

Title: QUESTIONS FOR THE LAST DAYS, 1 THESSALONIANS 5:1 – 11
(Chatham, NJ; 11/19/17, AM) [Pc – Exegetical: Question and Answer Outline]

Theme: After assuring the church about the Second Coming, Paul reminds them to wait patiently for it with full alertness and readiness.

Purpose: To challenge us with questions to help clarify the issues involved in waiting for the Second Coming.

Introduction:

1. Crisis does not make character; it reveals it. (Remember the Foolish and Wise Virgins: five prepared ahead of time, but five didn't.)
2. We ask ourselves today: what is our response to the description of the Second Coming.
3. Will it be the crisis we aren't ready for?
4. Paul assumes his audience knows about times and seasons, but he still exhorts them to stay alert and be ready.
5. Let's consider the challenges involved in preparing for the Second Coming by asking some relevant questions.

First: Would we prepare better if we knew the exact date? (1 – 4)

- A. Planning or procrastination
 1. How well do people work with deadlines
 2. Some get things done right away: they plan
 3. Some wait until the last minute though some of them use the pressure to focus
 4. Others can't think or work under too much pressure
- B. A different sort of pressure and preparation is involved here
 1. Some might be "Mardi Gras" types: let's get all our debauchery in before Lent with its self-discipline and self-denial begins
 2. Disingenuous at best: I'll be a good person until I don't have to
 3. We don't know the time, season, or day, 1
 4. Paul urges us to live with the scout motto: be prepared
 5. The Day will come like a thief: an image used by Jesus as well
 6. Many people will be saying, "peace and safety"
- C. Long history of ignoring sin and its consequences
 1. Jeremiah 6:14 – the prophets and priests essentially say, "Everything is alright"
 2. Jeremiah 8:4-11 addresses the same thing and they don't have any shame about their sins
 3. The "peace and safety" mantra is only a step away from "eat, drink, and be merry"
 4. An attempt to preserve certain social and sinful conventions: everything is just fine so keep doing what you are doing
 5. When all seems OK, Jesus will appear
 6. Are we in darkness for that day to surprise us? (verse 4)

Second: Do you like surprises? (5 – 8)

- A. My surprise parties
 1. One was in Massachusetts: I figured it out when I saw all the cars
 2. For others I haven't been so alert which is weird because I am usually good at catching clues
 3. Janet and the whole church here surprised me with a 40th party downstairs on a Sunday night: I was unprepared
- B. What do you want to see when the lights come on or you walk into a room full of people?
 1. We are children of light, 5

2. We are not of the “night or the darkness,” 5
3. Keep awake and sober, 6
4. Wear your armor, 8 (don’t take it off)
5. Breastplate of faith and love
6. Helmet: the hope of salvation
7. The Second Coming will surprise us because we don’t know when
8. Do you want a happy surprise or a sad surprise?

Third: What gives you feelings of excitement and anticipation? (9 – 11)

- A. Destined for salvation, 9
 1. We may not know specific times and seasons, but we know more than others and we know our destiny:
 - 1 Peter 1:10-11, prophets sought time and circumstances
 - Eph. 3:5, a mystery not made known in earlier times
 - 1 Corinthians 2:7, we have God’s wisdom in the cross that was once hidden
 2. Our goal is not merely character development or fulfillment of human potential
 3. These are part of the larger goal
 4. Our goal is living with Christ in eternity
 5. Does that fill you with excitement and anticipation?
- B. Encourage and build up one another, 11
 1. See this as an effort by everyone in the community (“as you are doing”)
 2. Each individual has a role to play in this, not just the leaders and teachers
 3. We should be like the Roman church – 15:14
 4. It is a person to person activity among all members of the congregation
 5. The rest of 1 Thessalonians 5 details the program of exhortation and encouragement

Conclusion:

1. We are no better off if we know the exact date of Christ’s coming; we’d waste our time in dissipation and sin.
2. Even if you don’t like surprises, the Day will surprise you, but you can be ready for it.
3. Anticipate eternity; be enthralled with the idea.
4. Encourage one another and continue to do good works.
5. For those who’ve never prepared for the Day of Christ’s coming, your opportunity is now.
6. Accept the Gospel that saves you from sin: believe, repent, confess, and be baptized so that you too will be one of the people in this world that has hope.