

“Thoroughly Equipped” Part 2 “Grace Saves Us”

Before someone asks, let me answer. “We are one day closer.” This is my standard response to questions that ask, “Do you think Jesus is returning soon?” Yes, he has always said he is “Coming soon.” While he never tells us the exact date and time (for a reason), he tells us what to look for and expect. Then ask, “What does grace have to do with it?”

Matthew 24:3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

⁴ Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains.

⁹ “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

- A. How much do you spend thinking about the end of the world? Why or why not?

- B. What words of Jesus concern you most? Comfort you most?

- C. Some look at verse 14 as a key indicator of the end by trying to figure out what nations don’t have the Gospel yet. Do you think this is Jesus’ point? Why/why not?

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ² for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

⁴ But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵ You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶ So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹ For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. ¹¹ **Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.**

How do these truths/words encourage and build you up?

How can you use them to encourage and build someone else up?

Why are the last words of this letter so important: *“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you”*?