



The Second Coming
of Christ

Thoughts from First Thessalonians ...

Sober Saints

It is good and acceptable to be “of sober spirit.” This does not require the elimination of all humor or levity, but it does require a willingness to take a hard and honest look at facts, issues, personalities, and potentials. For example, if a person has a denominational background and where he thought that salvation was accomplished by saying a prayer and “inviting Jesus” into his heart, he would have to take a sober look at scripture. If he attempted to be angry about it and by this means duck his responsibility, he would not be “of sober spirit.” If he tried to laugh it off, making some joke to change the conversation, he would not be “of sober spirit.” “Be of sober spirit,” exhorted the apostle Peter, “be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion,

seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). That picture, honestly processed, would make a person sober in a quick hurry!

- ▼ **Drunk vs. sober** — A clear contrast often drawn is the difference between someone drunk and someone sober. Generally speaking, a drunk cannot be engaged in a deeply reasonable conversation; he hasn’t the mental capability under those conditions to focus or process properly. Drunkenness from alcohol is always pictured as a bad thing in the scripture, and the word of God is clear that drunkenness will send a person directly to hell. Christians are exhorted to be awake, alert, and sober, ready for Jesus’ soon return. “For those who sleep do their sleeping at night,” Paul points out, “and those who get drunk, get drunk at night!” (1 Thessalonians 5:7). Their attempt is really to hide from God, much like their forebear Adam, and is equivalent to a small child’s covering his eyes with a handkerchief and saying, “You can’t see me!” Clearly, the advice is to abstain from drunkenness, and be sober in all things.

- ▼ **Some sober armor** — Those who are in rebellion and in hiding from God skulk around in the darkness. “But since we are of the day,” observes Paul, “let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation” (1 Thessalonians 5:8). The apostle likes to use the picture of a soldier in armor to describe Christians, and here he speaks of the breastplate’s consisting of faith and love. Faith includes the drive to keep moving forward in spite of obstacles and difficulties, trusting the Lord to bring about the proper result in His time. Love, as well as faith, is part of the breastplate — protection, as well as covering for the forward march in the army. Without Holy Spirit-given love, the individual is open to discouragement and destruction. “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails [quits]!” (1 Corinthians 13:7,8a). The helmet pictured is “the hope of salvation.” As usual, *hope* here is used in connection with the resurrection of the saint from the dead; this is “the salvation of the body” — the hope that enables the saint to “press on.”

God raised Jesus from the dead, and then took the step of seating Him at His right hand in the power position. This is pictured as “within the veil”; that is, that as the veil or curtain separated the holy of holies from the outer room or the holy place, so Jesus has entered into the true holy of holies within the veil, or into heaven itself for us. “This hope,” said the writer of Hebrews, connected with Jesus resurrection and ascension, “we have as an anchor for the soul” (Hebrews 6:19). This “hope” is also the salvation of the body, set to occur at Jesus’ return. “For God has not destined us for wrath,” Paul encourages the brethren in Thessalonica, “but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:9). “He shall appear a second time,” the writer of Hebrews also assures us, “for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him” (Hebrews 9:28). Crank up that eagerness!!

CRANK UP THE
EAGERNESS FOR
JESUS’ SECOND
COMING!