

Thoughts from First Thessalonians ...



Sons of Day, Sons of Night

At the first of creation, everything was dark. Then God said for the light to come into existence, and there was light. From the get-go, then, there has been this contrast between light and dark in the physical realm, setting the stage for the communication of the concept of darkness and light in the spiritual realm. "For you were formerly darkness," the apostle Paul explained to the brethren in Ephesus, "but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8). This usage of *dark* and *light* is not just metaphorical; Christians really are "light," and non-Christians really are "darkness." The apostle informed the congregation at Corinth that the God who caused the light to shine on the first day of creation is "the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6). Inside each true saint of God there is a tremendous light shining, the treasure currently obscured by "earthen vessels" (2 Corinthians 4:7). Brethren are "sons of light."

- ◆ **Not overtaken** — The apostle has already indicated that the disciples of Christ in Thessalonica should not be surprised should Jesus return at any point, the teaching about Jesus' second coming being a basic doctrine of Christianity. The rest of the world will be planting and harvesting, buying and selling, and marrying and being given in marriage totally oblivious to the fact that the Maker of heaven and earth is on His way, the "destruction coming upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child." "But you, brethren," the apostle reminds them, "are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief" (1 Thessalonians 5:4). Christians are enlightened, alert, and awake!

- ◆ **Sons of day** — There is a clear contrast between night and day. What is done in the day is honest, done out in the open where everyone can see what is going on. What is done in the darkness is hidden, often illegal or immoral; even the word *shady* applies. "For you are all sons of light and sons of day," Paul emphasizes, indicating that the brethren have nothing to be afraid of at the Lord's return, because they have nothing illegal or immoral hidden. "The fruit of the light," Paul had commented, "consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Ephesians 5:9). Saints are ready for the return of Jesus, and are not doing anything that would cause them to shrink away in shame.

- ◆ **Sons of darkness** — The sons of darkness alive on earth at Christ's return will be engaging in their conniving, immoral, and lascivious activities, and they will cry out to the mountains and to the rocks, saying, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" (Revelation 6:16). "We," says Paul, of the faithful brethren, "are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober" (1 Thessalonians 5:5,6). The sons of day are doing what they are supposed to be doing, being where they are supposed to be, having the great attitude they are supposed to have, scanning the sky and expecting the Lord's imminent return. Not so with those on the dark side: "For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night" (1 Thessalonians 5:7).

By contrast, then, "we are of the day," and the exhortation is "let us be sober" (1 Thessalonians 5:8). For the saint, the sober warning of Jesus still stands: "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming." If the householder had known when the thief was coming, he would have been ready with his shotgun. "For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will" (Matthew 24:42-44). Are you still willing to say that Jesus is not coming today?

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