

WEEKLY REFLECTION

Our passage this week is where Paul first explicitly discusses “the day of the Lord” (1 Thess. 5:2), but references to our Lord’s second coming are peppered throughout the entire letter. (1:10; 2:19-20; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:2-7; 23-24) Paul referenced this so frequently because the Thessalonians were experiencing persecution and suffering for the sake of their faith. They needed encouragement. They were worried about those who had “fallen asleep” before they could meet Christ Jesus in the flesh. Most importantly, they were being deceived—lulled into a false sense of peace and security; tempted, deceived, and confused (v.3).

Times have not changed. We face the same problems that the church in Thessalonica did, so many years ago. War, famine, violence, poverty, disease, inequity and injustice. At the very root of it all, human pride, greed, and sin. No wonder Paul calls the church to be sober! To be clear-headed and clear-minded! Paul reminds the Thessalonian church that “the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.” (v.2) No one knows the day or the time, not even the Son Himself. (Matt. 24:36) But this should not instill in us fear and anxiety. Rather, we must be on guard and aware of all the things going on around us. In the process, we must protect ourselves against the enemy’s confusion, division, and deception by putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and the helmet of the hope of salvation (v.8)

The day of Lord will come suddenly, with destruction and judgment. No one will be spared. But we who are children of light can walk in our Father’s ways, knowing that He did not destine us for wrath. (v.9) Already, the Lord Jesus has obtained salvation for us through His death. Already, He has prepared a place for us to be with Him, for all eternity—the question is, are you ready? Are you ready for the time when He comes again?

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

“Prosperity knits a man to the world. He feels that he is finding his place in it, while really it is finding its place in him.”

“It does not matter how small the sins are provided that their cumulative effect is to edge the man away from the Light and out into the Nothing. Murder is no better than cards if cards can do the trick. Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.”

Above are two quotes from C.S. Lewis’ *Screwtape Letters*. Given this and what was shared on Sunday, what are some ways that the enemy seeks to tempt, deceive, confuse, and divide? How do you see yourself being lulled into a false sense of peace and security, distracted from the eternal hope that awaits you?

QUESTION TWO:

Paul shares some ways that we can protect ourselves against the darkness of this age, by putting on the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet of the hope of salvation in verse 8. This tells us that even the act of staying ready and sober is often in itself a battle.

What might be some things you are fighting, that stop you from being prepared for Christ? How might you defend yourself or fight back against these things by equipping yourself with the armor pieces that are mentioned in verse 8?

QUESTION THREE:

We shared on Sunday some ways to encourage and build each other up as we walk alongside one another on our journeys of faith.

Take the time now to encourage one another with boldness and courage, as you prepare to reflect back on the past year and the journey ahead. End by praying for each other, as we know it takes patience, perseverance, and endurance to keep running the good race of faith.