Preparing for the Age to Come

Living in Light of Eternity Pt. 1

2 Corinthians 5:1-7 *For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, 3 if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. 4 For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 6 So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight."* (ESV)

INTRODUCTION

Despite what some claim, there is a growing antagonism toward Christianity, even in America.

- *Businesses are being forced to close because of the owners' Christian convictions.*
- *Non-profit agencies and churches are being pressured to compromise their beliefs.*

Times of persecution and suffering remind us of God's perspective on how we should live our lives in this present evil age.

- *Peace and prosperity has given rise to unbiblical expectations for Christian living in this age.*
- *Jesus told us we are in the world but not of it and we should expect tribulation in this life.*

CONTRASTING NOW AND THEN

This passage underscores what the Christian can expect beyond the grave. This contrast between "now and then" not only provides us with comfort and hope, it also speaks to how we should presently live.

- *Our present condition is temporal; our destiny is eternal.*
- *Our present physical existence of corruption will be replaced with an eternal, glorified humanity.*
- *Our present distress is not caused by living in a physical state but by living under the corruption of sin.*
- *We await a new heavens and a new earth in which the entire created universe exists to worship and glorify the God of heaven and earth.*

AT PRESENT, WE GROAN

Contrary to what so many claim today, Paul says that our present existence is one of groaning. We long for the glorious blessing of God's fulfilled promise, which is yet to come. For Paul, our best life is yet future.

- *This provides us with much needed perspective for living in this present evil age.*
- *From an earthly perspective it often seems as if the wicked fair far better than God's people.*
- *The Psalmist faced this dilemma and found that the answer is found in an eternal perspective.*
  - *The ease of the wicked will end when they die.*
  - *Their apparent prosperity only serves to keep them deluded.*

The Apostle Paul reminds us that the race to which we are called is a marathon, not a sprint. We are living our lives in preparation for the age to come.