

**Supplemental Notes:**

*The Epistles  
to the  
Thessalonians*

*compiled  
by  
Chuck Missler*

## Acknowledgments

These notes have been assembled from speaking notes and related materials which had been compiled from a number of classic and contemporary commentaries and other sources detailed in the bibliography, as well as other articles and publications of Koinonia House. While we have attempted to include relevant endnotes and other references, we apologize for any errors or oversights.

The complete recordings of the sessions, as well as supporting diagrams, maps, etc., are also available in various audiovisual formats from the publisher.

## Audio Listing

### 1 Thessalonians - Introduction & Chapter 1

An introduction to the earliest book of the New Testament; an amazing insight into what Paul taught these new Christians in their first three weeks. (Includes a review of the background from the Book of Acts.)

### 1 Thessalonians 2

The greatest missionary manual ever written.

### 1 Thessalonians 3 - 4:12

Practical examples and instructions about caring.

### 1 Thessalonians 4:13 - 18

Our Blessed Hope: The Rapture of the Church. (An issue of *ecclesiology* rather than eschatology alone.) The ultimate non-linearity.

### 1 Thessalonians 5

A history of “Rapture-mania.” The Day of the Lord.

### 2 Thessalonians 1 - 2:2

“Third Thessalonians”: Paul’s response to a forgery. “Pre-Tribulation,” “Mid-Tribulation,” and “Post-Tribulation” views.

### 2 Thessalonians 2: The Day of the Lord

One of the most important prophetic chapters in the New Testament. The revelation of the Man of Sin and its prerequisite events. The Restrainer.

### 2 Thessalonians 3 and Recap

Exhortations: Prayerfulness, Preservation, Protection, and Patience.

# The Epistles to the Thessalonians

## Session 1: 1 Thessalonians 1

The most significant eschatological epistles in the New Testament!

### Introduction to 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians

First Thessalonians is regarded as the earliest book of the New Testament. It is an amazing insight into what Paul taught these new Christians *in their first three weeks in the faith!* (First, a review of the background from the Book of Acts.)

### Biographical Notes

Paul was born in Tarsus, the principal city of the Roman province of Cilicia, in southern Asia Minor. He was born a free Roman citizen with full rights as a citizen of Tarsus (Greek); Acts 22:28. Paul quotes from the Septuagint (LXX).

Paul was raised by strict Jewish parents: A Pharisee (2 Cor 11:22; Phil 3:5) who studied under Gamaliel at Jerusalem (Acts 22:3). "Saul" commemorates another Benjamite. Saul (*Saulos*), Grecianized for Hebrew *Shaoul* ("asked for"). Paul was his Roman name ("little").


### Theme of the 1<sup>st</sup> Letter

- 1) Confirm the foundational truths they'd been taught.
- 2) Exhort them to personal holiness.
- 3) Comfort them concerning departed loved ones.
- 4) Remind them of their Blessed Hope.

### Review of Paul in Acts ("Luke Volume 2")

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey: Acts 13 - 14

- Salamis Acts 13:5
- Paphos Acts 13:6
- Antioch (Pisidia) Acts 13:14
- Iconium Acts 13:51
- Lystra and Derbe Acts 14:6, 20
- Return journey Acts 14:21, 22



**The Damascus Road**

Saul, a Jew born a Roman citizen and raised in Tarsus, Acts 22:26

Educated in Jerusalem as a Pharisee under Gamaliel Acts 22:3


Holds coats while Stephen is stoned. Becomes violent persecutor of the Church Acts 26:9f

On the road to Damascus, is confronted by Jesus Acts 9:

Visit with Ananias; blindness healed and is baptized Acts 9:1-19

Stays in Damascus; during which he spends 3 years in the desert in Arabia and then returns. Acts 9:19-22; Gal 1:15-17

Arable



**The Apostle to the Gentiles**

3 years after his conversion, Paul is forced to flee in a basket. Acts 9:25

Goes to see Peter; Barnabas introduces to suspicious believers; Talks with Peter and James. After 2 weeks smuggled out Acts 9:26-30; Gal 1:18-20

Taken to Caesarea, then to Tarsus Acts 9:30

Spends 10 years in Tarsus; during which he visits Cilicia and Syria. Still unknown to believers in Judea. Gal 1:21-24

Barnabas brings Saul to Antioch; they teach together 1 year Acts 11:26

Saul, Barnabas, and Titus bring famine relief money for Judea. They meet privately with church leaders, who acknowledge Saul's ministry to the Gentiles Acts 11:27-30; Gal 2:1-10





### 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey: Galatians

Saul and Barnabas sent out by Antioch Church, with John Mark  
 They encounter Bar-Jesus, a false prophet and friend of governor.  
 Bar-Jesus is struck blind; governor becomes a believer.  
 John Mark leaves to return to Jerusalem. (A dispute will ensue later)  
 Paul preaches; jealous Jews stir up opposition  
 They stay a long time; but a Gentile plot on their lives forces them on.

Acts 13:1-3

Acts 13:4-12

Acts 13:13

Acts 13:14-15

Acts 14:1-7



### 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey: Galatians

They return the way they came, encouraging the young churches.  
 They report everything to the church in Antioch.

Acts 14:21-26

Acts 14:27-28

## The Council in Jerusalem: Acts 15

Considerable controversy erupts over the obligations incumbent upon Gentile believers. Circumcision? Keeping the Mosaic Law, etc. Paul, Barnabas, and others seek the elders in Jerusalem for resolution. Peter also testifies...

## Peter's Testimony

*Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.*

Acts 15:10,11

## The Two Problems Raised

- 1) What must a Gentile do to be saved?
- 2) What is to become of Israel?

## James' Response

*Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up..."*

Acts 15:14-16

## The Resolution(s)

Gentiles should: abstain from idols, abstain from fornication, and abstain from things strangled, and blood (no commitment to Mosaic practices: ceremonial laws, circumcision, etc.). The issue of Israel's destiny Paul deals with in Romans 9, 10, 11.



### 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey: Greece

Paul convinces both Jews and Greeks. Some Jews stir up a riot;  
 Paul leaves secretly for Berea.  
 Better reception; but mob stirred up by Jews from Thessalonica.  
 Paul leaves for Athens; Silas and Timothy stay behind.  
 Paul speaks at the Areopagus (Mars Hill)

Acts 17:1-9

Acts 17:10-15

Acts 17:16-34

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey: Acts 15:36 – 18:22

- Philippi
- Thessalonica
- Berea
- Athens
- Corinth
- Ephesus

### Thessalonica: Acts 17

Thessalonica was the capital of Macedonia Secunda. It was founded in 315 B.C. by Cassander, son-in-law of Philip of Macedon and one of Alexander's four key generals, who named it after his wife Thessalonike, the half-sister of Alexander the Great. It enjoyed a strategic location on a natural harbor at the head of the Thermaic Gulf; situated on *Via Egnatia*, the main route between Rome and the East. It was the most populous town of Macedonia, practically the capital of Greece, Illyricum, and Macedonia. (Perhaps 200,000 lived there in Paul's day.) Cicero was in exile here in 58 B.C. Thessalonica was almost made the capital of the world; presently the second most important city in Greece.

Antony and Octavius (the future Augustus) were here after their victory at Philippi. In gratitude for their cooperation in the struggle against Cassius and Brutus, Thessalonica was made a free city like Athens. No Roman soldiers were stationed in it; government was in the hands of a people's assembly, from whom the "politarchs" (magistrates) were chosen. Kingdom preaching would make them fearful of losing their privileges of "free" status.

### Thessalonica: Acts 17

#### Verse:

- 2] Three Sabbaths!? Preached entirely from the OT (including the rapture and the Second Coming!). See our briefing package, *Footprints of the Messiah*. His stay may have been longer (note Phil 4:16).
- 4] Mostly Gentile converts? (Note absence of OT references in his Thessalonian letters—also, idolatry reference in 1:9.)
- 5] Riot organized. Jason posts bond. As in Philippi, they were vulnerable to the charge of treason due to the recent expulsion of Jews from Rome
- 10] Paul and Silas flee to Berea (50 miles westward; three-day journey?)
- 11] [Our trademark passage.] They verified the OT prophecies.

## Paul on Mars Hill

At the Aeropagus: Court of the Judges, Paul begins where the people were: their idolatry (30,000 "gods"). You are "extremely devout"; "very god-fearing"; the altar to the Unknown God: "We are his offspring..."; referring to an astronomical poem of Aratus, a Greek countryman of Paul's (his predecessor by 300 yrs.); reciting a religious hymn of Cleanthes of Troas, a contemporary of Aratus (Paul also quoted Menander in 1 Cor 15:33).

### Corinth: Acts 18

Paul may have been here for two years (Acts 18:11,18). *He writes both Thessalonian letters from here, perhaps within weeks of visiting there.* Timothy had been left in Philippi, and joins Paul in Berea and travels with him to Athens. Paul sent him back to Thessalonica. The first letter is in response to Timothy's rejoining Paul in Corinth with his report (1 Thess 3:6-7; Acts 18:5).

### 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians

This letter initiates the New Testament documents. Written less than 20 years after Christ's resurrection. (Some believe Galatians was written before Acts 15.) *Every chapter refers to the Second Coming.* The first three chapters: **personal**. The second two chapters: **practical**.

Timothy and Silas had just arrived from Thessalonica (1 Thess 3:6; Acts 18:5). They had brought supplies from the Macedonian churches to supply Paul's need (2 Cor 11:9), as the church in Philippi did once and again while Paul was in Thessalonica (Phil 4:15f). Before Timothy and Silas came to Corinth, Paul had to work steadily at his trade as tent-maker with Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:3).

Paul could only preach in the synagogue on sabbaths, but the rich stores from Macedonia released his hands and "Paul devoted himself to the word."

But Timothy and Silas brought news of serious trouble in the church in Thessalonica. Some of the disciples there had misunderstood Paul's preaching about the second coming of Christ and had quit work and were making a decided disturbance on the subject. Obviously, Paul had touched upon eschatological matters during his brief stay in Thessalonica.

The Jewish leaders at Thessalonica charged it against Paul and Silas to the politarchs that they had preached another king, Jesus, in place of Caesar. Paul had preached Jesus as King of the spiritual kingdom which the Jews misrepresented to the politarchs as treason against Caesar as the Sanhedrin had done to Pilate about Jesus.

Clearly Paul had said also that Jesus was going to come again according to his own promise before his ascension. Some asserted that Paul said Jesus was going to come right away and drew their own inferences for idleness and fanaticism as some do today. Strange as it may seem, there are scholars today who say that Paul did believe and say that Jesus was going to come right away. (They say this in spite of 2 Thess 2:1ff, where Paul denies having ever said it.)

Undoubtedly Paul hoped for the early return of Jesus as most of the early Christians did, *but that is a very different thing from setting a time for his coming*. It is open to us all to hope for the speedy return of Christ, but times and seasons are with God and not with us. It is not open to us to excuse our negligence and idleness as Christians because of such a hope. That hope should serve as a spur to increased activity for Christ in order to hasten his coming.

So Paul writes this group of Epistles to correct gross misapprehension and misrepresentation of his preaching about last things (eschatology). [It is a rare preacher who has never been misunderstood or misrepresented.]

## Purpose of the Letter

To express the writer's joy at their steadfastness. Also to refute certain false charges and slanderous insinuations being circulated and respond to personal attacks; assailed motives. There was also *concern over loved ones who have passed on (the Harpazo passage)*.

## 1 Thessalonians 1

- 1] Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus": The three of them were together at Corinth; no evidence that the three were ever together again. It is

remarkable how often Paul speaks of bearing up God's people in prayer! He was a busy guy, *yet he found time for prayer*.

## Silvanus

*Silvanus* (Roman): god of the woods; woodland. (Luke always calls him Silas; Paul, always Silvanus; Cf. Acts 18:5, 2 Cor 1:19). He was an esteemed member of the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:22), a Prophet (Acts 15:32), and a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37). He was in hearty agreement with the Council decision regarding Gentile believers (Acts 15:22-32), a fitting co-worker and preacher (2 Cor 1:19), and an amanuensis for 1 Peter (1 Pet 5:12).

## Timotheus

*Timotheos*, "honoring God"; he was the son of a Jewish mother and a Greek father. He was one of Paul's converts at Lystra on the first tour and is included as co-salutation in five of Paul's epistles.

Paul does not here call himself "apostle" as in the later Epistles, perhaps because his position has not yet been so vigorously attacked as it was later.

"...church": ἐκκλησία *Ekklesia*, called out assembly; called to assemble in their homes. LXX: assembled people of God. The church is never a building: "The sanctuaries were chewing gum."

"...Lord": Paul dares to apply κύριος [*kurios*], the word appropriated by Claudius and other emperors in the emperor-worship, and also common in the Septuagint (LXX) for God. Paul places "the Lord Jesus Christ" in the same plane with "God the Father."

"...Jesus": Ἰησοῦς *Iesous Jesus*: Derived from the Latinization of the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew *Joshua*, which is an abbreviation for *Jehoshua*, "YHWH is salvation" (Mt 1:21).

"...Christ": Χριστός *Christos*: Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *Meshiach*, or Messiah, the anointed one. (The ISV always uses "Messiah.")

"...in God": Not spatial, but *positional*; a vital, organic union which makes possible the sharing of a common life.

"...grace": χάρις *charis*: to rejoice, greetings; free and *unmerited* favor of God; One of the great words of the New Testament (cf. Jn 1:16),



particularly in the Pauline Epistles. Perhaps no one word carries more meaning for Paul's messages than this word

"...peace": (εἰρήνη *eirēnē*) is more than the Hebrew *Shalom* so common in salutations; that precious sense of inner tranquility and well-being from being reconciled to God through Christ.

This introduction is brief, but rich and gracious and pitches the letter at once on a high plane.

- 2] We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

"...give thanks to God always": Thanksgiving: a priority; continual. The plural implies that all three missionaries prayed together.

- Give thanks in everything (1 Thess 5:18; 2 Cor 4:15; 9:11ff).
- "The Spirit of Christ is the oil that feeds the lamp of praise."
- Affection: he tried twice to return (1 Thess 2:17-18).

- 3] Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

These three graces would also be featured later in the Corinthian letter:

1) the work of faith, 2) the patience of hope, and 3) the labor of love.

"...work of faith": Faith vs. "works"; vs. fruit-bearing....We are justified by faith...but faith produces works (Rom 6-8) as John the Baptist taught and as Jesus taught and as James does (James 2).

"...labour of love": *Αγάπη Agapē* is one of the great words of the N.T. *Κοπος Kopos*: fatiguing labor to the point of weariness.

