

End Times Perspective Living

Charlie Watson, father of my mother, was a chronic alcoholic. But Charlie had heard the Gospel. Waking up on a beach after a drinking binge, with the tide lapping just under his nose, Charlie was suddenly wide awake. Terrified. He knew that if he'd drowned he would have been damned to hell. Charlie repented and asked Jesus to be his saviour. For the rest of his life granddad Watson lived life with an End-Times perspective. He was determined to be alive when Jesus comes again. Just before he died he said to his wife, "Violet, I think I'm about to go to be with Jesus. I'd so hoped he would have come in my life time."

First Thessalonians 4:13-18 asserts that based on the resurrection of Jesus the living dead who have *died in Christ* will return from heaven with Jesus. They will receive new, transformed, resurrected bodies. Then the living Christians will be changed, reunited with those who have *died in Christ* and together meet the Lord in the air. *So we will be with the Lord forever*. I expect to be reunited with Granddad Watson when Jesus comes.

First Thessalonians 5:1-11 contrasts the fate and future of non-Christians with the destiny of Christians. The Christians in Thessalonica are aware of the coming of the *day of the Lord*. Paul explains their relationship to that day. The *day of the Lord* is synonymous with the *day of Judgement*, a day of wrath, of punishment, of visitation.

To be a spiritually healthy Church, a healthy Christian, requires having an eternal perspective that includes both concepts, *the day of the Lord*, and the *coming of the Lord* for his saints. The Thessalonians already know the *day of the Lord* will arrive unexpectedly, *like a thief in the night*. The *day of the Lord* is inevitable, but unpredictable, (Leon Morris). Because of this, healthy Christians are to live as sons/daughters of light and sons/daughters of day having an eternal perspective.

While the *day of the Lord* should not catch Christians unprepared, it is possible for them to adopt the same life style as those who will be caught unawares. Paul urges them not to let this happen. Healthy Christians are to be *'looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God'* Hebrews 11:10.

Stott observes: "Christ's coming will be (1) sudden and unexpected (like a burglar in the night), and (2) sudden and unavoidable (like labour at the end of pregnancy). In the first case there will be no warning, and in the second no escape."

What do you need to do to be ready, waiting, anticipating the return of Jesus?