

The Day Is at Hand

Romans 13:11-14



Apostle Paul (~ 5 – 67 A.D.)
By Andrei Rublev (1410)

Previously in Romans



Previously in Romans

- Paul's goals:
 - To introduce himself to the Roman church in preparation for later mission work.
 - To encourage unity among Jewish and Gentile believers.
 - To thoroughly explain the gospel he preaches as the means to both of the above.

Previously in Romans

- Key verses: **Romans 1:16-17** (ESV)

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

Previously in Romans

- Key concept: God's grace
 - Unmerited favor, freely given to penitent sinners.
 - God's goodness toward those who deserve only punishment.

Previously in Romans

- Key phrase: “the obedience of faith” (1:5, 16:26)
- Faith and obedience are *related* – *not rival* ideas.
- The gospel brings about **faith** which leads to **obedience**.
- This was Christ’s intention for Paul’s apostleship.

Previously in Romans

- In **Romans 1 – 11**, Paul described right belief.
- In **Romans 12 – 15**, he describes right conduct.
- Paul links our motivation for right conduct to Christ's most certain and sudden return.

The Day Is at Hand Introduction

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- **1 Thessalonians 5:1-8 (ESV)**

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. ² For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴ But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief ...

The Day Is at Hand Introduction

- **1 Thessalonians 5:1-8 (ESV)**

⁵ For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶ So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

The Day Is at Hand Introduction

- Jesus, in his Parable of the Ten Virgins, emphasizes the suddenness of his coming.
- **Matthew 25:5-6** (ESV)

⁵ As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. ⁶ But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'

The Day Is at Hand Introduction

While the prophetic declarations of the events of that time remain to instruct us, the eager expectation of the time ... has also remained ... On the certainty of the event, our faith is grounded: by the uncertainty of the time, our hope is stimulated, and our watchfulness aroused.

*– Henry Alford (1810 – 1871),
English theologian, composer of hymns*



The Day Is at Hand Introduction

Paul did not foresee two thousand years of church history, but when the timing of the second coming is allowed to be uncertain while the event is believed to be certain, one can treat it like company coming from afar. One needs to be prepared always, because one does not know just when it will show up.

*– Ben Witherington III,
Asbury Theological Seminary*



The Day Is at Hand Introduction

The more we look toward the Lord's coming,
the more we will want to live as if
we were already in his presence.

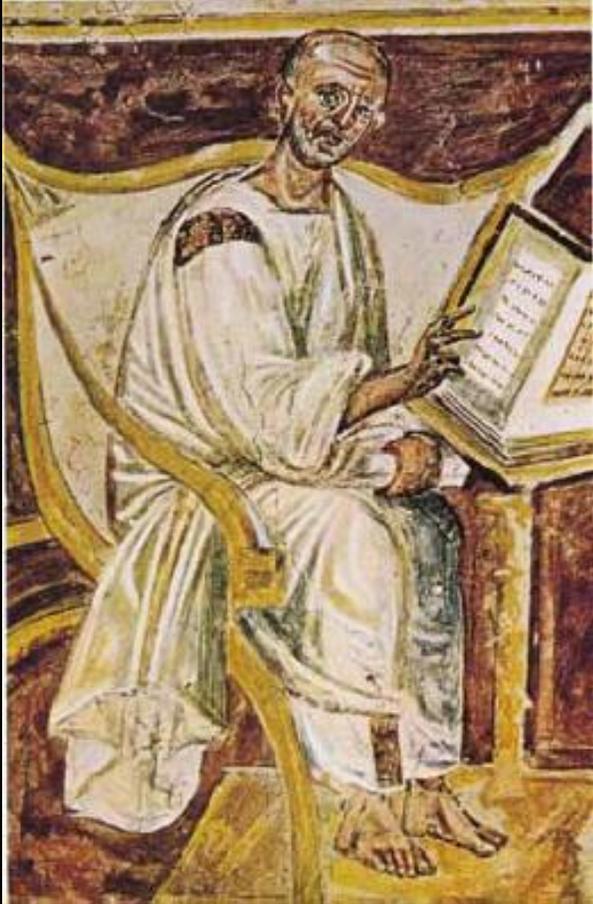
The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14



The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14

- **13:11** For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.
- Paul wants us to be eagerly, continuously on the watch for the coming of Jesus.

The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14



Paul said this, yet look at how many years have passed since then! Yet what he said was not untrue. How much more probable it is that the coming of the Lord is near now, when there has been such an increase of time toward the end!

*– Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430 AD),
North African Church Father*

The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14

- 13:11 For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.
- And how many more years have passed since Augustine wrote those words!

The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14



Christ's return is the next event in God's plan; Paul knew it could take place at any time and sought to prepare Christians—both in his generation and in ours—for that “blessed hope.”

*— Douglas Moo,
Wheaton Graduate School*

The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14

- We should consider this a time of preparation.
- All that we do should be done in light of the Lord's return.

The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14



Those who 'slumber' do not understand the nature of the interim time in which they live. Believers, however, should be 'awake', knowing the present time is drawing to a close, and therefore their salvation is nearer than when they first believed.

*– Colin Kruse,
Melbourne School of Theology*

The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14

- **13:12** The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.
- Some works are more appropriate than others in these times in which we live, given who we are as children of the day.

