

October 25 2015

CHILDREN OF LIGHT

1 Thessalonians 5: 1-10

Look at 1 Thessalonians 5: 1-2 “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.”

“The day of the Lord” is the DAY of Christ’s second coming. **It is** the FINAL day of this world’s existence. **It is** the DAY that the world (and all that is in it) will melt “with fervent heat”. **Peter** has similar words concerning THAT day.

Look at II Peter 3: 10 “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

Our context tells us that “the day of the Lord”, (Christ’s second advent), will OVERTAKE many. **It will OVERTAKE** them. **They** won’t be expecting it. **They** will be (totally) surprised by it. **These** many will be OVERTAKEN in three (particular) ways. **And**, Paul uses two metaphors to describe this OVERTAKING.

First, Christ will come “as a thief in the night”. **How** does a thief come? **He** comes suddenly. **He** comes unexpectedly. **He** comes secretly. **He** comes without warning. **These** are all characteristics of a thief. **And**, the scriptures warn against such and exhort sinners to be watchful.

Listen to Luke 12: 39-40, “**And this know, that if the good-man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. 40 Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.**”

Secondly, “the day of the Lord”, will come upon these many CERTAINLY.

Look at 1 Thessalonians 5: 3 “**For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.**” **THAT** day will come CERTAINLY.

Thirdly, “the day of the Lord”, will come upon these MANY with final (absolute) destruction. **Paul** writes in our text, “**And, they shall not escape**”. **If you** are OVERTAKEN by this “day of the Lord”, it will be to your (full/final) DESTRUCTION.

“**The day of the Lord**” will (certainly/suddenly) overtake and surprise MANY? **Who** are these MANY who will be OVERTAKEN by Christ’s return? **It will** overtake MANY who are irreligious and indifferent and unconcerned about spiritual and eternal things. **They** will, (of course), be overtaken and surprised. **But**, included in that number, will be MANY who are dedicated, sincere, zealous religionists.

Look back at verse 3 “**For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.**”

That day will OVERTAKE (many) who are (genuinely) concerned about their eternal well being. **It will** OVERTAKE (many) who (honestly) THINK they are ready to meet God; **MANY** who THINK they have done all they need to do to prepare themselves for the end; **MANY** who think they are looking to Christ for salvation.

The scriptures describe these (religious) MANY in different ways. **They** are those who love darkness and hate the light (John 3). **They** are those who (continue) “trusting in themselves that they are righteous”, (like the Pharisee in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican). **They** are those like the preachers in Matthew 7 (who showed up at the judgment pleading what “god” had enabled them to do).

The MANY are those speaking “peace and safety” to their listeners based on something **THEY** do and the MANY listeners who believe them. **These** are the **SAME** ones Paul writes about here. **Ultimately**, it is anybody preaching or promoting “Peace” with God based on anything other than the righteousness of God imputed to the sinner. **It is** those who are rejecting the Christ who is plainly and clearly revealed in the Gospel. **These** MANY are the same in every generation.

Look at a familiar verse from Jeremiah 8: 11. **Jeremiah** is speaking of the false prophets of his day. “**For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.**”

You always have to be careful when considering what **THEY** say. **And**, what you have to be **MOST** careful about is **WHO** (they) are. **What** is their **INTENT**? **What** is their **AUTHORITY**?

Listen to another familiar verse from Isaiah 8: 20 “**To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.**”

Then, listen to these verses from the New Testament warning us about (they).

II John 9-11 “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: 11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”

THAT day will OVERTAKE many suddenly, certainly, unto final destruction. **But**, although **THAT** day will be devastating; **although** it will overtake many, **it** will NOT overtake EVERYONE that way. **SOME** are under the mercy and grace of God. **And**, because of God’s mercy and grace toward **SOME**, “that day” is a day to be welcomed. **It** is a day for **SOME** to pray for and look forward to with hope and confidence. **Look** at 1 Thessalonians 5: 4 **“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”**

Why won’t **THAT** day overtake **MANY**? **It** won’t overtake **MANY**, because these **MANY** are “not in darkness”. **The** **MANY** who won’t be overtaken are “children of light, children of the day”. **THESE** are “not in darkness”. **WHY** are **THESE** (why is ANY sinner) “not in darkness”? **It can ONLY** be because they have been **DELIVERED** from “darkness”.

