecution of believers.

(Mk 13:9–13) “But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to *the* courts, and you will be flogged in *the* synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them. {10} “The gospel must first be preached to all the nations. {11} “When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but *it is* the Holy Spirit. {12} “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. {13} “You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.”

In verse six, twenty-one, and twenty-two, Jesus said that many would say, “I am He!” or “Here is the Christ,” or “Behold, He is there”, and we are not to believe them.

(Mk 13:6) “Many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am *He!*’ and will mislead many.”

(Mk 13:21–22) “And then if anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here is the Christ’; or, ‘Behold, *He is* there’; do not believe *him*; {22} for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect.”

In verses twenty-four through twenty-seven, Jesus said that after the tribulation, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven. Then, those who are alive will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And Jesus will send forth the angels and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven.

(Mk 13:24–27) “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light, {25} and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. {26} “Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. {27} “And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven.”

After giving these signs, Jesus said to learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. Even so, you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, right at the door.

(Mk 13:28–29) “Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. {29} “Even so, you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, *right* at the door.”

He said that no one knows that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. God is not telling us the exact day or hour, but what He has given us are the kairos, the characteristics and signs of the season. When we see these things, we know the time is near. Jesus said to “Take heed, keep on the alert,” and then He repeated His exhortation, “What I say to you I say to all, ‘Be on the alert!’” Believers are not to be unaware as unbelievers, we should be alert to these signs.

(Mark 13:32-37) “But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father *alone*. {33} “Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the *appointed* time will come.... {37} “What I say to you I say to all, ‘Be on the alert!’”

## 2. Life

### a. Unbeliever

The first contrast between the believer and unbeliever is about awareness. The unbelievers will be caught unaware, like a thief coming at night. The believers have been given characteristics and signs of when the Day of the Lord will take place, and they are to be alert and not caught by surprise.

The second contrast is about the life of an unbeliever and believer. Believers are called sons of light and sons of day. In contrast, the inference is made that unbelievers are sons of night and darkness. Light refers to righteousness and darkness refers to unrighteousness. A son of light is one who walks with God and in God’s ways. A son of darkness is without God and is not walking in God’s commandment. Christians are not of night nor of darkness.

(1 Th 5:3–5) “While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. {4} But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; {5} for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness;”

Those who are of the night or darkness are not aware; they are asleep. When we are asleep, we are not aware of what is going on, and unbelievers are unaware, or asleep. Second, those who are drunk get drunk at night. A person who is drunk is not sober and alert; his faculties have been dulled. They are drunk with the things of the world, not just alcohol.

(1 Th 5:6-7) “so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. {7} For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night.”

In 1 John, the apostle speaks about walking in the light and walking in darkness. Those that hate their brother are in darkness. Those without Christ do not love their brother; they hate their

brother. John also says that those that walk in darkness do not know where they are going because the darkness has blinded their eyes.

(1 Jn 2:9–11) “The one who says he is in the Light and *yet* hates his brother is in the darkness until now. {10} The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. {11} But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

## b. Believer

In contrast, believers are not in darkness, but in the light. They are not of the night, but of the day. Therefore, the day of the Lord will not overtake us like a thief in the night, for we are sons of light and sons of day. In contrast to being drunk, dull, and unaware, believers are to be alert and sober. The word for alert is *gregoreo* (Strong’s G1127), which means watch, wake, vigilant. Believers are exhorted to be watchful, alert, and vigilant.

(1 Th 5:4–6) “But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; {5} for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; {6} so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.”

*Gregoreo* is used twenty-three times in the New Testament. When Jesus was in the garden of Gethsemane praying before His arrest and crucifixion, He took with Him Peter, James, and John. He told them to keep watch with Him. He told them to pray specifically that they would not enter into temptation. Instead of praying, they fell asleep. They were to be alert to coming temptations.

(Mt 26:36–41) “Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” {37} And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. {38} Then He said to them, “My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep **watch (*gregoreo*)** with Me. {39} And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.” {40} And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “So, you men could not keep **watch (*gregoreo*)** with Me for one hour? {41} “Keep **watching (*gregoreo*)** and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

In Peter’s first letter, he exhorted believers to be of sober spirit, and to be on the alert. He said that our adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. We are to be sober and alert in our lives, and in particular about the schemes of the enemy. I would include Jesus’ exhortation to pray with alertness about temptations in this exhortation.

(1 Pe 5:8–9) “Be of sober spirit, be on the **alert (*gregoreo*)**. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. {9} But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.”

In Paul’s letter to the Colossians, he also exhorted them to devote themselves to prayer, and to keep alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving. The context of his exhortation was praying for open doors or opportunities to share the gospel with others.

