

Reflections by the Pond

THE WRITINGS OF DAVID S LAMPEL

The background image is a perspective view of a dark tunnel. Numerous light rays, primarily white and yellow, converge from the sides and floor towards a bright, glowing point at the far end of the tunnel. The rays create a sense of depth and movement, drawing the viewer's eye towards the light source.

THE LIGHT

AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 1:9–13

Violent earthquakes.
Mysterious objects in the sky.
Food shortage. Famine.
Peril lurking around every corner.
Perversity celebrated. Righteousness condemned.
Scripture adulterated.
Christ ridiculed.
God forgotten.

THE SEVEN-YEAR TRIBULATION, during which the church and Holy Spirit are absent from the earth, is so described. Tragically, it also accurately describes this present age.

Those running the show, those in charge of today's predominate culture seem to be always angry, always condemning others, constantly dredging through history to ferret out anyone who had the temerity not to live by their self-appointed, twenty-first century standards.

This is a society controlled by miserable people whose sole purpose for living is to make everyone around them equally miserable. These are people dwelling in darkness, choosing to live in a murky tunnel, seeing before them only more and deeper despair.

The Tribulation may still be future, but we are in dress rehearsal for it now.

All this leaves one wondering how a holy and righteous God could love such pitiful, self-destructive beings.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

John 3:16

But that very paradox underlines the fact that human beings are not the standard for His love. Man's mindset, behavior, or affections are never the impetus that drives God's love. As He explained to Israel through the prophet Moses,

"The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."

Deuteronomy 7:7-8

In other words, God loved Israel because He loved them. They didn't earn it, nor did they deserve it, and they rarely loved Him in return. God does not love because He is loved. No, it is the other way around: He is the initiator of love.

We love, because He first loved us.

1 John 4:19

The believer’s hope is based on that love; the oxygen it requires for life is the unselfish, sacrificial love of the Godhead for mankind. And the preeminent demonstration of that love is Christ Jesus.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

John 1:1–5

Those who embrace the darkness hate the light of Christ because, just like the Law which He fulfilled, His light is the uncomfortable exposé of their dark deeds.

This world, though smaller at the time, was dark and tragic even two thousand years ago. Treachery, deceit, corrupt politics, corrupt religion were all powerful and obstructive forces perpetuating the darkness even then. For many then, like today, darkness was all they knew. It was the norm; it was comfortable.

Jesus entered this world like a thundercrack of lightning on a still, sleepy night. He did not bring peace, but turmoil, for His purpose was revolutionary—and unwelcome. He was certainly not the long-awaited Messiah the power structure anticipated. He was, instead, a threat. They looked for a Messiah to bolster their power; Jesus challenged it, revealing its corruption. The rulers expected a Messiah who would bring immediate relief from their Roman oppressors.

Their line continues to this day, in which the prevailing attitude is, “Don’t waste my time if I must wait for it.” Jesus did not offer an immediate escape from the dark tunnel—He offered light to illumine its end, as well as light to conduct one along the way.

At the end of all things the long dark tunnel will, at last, reach its destination. In its place will be only glorious, unending light—the perpetual, never fading light of Christ and His Father.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

Revelation 21:1–4, 22-24

The long travail of man will come to an end. Those who refused the Messiah—from the beginning of time to its end—will be removed from the earth, consigned to an eternity of fiery torment. Those who did not refuse Him will dwell with Him in His pure light. ♦

“I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.”

John 12:46