Paul writes to believers in Ephesians 5: 8 **“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:”**

“You WERE darkness”. **What** does that mean? **It means** you walked among and acted just like the “children of disobedience”. You walked “in the flesh” and NOT “in the Spirit”. **You** walked among and acted just like those who have NOT YET been delivered from “darkness”. **You** sought salvation by YOUR works and NOT by Christ ALONE. **This** is the “darkness” that prevails over ALL (w/o exception) who have not been **DELIVERED** from the “darkness”.

Listen to Ephesians 2: 1-2 **“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:”**

Paul goes on to say in Ephesians 2 that those who are NOW (true) believers; those who are NOW regenerated and converted, **“WERE (by nature) children of wrath even as others”**. **The ONLY** reason ANY sinner is not YET (not STILL) in darkness, is because that sinner has been **DELIVERED** from darkness.

THESE (many) won't be OVERTAKEN because they NO LONGER) in darkness. **And**, it is their DELIVERANCE from darkness that REVEALS them to be “**children of light**”.

Look back at 1 Thessalonians 5: 5 “**Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.**”

Look at John 12: 35-36 “**Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.**

36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.”

What DISTINGUISHES the “children of light” from the unbelieving world in their (respective) generations? **They** are those who are DELIVERED from “darkness”. They are those who “believe (and walk) in the light”. **The** “light” these walk in, (as well as), the “darkness” these have been delivered from is SPECIFIC.

What “light” do the “the children of light” walk in? **What** “darkness” have they been DELIVERED from? **They** walk in the “light” of the Gospel. **The** Gospel is the revelation/declaration of who Christ is and what He has done that makes it RIGHT for God to justify ungodly sinners. (**I.e.** to NOT give them what they deserve, which is eternal death, but RATHER give them eternal life and blessedness because of Christ's righteousness imputed to them.) **WHO**, **WHEN**, **WHY**.

The FIRST element of “darkness” the “children of light” have been delivered from is “darkness” concerning the Christ who is returning. **Their** HOPE is in the Christ “lifted up” in the preaching of the Gospel.

The “children of light” are those in each generation who believe Christ's Promise to return. **Christ** comforted His disciples upon His impending departure with the promise of His return.

Listen to John 14: 1-3 “**Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.**”

Angels consoled those who witnessed Christ's ascension with the same promise. **Look** at Acts 1: 9-11 **"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."**

"Children of light" are those who believe Christ's PROMISE to return. **AND**, they are those who have received the Gospel record of Christ's FIRST Advent. **I.e.** They know THAT One WHO is coming AGAIN. **And**, they know HIM who is coming AGAIN because they know WHO came the first time. **And**, they know WHO came the first time because they have received God's Testimony concerning Him.

The "children of light" are not just (mildly) acquainted with a (generic) "savior". **They** are (intimately) acquainted with Christ, the true Savior. **They** know WHO He is. **They** know WHAT He accomplished for those He was given. **They** know that God is honored to save sinners for His sake ALONE.

Those of Christ's day did not recognize Him or acknowledge His as the Messiah because they rejected God's testimony concerning Him. **And**, the religious people of our day do not know the Christ who is coming AGAIN for the same reason.

They will not HEAR the word of the Lord. **They** will not believe the Gospel. **When** is any sinner confronted with the Christ of the Scriptures? **That** (confrontation) ONLY takes place when God sits a sinner down under the preaching of HIS Gospel (wherein "the righteousness of God is revealed"). **Before** then, (all) are under "another gospel".

The Christ of the Scriptures did not give His life for a sinner only to have that sinner end up under the eternal wrath of God ANYWAY. **That** is NOT the Christ revealed in this Word. **The** scripture is CLEAR and EMPHATIC concerning Christ's death. **The** blood of Christ OBTAINED the eternal redemption of every sinner He died for. **Christ's** sacrifice "PUT AWAY" the sin of every sinner He laid down His life for.

