

Recently a proponent of date-setting made the point that while 1 Thess. 5 may not expressly teach that one can know the day of the Lord, the passage does not exclude believers from knowing the day. This contention leaves itself open to honest criticism on two accounts:

1. The argument made by those who believe in knowing the day is exactly that 1 Thess. 5:4's "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness" refers to the fact that believers do know the timing of His second coming. This argument, in fact, predates 1994. To put forth, thus, that 1 Thess. 5 merely does not exclude the possibility of believers knowing the date of the Lord's return is either a softening of the argument, or is reflective of an incorrect understanding of how the passage is used by those who are awaiting May 21.

\*\*\*Please note that the "do" in my statement above, that " 'But ye, brethren, are not in darkness' " refers to the fact that believers do know the timing of the second coming' " would actually be will, according to the view of May 21 proponents, since they hold that only believers living in our time have had their eyes open to the truths regarding timing; which would mean believers at Thessalonica would not have had the knowledge regarding timing, in spite of the fact that the epistle addresses them in the first instance. This would then force one to conclude that not being in darkness for the Thessalonian believers meant something different from what the expression means for believers living in our time.

2. In complete contradiction of the above point, the verse actually *does* exclude believers from knowing the timing of the Day of the Lord:

v. 1: "But of the times and the seasons...."

Why does the verse begin with "but"? Let us note that chapter 4 describes the glorious blessedness of His return and the ultimate rapture of His people. By these truths were believers to comfort one another even in the face of grief over the physical deaths of their own. So why would God choose to begin chapter 5 with an adversative particle? If chapter 5 is meant to encourage believers to eagerly wait for the unfolding of ch. 4's promises, to hasten unto the appearing of the Lord upon Whose return they will experience the transformation of the mortal bodies into that immortal, and not only this, but to then be taken up, to "ever be with the Lord" (ch. 4 v. 17), why start with "But" (yet)? If ch. 5 teaches that believers in the last days will come to know the day, yea, even the very hour of the Master's return, why would the chapter begin with "But" (yet)?

Chapter 5 v. 1 speaks directly of "times and seasons"; what might be the logic that allows us to bridge the two chapters? Surely as the disciples responded to the Lord's surprising declaration regarding the coming destruction of the temple in the Olivet passage, so the expected response to the wondrous promises of ch. 4 of 1 Thess. would have been, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Mt. 24:3). The answer of the all-knowing Heavenly Father to such inquiries of His little ones is this:

"Yet," that is, in spite of questions arising in your hearts regarding the "times and the seasons" - for what child of God would not be desirous to know about his day of resurrection, glorification and rapture? - indeed You "have no need that I write unto you." Why?

2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

\*\*\*For a more in-depth look into the expression "ye have no need" (1 Thess. 5:1), along with other verses related to the matter of the timing of the Lord's return, please feel free to review the three studies available here:

<http://www.examine-expound.com/pages/audio%20bible%20studies%20sundays%202007.aspx>

Zin Yi  
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