"...patience of hope": Patience (steadfastness): active constancy in the face of difficulties. It is patience inspired by hope...

"...in the sight of God and our Father": The picture here is the day of judgment when all shall appear before God.

Faith, love, and hope are conjoined (1 Thess 5:8; 1 Cor 13:13; Gal 5:5f; Col 1:4f; Heb 6:10-12, 10:22-24; 1 Pet 1:21f).

A Paradigm: Faith rests on the past; Love works in the present; Hope looks to the future.

Each looks outward: Faith looks **back** to a Crucified Savior; Love looks **up** to a Crowned Savior; Hope looks **on** to a Coming Savior.

The Church is *distinguished* by these three...faith, hope, and love.

Characteristic of Paul's writing: If he finished his sentence, it would have been complete and well designed. But his thoughts continue to verse 5 and beyond. They grow like living things rather than being constrained by rules... Sometimes, "Finally, my brethren," means only a few chapters to go!

- 4] Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

"...brethren: Born into the relationship. Paul uses this word 60X (14X in 1<sup>st</sup> Thess; 7X in 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess).

"...election": The word *εκλογη [eklogē]* is not in the LXX and only seven times in the NT and always of God's choice of men (Acts 9:15; 1 Thess 1:4; Rom 9:11; 11:5, 7; 2 Pet 1:10).

## Divine Election

OT: national election/NT: individual and spiritual (Lk 4:23-29 Jn 13:18; 15:16; Acts 9:15; Jas 2:5; 1 Pet 1:10). Love and election are connected (2 Thess 2:13). Election protects us from thinking of salvation as dependent on human whims and roots it squarely in the will of God.

- Assurance, not presumption;
- Holiness, not moral apathy;
- Humility, not pride;
- Witness, not lazy selfishness.

Left to ourselves, we do not wish to leave our state of untroubled sinfulness. When did God first start dealing with YOU? You are not an afterthought (Eph 1:4). [Wilbur Smith: "I'm glad He chose me *then*. Now he might change His mind!"]

"...Knowing": ...the election of God. *How?* Their lives (new life) evidenced it (Cf Acts 1:18). To all of Macedonia and Achaia! (v.7). You, not your words, are your witness.

The church is God centered: Chosen by Him; rooted in Him; drawing its life from Him. Exhibiting this life in a Faith that works, a Love which labors, and a Hope which endures.

- 5] For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

“...our gospel” Paul had a definite message of grace that he preached everywhere including Thessalonica. This very word was later applied to the books about Jesus, but Paul is not so using the term here or anywhere else.

Words + Power: ...*of the Holy Spirit!* We must never divorce what God has married. Namely, His Word and His Spirit (Eph 6:17). He Himself is given to them as the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 4:8) to perform His sanctifying work in their lives (2 Thess 2:13). To ignore or inhibit His manifestations is to “quench the Spirit.” (1 Thess 5:19).

- The Spirit without the Word is weaponless;
- The Word without the Spirit is powerless.

The Word + The Spirit = The Koinonia House logo.



- 6] And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

“...in much affliction”: The authentic Gospel always arouses hostility because it challenges human pride and self-indulgence.

There was opposition: Riots there (and in Berea; cf. Acts 17:5, 13), and affliction “with joy of the Holy Spirit.” How about us? Is it coming?

- 7] So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

“...ye were ensamples”: *How?* Their lives (new life) evidenced it (Cf Acts 1:18). You, not your words, are your witness.

“...ensamples”: τύπον *tupon*, the mark left by a blow, as when a die strikes an image on a coin;

**Corporate blessing:** But he had the right perspective: the blessing of God was evident in the work he was doing.

**Personal blessing:** It is proof of a healthy Christian life when it becomes an example to others.

- 8] For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

Macedonia and Achaia were the northern and southern provinces into which the Romans divided the ancient land of the Greeks (Cf. Acts 17:6).

“...sounded out”: ἐξηχέω *execheo*, derived from *echos*, a loud noise, trumpet, thunderclap. Their “word of mouth” was more powerful than any media blitz...

- 9] For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

“...turned to God from idols”: Turn: a radical change of allegiance. Re: Lystra (Acts 14); Athens (Acts 17); from Thessalonica, Mt. Olympus was about 50 miles south of their city. Turn *from* idols (God-substitutes). What are yours?

“...to serve”: Serve, then wait.

To serve (as a slave) the living (and active) and true (real, genuine) God. Beginning a new life of service. Every idolater is a prisoner, held in humiliating bondage. We become like the gods we worship (Ps 135:18).

Salvation does not begin with giving up something, but with *receiving someone*. [Prophetic hope drives one toward personal holiness and evangelism.]

- 10] And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

“...to wait for his Son from heaven”: Sustained expectation; most frequently mentioned doctrine in New Testament: 1 out of every 13 verses!

The hope of the second coming of Christ was real and powerful with Paul as it should be with us. It was subject to abuse then as now as Paul will show in this very letter. He alludes to this hope at the close of each chapter in this Epistle.

“...whom he raised from the dead”: Paul gloried in the fact of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead of which fact he was himself a personal witness. This fact is the foundation stone for all his theology and it comes out in this first chapter.



“...which delivered us from the wrath to come”: It is the historic, crucified, risen, and ascended Jesus Christ, God’s Son, who delivers from the coming wrath. He is our Saviour (Mt 1:21), true to his name, Jesus.

It was Paul’s allusion to the day of judgment with Jesus as Judge whom God had raised from the dead that made the Athenians mock and leave him (Acts 17:31f).

But Paul did not change his belief or his preaching because of the conduct of the Athenians. He was certain that God’s wrath in due time will punish sin. Surely this is a needed lesson for our day. It was coming then and it is coming now.

“Wrath is the holy revulsion of God against that which is a contradiction of his holiness.” He brings us completely out of the reach of future judgment.

Verses 9 & 10 give the fullest account of Christian “conversion” in the New Testament:

- 1) a decisive break with idols; turning; faith.
- 2) an active service of God; fruit of love.
- 3) a patient waiting for His Coming; the Blessed Hope. “

*...turned...to serve...to wait....”*

*Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;*

1 Thessalonians 1:3

Paul’s trilogy of commitment.

## Conclusion

Does YOUR life manifest your election? Is your study of the Word accompanied by the illumination of the Holy Spirit?

## Next Session

The greatest missionary manual ever written: Study 1 Thessalonians Chapter 2.

# The Epistles to the Thessalonians

## Session 2: 1 Thessalonians 2

### Introduction to 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians

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### Purpose of the Letter

To express the writer’s joy at their steadfastness. Also to refute certain false charges and slanderous insinuations being circulated and respond to personal attacks; assailed motives. There was also *concern over loved ones who have passed on (the Harpazo passage).*

*Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;*

1 Thessalonians 1:3

These three graces would also be featured later in the Corinthian letter: 1) the work of faith, 2) the patience of hope, and 3) the labor of love.

*For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;*

1 Thessalonians 1:9

“...turn”: a radical change of allegiance. Re: Lystra (Acts 14); Athens (Acts 17); from Thessalonica, Mt. Olympus was about 50 miles south of their city. Turn *from* idols (God-substitutes). What are yours?

“...to serve”: Serve, then wait. *To* serve (as a slave) the living (and active) and true (real, genuine) God. Beginning a new life of service. Every idolater is a prisoner, held in humiliating bondage. We become like the gods we worship (Ps 135:18).

Salvation does not begin with giving up something, but with *receiving someone*. [Prophetic hope drives one toward personal holiness and evangelism.]

“To wait for his Son from heaven” does not mean to sit down. It means to be busy for the Lord. That is the patience of hope. It means to keep on serving the Lord, giving out the Word of God while you wait.

The coming of Christ to take His church out of the world is not an escape mechanism. Rather, it is an incentive to serve Him and to give out the Word of God. “... Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Rev 22:20).

The coming of Christ for His church is called the Rapture of the church. It is not a doctrine to argue about; it is a doctrine to *live*. Unfortunately, there are many who believe Christ is coming after the Great Tribulation. There are those who believe He is coming before, and some believe He is coming during that period of time. Then there are others who don’t believe that He is coming at all, and yet they say that they trust Him as their Savior.

For all the groups there is one important question: How does your interpretation affect your life? If your view has no effect on your life, then you should reconsider what you believe. The expectation of the return of the Lord should be the motivating factor in the life of the believer.

## 1 Thessalonians 2

- The Faithful Steward      1 Thess 2:1-6
- The Gentle Mother        1 Thess 2:7-8
- The Concerned Father    1 Thess 2:9-16
- The Loving Brother        1 Thess 2:17-20

Verses 1-12 are an elaboration of 1 Thess 1:9: “what manner of entering in we had unto you”: why and how he preached.

Verses 13-16 explain “How ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God”: hearing... listening... doing. Let’s begin, first, by simply reading through the entire passage.

- 1] For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:

“...not in vain”: Service; a vital living for God. They were not guilty of a superficial religion. Missionary’s conduct: the way a Christian should act. (Each of us is a missionary.) The Thessalonian church existed because Paul had stopped by. Paul was there only *three weeks*—long enough time to start a riot! A success story. How did he do it?

- 2] But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

“...were bold in our God”: The insult in Philippi did not close Paul’s mouth, but had precisely the opposite effect “in our God.” It was not wild fanaticism, but determined courage and confidence in God that spurred Paul to still greater boldness in Thessalonica.

More than the bodily suffering, it was the personal indignity that had been offered to him as a Roman citizen (Cf. Acts 16:16–40). An interesting example of how Acts and the Epistles throw light on each other. Luke tells how Paul resented the treatment accorded to him as a Roman citizen and here Paul shows that the memory still rankled in his bosom.

Preaching with boldness amid conflict. *Eparresiasametha*, eight syllables (?). Speaking out publicly; making a public declaration. (Secret believers do not lead souls to Christ.)

Roman flogging was no light matter. They were arrested on a false charge; stripped of their clothes, publicly beaten without a trial, thrown into prison with their feet in stocks. *Contrary to Roman law!*

Sit-down strike: If any of Paul’s opponents charged that Paul had a police record, he would’ve been quite willing to have the facts known.

It was not Paul but the magistrates who had reasons to hide the truth. He arrived in Thessalonica still bleeding.

“...contention”: *Agoni*: athletic contest, arena; a struggle, a battle [doesn’t imply tactlessness, devoid of common sense]. They had courage in spite of persecution. Christian courage springs from the knowledge that God is OUR God. (God is raising sons, not vegetables.)

Was Paul ever “careful”? When a Christian starts being “careful” in serving the Lord, the power goes out of his message. Never does the Holy Spirit lead one to “pussyfoot” around.

## Paul’s Greatest Sermon?

- At Damascus after his conversion?
- Before Sergius Paulus, Isle of Cyprus?
- At Synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia?

- At Mars Hill, Athens?
- At School of Tyrannus, Ephesus?
- His Defense at Corinth?
- His Arrest in Jerusalem?
- Before Felix?
- Before Festus
- Before Agrippa

...*His Life in Thessalonica!* (James 2:26)

[Source: J. Vernon McGee...]

Paul is going to tell us about the sermon he preached at Thessalonica (vv. 3–6). He then described the *relationship* he had with the Thessalonians: He was like a *mother* to them in that he comforted them (v. 7); he was like a *father* to them in that he charged them (v. 11), and he was like a *brother* to the Thessalonians in that he challenged them (v. 14).

- 3] For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

Verses 3 and 4 are characteristically Pauline: First sweep away the false; then with the ground cleared, set forth the positive presentation of the truth. Paul's preaching was according to the Word of God. [Missing today.]

"...not of deceit...nor guile": Pure in its content and in its intent...not adulterated by human philosophy and human speculation (the K-House mission).

"...guile (*dolo*)": "catching a fish with bait"; trickery; any crafty method for deceiving or catching the unwary.

The most dangerous kind of preaching is that which is partly true. These letters were written from Corinth, which was notorious for its moral degeneracy. Prostitution was a sacrament; the priests owned the harlots in town (as in India today).

Temples in town: Aphrodite and Astarte, and the temples of Apollo and Zeus and Ares. Also, Dionysiasts and the Cabiri (with phallic emblems).

- 4] But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

"...allowed": "Have been approved of God": *dedokimasmetha*, "putting to the test" as coins being tested for genuineness, or for full weight. Not a self-chosen work.

Has God given you the truth? What are you doing with it? Once you've been given the Good News by God, you're a trustee (a fiduciary). You may not whittle it down. You are held accountable.

Don't break your trust. [Ten talents... capital + interest; cf. Heb 13:17.]

"Pleasing God?" Can a Christian do (x)? (Wrong question: *Should* he? Is it pleasing to God?) What is the "message" in our entertainment media today?

To "take credit" is not Christian. "It's amazing what you can get done if you don't care who gets credit for it!" Paul always chose God's approval over man's; to do otherwise would disqualify God's messenger (Gal 1:10).

He would not compromise his message to gain human favor, yet was anxious to please men if he could (1 Cor 9:20-22; Rom 15:2); even this, for their welfare (1 Cor 10:33).

Testing (proving) our hearts (Ps 17:3; Jer 11:20; Acts 1:24). *Kardia*: the very depth of inner life. [See our briefing pack, *The Architecture of Man*, and Nancy's Bible Study, *The Way of Agape*.]

- 5] For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:

"...flattering words": Flattery: "soft soap = 90% lye." Smooth-tongued discourse giving a favorable impression to gain over others *for selfish advantage*.

The early church was plagued with people attempting to cash in on their Christianity. Livelihood through pretensions, just like today. Our friends are probably more dangerous at times than our enemies!

"...cloak": Cloak: Spacious pretext which conceals the real motive.

"...covetousness": *pleonexias*: a desire to have more of that to which one does not have a just right. [The only commandment of *intent* (vs. overt acts).]

"...God is witness": Paul appeals to God, the only One who knows the heart. Cf. Jewish magicians, Elymas at Paphos (Acts 13:6-11).

- 6] Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

No apostolic title in the salutation in this epistle: there is a list of what he *did not* do (v. 6) and a list of what he *did* do (v.12).

Law: “Don’t” do this and that. Grace: “It is done.”

Paul was not a financial burden to them (Cf. v. 9; 2 Cor 11:9; 12:16; 2 Thess 3:8; 1 Tim 5:16). But support is valid (1 Cor 9:6-18).

- 7] But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

“...as a nurse”: “A nursing mother,” like a mother bird (Mt 23:37).

“...cherisheth”: *thalpe*. To warm; as birds covering their young with their feathers to warm and protect them (Deut 22:6 LXX; Ps 91).