Christ came the first time to SAVE His chosen people. **And**, He did. **He** did (everything) that was required of a Holy God to declare His people NOT guilty, BUT righteous in His sight. **"He** was delivered because of OUR offences and was raised again because of OUR justification", (Romans 4: 25).

That SAME One is coming AGAIN. **This** time He is coming to deliver His Church unto FINAL salvation and to judge this world unto (final) DESTRUCTION.

“**Children** of light” know WHO is coming AGAIN because they know WHO came the first time. **They** are those in every generation who believe the Gospel declaration of Christ. **They** believe that the Christ who is coming AGAIN is the God-man, who by His obedience unto death satisfied law and justice, put away the sins of His people, and established the righteousness by which God is Just to justify them.

“**Children** of light” are those in every generation who believe the promise of HIS return. **The** encouragement of the Scriptures is to those that look FOR HIM. **The** world has the emphasis on the believing. **BUT**, the Word of God has the emphasis on the HIM we are to believe in. “**God** gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes IN HIM should not perish but have everlasting life”. “**He** is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God BY HIM.”

Look at Hebrews 9: 28 “**So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.**”

These promises of salvation are unto a (particular) THEM. **It is** NOT unto them that LOOK. **I.e.** **The** emphasis is not in the LOOKING. **The** emphasis is on the WHO. **It is** “unto them that look for HIM”. **Them** that look for WHO? **Is it** them that look for a “savior” who died for ALL, but whose death (itself) did not secure the salvation of ANY?

No! **It** is to those who rest their whole salvation in the Christ of the Gospel. “**Children** of light” are those who know that because Christ died NO SINNER He died for can perish. **They** Must LIVE (eternally). **His** righteousness demands it.

If you are ignorant of or have rejected the Christ who came the first time, you cannot (possibly) know the One who is coming again. **Those** who rest their WHOLE salvation in the Christ declared in the Gospel (alone) are those who are “led by the Spirit of God”. **Therefore**, they (alone) are rightly identified as the sons of God (Romans 8: 14). **They** (alone) have been given the “privilege” of being called the sons of God (John 1: 12). “**Children** of light” are those that know WHO is coming again because they know WHO came the first time. **And**, they know WHO came the first time ACCORDING TO the Gospel that declares Him.

Next, the instructions in the Scriptures are to those ALONE who have NOT rejected, but have “received” the Christ “lifted up” (declared) in the Gospel.

Look back at 1 Thessalonians 5: 6-9 “**Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. 7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that**

be drunken are drunken in the night. 8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.”

“**Children** of light” are those who ARE not just “watching”, but who are “soberly (sound mindedly) watching” for the Christ revealed in the Gospel.

As we saw earlier, MANY will be OVERTAKEN who refuse to “watch” for the One who is coming. **I.e.** They are those not looking for the Savior who is plainly and evidently revealed in the Gospel. **God** WARNS sinners in this age of this kind of thinking and defines “watching” for us in the book of Revelation.

What does “watching” involve? **Look** at Revelation 3: 3 **“Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”** ELABORATE!

The “children of light” are those in every generation who are WATCHING for the Christ of the Gospel. Why are we watching for HIM? Because we know WHEN He is coming. We know what “delays” Him. **What** the world calls “delay”, is (really) the “longsuffering of God”. **We live** in the GOSPEL Age, that period of time between Christ’s ascension to His Father and His return to this earth.

The Apostle Peter answered the scoffers of His day concerning Christ’s return. **Look** at 11 Peter 3: 9 **“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”**

In this age God is working out His predestined purpose for this world’s existence. **In this** age Christ is exercising the SPIRITUAL realm of salvation.

He is shining light out of darkness. **11 Corinthians** 4: 6 **“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”**

He is bringing His sheep into the fold. John 10: 16 **“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”**

He is making those who are rebels by nature “willing in the day of His power”. **Psalm** 110: 1-3a **“The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make**

thine enemies thy footstool. 2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. 3 Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,”

Christ is not (really) being delayed. **And**, this world is not (really) out of control. **In** this age **Christ** is exercising the SPIRITUAL realm of salvation.

