

Jeff Lingerfelt
PO Box 12131, SC 29211
803-467-7634
Jeff.lingerfelt@capitolcom.org

LEADERSHIP DURING DIFFICULT DAYS
CONTRAST OF CHARACTER (v.5)
1THESSALONIANS 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.

CONTRAST OF CHARACTER: Sons of light/day – vs– of night/darkness

Paul in our study is making a contrast in character between two groups "but you" the believers (v.4) and the "others" unbelievers (v.6). "But you brother—Believers" marks out a contrast and introduces an appeal to believers. Paul makes the distinction between the 3rd person plural pronoun (3 times in verse 3) to the second person plural. Because the true church has been caught up together to meet the Lord in the air (aka rapture—a word technically not used in Scripture). The believer will not be present on earth to experience the awful "Day of The Lord" in which His wrath, the terrifying judgments, will be poured out all the godless, because on the cross God poured out the full fury of His wrath on His Son Jesus Christ.

The future "Day of The Lord" is seen in two events in the New Testament: 1) the end of the 7 year tribulation period-Revelation 19:11-21, and 2) the end of the 1000 year reign of Christ. Here Paul is referring to the former.

Though believers in Christ will not be a part of this, it still has a real and practical application. Note the contrast in verses 4-5 and the words "them" and "they" (v.3) and "others" (v.6). Our passage deals with two "Characters". The "brethren" and the "others". The former are known as: 1) sons of Light; 2) sons of Day; 3) alertness; 4) sobriety. The latter are known as: 1) of night; 2) of darkness; 3) sleeping; 4) drunkenness.

THE BRETHERN

"Sons of" depicts an individual as sharing in the nature or quality of spiritual light (believers) versus spiritual darkness (unbelievers) in the next clause (where Paul drops the word "sons" and just states "of night...of darkness"). Believers are those who are characterized by all the blessings and privileges of sons.ⁱ

Sons of Light: This is a Hebraism which describes one as belonging to or characterized something in this case light (spiritually speaking). Paul uses a similar phrase in Ephesians describing unbelievers as sons of disobedience (Ephesians 2:2) or sons who are characterized by disobedience. You were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light.ⁱⁱ

Believers are of the light!

Jesus, on Sermon on the Mount stated "you are the **light** of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Mt 5:14-16; Philippians 2:14-15)

The Apostle John says in John 3:21 "he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

Peter in 1 Peter 2:9 reminds his audience that they are A CHOSEN RACE, a royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you **out of darkness** into His marvelous **light**

John in his Epistle, 1John 1:7 affirms "if we walk in the **light** as He Himself is in the **light**, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Believers have been delivered from the domain of darkness:

Colossians 1:13-14 "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Ephesians 5:8 "you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as **children of Light**"

Sinners who once existed only in the sphere of spiritual darkness, blind to the light of the Word (In 8:12), have been miraculously made into saints by a divine rescue operation which removed them from the "dark side" and transferred them into the new sphere, the kingdom of light, the kingdom of Christ.ⁱⁱⁱ

Sons of Day: This repetition of the "sons of..." idiom adds emphasis to the description of these believers and calls for conduct concordant with their status as day people. This term **day** refers to the realm in which they are now living as light possessed people.^{iv}

Paul is not referring to "the day". The idea is "how are you living as light possessed people? Are you living as those characterized with all the blessings and privileges of sons?"

C H Spurgeon States..."I will not execute the fierceness of Mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man" (Hosea 11:9).

The LORD thus makes known His sparing mercies. It may be that the reader is now under heavy displeasure, and everything threatens his speedy doom. Let the text hold him up from despair. The LORD now invites you to consider your ways and confess your sins. If He had been man, He would long ago have cut you off. If He were now to act after the manner of men, it would be a word and a blow and then there would be an end of you: but it is not so, for "as high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are his ways above your ways." You rightly judge that He is angry, but He keepeth not His anger forever: if you turn from sin to Jesus, God will turn from wrath. Because God is God, and not man, there is still forgiveness for you, even though you may be steeped up to your throat in iniquity. You have a God to deal with and not a hard man, or even a merely just man. **No human being could have patience with you.** You would have wearied out an angel, as you have wearied your sorrowing Father; but God is longsuffering. Come and try Him at once. Confess, believe, and turn from your evil way, and you shall be saved.

Where are you today? Have you become a child of Light? How are you living your daily life in light of the imminent appearing of the Lord and the Day of the Lord?

ⁱ http://preceptaustin.org/1thessalonians_54-5.htm.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Ibid.