Loving care: “A nurse for her *own* children” not just his “duty.” Met people in Thessalonica he never knew before; how he loved them now as trophies of grace!

- 8] So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

Not just the Gospel; but ourselves! The antidote to “professionalism.”

“...dear unto us”: Dear is “beloved.”

- 9] For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

“...night and day”: (Hebraism; also the Athenians); 1 Thess 3:10; 2 Thess 3:8; 1 Tim 5:5; 2 Tim 1:3; also Acts 20:31; 26:7. No 40-hour weeks for Paul. (In the days of Thomas Jefferson there was great agitation for a 60-hour work week: 10-hr days vs. 12 for a 6-day week.)

*Doulos*? Bondslave [“Coeur d’Alene” = “Heart of the Bondslave.”]

“Tentmaking”? (Acts 18:3, *skenopoios* = ?) Tents made of Cilicium, the hair of a species of shaggy goats, a flourishing occupation in Tarsus.

“Tent-tailor”? *Tallits*? The Talmud required that every Jewish father must circumcise his son, instruct him in the Law, and teach him a trade.

“He who teacheth not his son a trade doth the same as if he taught him to be a thief.”

Jews did not have salaried teachers. Saul’s father was of means, and may have been a textile merchant. Paul seemed to support himself: At Thessalonica his income from his work was supplemented by contributions from Philippi (Phil 4:15). He worked at Corinth (Acts 18:3). Paul refused to accept support from the Corinthians (1 Cor 9:11-12). And he worked at Ephesus (Acts 20:34).

His independence was important to him and his ministry:

- It cut off criticism (2 Cor 11:7-12);
- Set a worthy example (2 Thess 3:7-9);
- Proved his unselfish love for them (2 Cor 12:13-18);
- Allowed him to share his meager means with those in need (Acts 20:34-35).

- 10] Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

“Ye are witnesses”: Their behavior confirmed their belief.

- 11] As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,

“...as a father doth his children”: education + discipline. [All participles in the plural, indicating that all three were engaged in this work.]

“...comforted”: παραμυθέομαι *paramutheomai*: Actually, “persuaded.”

## The Church Today

Someone has defined the average church service in a liberal church as when a mild-mannered man gets up before a group of mild-mannered people and urges them to be more mild-mannered (Cf. Rev 3:14-22).

- 12] That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto His Kingdom and glory.

“...walk worthy”: Cf. Heb 4:2: “Word...mixed with faith.” Walk, *peripatein*: *peri*, around; *pateo*, to walk: to walk about = moral conduct. Present tense, marks the habitual conduct of daily life. Paul was never content merely to gain large numbers of converts without seeking to induce them to walk worthily of the Lord they had professed.



“...His Kingdom”: “Thy Kingdom Come...” How? Nan and I have just published a book on this very topic: let me warn you, it is VERY controversial in some churches. Using the paradigm of Jesus’ “Seven Letters to Seven Churches,” which one do you think was the most offended?

Walk worthy...*because* we are saved in keeping with our destiny; Cf. a child born into a royal family...

“...called you”: Present active participle, *tou kalountos*, and the plural pronoun *humas*: God is continually calling them.

The Kingdom of God centers in the person of the King. Now a reality; with a future manifestation (Lk 1:32-33; Mt 25:31; Rev 2:26-27; 20:4). God, and no other, establishes the Kingdom.

- 13] For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

“...the Word of God”: God-breathed (2 Tim 3:16) and pure (Ps 119:40; Prov 30:5).

Word of God = OT Scriptures: Acts 17:2-3 Not humanly originated. [These 66 books written by 40 authors over thousands of years is an integrated message system.]

How to “hear”: [Eyes: symbols distort the word(s).] Proof of the Word follows....

- 14] For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:

“...followers”: Imitators. Not superficial “stony-soil” hearers (Mt 13:20-21).

“...ye also have suffered”: Persecution is proof.

[Verses 15-16 contain a vitriolic outburst without parallel in Paul’s writings.]

- 15] Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

Five participles: First two are aorists and picture the past violent manifestations of their opposition; the remaining three are present tense and provide a sad evaluation of their opposition.

“...killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets”: Violent manifestations: [Verb *killed* between Lord and Jesus: separation in the double name brings into striking relief the Divine glory and the human character of the Slain.]

Christ Himself accused the Jews of killing their prophets (Mt 23:31, 37; Lk 11:47-48 and in the parable of the wicked husbandman). He pictured His own murder as the culmination (Mt 21:33-41). This charge was repeated by Stephen before the Sanhedrin (and Paul) in Acts 7:52.

“...they please not God”: A deliberate understatement for effect.

“...contrary to all men”: Roman historian Tacitus charged the Jews with “hostile odium” toward all men, and Gentiles generally regarded Jews as an unsociable and unfriendly race. While the nation was divinely called to be a separated people, they had become a sinfully exclusive and bigoted nation. Paul understood that their hostility to non-Jews was grounded “not in their natural make-up, but in their rejection of the Gospel,” and their determination to thwart its progress.

- 16] Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

“Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles”: An obstructionist. Also, jealous of Paul’s success. The hardest opposition to take is the one by your own loved ones. Opposition of the world is most clearly revealed by the faithful preaching of Christ.

“...fill up”: Common Hebrew image of a measuring cup (Cf. “vials” in Rev 15). Punishment withheld until it is full, ripe, etc. (Cf. Amorites, et al.), Paul’s outlook was dark indeed. But God will not make a full end (Jer 30:4-11; 31:35-37; 33:20-22). Fuller teaching in Rom 9-11.

- 17] But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

“...taken from you”: Bereaved of you: aorist passive participle: separation forced upon them. *Aporphanisthentes*, a compound form, used only here in NT: lit. “to be orphaned; bereft of parents.” Only three weeks together; 8-9 months after first meeting; demonstrates ties of brotherhood among believers.

18] Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

“...hindered us”: Hinder = to break up the road. Impassable.

19] For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

Our (real) hope. Crown of rejoicing. Paul was not content to be saved himself

20] For ye are our glory and joy.

Each chapter of this epistle ends with a reference to the return of Christ. In Chapter 1, Christ’s return is related to *salvation*; in Chapter 2, Christ’s return is related to *service*.

## Next Session

- Chapter 1: Salvation
- Chapter 2: Service
- Chapter 3: Sanctification (through 1 Thess 4:12)

Study 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians, Chapter 3:1 – 4:12.

## The Epistles to the Thessalonians Session 3: 1 Thessalonians 3 - 4:12

### The Study of Eschatology

The Great Themes of Thessalonian Epistles:

1<sup>st</sup>: The *Harpazo* (“Rapture”)

2<sup>nd</sup>: The Kingdom (on the Earth: the “Second Coming” of Christ)

The Danger of Marginalizing Eschatology: Extraneous or Vital? It is often marginalized by enthusiasts as well as by detractors!

The theme of this chapter is that the coming of Christ is a purifying hope. It will change your life and affect your lifestyle, if you hold to the hope of the imminent coming of Christ for His own. If that doesn’t affect your life, you don’t really believe it. It is just sort of a theory or a philosophy with you.

This theme becomes the very heart of the epistle, and we will be dealing with it from Chapter 3 through Chapter 4:12.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians

- Chapter 1: Salvation
- Chapter 2: Service
- Chapter 3: Sanctification (through 1 Thess 4:12)

If the unbelieving Jews were so relentless in their antagonism to the Gospel as to hound the missionaries all the way to Berea, what might they be doing to their followers at home? Paul was anxious (like a parent with kids at “boot camp”). They were his “crown of rejoicing” (1 Thess 2:19).

Five crowns:

- |                           |                 |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 1) Crown of righteousness | 2 Tim 4:8       |
| 2) Crown of glory         | 1 Pet 5:2-4     |
| 3) Crown of life          | Rev 2:10        |
| 4) Incorruptible Crown    | 1 Cor 9:25-27   |
| 5) Crown of rejoicing     | 1 Thess 2:19,20 |

“Crown”: *Stephanos*, a festive garland earned in an athletic contest “... at that day” (1 Tim 4:8); at His appearing. [The funeral “gone to his reward” is without foundation.]

## 1 Thessalonians 3

1] Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;

“Wherefore”: This important word ties this chapter back in with what Paul had talked about in the previous chapter: the family relationship that exists in the church. He had been a “mother” to the church, a “father” to them, and a “brother.” Because Paul had a real affection for them, he was frustrated in not being able to return to them.

Timothy was “delegated.” It’s not easy to be left in Athens “alone.” Athens was the intellectual capital of the world, but a deeply pagan challenge; intellectual curiosity coupled with moral indifference; hopelessly estranged from God.

2] And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

“...minister of God”: *diakonos*, deacon. (Originally, “table waiter.”)

“...establish”: Strengthen, fix, make firm or solid. Paul’s labors (Acts 15:32, 41; 16:5; 18:23; Rom 1:11; 16:25).

“...comfort”: To call to the side of. *Com*, with; *forte*, strength; to encourage.

*But Moses’ hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.*

Exodus 17:12

“Stayed up” is the same word as “establish.” Paul sent Timothy over to them to stay them up, to hold them up, to establish them. People still need the same thing today. They need to be established in the faith.

- 3] That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

“...appointed thereunto”: Some things we will only learn the hard way. Pray that “our lessons not be wasted.” Suffering was appointed; not incidental. Always a beneficial purpose (Mt 5:10-12; Jn 16:33; 8:17-18; 2 Tim 2:10-13; 1 Pet 4:12-14). [There are very few mistakes I’ve missed.]

The devil is often more to be feared when he fawns than when he roars. Tanks draw the heavy artillery... If you’re not drawing the heavy fire, you may not be in the relevant part of the battle...

- 4] For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

“...suffer tribulation”: “To suffer affliction”; to oppress, distress, trouble, afflict by the application from without. In the world you will have tribulation (Jn 16:33). (Not the Great Tribulation—2 Thess 2 will deal with this.)

Another purpose of afflictions is to test the genuineness of our belief. “If we suffer with Christ we shall also reign with Him (2 Tim 2:12).

- 5] For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

“...the tempter”: Lots of repetition. Paul was very stirred as he wrote. There is a time break implied: Timothy’s return. Paul had moved to Corinth; worked at his trade; preached in the synagogue (Act 18:1-5).

## Satan

**Satan** is referred to in every major section of the New Testament.

- He is supreme in the realm of evil spirits (Eph 2:2; 2 Thess 2:9).
- He is always opposed to God and man’s best interests (Gen 3; Job 1-2; 1 Chr 21:1; Ps 109:6; Zech 3:1,2).
- He is a source of affliction (2 Cor 12:7);
- He takes away the good seed from the hearts of men (Mk 4:15).
- He sows evil seed in the world (Mt 13:39).
- As “god of this world, he blinds the minds of the unbelieving (2 Cor 4:4).
- He tempted the Lord (Mt 4, Lk 4) and His followers (Lk 22:3, 1 Cor 7:5).
- He hindered Paul’s missionary work (1 Thess 2:18).
- He seeks to gain advantage over the faithful (2 Cor 2:11).
- He is a deceptive “angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14).
- He is like a roaring lion (1 Pet 5:8).
- He is chief among the enemies to be subjugated at the end (1 Cor 15:25).
- He’s defeated already (Col 2:15).
- He cannot touch any child of God without permission (Job 1,2; Lk 22:31,32).
- Christians may defeat his purposes here and now (Eph 6:16).
- It’s the art of war—more by carefully concealed surprises than by an ostentatious display of force.
- He has persuaded a frivolous and shallow generation that he no longer exists but as a phantom of the past; a popular joke.

[See *The Origin of Evil* briefing pack for further study.]

- 6] But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you:
- 7] Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:

“...in all our affliction”: The good report from them is a comfort to him. This is the fourth time in this chapter that Paul has mentioned their faith.

Verses 8-10: Our challenge—Paul’s whole heart was wrapped up in the spiritual prosperity of these his children in the faith.

Prayer Life...Study of the Word...Soul winning.

- 8] For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

“Now you’re really living, [since] you are standing fast in the faith.” Standing fast (Rom 11:20; 2 Cor 1:24). “To me to live is Christ (Phil 1:21). What matters *most* to us?

Verses 9-10: A picture of Paul’s great heart. Also, love is being contrasted with lust. [In vv 6-10 the Greek pronoun for “you” is used 10X!]

- 9] For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;  
10] Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

Fervent, continual prayer. (Here in 1 Thess 5:13 and in Eph 3:20. Nowhere else in NT.) Praying that looks toward the spiritual welfare of others is always appropriate.

“...perfect”: complete; to be completely equipped. He was not doubting their salvation because he speaks of “knowing, brethren, your election” in Chapter 1:4.

## Paul’s Prayer

Verses 11-13: The most dangerous thing in our spiritual experience is to rest on our oars.

“That we may see your face” (1 Thess 2:17,18; 3:6). This petition to return was not granted until several years later. Paul’s labor in Thessalonica was very rudely interrupted—he was run out of town—and he wanted to return to continue his teaching ministry.

- 11] Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.

God rules in the affairs of men. Notice how Paul links the Father and Son. Most impressive as it occurs incidentally. Full deity is ascribed to the Son. (Held from the earliest date.)

- 12] And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:

In this epistle, love is seen only in action—“labor of love.” It is not affection, but an active seeking of the welfare of another.

“And the Lord”: *kurios*, familiar to readers of OT as the name of God. Consistent with “the road to Damascus” experience...

- 13] To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

Every chapter deals with the Lord’s Coming.

“...unblameable in holiness”: To be equipped and complete; *unblamable* in holiness before God (Heb 12:14). When one follows, he has not yet attained perfection, but it will be attained when we see the Lord.

“Holy men of God...” (2 Pet 1:21). OT writers were not “perfect,” but they were set apart for God’s holy use. Be not preoccupied with this present life.

“Unblamable” before God: Nothing less than the very highest standard will do for the Christian. Conversion is only the beginning. “Life after birth” (vs. life after death).

## The Second Coming

Three words are used both of the rapture and His Second Coming:

- ἐπιφάνεια *Epiphaneia*; his appearing. Every eye shall see Him.
- ἀποκάλυψις *Apokalupsis*; revelation. His glory was veiled in the gospels, except at the transfiguration and in the garden of Gethsemane.
- παρουσία *Parousia*; His presence; *para*, along, *ousia*, form of “to be”; to be alongside of, to be present (2 Cor 10:10; Phil 2:12).

Today’s lack: given to a real prayer life; given over to the study of God’s Word; given to soul winning.