And, when THAT work is done; **WHEN** **Christ** has delivered the last of those He was given - from the darkness and ignorance of this world's religion; **WHEN** He has brought them unto the marvelous light of the Gospel and God's glory; **WHEN** He has brought the last of His sheep to faith and repentance, **THEN**, (and **ONLY** then), will **Christ** return.

The “children of light” are not in **DARKNESS** concerning **WHO** is coming. **And**, they are **NOT** in “darkness” concerning **WHEN** **Christ** is coming **AGAIN**. **That** is why the Church's main purpose (in this age) is to preach the Gospel. **It is** under the Gospel (and **ONLY** there) that the Spirit's great work of regeneration takes place. **It is ONLY** under the Gospel that the “wheat” are distinguished from the “tares”. **It is ONLY** under the Gospel that the Spiritual realm of salvation is being exercised.

Third, the “children of light” are not in “darkness” concerning **WHY** **Christ** is coming again. **Look** back at our text, 11 Thessalonians 5: 9-10 “**For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.**”

Christ's second coming will be (both) a day of **DELIVERANCE** and a day of **DESTRUCTION**.

First, **THAT** day will be a day of **DELIVERANCE**. **Listen** again to Hebrews 9: 28 “**So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.**”

Listen to 1 Corinthians 15: 50-52 “**Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.**”

“**Children** of light” are those who know **WHO** **Christ** is coming to **DELIVER**. **They** know **WHO** is coming. **And**, they know **WHO** He is coming **FOR**.

Jude is very specific in identifying these sinners. **Listen** to Jude, verse 1 “**Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:**”

“**Children** of light” are those who are “sanctified by the Father. **I.e.** They are SET APART by divine election. **They** are “preserved in Christ”. **I.e.** They are PRESERVED by Christ’s obedience unto death; PRESERVED by His righteousness imputed alone. **And,** they are “called” (by the Spirit in regeneration). **They** are CALLED out of the darkness and ignorance of this world’s religion under the Gospel unto the light of God’s glory in Christ. **As we** have already seen, UNTIL these are CALLED, they look like any other zealously religious sinner.

They walked “according to the course of this (religious) world”. **They** were in league with “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that STILL works in the children of disobedience”. **They** were BY NATURE the children of wrath, even as others.

But, the “children of light” are not LEFT there. **They** are CALLED by the Spirit of God. **They** are CALLED (by) the Gospel and (to) the Gospel. **They** are CALLED to Christ who has “saved His people from their sins”. **They** are CALLED to a Just God and Savior. **They** are CALLED to a righteousness worked out by Christ and imputed to those of God’s choosing.

WHO is Christ coming to DELIVER? He will DELIVER those who are CHOSEN, PRESERVED, and CALLED. **But,** His second coming is also for DESTRUCTION.

Listen to Acts 17:31 “**God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.**”

When God raised Christ from the dead, He gave assurance unto all men that Christ’s righteousness would be the STANDARD of (final) Judgment.

WHO will Christ DESTROY on (that) day? **Who** is He NOT coming to DELIVER? **He is** NOT coming to DELIVER those who preach “another gospel”. **He is** NOT coming to DELIVER those who are confident of a righteousness WITHIN. **He is** NOT coming to DELIVER those who have not been careful HOW they have received the truth (the Gospel). **And,** He is not coming to DELIVER those who remain in “darkness”. To THESE Christ’s second coming will be a day of DESTRUCTION.

The “children of light” believe the Gospel; not just with head knowledge, but with heart faith. **I.e. They** see every OTHER message of religion as “another” gospel. They see every OTHER message as the religion of works. **They** see every OTHER message as dishonoring to the Christ who came and the God who sent Him.

The Gospel sets before the minds of sinners the Christ of the Scriptures; **the** Christ whom God has sent; **the** Christ whose righteousness imputed alone enables God to be Just when He justifies the ungodly. **And**, in declaring the Christ of the Scriptures, the Gospel sets before sinners life and death. **There** is life in Christ ALONE. **There** is “darkness” and death everywhere else.

Let the Gospel of God’s free grace in Christ deliver you from the “darkness” of this world’s religion unto the “light” of God’s glory in the doing and dying of Christ ALONE.

While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.

By Mark Pannell