

Templates of Truth with Rick Smith  
Audio Script - January 23, 2009

Are you a morning person or a night person? What part of the day do you function at your best? In today's Templates of Truth, Paul offers an insightful perspective on the difference between day people and night people, taken from his words of encouragement in I Thessalonians, chapter five.

In the short amount of time Paul had spent with this young church, he apparently taught them much about the Rapture of the Church, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and insights about persons and activities that would accompany those events. Like all of us, they were curious to know when all these things would occur. Paul reminded them of that which he had already taught them. Specifically: *the day of the Lord will come* (I Thessalonians 5:2). It is not a question of, "if;" it is only a question of "when." It is imminent. There is little question among scholars as to what Paul is referring to. The *day of the Lord* is a day of wrath and judgment that is coming upon an unbelieving world who continues to reject God.

As to when that day is coming, Paul affirms that which Jesus declared: *It is not for you to know the times or epochs which the Father has fixed by his own authority* (Acts 1:7). *Times* refers to the number of days that will elapse between now and when the day of the Lord comes. *Epochs* refers to the designated date on the calendar for when it happens. Regardless of what you read about or hear about on television today, Jesus taught the bottom line: *But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone* (Matthew 24:36). If you hear someone proposing a date, you can know immediately that his message is not of God.

Paul did give two insightful clues, however, as to when. He said, first of all, that it *will come just like a thief in the night* (I Thessalonians 5:2). A thief doesn't call you on the telephone and inform you of the night and hour of the night that he intends to break into your house and rob you of your belongings. Secondly, Paul said, it will come *while they are saying, "Peace and safety!"* (5:3). Both of these clues indicate that the day of the Lord is going to be sudden, unexpected, and at a time when everyone would least expect it. A time, in fact, when everything seems safe, secure and peaceful.

In the verses that follow, Paul contrasts the night people from the day people. Thieves often come at night when the cover of darkness obscures their activity. And, *those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night* (5:7). Contrary to these in darkness, Paul says: *we are not of night nor of darkness... we are all sons of light and sons of day... so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be sober and alert* (5:5-6). While those in darkness sleep, we who live in the light remain awake. While those in darkness get drunk, those of us in the light remain sober. In this comparison, night people are those who will experience the full wrath of God on the day of the Lord, while Paul affirms: *Since we are of the day... God has not destined us for wrath* (5:8-9). The difference between the two is destruction for night people, but salvation for day people.

Are you a day person? If so, *be alert and sober* (5:6). That involves putting on *the breastplate*

*of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation* (5:8). It also involves *encouraging one another and building up one another* (5:11). Being on alert means being in a perpetual state of readiness; positioned to move into action at a moment's notice. Satan doesn't have to lead you into rebellious sinful behavior to get you out of fellowship with God. All he has to do is lead you into complacency so that you are doing little or nothing for God. When God calls, will He find you awake or asleep?

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in Christ Jesus.

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