

Adult Sunday School Class

Objective: Stimulate us toward wholesome thinking regarding the return of Christ and some of the other fundamentals of the faith.

Opening Prayer: Thank you Father, we pause now to acknowledge your presence..... I thank you that you always hear me. That you never leave me or forsake me and that you are an ever present help. I ask for a special anointing on this lesson plan and the time we will spend together today. Bless all who will come in contact with it, speaker(s) and listener(s). Open our hearts to receive a fresh revelation from your Spirit. I bind forces that would hinder and welcome the Holy Spirit as our teacher today. In Jesus name!

Read: II Peter 3

Q – What statement does Peter make concerning Paul's letters? - He speaks of them synonymous with scripture

- 15) Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. 16) He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, **as they do the other Scriptures**, to their own destruction.

Q – Why would he speak of Paul's letters in the same context as he would of other scriptures?

- I believe he did so because he was able to compare what he had heard during his time with Jesus to Paul's doctrine and insights and found them to be totally consistent.
- When I say the things he had heard I mean what he was an eye witness to, heard with his own ears and in addition to what had been revealed to him by God's Spirit

Q – When the apostles made reference to Jesus did they always use the same words or phrases or did they have several phrases that meant the same thing when they were describing Him?

- The latter, at times they referred to Him as;
 - **The Lord**, at other times as
 - **The Christ** and
 - John called Him **The Lamb of God**.

Q – So can we conclude that when used by the apostles, the terms Lord and Christ are synonymous? - We can.

Q – What is the subject of this chapter? - The day of the lord.

Q – What does that term mean? - The return of Christ.

Q – How do we know that is the correct meaning of the term?

- Because the term is defined for us in several places in scripture.
- I'll use New Testament references because they are more directly relevant given the teaching of Jesus concerning His return for the saints.
- Christ's return is defined much more accurately in the NT.
- I Thessalonians 4:13) Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.14) For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.15) According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16) **For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17) After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to**

meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18) Therefore encourage one another with these words.

- I Thessalonians 5:1) Now, brothers and sisters, 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.
- I Corinthians 1:8) He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the **day of our Lord Jesus Christ**. 9) God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- Philippians 1:6) being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the **day of Christ Jesus**.
- Philippians 1:9) And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10) so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for **the day of Christ**, 11) filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.
- Philippians 2:16) Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 15) so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky 16) as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the **day of Christ** that I did not run or labor in vain.
- II Thessalonians 2:1) Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, 2) not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that **the day of the Lord** has already come. 3) Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4) He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.
- II Peter 3:10) But **the day of the Lord** will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

Q – What is Paul's opening statement in I Thessalonians chapter 5? - Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you.

Q – To what is he making reference? The date and time of what event? - The return of Christ.

Q – How do we know he is speaking about the return of Christ?

- Because it is a continuation of his thoughts from chapter 4.
- Chapter and verse references were added by the translators to make it easier for us to find and correlate scriptures.

Q – Is Peter making reference to the same event in verse 10 & 12? - He is.

- 10) But **the day of the Lord** will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. 11) Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12) as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.

Q – What would Peter use as the source for his understanding of the return of Christ?

- The things Jesus taught the disciples about His return.
- One of the best sources of the teaching of Jesus on the subject of His return for the saints is found in Matthew 24.
- The reason I say that is in this chapter He is answering a direct question from the disciples concerning the signs that will precede His return for the saints.

- 24:1) Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings.
- 2) "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."
- 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?"

Q – What's required to establish an accurate or scriptural doctrine on any given subject?

- One needs to know what the scriptures (plural) say about the subject.
- As we've heard numerous times in our bible studies we need to understand the "full council of God" and by that statement we mean all the scriptures.

Q – Why did Peter say he had written his letters?

- To remind them of what they had already been taught and to stimulate them to wholesome thinking.
- The JB Phillips translation says it this way.
 - I Peter 3:1,2) This is the second letter I have written to you, dear friends of mine, and in both of them I have tried to stimulate you, as men with minds uncontaminated by error, by simply reminding you of what you really know already.

Q – How would you define contaminated? - To make (something) dangerous, dirty, or impure by adding something harmful or undesirable to it.

Q – What are the most common ways that false doctrines contaminate the scriptures?

- By adding someone's biased, personal interpretation or opinion.
- The assertion of an individual who claims to have received a special or extra revelation from God.
- By distorted emphasis, over simplification or the omission of other scriptures.
- Or you might say by an unfair or unbalanced interpretation.
- Allow me to give you some examples where the absence of balance can create inaccurate conclusions regarding the subject of divine healing.
- These statements are absolutely true as far as they go, however, health and divine healing are both complex subjects. One example or simple statement does not begin to cover all the issues involved.
 - By His stripes we were healed (past tense) – Implication, if you are sick, it's not God's fault.
 - He healed all who came to him. - Implication, you couldn't have come to him and still be sick.
 - Your faith has made you whole. - Implication, something must be lacking with your faith.
 - He there could do no mighty miracles because of their unbelief. - Implication, your condition is directly attributed to your degree of faith or belief.

Q – What does the term wholesome mean in the context of thinking or mental outlook? - Wholesome in this context means good, ethical, moral, clean, virtuous, pure, innocent, chaste.

Q – Is Peter saying we have an option in the way we think? - He is.

Q – Why is it that we have the option in the way we think?

- We are created in God's image as free moral agents.
- We have the option of choosing right, wrong and any degree in between for our thoughts & actions.

Q – What are the broad categories of thought we can engage in?

- Wholesome, constructive, positive, hopeful, confident, full of faith.
- Unwholesome, destructive, negative, doubtful, unbelief and periods of depression.

Q – What is the proper sequence of events? Does action precede thought or does thought precede action? -

- The latter.

- We've all had the experience of either opening our mouth to speak prior to engaging our brain or acting without first thinking about the consequences.
- However correct and appropriate actions are preceded by clear and thoughtful reflections.
- We must learn to be experts in following the still small voice of the Holy Spirit and allow Him to fill our minds and stimulate our actions consistent with His will, plan and purposes.
- Let's learn to always say & do those things that are pleasing to God in every aspect of our lives.

Q – What was Peter's intent in reminding them of what they had already been taught? - Encourage them toward correct attitudes and behaviors.

Q – What effect does the thought of the soon return of Christ have on you?

- It's a sobering thought.
- I want to make sure I'm ready and that I've done my best to influence my family, friends and others to be ready as well.

Q – Is the struggle of unwholesome thought and behavior unique to us “little people”?

- No, the apostle Paul had similar struggles.
- Romans 7:21) So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22) For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23) but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. 24) What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? 25) Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin. 8:1) Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2) because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. 3) For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, 4) in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Q – What causes those who live according to sinful nature to think and behave as they do? - Their minds are set on natural desires or earthly things.

Q – What do we mean when we use the term natural desires? - Those things that are attractive to human nature.

Q – Can you give me some examples of the things that are attractive to human nature?

- The lust of the flesh.
- Lust of the eye.
- Pride of life or possessions and/or accomplishments.

Q – How did Paul describe the things that are attractive to human nature in his letter to the Galatians?

- 5:19) The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20) idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21) and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23) gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Q – What is the benefit of wholesome thinking in the life of believers?

- They can be thankful in all things because they know He never leaves them and is an ever-present help in time of trouble.
- They can rejoice regardless of circumstances. They do not have to be anxious about anything.
- They can have peace in the midst of the storms of life.
- The peace of God that passes all understanding will garrison about their heart and mind.