Holiness: Greek word in OT used only of God Himself. In the NT, found only here and in 2 Cor 7:1. The believer belongs to God: he is set apart entirely for God’s service.



“At the coming...” *at any time. Imminence* a key doctrine of the church. It’s not a new idea.

“Holy Ones”? Angels or Believers?

- Angels: LXX (Ps 89:5; Dan 4:13; 8:13; Zech 14:5). Also associated with the Second Coming in NT (Mt 13:41, 25:31; Mk 8:38; Lk 9:26; 2 Thess 1:7).
- Angels never seem to be called simply “holy ones” in NT (1 Thess 4:13-17).

## 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:1-12

Three issues are covered in this chapter: 1) Private moral lives; 2) Everyday living in love toward each other; and 3) Questions concerning the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

- 1] Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.

“...to walk”: The practical side: “walk” (v.1 – v.12). It implies *growth*, too (2 Pet 3:18).

- 2] For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

“...commandments”: In regard to their walk, we will find Paul giving some commandments to the Thessalonians. The Lord Jesus also gave commandments. Some of these commandments are new commandments. The standard for Christian conduct which they set is on a much higher plane than the Ten Commandments. In Chapter 5 we will find 22 commandments for believers!

## The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments have no part in a sinner’s salvation, nor are they the standard for Christian conduct. The Ten Commandments were not given to save us; they were given to show us that we are sinners and that we need a Savior.

Now the question naturally arises: If man could not keep the Ten Commandments, how can he keep higher commandments? The Bible makes it very clear that man was not able to keep the Ten Commandments. The nation Israel transgressed these commandments (Acts 15:7, 10–11).

Paul has some commandments for believers. We should be disciplined, and in obedience to Christ. It should be a love relationship—we should be motivated by love—the Lord Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (Jn 14:15). Now if we can’t keep the Ten Commandments, how are we to keep any higher commandments of Christian conduct? Man cannot do it himself. *This can be attained only by the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells within the believer.* (Cf. v. 8; Rom 6, et al.)

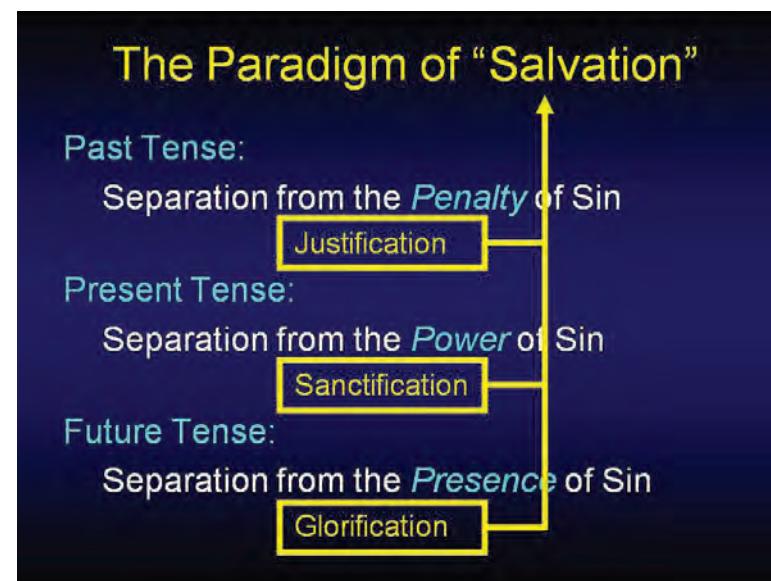
- 3] For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

“...sanctification”: A widely misunderstood word: “set apart for God.” NT: Every believer is holy; set apart for God. Sanctification, *hagiasmos*, is the process; holiness is the final state.

## Sanctification

Three distinct aspects:

- 1) *Positional* sanctification means we are accepted in the Beloved, and we will never be more saved than at the moment we put our trust in Christ. This positional sanctification is also called *Justification*.
- 2) *Practical* sanctification is the Holy Spirit working in our lives to produce a holiness in our walk. This is a work-in-progress, and will never be perfect so long as we are in these bodies with our old sinful flesh.
- 3) *Total* sanctification will occur in the future when we are conformed to the image of Christ Jesus, and is also referred to as *Glorification*.



“...fornication” = all forms of illicit sexual intercourse. The Body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:13-20) and belongs to God. Remember, this epistle was written from Corinth! Adultery was a common subject of poetry and the arts. The new morality is only the old immorality brought up to date.

Sexual purity: In Greece, sexual sins were winked at (like today). They should refuse to allow the practice of the Christian Church to be determined by the ideas of contemporary society (the “politically correct” tolerance).

- 4] That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

“...his vessel” = the body, the vessel of the soul.

- 5] Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

The God-empowered man rules his body. Passion is always used by Paul in the bad sense.

“...the Gentiles”: the nations. In the usual sense it’s non-Jews. Here, it’s used as non-Christians (Cf. Rom 1:18, 28). Suppression of the knowledge of God leads to idolatry; idolatry leads to immorality; immorality leads to death.

- 6] That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

“...avenger”: God is an avenger (Deut 32:35; Ps 94:1; Rom 12:19). Paul applies Old Testament YHWH expressions to Christ.

Sexual sins rob others. Virginity and the expectation thereof; a defrauding. There are no “victimless” crimes (they injure those in whose love they live). Cf. The *sanctity of a commitment*...in marriages...in business.

- 7] For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

A child of God cannot continue in sin. The prodigal son may get in the pigpen for a time, but he won’t *live* in the pigpen.

- 8] He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.

“...Holy Spirit”: Sin against the Holy Spirit. Paul usually thinks of the Spirit as given once for all. Here, “giveth” = present tense, “continually gives.” This is God’s supreme gift.

- 9] But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

The early church was characterized by love. Tertullian quotes the heathen as remarking in amazement, “Behold how these Christians love one another.” The Thessalonians demonstrated love: cf 1:3; 3:6.

- 10] And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

Christians must never be weary of well-doing. Love for the brethren is an area for growth and development. Very candidly, some of the saints are not very lovely. Someone has put that fact into this little jingle:

*To dwell above with saints in love  
Oh, that will be glory.  
But to stay below with the saints I know—  
Well, that’s another story.*

McGee, J. Vernon: *Thru the Bible Commentary*.  
electronic ed. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1981, S. 5:393

- 11] And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

Three sources of trouble:

- 1) Bridling the tongue: “Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: *and* he that shutteth his lips *is esteemed* a man of understanding” (Prov 17:28).
- 2) Meddlesomeness.
- 3) Idleness (vs. tangible productiveness).

- 12] That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

“...walk honestly”: “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (2 Pet 1:5-7 (KJV.)

“For this very reason, you must make every effort to supplement your faith with *moral character*; your *moral character* with knowledge, your knowledge with self-control, your self-control with endurance, your endurance with godliness, your godliness with brotherly kindness, and your brotherly kindness with love” (2 Pet 1:5-7 (ISV).

“...need of nothing.” A Christian cannot be a parasite. Are you robbing your employer? Short change is thievery. Self-support, where possible, is a moral duty.

Every chapter in Thessalonians deals with the Lord’s Coming:

Chapter 1:10, Last verse  
Chapter 2:19  
Chapter 3:13, Last verse  
Chapter 4:13-18 (climactic!)

## Next Session

The *Harpazo*: the most preposterous doctrine of Biblical Christianity!  
The Ultimate Non-linearity: The Rapture of the Church—1st Thessalonians 4:13-18.

## The Epistles to the Thessalonians Session 4: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Before the millennial kingdom, He would leave and go to heaven; He would prepare a place for them in heaven; and He would come back to receive them unto Himself. He would take them to glory *before* He set up His kingdom on the earth.

Note: It was a promise to the *Church* that the Holy Spirit would take up residence in them and that a specific place was reserved for them—separate from their return to the Earth (Zech 12, 14:4-9).

The early Christians were looking for some to be taken home without dying. The Thessalonians were not concerned about their salvation, nor that Christ would be coming for them. They knew that there were a number of resurrections. (They called their burial places *koimeteria*, dormitories... cemeteries.) Their question was “when?” (Their concern argues for an early date for this epistle.)

- 13] But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

“...ignorant”: *Agnos*, Greek; *Ignoramus*, Latin. (Rom 1:13; 11:25; 1 Cor 10:1, 12:1, 2 Cor 1:8). Heathens are hopeless. vs. The Blessed Hope (Titus 2:13).

How *certain* is our hope? It depends upon our certainty concerning the death and resurrection of Christ. His resurrection is God’s seal and evidence for ours. Those who do not take His coming seriously have not been at the cross enough.

Pulpits that do not declare His death and resurrection can hardly expect to preach His Return. Do you really love the Lord’s appearing? As a living expectation?

- 14] For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

Paul did receive direct communications from the Lord (Acts 9:5-6; 22:17-21; Gal 1:12; 2:2; 1 Cor 11:23).

“...sleep in Jesus”: We go immediately into the presence of God. (*Body* sleeps; “soul sleep” is not Scriptural.) Cf. Phil 1:23; 2 Cor 5:8 (note v. 3, 4!). First fruits (1 Cor 15:20 imply later fruits).

- 15] For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

“...prevent” = precede. When will the dead in Christ be raised? Answer: The dead in Christ will be raised (just) before we go to see the Lord.

The question was not: Is the Lord coming? Are we going to be with Him? But rather, what is going to happen *to our loved ones* who have preceded us in death?

## Jesus’ Resurrection Body

- Could appear and disappear at will (Lk 24:31; Jn 20:19).
- Could move through solid walls (Jn 20:19, 26).
- Could be seen and felt; palpable (Mt 28:9; Lk 24:36-42).
- He could eat food, although it wasn’t apparently necessary (Lk 24:41-43).
- Though glorified, He could be recognized (Lk 24:30-31).

- No more experience of death, aging, crying, mourning, sorrow, or pain (Rev 21:4).
- [At least ten dimensions? We, too: 1 John 3:2.]
- All believers will be given new bodies like the glorious body of the Lord (Phil 3:21; 1 John 3:2). Otherwise, we'd be better off if we died at age 25!?
- However, resurrection implies *death*. Oldest book of OT (Job 14:14; 19:25-27).

*For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.*

Job 19:25-27

Not all are going to die! Some of you hearing this will not experience death! (Cf. Enoch and Elijah). The Rapture is a transformation: Phil 3:20-21; transformed in a moment (1 Cor 15:52) *atmos*, something that cannot be divided; (i.e., “atom”). A quantum of time =  $10^{-43}$  seconds!

- 16] For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

“...shout”: (of command). See Jn 11: “Lazarus!” (Otherwise, all would have “come forth.”) Cf. Jn 5:28f. The sound not understood by others? Voice from heaven in Passion Week (Jn 12:28-30), and on the Damascus road (Acts 9:7; 22:9).

“...the voice of an Archangel”: (not necessarily Michael, as in Jude 9.) Battle with the forces of darkness (Before Eden?); Eph 6; Dan 10.

“The trump of God”: Only here, and at Mt. Sinai (Ex 19:16,19). Not to be confused with the Seven Trumpet (Judgments) of Revelation. Those assemble no one; they are not symbols of salvation; they are not symbols of deliverance; they are symbols of judgments on a Christ-rejecting world.

“Last Trump” of 1 Cor 15? Not the last trump in the Bible: another trump calls the elect in Matt 24:31. There are also trumpets in the millennium. [Cf., Feast of Trumpets, in the *Feasts of Israel* briefing package.]

- 17] Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

“...caught up”: *Harpazo*, to seize, or to snatch away by a force which cannot be resisted; as when the centurion ordered his troops to take Paul by force in order to rescue him from a possible lynching (Acts 23:10). Latin, *rapturo*; Vulgate “The Great Snatch.”

## Clouds

Clouds—Regular feature of theophanies: at Sinai (Ex 19:16; 24:15-18); and the Tabernacle (Ex 40:34); at Solomon’s Temple (1 Kg 8:10,11); at the Transfiguration (Mt 17, Mk 9:7); and the Ascension (Acts 1:9—was it literal? v.11).

In Psalm 97:2, “clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne” (Dan 7:13; Mk 13:26, 14:62; Rev 1:7).

The church will be removed as suddenly and as mysteriously as it began.

## The Rapture:

### The Most Preposterous Belief of Biblical Christianity

#### The *Harpazo*: ἁρπάζω

- The Promise
- The Process
- The Purpose
- The Prophetic Profile
- The Problems
- The Proposal

*I think it is safe to say that no one understands quantum mechanics... In fact, it is often stated of all the theories proposed in this century, the silliest is quantum theory. Some say that the only thing that quantum theory has going for it, in fact, is that it is unquestionably correct.*

Richard Feynman

#### The Promise

*Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

John 14:1-3



## The Process

*But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

## 7 “Raptures”

- |                   |                                 |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1) Enoch          | Gen 5:42; Heb 11:5              |
| 2) Elijah         | 2 Kgs 2:1, 11                   |
| 3) Jesus          | Mk 16:19; Acts 1:9-11; Rev 12:5 |
| 4) Philip         | Acts 8:39                       |
| 5) Paul           | 2 Cor 12:2-4                    |
| 6) Body of Christ | 1 Thess 4:17                    |
| 7) John           | Rev 4:1                         |

## The Purpose

*Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*

1 Corinthians 15:55

## The Physics of Immortality

- |                                |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Dimensionality               | 1 John 3:2        |
| • οἰκητήριον <i>oiketerion</i> | 2 Corinthians 5:2 |

*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.*

1 John 3:2

*For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:*

2 Corinthians 5:1,2

*And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.*

Jude 6

“...first estate”: ἀρχή *arkhay* or, principality, magistracy of angels and demons.

“...habitation”: οἰκητήριον *oiketerion* or dwelling.

“...clothed upon”: ἐπενδύομαι *ependuomai* (compound of *epi, en, duo*); to put on over, one piece of clothing over another presently being worn.

## The Jewish Wedding

- The *Ketubah*, Betrothal—payment of the purchase price; set apart (sanctified).
- Bridegroom departs to Father’s House—prepares room addition; Bride prepares for imminent return.

## The Doctrine of Imminency

Imminent: Next expectation—not be confused with “immanent,” that God is not only transcendent, or far above us, but that He is always with us and active on our behalf. Nor should it be confused with “eminent,” which is a title of honor reserved for persons of outstanding distinction.

Believers are taught to expect the Savior from heaven at any moment (Phil 3:20; Titus 2:13; Heb 9:28; 1 Thess 1:10; 4:18; 5:6; Rev 22:20).

Imminency expresses hope and a warm spirit of expectancy (1 Thess 1:10) and should result in a victorious and purified life (1 Jn 3:2,3).