(Col 4:2–4) “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert (gregoreo) in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; {3} praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; {4} that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.”

In Matthew 24:42-44, He was speaking about the Day of the Lord and He used the same illustration of a thief coming at night, and told the apostles to be on the alert (gregoreo). The first alert was in regard to prayer and temptations. This alert is in regard to the signs of the time, so that we are not surprised by His coming.

(Mt 24:42–44) “Therefore be on the alert (gregoreo), for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. {43} “But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. {44} “For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.”

When Paul met with the Ephesian elders at Miletus, he told them that after his departure savage wolves would come in among them, not sparing the flock. He exhorted them to be on the alert against these dangerous wolves. This is not alertness about temptations, or the Day of the Lord, but alertness in watching over the flock. As believers, we must be alert. We must be alert in all areas of our lives. Alertness is not just limited to being ready for the Day of the Lord.

(Ac 20:29–31) “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; {30} and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. {31} “Therefore be on the alert (gregoreo), remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.”

One example about being alert or vigilant is a nurse in the ICU. She keeps very careful watch over all the vital signs that are being monitored. If there is any change in one of these signs, she responds immediately.

Another example of being alert is a factory worker on an assembly line. As the products come down the assembly line, they are specifically charged to cull out any parts that are irregular. They are told to look out for parts that may have had too little or too much plastic injected into the molding machine. So, these workers have to be very alert and on the lookout for commonly found deformed pieces. If they do not do their job well, the quality control process will be jeopardized. Christians have been given specific things to alertly watch out for. Jesus gave many signs, and we need to be aware of these signs, and then alertly paying attention or watching out for them so that we are not taken by surprise.

There are many important reasons to be alert in prayer. One important reason to be alert in prayer is that we want to hear the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit. God may be telling us about an open door that he is setting before us and how He wants us to respond. He may be shodding our feet with the preparation of the gospel.

Believers are of the day, not the night, and we are therefore to be sober and alert. We are also to put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. This is a reference to the armor of God that Paul wrote about in Ephesians 6. There is a spiritual battle going on, and we are to put on the full armor of God and stand firm against the enemy.

(1 Th 5:8) “But since we are of *the* day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.”

(Eph 6:10–17) “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. {11} Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. {12} For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. {13} Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. {14} Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, {15} and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; {16} in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*. {17} And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

Earlier in Ephesians 5, Paul used the same contrast of walking in the light versus walking in darkness. As believers, we were formerly in darkness, but now we are Light in the Lord, and we are to walk as children of Light. As children of Light, we are to be full of goodness, righteousness, and truth, and are to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. We are not to participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but are to even expose them. The Day of the Lord is coming, and believers need to be aware of it, and second, they need to walk in the Light. Believers need to be sober, alert, and put on their armor. The lives of believers are to be characterized by love, righteousness, and goodness.

(Eph 5:6–14) “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. {7} Therefore do not be partakers with them; {8} for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light {9} (for the fruit of the Light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth), {10} trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. {11} Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; {12} for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. {13} But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. {14} For this reason it says, “Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you.”

### 3. Destiny

There is a contrast in the awareness of the Day of the Lord between the unbeliever and the believer. It will catch the unbeliever like a thief in the night, but believers are taught in the word of God about the Day of the Lord, and they are to be alert and sober. There is a contrast in the lives that the unbeliever and believer are living in the time leading up to the Day of the Lord. Third, there is a contrast in the destiny between the unbeliever and believer.

#### a. Unbeliever

While the unbeliever thinks that things are going along well, and are saying, “Peace and safety!”, destruction will come upon them suddenly, and they will not escape it.

(1 Th 5:3) “While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.”



In verse nine, we see that God has not destined the believers for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. This destruction that is going to come upon unbelievers is the wrath of God.

(1 Th 5:9) “For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,”

Earlier in the letter, Paul, Silas, and Timothy wrote about the testimony of the Thessalonians, and how they had turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come. Believers are rescued from the wrath, but unbelievers are destined for wrath and destruction.

(1 Th 1:10) “and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is* Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.”

John the Baptist spoke about the wrath to come. He rebuked the Pharisees and Sadducees, and said, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” He went on to say that the Lord would clear out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat, but would burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. The wrath to come is an unquenchable fire.

(Mt 3:7-12) “But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?... {10} The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.... {12} “His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

In Revelation 20, the devil was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are also, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. This wrath to come is an eternal place of torment, and it is described as a lake of fire.

(Re 20:10-15) “And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.... {15} And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

## **b. Believer**

The destiny of the believer is salvation and to be with the Lord. They wrote, “For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Whether a believer is awake (alive in the flesh), or asleep, he will live together with Christ.

(1 Th 5:9–10) “For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, {10} who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.”