The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14

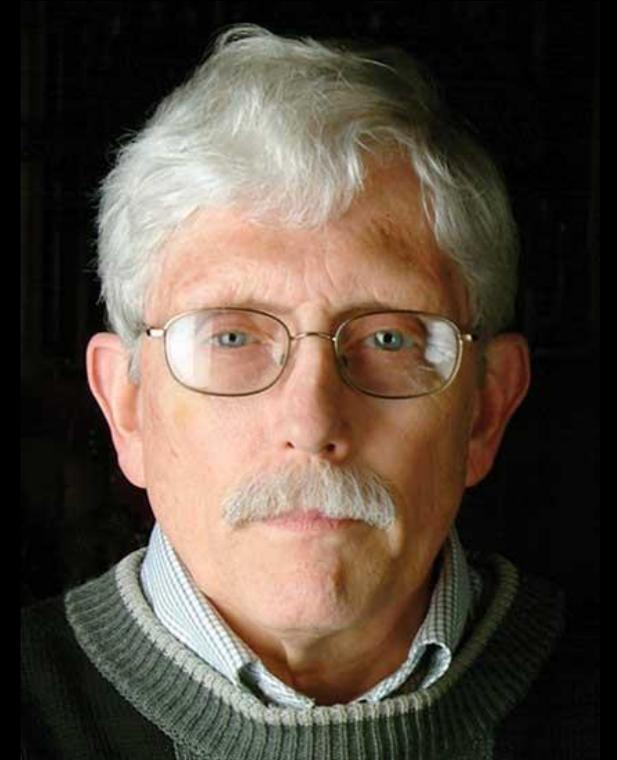
- Remember that passage we read at the beginning.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:4-6 (ESV)

⁴ But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵ For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶ So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.

The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14

Paul is saying that Christians should live such exemplary lives that when people observe them, their conduct is beyond reproach ... Christians walk in the present day in light of the final Day when we meet the Lord.

*– Grant Osborne,
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School*



The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14

- **13:13** Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.
- The behaviors that Paul lists were not unusual.
- The Greco-Roman world was much like ours.

The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14



If there is anyone who thinks that youth should be forbidden affairs even with courtesans, he is doubtless eminently austere but his view is not only contrary to the license of this age, but also to the custom and concessions of our ancestors.

*– Cicero (106 – 43 B.C.),
Roman philosopher, politician, orator*

The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14

- **13:13** Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.
- And yet Paul is saying that such behaviors are not acceptable for us as Christians.

The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14

- **13:13** Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.
- The first three sins are sort of “bad” sins – ones we might be embarrassed about.
- The last two are often accompanied by a deep sense of self-righteousness or self-justification.

The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14

The more we look toward the Lord's coming,
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The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14

- 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.
- Our focus should be only on Jesus and whatever it takes to please him.

The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14

The conclusion in 13:14 strengthens the contrast between ... living in anticipation of the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ and ... gratifying the desires of the sinful nature. We need to consciously and constantly put on Christ, that is, decide to live under his lordship and allow Christ to control all aspects of our lives.

*– David M. Kasali, Bilingual Christian
University of the Congo*



The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14

- 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.
- This is what it takes to be ready.
- The Day is at hand.

The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14



Paul does not say, as many of his interpreters have supposed ... that the final end of which he speaks in Romans 8, 1 Cor 15, 1 Thess 4–5, and elsewhere, will certainly come within a generation ...

– Tom Wright, former Anglican Bishop of Durham

The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14



but he knows that it might well do so, and insists that it is the more urgent that Christians behave already in the manner that will then be appropriate.

– Tom Wright, former Anglican Bishop of Durham

The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14

- Given that our time is limited, what should our response be?
- 2 Peter 3:9 (ESV)

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Three Reasons to Remember That Jesus Is Coming

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1. It gives us a purifying hope.

- **1 John 3:2-3** (ESV)

²Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

Three Reasons to Remember That Jesus Is Coming

1. It gives us a purifying hope. See **1 John 3:2-4**.
2. It reminds us that the “**Big Story**” of the Bible – and the world – is all under God’s control.

(In case we can’t see that.)

In other words, we don’t have to see or even expect to see a superficial “silver lining,” from our shortsighted angle.

Three Reasons to Remember That Jesus Is Coming

1. It gives us a purifying hope. See **1 John 3:2-4**.
2. It reminds us that the “Big Story” of the Bible – and the world – is all under God’s control. (In case we can’t see it.)
3. It reminds us that Jesus wins. God wins. The Good Guys win. All that is wrong in the universe will be corrected.

The Day Is at Hand **Conclusions**



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Paul certainly betrays a strong sense of expectation about the return of Christ and can even speak at times as if he will be alive at that time. But nowhere does he predict a near return and, more importantly, he does not ground his exhortations ...

*– Douglas Moo,
Wheaton Graduate School*

The Day Is at Hand **Conclusions**



on the conviction that the [personal return of Christ] would take place very soon but on the conviction that [it] was always imminent— its coming certain, its timing incalculable.

*– Douglas Moo,
Wheaton Graduate School*

The Day Is at Hand **Conclusions**

- Just like Paul and the Roman Christians that he wrote to, our culture does not give us much incentive to live a holy life.
- And yet, just like them, we need to look beyond our culture and look to Jesus – representing him in all that we do.

The Day Is at Hand **Conclusions**

- We cannot completely put aside sin by mere willpower.
- Nor should our putting aside sin (to the extent we can) cause us to think ourselves better than others.
- Our Master died to save us from sin's power over us as well as from its penalty – our ability comes from him.

The Day Is at Hand **Conclusions**



Romans 13 began with important teaching about how we can be good citizens (1-7) and good neighbours (8-10); it ends with why we should be. There is no greater incentive to the doing of these duties than a lively expectation of the Lord's return.

*– John Stott (1921 – 2011),
All Souls Church, London*

The Day Is at Hand Conclusions

The more we look toward the Lord's coming,
the more we will want to live as if
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The Day Is at Hand **Conclusions**

- Key verses: **Romans 1:16-17** (ESV)

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”