Paul seemed to include himself among those who looked for Christ’s return (1 Thess 4:15,17; 2 Thess 2:1). Timothy was admonished to “keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Tim 6:14). Jewish converts were reminded that “yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry” (Heb 10:37).

## “Occupy til I come”: Luke 19:13

The expectation of some were so strong that they had stopped work and had to be exhorted to return to their jobs (2 Thess 3:10-12) and have patience (James 5:8).

## Two Extremes

- Rapture-itis (Rapture paralysis).
- Rapturemania (The Date Setters).

## “Rapture-itis”

A uniquely American dementia. Just because the Church will *not* go through The Great Tribulation, *why should we escape what most of the Body of Christ in most of the world for most of the past 2,000 years has had to endure?*

## Date Setters

- Joachim of Flores, 1260;
- Miltitz of Kromeriz, 1365;
- Joseph Mede, 1660;
- John Napier, 1688;
- Pierre Jurieu of France, 1689;
- William Whitson, 1715; then 1734; then 1866;
- J.A. Bengal, 1836;
- Joseph Worlf, 1847;
- William Miller, 1843; then Oct. 22, 1844;
- C.T. Russell, 1874;
- E.C. Whisenant’s “88 reasons for 1988”;
- Harold Camping, September 1994;
- More coming. . .

*But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

Matthew 24:36  
Mark 13:32

*Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.*

Matthew 24:42

*Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.*

Matthew 24:44

*Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*

Matthew 25:13  
Mark 13:33-37

*Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.*

Luke 12:40

*And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.*

Acts 1:7

## The Second Coming

Daniel 2:44-45	Acts 1:9-11
Daniel 7:9-14	Acts 3:19-21
Daniel 12:1-3	1 Thes 3:13
Zech 14:1-15	2 Thes 1:6-10
Matt 13:41	2 Thes 2:8
Matt 24:15-31	2 Peter 3:1-14
Matt 26:64	Jude 14-15
Mark 13:14-27	Rev 1:7
Mark 14:62	Rev 19:11-20:6
Luke 21:25-28	Rev 22:7, 12, 20

## The “Rapture”

John 14:1-3	2 Thes 2:1, (3)
1 Cor 15:1-53	1 Tim 6:14
1 Thes 4:13-18	2 Tim 4:1
Rom 8:19	Titus 2:13
1 Cor 1:7-8	Heb 9:28
1 Cor 16:22	James 5:7-9
Phil 3:20-21	1 Peter 1:7, 13
Col 3:4	1 John 2:28-3:2
1 Thes 1:10	Jude 21
1 Thes 2:19	Rev 2:25
1 Thes 5:9	Rev 3:10
1 Thes 5:23	

## Rapture

Translation of believers  
Translated saints go to  
heaven  
Earth not judged  
Imminent, any moment,  
signless  
Not in the Old Testament  
Believers Only  
Before the Day of Wrath

## Second Coming

No translation involved  
Translated saints return to  
earth  
Earth judged  
Follows definite predicted  
signs  
Predicted in the Old Testament  
Affects all men on the earth  
Concludes the Day of Wrath

## Prophetic Profile

*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

Matthew 23:37-39

*I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly.*

Hosea 5:15

## The Jewish Wedding

- The *Ketubah*, Betrothal: payment of the purchase price; set apart (sanctified).
- Bridegroom departs to Father's House: prepares room addition; Bride prepares for his imminent return.
- Surprise gathering: *Huppah*, Wedding.
- Seven day Marriage supper.

## The Marriage Fulfilled

- Covenant established (1 Cor 11:25);
- Purchase price (1 Cor 6:19-20);
- Bride set apart (Eph 5:25-27; 1 Cor 1:2; 6:11; Heb 10:10; 13:12).
- Reminded of the covenant (1 Cor 11:25-26).
- Bridegroom left for the Father's house...
- Escort to accompany Him upon His return to gather His Bride (1 Thess 4:16-17).

## Old Testament Patterns

- Enoch and the Flood of Noah (Gen 5:24);
- Isaac's Absence after his offering (Gen 22:19 – 24:62);
- Ruth during the Threshing Floor Scene (Ruth 3:7-9);
- Daniel's absence from the Fiery Furnace (Daniel 5).

## Three Groups Facing Flood of Noah

- Those that *perished in* the Flood.
- Those *preserved through* the Flood.
- Those *removed prior* to the Flood.

- Enoch Born: *Hag Shavout*
- Enoch Translated: *Hag Shavout*
- Church born: *Hag Shavout \**

\* = Feast of Weeks, Harvest, Pentecost

## Old Testament Allusions?

- Isaiah 26:19-21;
- Zephaniah 2:3;
- Psalm 27:5.

*Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.*

Isaiah 26:19-21

*Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger.*

Zephaniah 2:3

*For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.*

Psalm 27:5

## The Problems

Amillennialism? Will the Church enter the Tribulation? These issues will be addressed in 2 Thessalonians.

## The Proposal

How will all this affect YOU?

## The Return of Christ to Rule

- 1,845 references in the Old Testament;
- 17 books give prominence to the event;
- 318 references in the New Testament;
- 216 chapters;
- 23 of 27 books give prominence to the event;
- *For every prophecy of Christ's 1st Coming there are 8 of His 2nd Coming!*

## Jesus Christ: The Ultimate Monarchy

He is:            King of the Jews            *(a racial King);*  
                    King of Israel            *(a national King);*  
                    King of all the Ages;  
                    King of Heaven;  
                    King of Glory;  
                    King of Kings;  
                    ..and Lord of Lords.

*Do you know Him? Do you really? Is He coming for YOU?*

## Next Session

Jesus comes “as a thief in the night” to the “children of the night.” *The “children of the day” will not be surprised! Who are they?* Study 1 Thessalonians Chapter 5.

## The Epistles to the Thessalonians Session 5: 1 Thessalonians 5

The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Epistles to the Thessalonians were the only epistles Paul wrote on his 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey, both from Corinth. The Epistles to Galatians, Romans, and Corinthians belong to his 3<sup>rd</sup> journey. The epistles to Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians belong to his first captivity at Rome.

## Review of 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians

Chapter 1 (last two verses): “How you turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven.”

Chapter 2: The greatest missionary manual ever written.

Chapter 3: Caring.

Chapter 4: The Blessed Hope. The Ultimate Non-linearity: the *Harpazo*.

Chapter 5: The Day of the Lord.

## The Day of the Lord

Following the catching away of the saints, there will come upon this world the ***darkest*** period it has ever known:

- The Day of the Lord.
- The Time of Jacob’s Trouble.
- The Great Tribulation.

What is more certain than death and judgment? How can we sinners get ready for it? Now Paul deals with what was *already known* to them.

## 1 Thessalonians 5

- 1] But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

“...the times and the seasons”: Acts 1:7; note plurals (also Dan 2:19-22). *Chroni*; chronology; *kairoi*, a crisis; opportunity. Example: Jonah and Nineveh. 40 days from “ground zero”! Repentance caused a change! (2 Chr 7:14...) There *is* hope for America: God!

“...ye have no need”: Not for you to know (Acts 1:6-8 Mark 13:32)!

## Date Setters

- Joachim of Flores, 1260;
- Militz of Kromeriz, 1365;
- Joseph Mede, 1660;
- John Napier, 1688;
- Pierre Jurieu of France, 1689;
- William Whitson, 1715; then 1734; then 1866;
- J.A. Bengal, 1836;
- Joseph Worlf, 1847;
- William Miller, 1843; then Oct. 22, 1844;



- C.T. Russell, 1874;
- E.C. Whisenant's "88 reasons for 1988";
- Harold Camping, September 1994;
- More coming. . .
- Protection? "The *whole* counsel of God."

- 2] For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

Jesus used the same analogy (Mt 24:43). The problem with burglars is that they don't tell us when they are coming. No advance announcement of their arrival; no warning postcard....Previously taught (Mt 24:43-44; Lk 12:39-40) as a regular part of apostolic teaching (2 Pet 3:10; Rev 3:3; 16:15).

- 3] For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

Notice the change of pronouns. In the first two verses Paul is addressing the "brethren;" now he says that it is not necessary for him to write to them about the times and seasons, *because they will have nothing to do with it—believers will be gone at that time*

"...peace and safety": Only here in NT. From what do they feel themselves secure? (2 Thess 2:10-12). Thief: No warning; unexpected.

"...sudden destruction": Not physical annihilation, but rather the eternal separation of the lost from Christ (2 Thess 1:9). Opposite of salvation awaiting believers (vv. 7-10).

"...cometh:" (*epistatai*) = to stand upon or over, to stand by; *by surprise*.

"...travail": Birthpangs. 7X: NT: Mt 24:8; Mk 13:8; OT: Isa 13:8-9; **26:16-21**; Jer 4:31; Hos 13:13; Mic 4:9. No escape; unavoidable.

*LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them. Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O LORD. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen. Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were*

*for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.*

Isaiah 26:16-21

- 4] But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

"...as a thief": What does that mean? An important contrast with the unbelieving world. Not by surprise (Mt 12:29).

## The Day of the Lord

The Rapture ends the Day of Church and begins the Day of the Lord. This is a period of time which begins with the Great Tribulation and goes through the millennial reign of Christ here upon the earth (Isa 12-13; Joel 1:15; 2:2). It denotes the day when God intervenes in history to deal with wicked men directly and dramatically in fearful judgment, and to establish His kingdom. Sorrow for the unsaved; joy for the saved. Mal 4:1; Isa 13:9-13...

### "Day of Wrath": Isaiah 13:9 - 13

*Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible... Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.*

Isaiah 13:9-11,13

### "Day of the Lord"

- "Day of Wrath" (Isa 13:9-13, Joel 2:1-3, 10, 11, 15, 16; Amos 5:18-20; Zeph 1:14-18; 2:1-2; Rev 6:12-14; 16-17).
- "Time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer 30:7).
- "All inhabitants of the land will tremble" (Mt 24:21, 22).
- "Kept from the hour" (Rev 3:10).
- Result of the uncertainty for the unprepared: Cf. days of Noah (Mt 24:37-39; Lk 17:26-27) and Lot (Lk 17:28-30).

*For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*

Matthew 24:21,22

- 5] Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

“...not of the night”: Note the *chiasmus*, rhetorical reversals: light, day vs. night, darkness; Cf. frequency with Paul (Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 4:10; 2 Cor 6:8). We are transplanted into the kingdom of the Son of God’s love (Col 1:13). No “twilight zone” here!

- 6] Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

“...let us watch” = opposite of “sleep” (indifference to spiritual realities). All true prophetic teaching has an application. The *imminence* of His return is an impelling motive to be living for Him every day.

## Imminence

Demands morally and spiritually wakeful activity, being on the alert against the assaults of sin and unrighteousness (Mt 24:43-44; Mk 13:33-36; Lk 12:37). His return is one of the chief objects of Christian watchfulness (1 Cor 1:7; Tit 2:13; Heb 9:28; 2 Pet 3:12).

- 7] For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

“Children of the night” are contrasted with the “children of the day”: Not intoxicated by the stimulants of the world—glamour, pleasures, appearances....

- 8] But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

We are contrasted with those “of the night.”

## Armor of God

We are not only a watchman, but a warrior; a soldier guarding himself against a surprise attack (Cf. Eph 6:14).

- **Breastplate:** protected the heart.
- **Faith:** inner attitude.

- **Love:** outward expression.
- **Helmet:** “around the head” crown; invited special attack of the enemy.
- **Hope of salvation:** antithesis of the wrath in next verse...

*Triad (again):* faith, hope, love (1 Thess 1:3; 1 Cor 13).

- 9] For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

“Not”: Emphatic by position. As in 1 Thess 1:10, wrath is used in its eschatological sense. Day of the Lord = Day of wrath; Cf. Isa 13:9-11; Zeph 1:14-16 vs. Rev 6:12-14. Salvation is an all inclusive term, with three tenses: Past, Present, and Future. Here, it is in contrast to the eschatological wrath of God.

## The Tenses of “Salvation”

Past Tense:

Separation from the *Penalty* of Sin

**Justification** Salvation

Present Tense:

Separation from the *Power* of Sin

**Sanctification** Salvation

Future Tense:

Separation from the *Presence* of Sin

**Glorification** Salvation

Translation of the church at the beginning of Day of the Lord; assures that the believers will not have a part in the coming great tribulation, when God’s wrath falls upon a Christ-rejecting world (Rev 6:15-17; 14:10; 19:15; Cf. Rev 3:10).

The divine calling necessitates a human response. Partial rapture? If so, I haven’t found anyone qualified to go!

Remember righteous Lot (2 Pet 2:7-9), yet he was removed as a *pre-requisite* to the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:22).

- 10] Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

That the significance of Christ’s death is *not* discussed in the Thessalonian epistles demonstrates that this doctrine (vs. Galatians) was not

questioned at Thessalonica. This was at the heart of apostolic preaching at Corinth at the very time this epistle was being written (1 Cor 2:1-2; 1:17-18; 15:1-3).

- 11] Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

“Wherefore”: 22 Commandments follow (Jn 14:15):

- 1) Comfort yourselves together (1 Thess 4:18).
  - 2) Edify: edifice; build up. *Parakaleo*; encourage; not only our theology and our hope but the mainspring of our Christian life and testimony. We are not to leave it to an elite of professional comforters or counselors.
- 12] And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;
- “...brethren”: *Adelphio*, brothers: 5X in vv.12, 13, 25, 26, 27. We belong to the family.
- 3) Know, recognize, esteem them. The solicitous tone indicates that the writers were aware that difficulties did exist regarding the subjects now being dealt with (as with us!).
- 13] And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves.
- 4) Esteem them very highly.
  - 5) Be at peace among yourselves. No church could grow spiritually without its members being at peace among themselves.
- 14] Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.
- 6) Warn them that are disorderly; a military term denoting one who was neglecting duties, falling into careless habits.
  - 7) Comfort the fainthearted (“small souled”).
  - 8) Support the weak.
  - 9) Be patient toward all men.

[These three groups are already identifiable in Ch 4: Disorderly; idlers of vv.11-12; fainthearted: anxious of departed loved ones in vv.14-17; and the weak: those suffering from temptations to lapse into immorality in vv 2-8.]

- 15] See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

- 10) See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but
- 11) Ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. A Christian’s life consists of doing good and suffering evil. (Third of three alternative philosophies...)

- 16] Rejoice evermore.

- 12) Rejoice evermore (Phil 4:4). Shortest verse in the Bible: Two short words in Greek [John 11:35 = Three longer words in Greek!]