In Philippians 1, Paul wrote, “to live is Christ and to die is gain.” How could he say that? He said it because he knew that when he died, he would be in the presence of the Lord. He knew that the Lord was with him in this earthly life, but when he died, he will be in the Lord’s presence. Paul

was hard pressed between wanting to stay alive in the flesh, because there was much work that needed to be done, and that meant fruitful labor for him. At the same time, he had a desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better. When a believer dies, his spirit and soul are immediately with the Lord. Our earthly bodies will decay, but when the Day of the Lord comes, He will bring back with Him all those who are asleep, and the dead in Christ will rise first, meaning they will get their resurrected bodies first. Then, those who are alive at that time will be caught up in the sky with them and they will get their resurrected bodies. The destiny of the believer is to always be with the Lord. They are not destined for wrath, but to be in presence of the Lord forever.

(Php 1:21–24) “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. {22} But if *I am* to live *on* in the flesh, this *will mean* fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. {23} But I am hard-pressed from both *directions*, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for *that* is very much better; {24} yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

### Conclusion and Applications

This passage is a continuation of the discussion in 1 Thessalonians 4, where Paul, Silas, and Timothy addressed what happens to believers who have already died. They wanted the Thessalonians to have a good understanding about this matter. They did not want them uninformed or ignorant. They answered by saying that the Lord will bring them back with them, and they will get their resurrected bodies first. Those alive when He comes will not precede or go before those who have already died.

Second, they encouraged the Thessalonians not to grieve like those who have no hope. Because Christ was raised from the dead, we will also be raised from the dead.

Third, because of this knowledge, they were to encourage and build up one another, just as they are already doing. In the light of the persecution and suffering they are experience, and the loss of loved ones, they are not to grieve like those without hope. We will see our loved ones again, and they are in the presence of the Lord, a much better place. When the Lord returns, they will come back with the Lord and they will be the first to get their resurrected bodies. They are not in an inferior state or circumstance; they will be the first to get their resurrected bodies, and they are in the Lord’s presence now.

(1 Th 5:11) “Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”

The Day of the Lord is going to come. God has given us many different signs of the epochs or seasons, and Christians are to be aware of the season that we are in. We do not know the exact time (chronos), but we have been given the characteristics of the season or epoch. Unbelievers will be caught off guard like a thief in the night, but God has given believers much instruction in His word, so we have no reason to be unaware.

The second contrast is in the life we live. Christians are of the light, and are to walk in the light. Unbelievers are in the dark, and they are asleep or drunk. Believers are to be sober and alert, and living righteous lives.

Third, the destiny of the believers and unbelievers is very different. Believers have very much to look forward to. They have escaped the wrath to come by placing their trust in the Lord Jesus

Christ, who has rescued us from the wrath to come. The destiny of believers is to be with the Lord forever. The destiny of unbelievers is wrath and destruction.

Have you studied and are you familiar with the signs of the Day of the Lord? Are you sober and alert, and are you watching for the Lord's return?

Are you living your life in the reality that the Lord is coming back? Are you walking in love? Are you walking in the light? Are you walking uprightly? Are you putting on your spiritual armor each day? How are you living your life while waiting for the Lord's return?

### **Closing Prayer**

Father God, thank You for our salvation. Thank You for rescuing us from the wrath to come. Help us to live our lives for You. Help us to live soberly and alertly. Help us to walk in the light. Help us reach out and rescue those who are walking in the dark? Help us to have mercy on some who are doubting. Help us to snatch others out of the fire. Help us to have mercy with fear on some, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. Help us to be good representatives of Yours, and help us to bear much fruit for You. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

(Jud 22–23) “And have mercy on some, who are doubting; {23} save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.”

## **Three Contrasts in the Day of the Lord**

### **Introduction** (1 Jn 3:9–10, 1 Th 5:1–11)

#### **1. Awareness**

- a. Unbeliever (1 Th 5:1–3)
  
- b. Believer (1 Th 5:1–2, 4, Ac 1:6–8, Mk 13:6–37)

#### **2. Life**

- a. Unbeliever (1 Th 5:3–7, 1 Jn 2:9–11)
  
- b. Believer (1 Th 5:4–6, Mt 26:36–41, 1 Pe 5:8–9, Col 4:2–4, Mt 24:42–44, Ac 20:29–31, 1 Th 5:8, Eph 6:10–17, Eph 5:6–14)

#### **3. Destiny**

- a. Unbeliever (1 Th 5:3, 9, 1 Th 1:10, Mt 3:7–12, Re 20:10–15)
  
- b. Believer (1 Th 5:9–10, Php 1:21–24)

### **Conclusion and Applications** (1 Th 5:11, Jud 22–23)