Rejoicing = living in the will of God; trusting the Lord vs. sin of murmuring (Cf. Ex, Deut, Num...). Letter to Ephesus who “lost their first love” (Rev 2:1-7) vs. “Restore unto me the joy of my salvation....” (Ps 51:12).

“Evermore” = πάντοτε *pantote*. This was a favorite word of Paul—6<sup>th</sup> time in this epistle; 27X in Paul’s letters + 15X in NT = 42 = 6 x 7.

Paradox of joy amid suffering (2 Cor 6:10; Rom 8:18; 2 Cor 4:16-18; 2 Cor 12:10; Col 1:24). Philippian letter = A descant on this theme.

Christian sadness, depression = mistrust of God’s power, providence, and forgiveness (1 Cor 15:3-5; Phil 2:6-11; 1 Tim 3:16; Rev 4:8, 11; 15:3-4).

- 17] Pray without ceasing.

- 13) Pray without ceasing. Adverb; constantly recurring; Maintaining times of prayer. Daniel: 3X/day.

Note Paul’s constantly interjected prayers in this and other epistles. Each congregation would accept the responsibility to engage in serious intercession. Prayers are not limited by time or place; if you are not in a right place to pray, you are not in the right place.

- 18] In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

- 14) In everything give thanks. “In,” not “for.”

There is no simpler recipe for a happy Christian experience (Job 1:21; 2:10). Not just when you “feel like” it. This may have to be a contrary-to-

feeling choice. (See Nancy Missler's study, *The Way of Agape*.) Romans 8:28 (the three most important words are the first 3!) Cf. Paul & Silas in Philippian jail (Acts 16:25). In every circumstance of life, no matter where God puts you and no matter what your difficulties are, in those circumstances you can thank God for all He has done for you.

19] Quench not the Spirit.

15) Quench not the Spirit. σβέννυμι *sbennumi*: Extinguishing: “*Do not put out the Spirit's fire.*” “Quenching” = just saying “no” to God.

The image as a flame: tongues of fire, Acts 2:3; John the Baptist (Mt 3:11; Isa 4:4). Grieve not the Spirit (a *person*) Eph 4:30. The Holy Spirit is there to teach us, to guide us, to direct us, to rebuke us, to show us the way to unfold the Scriptures, to give us joy and peace and love, and to transform our lives and our character and our experience.

20] Despise not prophesyings.

16) Despise not prophesyings. Be ready to recognize the messages of God when His servants speak (1 Cor 14:3). Apply v. 21 (below).

21] Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

17) Prove all things; “Prove”: As the Bereans (Acts 17:11). A favorite of Paul: 17 of 23 occurrences in NT.

18) Hold fast that which is good.

22] Abstain from all appearance of evil.

19) Abstain from all appearance of evil or “abstain from every form of evil” (does not denote semblance as opposed to reality). Form = sort, kind, or species.

23] And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“...sanctify”: = to set apart, to consecrate. Does not mean “the absolute eradication of all inbred sin.” As we reviewed in 1 Thess 4:3, there is not even one scripture which treats it from that standpoint. We'll deal with this in 2 Thess 2:13.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy Word is truth (Jn 17:17). Have you read your Bible (wholly) *thoroughly*?

23] And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole **spirit and soul and body** be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“...spirit and soul and body”: The triune “Architecture of Man.” Paul differentiates between *psuchikos* (soulish) and *pneumatikos* (spiritual): 1 Cor 2:14-15, 15:44.

“...spirit”: Gr. *Pneuma*, Heb *Ruach*: air, breath, wind. The spirit is that which “knows” (1 Cor 2:11); his mind. Spirit and soul are divisible only by the Word (Heb 4:12).

“...soul”: Heb *nephesh*, Gr *psyche* (Deut 6:5; 14:26; 1 Sam 18:1; 20:4,17; Job 7:11,15; 14:22; Ps 42:6;84:2). The soul is the seat of affections, desires, emotions, and of the active will, the self (Mt 26:38; 11:29; Jn 12:27).

24] And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Spirit = God-consciousness
- Soul = Self-consciousness
- Body = World-consciousness

Natural death: Separation of body and soul; Spiritual death: Separation of soul & spirit? (2nd death?) Genesis 3; Cross; etc.

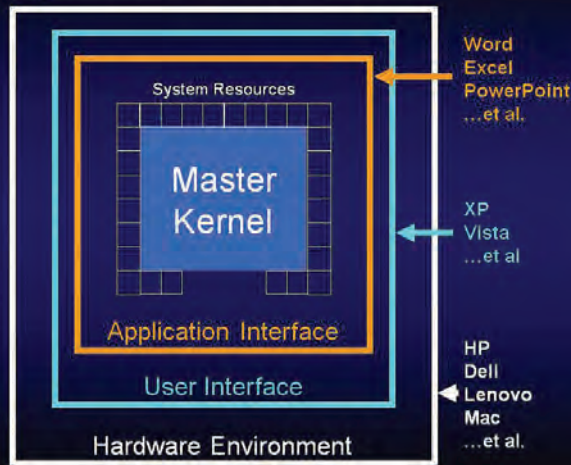
## Our *Personal* Architecture?

Seven times the Bible declares: “Ye are the Temple of God” (1 Cor.3:9-17; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:20,21; Heb 3:6; 1 Pet 2:5; 4:17). This appears to hold the key to our “software” architecture: What is our Heart? Soul? Spirit? Mind?

The Greatest Commandment: We are instructed to “love God with all of our heart, soul, strength and mind.” What does this mean? You can't determine the architecture of software by external means; you need the designer's manual. [That's why you can buy it at a store: you can *use* it, but not infer its internal design...]



## System Architecture



The architecture of “software” (of an infinite state machine) is impossible to infer from its external behavior. Thus, psychology is doomed to frustration to establish causes—or even deal with guilt.

## Architecture

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Hardware</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Microcircuits</li> <li>– Memory</li> <li>– Wires, resistors, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Physical Body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Flesh</li> <li>– Bones</li> <li>– Circulatory System etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Software</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– User Interface</li> <li>– Internal Interfaces</li> <li>– Machine Language</li> <li>– Algorithms, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Our Selves</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “Soul”</li> <li>– “Spirit”</li> <li>– “Mind”</li> <li>– Thoughts, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

## The Doom of Psychology

A programmable computer is an infinite state machine. An infinite state machine defies external determination of its internal architecture. The frustration of psychology is that it is attempting to determine internal architecture from external behavior. It is left with only the symptoms: *guilt*. It has no ability to deal with the root cause: *sin*.

## The Real You

You are software, not “hardware.” Software has no mass: it can pass through the air waves; it is not restricted to our physical time dimension. You are eternal—*whether “saved” or not!* [Source: Frank J. Tipler, *The Physics of Immortality*, Doubleday, New York, NY, 1994.]

24] Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

What He starts, He finishes! (Phil 1:6).

Postscript: Three further exhortations and a final benediction. Paul believed in the efficacy of prayer. He opens his letters by assuring them he is praying for them; he closes his letters urging prayer on his own behalf.

25] Brethren, pray for us.

26] Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.

27] I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

20) Pray for us

21) Greet and kiss...

22) Read this epistle (and I have just obeyed it).

This first letter inaugurated a new practice in the churches (that the letter be read unto all the holy brethren); he felt so strongly about the importance of the letter to all and felt the letter a substitute for personal trip, but nevertheless felt disappointment and neglect at not being there in person.

He sought to guard against garbled teaching, but his primary intention was one of comfort to all, although troublemakers might refuse to read or pay heed and elders might suppress parts of contents.

28] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Paul’s unique trademark...



## Next Session

“3<sup>rd</sup>” Thessalonians: The “2<sup>nd</sup>” apparently was a forgery. The one which we are going to study is a response. It is one of the most pivotal eschatological epistles in the New Testament. Read all three chapters in preparation for the next session.

They were upset due to the Day of the Lord having already begun? *Why were they upset?* They either missed the rapture or Paul taught them falsely? If they were “post-Trib” they wouldn’t have been upset!

## The Epistles to the Thessalonians

### Session 6: 2 Thessalonians 1

#### Divinely Authorized

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*

2 Timothy 3:16

“All Scripture is...profitable” in four ways: for *doctrine*—that’s what’s right; for *reproof*—that’s what’s not right; for *correction*—that’s how to get right; and for *instruction in righteousness*—that’s how to stay right.

Spiritual Order		
Romans	Doctrine	Soteriology
1, 2 Corinthians	Reproof	
Galatians	Correction	
Ephesians	Doctrine	Ecclesiology
Philippians	Reproof	
Colossians	Correction	
1, 2 Thessalonians	Doctrine	Eschatology

## The Thessalonian Epistles

The most important *eschatological* epistles of the New Testament:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians:
  - The *Harpazo* (Rapture).
  - The Day of the Lord.
- “2<sup>nd</sup>” Thessalonians – a *forgery*?
- “3<sup>rd</sup>” Thessalonians – Paul’s response:
  - The sequence of end-time events.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle to the Thessalonians: Our Blessed Hope

- Looking Back Ch. 1 – 3
  - Exemplary Conversion Ch. 1
  - Exemplary Evangelism Ch. 2
  - Exemplary After-Care Ch. 3
- Looking Ahead Ch. 4 – 5
  - Calling and Comfort Ch. 4
- The *Harpazo* Ch. 5
  - Calling and Challenge Ch. 5

### “2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians”

This letter followed 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians by only a few months. Persecutions had begun.

*It was in Thessalonica that the first Gentiles were killed in the Roman Empire. The local Roman governor in that part of the country said that every Christian had to bow before a statue of Augustus Caesar. He had been deified and statues of Caesar were erected everywhere. Christians who didn’t obey the edict were persecuted...It was in Thessalonica that they dreamed up the procedure of offering a cask of wine on the altar to Venus or Caesar, and then publicly taking it out to the marketplace, sprinkling all the vegetables, meat, and other goods, announcing that it had all been dedicated to the god...Anyone who bought or ate any of it thereby worshipped a false god...Christians who stopped buying in the marketplace as a witness immediately became marked. The first crucifixions, the first burnings, and the first great persecutions of Christians began then.*

Pliny, the Elder

### 2 Thessalonians: Our Blessed Hope – Part 2

- The Present Distress Ch. 1
  - Persecutions having begun...

- The Order of Events Ch. 2
  - Apprehensions stirred by a forgery?
  - Soon, but not yet: Sequence of events
- The Coming Challenge Ch. 3
  - Work for the night is coming

## 2 Thessalonians 1

- 1] Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Paul includes the greetings of Silas (a contraction of the name Silvanus) and Timothy (Timotheus is the Greek form). These three men had endured a great deal for the sake of the gospel.

Paul and Silas were in the prison at Philippi. Paul, Silas, and Timothy had gone to Thessalonica; later Paul had to leave them. He waited for them in Athens and, finally met them in Corinth. It was at that time Paul wrote his first epistle to the Thessalonians to answer some of their questions.

“...unto”: Epistles are written *to* the church, not *from* the church. Nothing authoritative comes *from* the church. It doesn’t teach; it is to be taught.

“...in God our Father”: A sound local church.

- 2] Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Grace” always comes first...the greatest need of the human heart.

- 3] We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

“...bound”: The word for paying a debt. He owes it to them to thank God for them.

“...meet”: proper.

“...charity”: *Agape*: Latin, *caritas*; once meant love dispensed to others; benevolent goodwill motivated by Christian love. (Present usage: a dole or handout). Their faith continued to grow in faith. An answer to Paul’s prayers in 1 Thess 3:12; 4:1, 10. [*Hope* is not mentioned: an unwarranted interpretation of the Christian hope was creating confusion in their minds...]

## Practical Problem

How should we deal with Christians who are doing well in their discipleship?

- 1) “Well Done”? Borders on flattery, promotes pride and robs God of His glory.
- 2) Privately in prayers and say nothing? Permits discouragement...
- 3) (Paul’s) He thanks God for them, and tells them he is doing so. Affirms without flattery; encourages without puffing up.

Are we *growing* in faith each day? Do you trust the Lord in ALL things? Or do the urgent things preempt the important? Tribulation works patience; patience experience; and experience hope (Rom 5:3-4).

- 4] So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

“...patience” = “Remaining under” (the load). The storm measures the sailor, not the calm sea. [Paul had his own trials in Corinth, from which this letter was written.]

- 5] Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

(See persecution detail above; Cf. Rev 6:9-11). We are not left on this earth in order to be popular. We are here to cause a ferment, an uproar, hatred, and strife (Mt 10:34).

- 6] Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

The principle of just requital lies at the basis of our belief in a moral universe. Not good but evil creates a moral problem for us. Present injustices require a future retribution.

A world in which justice was not done at last would not be God’s world at all. Vengeance is mine; I will repay (Rom 12:19). Retribution is pictured as overtaking men in the world to come; but there are passages which indicate that it may also operate here and now (Rom 1:24, 26).

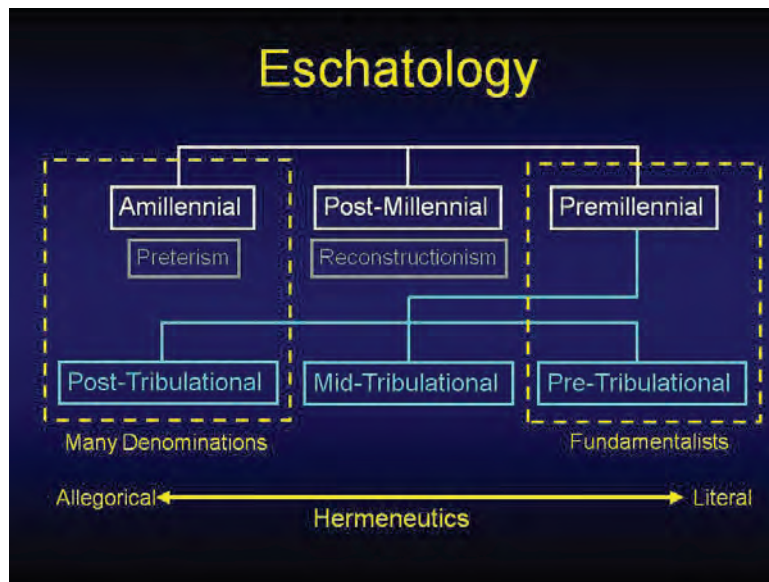
All that live godly in Christ will suffer persecution (2 Tim 3:12); if you suffer with Him, you shall also reign with Him (2 Tim 2:12).

7] And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

- Day of the Lord: vv 7 - 10 vs. 1 Thess 4, 5: *For* His saints; now *with* them.
- Mt 25: Judgment of the Gentiles; Ezek 20: Judgment of the Jews.

8] In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

“...vengeance”: Cf. Isa 66:15,16. Also Ex 3:2; Rev 1:13f. Vengeance: no vindictiveness, but simply the administration of unwavering justice. (Another example of how the early church ascribed the functions to the Lord that the OT reserved for YHWH.)



## Amillennialism

Amillennialism makes God guilty of not keeping His unconditional covenants to the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the Jews.

- Promise of the Land: Gen 12:7; 13:15-16; 17:7-8.
- Promise of the Land, a kingdom, and a greater Son of David (Messiah) as King: Ps 89:27-37.
- Promise of restoration to the land of Israel from worldwide dispersion and the establishment of Messiah’s kingdom: Jer 31:31:37; Ezek 36,37 38, 39 etc.

- Promises that a remnant of the Israelites will be saved: Rom 11:25-29; Zech 13:8,9; Isa 10:20-22

Amillennialism began with Augustine (A.D. 345-430) upon the allegorizations of Origen. Foundation for anti-Semitism (Jer 31:35-37). Reviving again.

- **Post-Tribulationists:** Robert Gundry, George Ladd, Walter Martin, Pat Robertson, Jim McKeever.
- **Mid-Tribulationists:** Norman B. Harrison, J. Sidlow Baxter, Marv Rosenthal.
- **Pre-Tribulationists:** J. Dwight Pentecost, John F. Walvoord, Charles C. Ryrie, Feinberg, Fruchtenbaum, Charles Dyer, Grant Jeffrey, Chuck Smith, Tim LaHaye, and ourselves.

9] Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

There is very little in Scripture about heaven; even less about Hell. (Jesus said more than anyone else.) These verses say it all. No annihilation; it’s just not in Scripture. Eternal destruction = *Separation* from the Lord, the final disaster, *forever*.

10] When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

“...glorified “in”: Not “among” them, as in a theater or stadium; not “by” them, as if they will be spectators, the audience who watch and worship; not “through” or “by means of” them, as if they will be mirrors which reflect his image and glory.

But rather *as a filament*, which itself glows with light and heat when energy passes through it (after John Stott, p. 149). A theater isn’t changed by the play which is performed in it. A mirror is not affected by the images it reflects. We shall be *changed* (the Transfiguration an example).

11] Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:

“We *constantly* pray for you.” It is prayer which links the future with the present. Although the future of God’s people is secure, but we should not presume upon it. Live a life worthy of the destiny that God has in store. Paul is mindful that they still had to live out their faith in the hard world of men who oppose themselves to the things of God.

“...the work of faith”: Faith is always busy.

- 12] That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

“...the name”: Summed up the whole character of a person. [New name: Rev 2:17...secret?] Are we living our lives as a means of bringing glory to the Savior? Are we really manifesting Christ as His trophies of grace, that we belong to Him and that He belongs to us?

## 2 Thessalonians Chapter 2

- 1] Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

“...the coming” of our Lord Jesus Christ:

- παρουσία *parousia* (here) lays emphasis on the **presence** of the Lord with his people;
- ἐπιφάνεια *epiphaneia* on his **manifestation** of the power and love of God;
- ἀποκάλυψις *apokalupsis* on the **revelation** of God’s purpose and plan in the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus.

“...and by our gathering together unto him”: Paul is referring to the *Harpazo*. He quoted 1 Thess 4:15–17 and “being forever with the Lord thereafter” (Jn 14; Mt 24:31; Mk 13:27).

- 2] That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the Day of Lord is at hand.

“...soon shaken in mind”: First aorist passive infinitive of σαλευω *saleuō*: to agitate, to cause to totter like a reed (Mt 11:7).

“...nor by letter as from us”: Prompted by the circulation of a spurious letter, apparently an intentional forgery, fretting that were that they were *already* in the Day of Lord. *Why would that bother the Christians in Thessalonica?*

Paul had plainly said that Jesus would come as a thief in the night and had shown that the dead would not be left out in the *Harpazo* [“Rapture”]. But evidently some one claimed to have a private epistle from Paul which supported the view that Jesus was coming at once, *as that the Day of the Lord is now present*.

“...Day of Lord is at hand”: ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου Greek: Day of the *Lord*.

## Eschatology

The rapture is not a doctrine to argue about: it is a doctrine to *live*.

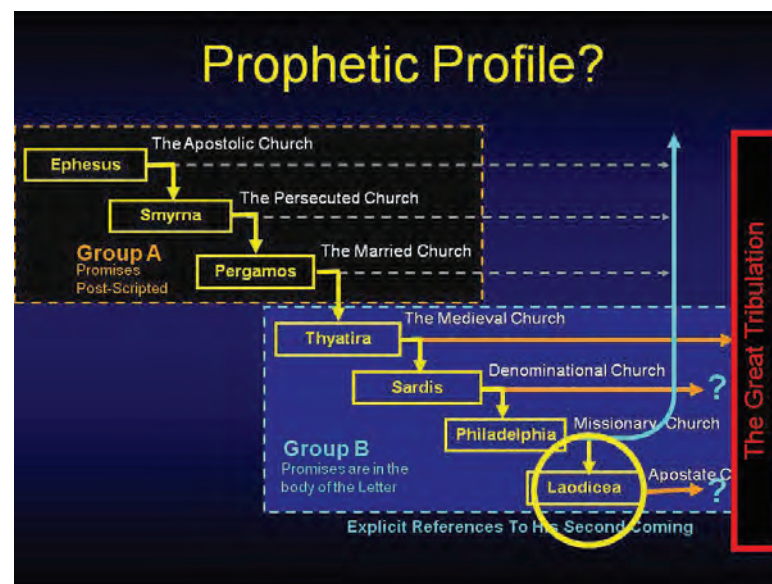
- Some believe He is coming after the Tribulation.
- Some believe that He is coming before;
- Some believe He is coming *during*.

How does your interpretation affect *your* life? Does it do anything for you? If your view has no effect on your life, then you might reconsider what you believe.

*I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*

Luke 18:8

(The Greek requires a negative answer to the rhetorical question).



## Next Session

Study: 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians Chapter 2. *What* was upsetting them? That they had missed the Rapture? Or that Paul taught them falsely? (*If they were “post-Trib” they wouldn’t have been upset!*)

What is the *sequence* of the eschatological events? Who is the “Re-strainer”?



# The Epistles to the Thessalonians

## Session 7: 2 Thessalonians 2

This chapter is the heart of the epistle and contains the most important prophetic passage in New Testament. It deals with an eschatological error from the belief that the Day of the Lord was already present. It's key issue is the identity of "the Restrainer." [Irregularities in the Greek implies that it was given in dictation.]

*What was upsetting them? That they had missed the Rapture? Or that Paul taught them falsely? (If they were "post-Trib" they wouldn't have been upset!)*

Major Issues: What is the *sequence* of the eschatological events? Who is the "Restrainer"?

### Precedent Events

- |                                  |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| • The Apostasy Must Take Place   | Ch. 2:1–3   |
| • The Temple Must Be Rebuilt     | Ch. 2:4–5   |
| • The Restrainer Must Be Removed | Ch. 2:6–12  |
| • The Church Must Be Completed   | Ch. 2:13–17 |

### 2 Thessalonians 2

- 1] Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

"...brethren": Common Christian concerns.

"...coming...gathering": the government of the two nouns under one article clearly indicates a single event. It's a summary of 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4.

"...the coming" of our Lord Jesus Christ:

- παρουσία *parousia* (here) lays emphasis on the **presence** of the Lord with his people;
- ἐπιφάνεια *epiphaneia* on his **manifestation** of the power and love of God;
- ἀποκάλυψις *apokalupsis* on the **revelation** of God's purpose and plan in the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus.

"...and by our gathering together unto him": Paul is referring to the *Harpazo*. He quoted 1 Thess 4:15–17 and "being forever with the Lord

thereafter" (Jn 14; Mt 24:31; Mk 13:27). The blessed hope of being caught up to the Lord at His coming is the most intelligible preservative against the false and disquieting rumor that the day of His judgment of the earth had come.

- 2] That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the Day of Lord is at hand. ;

"...son shaken in mind": First aorist passive infinitive of σαλευω *saleuō*: to agitate, to cause to totter like a reed (Mt 11:7).

"Be quickly shaken"—rashly. Be shaken: Passive tense points to an outside force.

"...or troubled": frightened, alarmed.

"Day of Christ" is incorrect: **Day of the Lord** is correct. ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου Greek: Day of the *Lord*.

"...nor by letter as from us": Prompted by the circulation of a spurious letter, apparently an intentional forgery, fretting that were that they were *already* in the Day of Lord. *Why would that bother the Christians in Thessalonica?*

### Day of the Lord

The traditional Jewish expression for the day when God would intervene in history to destroy His enemies and establish His Kingdom, which will last over 1000 years (Great White Throne at the end). Re: Joel, Zechariah, Isaiah, Amos, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Malachi, Zephaniah....

In that Day, Christ will rule with a *rod of iron* over the entire earth (Ps 2:9; Rev 2:27). He will administer absolute justice (Isa 11:1-9; also, Isa 11:10-12; Zeph 3:14-20).

Paul had plainly said that Jesus would come as a thief in the night and had shown that the dead would not be left out in the *Harpazo* ["Rapture"]. But evidently someone claimed to have a private epistle from Paul which supported the view that Jesus was coming at once, *as that the Day of the Lord is now present*.

- 3] Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

"...falling away first": There were two issues:



1) *apostasias*; deliberate abandonment of a formerly professed position or view; a defection; a rejection of a former allegiance. Used to denote a political or military rebellion. In the LXX: a rebellion against God (Josh 22:22). In NT (Acts 21:21; 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 3:1-9; 4:3-4; Heb 3:12).

Definite article points to “the great revolt” of the end time (1 Tim 4:1-3; 2 Tim 3:1-5; 4:3-4; Jas 5:1-8; 2 Pet 2:1-22; 3:3-6; Jude). Nowhere does the Scripture speak of the rapture as a “departure.” In the rapture, the Church is passive, not active. It is initiated by the Lord and done by Him (v.1).

2) *...revealed*, aorist tense: a definite time when the veil will be removed. His revelation will herald the fact that the Day of the Lord has actually arrived.

“...perdition” —opposite of salvation.

- 4] Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

An anti-theistic revolt; replacing all existing forms of worship.

“...all that is called God”: all heathen divinities. Overshadows Vatican, Islam, New Age, etc. Self-deification, in its climax. “Anti-christ” = pseudo-christ.

“...the temple of God”: *Naos*, inner “Holy of Holies.” (vs. Greek, *hieron*, temple complex). Paul’s use of the definite article excludes any other than God’s Temple.

The early church fathers understood a literal, eschatological Jewish Temple [Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, V.30.4]. Satellite TV is implied (Mt 24:1).

## Satan’s Parody of Christ:

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| – His <i>parousia</i> , coming                                | Ch. 2:9, 2:1   |
| – His <i>apocalypse</i> , revelation                          | Ch. 2:3, 1:7-8 |
| – His <i>gospel</i> , the lie vs. the truth,                  | Ch. 2:10-12    |
| – He will brook no rival,                                     | Ch. 2:4        |
| – with all power, signs, & lying wonders, empowered by Satan, | Ch. 2:9        |

*Note: The popes have never claimed for themselves exclusive divine honor. Romanism does not oppose all that is called God, etc. They, or the line, are not a specific unique eschatological person.*

- 5] Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

Obviously, an essential part of Paul’s early indoctrination of his ministry.

- 6] And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

Neuter present participle presents this restraint as an impersonal operative force. *The restraint prevents the premature manifestation of the man of sin as the very embodiment of iniquity.*

A “fullness of time” for Christ (Gal 4:4); so also for the man of sin.

- 7] For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

“...mystery”: Now divinely revealed. Paul uses the term in connection with revelation and publication (Rom 16:26; 1 Cor 2:6-12; Eph 1:9; 3:3-5; Col 1:25-27).

“...iniquity” (“lawlessness”): With a definite article, denotes the definite aim of the devil to overthrow the law of God and establish his own rule (not merely disorder and violation of the law in general).

“...lawlessness”: Asserting the absence of moral absolutes; right and wrong, etc. (Sound familiar?)

“...work”: The active operation of some supernatural power. (Paul: the working of the Word of God in the readers...1 Thess 2:13). While the individual has not yet been revealed, the spirit that will dominate his career is already operative.

“...let” = (Old English) restrains; holds back.

“...until”: There is a **time limit** upon the present restraint. This all cannot happen while the church is still in the world.

“...be taken”; aorist tense = a definite event. Subjunctive mode leaves the time undetermined.

“...out of the way”: μέσος *mesos* middle; the midst. “Out of the midst.”

“...he” The neuter participle of v.6 has been replaced by the masculine participle, “the one restraining.” Suggestions have included: Roman emperor(s); the Roman empire; human government generally; Paul (?); Satan; Elijah; Michael; the providence of God; the Holy Spirit; etc.

## The Restrainer

Only God has ever restrained sin. “And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh” (Gen 6:3). It was God’s hedge that restrained Satan (Job 1 & 2).

It is the Holy Spirit who restrains. “The Spirit of the Lord shall restrain him....” (Isa 59:19). At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit assumed a special relationship to the Church as its Indweller (Jn 14:16-17; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19, etc.) He came to abide with the Church forever. After completion of His work in the Church, He will resume the relation to mankind which He had before Pentecost.

The Greek word for Spirit is neuter (v.6). The personality of the Restrainer in v.7 is masculine (Cf. Jn 15:26; 16:13-14; Eph 1:13-14).

Three prerequisite conditions, still today:

- 1) Apostasy had not come (?);
- 2) Spirit of God had not been taken away;
- 3) Man of Sin not yet revealed.

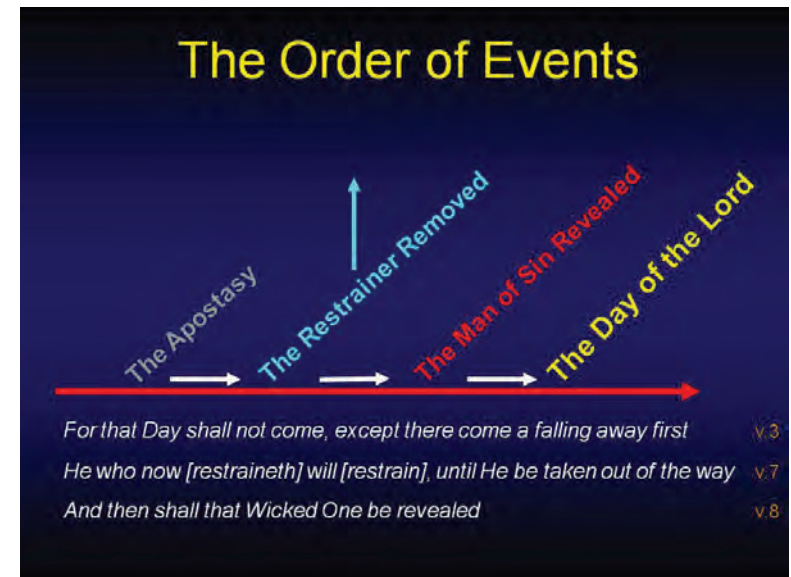
- 8] And then shall that Wicked [One] be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

“And then...” Emphatically asserts that the career of the lawless one will run its course *following the removal* of the Restrainer. Yet, his final doom is also asserted. *Isn't it interesting that we are never instructed to look for the rising up of this sinister personage who occupies such a large place in prophecy?!*

“...spirit,” “breath” of His mouth...”: the *epiphany* (shining forth) of His presence.”

- 9] Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

Three terms: Comprehensive description of miracles. 1) **Power:** Denotes the cause of the miracle; the inherent power producing it; 2) **Signs:** Point to the significance lying behind the miracles; 3) **Wonders:** Indicates the abnormal nature, and the astonishment they produce.



These three terms are used to designate the miracles of Christ (Acts 2:22) and the apostolic Church (Heb 2:4). He is a liar by nature (Jn 8:44)...on whom? “Them that perish.”

- 10] And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

“...in them that perish”: Their cause for perishing lies within themselves: their rejection of God’s provision (Jn 3:19).

- 11] And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe [the] lie:

“...[the] lie”: God uses their choice of evil as the very instrument to punish their sin. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins (Prov 5:22).

τῷ ψεύδει *tōi pseudei* definite article dative neuter singular = “The lie”; specific. Effective aorist tense: specific occasion.

Some feel that this verse is a refutation to the strategy of waiting until *after* the Rapture to accept Christ (e.g., “The Left Behind” series...)

- 12] That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Willful rejection of truth has resulted in the love of evil; evil had become their good (Isa 5:20,21). Have YOU really trusted Christ? Or are you vulnerable to this deception?

## Practical Issue

Will the Church (you?) go through the “Great Tribulation”? Caveat: This doesn’t mean that there won’t be substantial persecution, etc., forthcoming shortly.

- 13] But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

“...bound to give thanks alway”: Echoes 1:3: Obligation to give thanks.

“...God hath from the beginning chosen you”: The entire statement has God as its subject, made emphatic by being placed after the verb and object; middle voice of the verb: “He chose you for Himself.” Aorist indicative: choice as a past fact; entirely of divine initiative (Cf. Eph 1:4; Col 2:7; 2 Tim 1:9; Tit 1:2; Rom 8:29, 30).

“...salvation through sanctification of the spirit”: Sanctification process (Jn 16:7-11):

- The convicting work of the **Holy Spirit** (Eph 4:30).
- Grieve not...sealed (1 Cor 12:1).
- One body (1 Cor 6:9,10).
- Sinners...yet justified (Phil 1:6). What He starts, He finishes.

- 14] Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- 15] Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

“...brethren...” Stand firm; be steadfast.”

“...traditions”:

- 1) Of the elders (Mk 7:3-9; Mt 15:2-6) rabbinical (“oral”) traditions; (harmful developments).
- 2) Traditions of men (Col 2:8); spurious; of human origin.
- 3) Scriptural; God-given: What is new is not true; what is true is not new.

“...our epistle”: Again, whose?

## Eschatology

The rapture is not a doctrine to argue about: it is a doctrine to *live*.

- Some believe He is coming after the Tribulation.
- Some believe that He is coming before;
- Some believe He is coming *during*.

How does your interpretation affect *your* life? Does it do anything for you? If your view has no effect on your life, then you might reconsider what you believe.

- 16] Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,  
17] Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

## Final Session

Read 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians Chapter 3.

## The Epistles to the Thessalonians Session 8: 2 Thessalonians 3

### Three Practical Admonitions: Thessalonians 3

- 1) Pray and Be Patient Ch. 3:1–5
- 2) Work If You Want to Eat Ch. 3:6–13
- 3) Be Doers not just Hearers Ch. 3:14–18

### Pray and Be Patient: 2 Thess 3:1–5

- 1] Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:

Three requests: “...free course”: 1) “That the Word of the Lord may run...” 2) That it may be glorified; 3) That it accomplishes its purpose for which it is sent.

- Prayerfulness
- Preservation
- Protection
- Patience

- 2] And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

“...unreasonable and wicked men”: Cf. Fanatical Jewish opponents at Corinth. Thessalonians had personal experience with such antagonists (Acts 17:5-9). Paul had further experience with such bitter opponents at Berea (Acts 17:13-15). Even as he was writing this letter, the same threatening attitude was at Corinth; the attack of followed (Acts 18:12-17).

You can't pray for Paul anymore. But you *can* pray for Chuck! That he may be “delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.” Slander and deceit pervades the many “Christian” platforms and websites...The ethics and loyalties of a combat team vastly exceed the betrayals one encounters within “the Body” of Believers.

“(The) faith” *All* men have faith of some sort. The doctrines as the apostles taught them. Biblical faith is an unconditional surrender to Jesus Christ.

- 3] But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.

“...stablish” = Inner stability (vs. reaction to “Day of Lord” view). Cf. Luke 22:31,32 when Jesus prays for Peter.

“...keep”: Keep (guard) from the evil *one*; conveys military image, implying conflict and armed protection from violent attack. (Ambiguous gender: neuter, general, masculine, personal, context dependent as in Lord's Prayer; Mt 6:13.) Behind all forces there are *living wills*.

- 4] And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

Man is unworthy of trust (Jn 2:24,25; Ps 118:8). Remember the 22 “commandments” in 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5...

- 5] And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

“...direct your hearts”: Aorist tense: summarily states the prayed-for action without indicating the process involved.

“...patience” - *hypomone*, remaining-under (a burden). “Patient waiting for the coming of Christ”! Indeed! “Occupy until I come.” (Lk 19:13).

## Work If You Want to Eat: 2 Thess 3:6–13

- 6] Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

“...command”: not a “suggestion.”

“...in the name of the Lord”: Full confessional title, which in OT was used of YHWH (Ex 5:23; Lev 19:12; Deut 18:22; Jer 11:21, etc.)

“...Jesus Christ”: Transferred directly to Christ (1 Cor 6:11; Eph 5:20; Col 3:17).

“...withdraw,” more stern than 1 Thess 5:14. Over behavior, not doctrine!

“...every brother...”: Do not deny he is a brother, but his fault must be censured. Addicted to deliberate loafing; very active as busybodies (vv 11); interfering in the work of others.

- 7] For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

Apostolic example (*not* principle!). Paul was not a sponge. He was anxious to not be misunderstood. Has the right (1 Cor 9:3-14; 1 Tim 5:18), but he voluntarily waived it.

- 8] Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

He paid his own way.

- 9] Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

- 10] For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

Deliberate loafers must not be supported out of a false sense of charity. This is an abuse of Acts 2:44-46; 4:32-35 and the dignity of human labor. Work is a privilege as well as a responsibility.

## “Socialism”

The theft of socialism: Its *spiritual* goal is to destroy Biblical traditions, family, and private property. Nazis were socialists. And *occultic*. New

Age is *pantheistic* (initially); then *gnostic*; then *occultic*; in preparation for dictatorial leadership.

- 11] For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

Verbatim repetition of 1 Thessalonians 2:9. Paul was kept informed through thriving commercial contacts between Corinth and Thessalonica.

Keen-edged wordplay in the original: Working at nothing, yet too busily working...bushybodies who do no business. Not busy men, but bushybodies!

Bushybodies instead of being busy. The view that the Lord would come at any moment stimulated their native tendency to give themselves over to excited discussion in preference to dull manual labor. [“Rapture-itis”?]

- 12] Now then that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

It is interesting that in these eschatological epistles, so much is devoted to practical living...

- 13] But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

As Moody put it, “I get weary *in* the work, but not weary *of* the work.”

## Be Doers not just Hearers: 2 Thess 3:14–18

One of the strengths of the Thessalonian church was its attitude toward the Word of God. They heard and received the Word, believed it, and shared it with others (1 Thess 1:5–6; 2:13).

But apparently some of the believers were becoming hardened to the Word: *they heard it but did not obey it*. The evidence of their unbelief and disobedience was seen in the way they lived, and their lives were a disgrace to the church. *We must be hearers and doers of the Word*. James 1:22–27 (Cf. *The Kingdom, Power and Glory* reactions...).

- 14] And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.  
15] Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

The aim is not exclusion but reformation.

- 16] Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.  
17] The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.

What is his “token”? Paul takes the pen from the amanuensis and adds the closing words in his own hand (Rom 16:22; 1 Cor 16:21; Col 4:18).

The use of scribes was common. Roman business men were great letterwriters. They had invented three systems of shorthand as aides. [James C. Muir, *How Firm a Foundation*.]

- 18] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Response to forgery? Signing may not have been his earlier practice; now “cured.” Very large letters were mentioned in Galatians (imperfect eyesight?).

[Note: “Written from Athens,” appearing on some manuscripts, is an erroneous scribal addition from a misunderstanding of 1 Thessalonians 3:1. This letter, as was also the first, was written from Corinth.]

What have YOU learned from these epistles?

- 1) The Blessed Hope?
- 2) Ecclesiology over Eschatology?
- 3) The Imminence of His Return for His Own

## 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle to the Thessalonians: Our Blessed Hope

- Looking Back Ch. 1 – 3
  - Exemplary Conversion Ch. 1
  - Exemplary Evangelism Ch. 2
  - Exemplary After-Care Ch. 3
- Looking Ahead Ch. 4 – 5
  - Calling and Comfort Ch. 4
- The *Harpazo* Ch. 5
  - Calling and Challenge Ch. 5

*Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;*

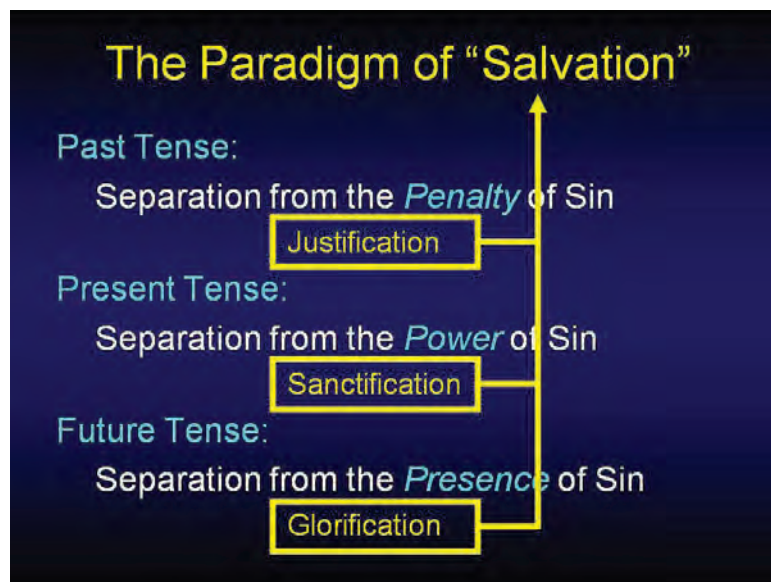
1 Thessalonians 1:3



These three graces would also be featured later in the Corinthian letter:  
 1) the work of faith, 2) the patience of hope, and 3) the labor of love.

## Paul's Trilogy of Commitment

- A Paradigm:
  - Faith rests on the past;
  - Love works in the present;
  - Hope looks to the future.
- Each looks outward:
  - Faith looks *back* to a Crucified Savior;
  - Love looks *up* to a Crowned Savior;
  - Hope looks *on* to a Coming Savior.
- The Church is *distinguished* by these three...faith, hope, and love.



## Our Blessed Hope: The Harpazo

*But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall*

## The Second Coming

Daniel 2:44-45	Acts 1:9-11
Daniel 7:9-14	Acts 3:19-21
Daniel 12:1-3	1 Thes 3:13
Zech 14:1-15	2 Thes 1:6-10
Matt 13:41	2 Thes 2:8
Matt 24:15-31	2 Peter 3:1-14
Matt 26:64	Jude 14-15
Mark 13:14-27	Rev 1:7
Mark 14:62	Rev 19:11-20:6
Luke 21:25-28	Rev 22:7, 12, 20

## The "Rapture"

John 14:1-3	2 Thes 2:1, (3)
1 Cor 15:1-53	1 Tim 6:14
1 Thes 4:13-18	2 Tim 4:1
Rom 8:19	Titus 2:13
1 Cor 1:7-8	Heb 9:28
1 Cor 16:22	James 5:7-9
Phil 3:20-21	1 Peter 1:7, 13
Col 3:4	1 John 2:28-3:2
1 Thes 1:10	Jude 21
1 Thes 2:19	Rev 2:25
1 Thes 5:9	Rev 3:10
1 Thes 5:23	

*descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

## The Day of the Lord

The Rapture ends the Day of Church and begins the Day of the Lord. This is a period of time which begins with the Great Tribulation and goes through the millennial reign of Christ here upon the earth (Isa 12

-13; Joel 1:15; 2:2). It denotes the day when God intervenes in history to deal with wicked men directly and dramatically in fearful judgment, and to establish His kingdom. There is sorrow for the unsaved; joy for the saved (Mal 4:1; Isa 13:9-13...).

- “Day of Wrath” (Isa 13:9-13, Joel 2:1-3, 10, 11, 15, 16; Amos 5:18-20; Zeph 1:14-18; 2:1-2; Rev 6:12-14; 16-17);
- “Time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer 30:7);
- “All inhabitants of the land will tremble” (Mt 24:21, 22);
- “Kept from the hour” (Rev 3:10);
- Result of the uncertainty for the unprepared: Cf. days of Noah (Mt 24:37-39; Lk 17:26-27 and Lot (Lk 17:28-30).

## 2 Thessalonians: Our Blessed Hope – Part 2

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| • The Present Distress                  | Ch. 1 |
| – Persecutions having begun...          |       |
| • The Order of Events                   | Ch. 2 |
| – Apprehensions stirred by a forgery?   |       |
| – Soon, but not yet: Sequence of events |       |
| • The Coming Challenge                  | Ch. 3 |
| – Work for the night is coming          |       |

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