

# I THESSALONIANS PART 2

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A brief résumé from last week.

These are Paul's earliest letters written about 51/52 AD?

**The key theme is Jesus' Return!** Parousia (mentioned 7 times ... 6 times about Jesus' return and once about the lawless one).

Jesus' return is at the forefront of their minds ... they are expectant ... excited? What about us?

As part of the Promise ... they would be delivered from the wrath to come (God's judgment poured out on the wicked).

There were 2 problems:

1. It appears quite a few people had given up working ... depending on others ... turning into busy bodies and meddlers. Paul reminded them of his example. Although he was an Apostle ... he worked (as a tent maker) ... to support himself. You should be industrious and working.
2. The danger of sexual immorality ... because ... the standards generally were low with the pagan temples, etc. But ... they needed to live Holy lives ... sanctified. That's a problem that faces us today. Standards today are quite low ... surrounded by a fairly immoral society ... not dissimilar to Thessalonica. In the USA it is suggested that only 3% are virgins at their 1<sup>st</sup> marriage. Don't be dragged down by the values of society.

**1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 (NKJV)**

1 Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how **you ought to walk and to please God;**

2 for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. *(We shouldn't be just doing the minimum ... we should go further and please God ... not just "scraping by")*

3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that **you should abstain from sexual immorality;**

4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honour,

5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

6 that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.

7 **For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.** *(We have a different citizenship in Heaven)*

8 **Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.**

### **1 Thessalonians 4:9-12 (NKJV)**

9 But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

10 and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. **But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more;**

11 **that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you,**

12 **that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.**

Be mindful of others (love towards) ... but ... don't meddle. Mind your own business. Aspire to a "Quiet life"? Calm life ... stable life ... tranquil life. (Not like celebrities ... what are their lives like?)

Stumble from one crisis to crisis ... 24/7 ... searching endlessly for fun and excitement). Don't be idlers.

The rest of this chapter and part of the next chapter are about Jesus' return ... Parousia.

### 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15 (NKJV)

13 **But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.**

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, **even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.** (Not running up and down the streets of gold)

15 **For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.** (Good news. Don't be concerned. Those already dead don't lose out ... they are part of the plan. No 1,000 year delay. Verse 16 tells us the "dead in Christ will rise first")

### 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 (NKJV)

16 **For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.**

17 **Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.** ("Caught up" ... Greek: Harpazo\*. That's where the term "rapture" comes from. In Latin: Rapiemur [root word ... raptus ... "a carrying off" ... "a snatching away" ... or rapture])

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

\*Harpazo: that Greek word appears 13 times ... for example:

### **Matthew 13:19 (NKJV)**

19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and **snatches away** what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.

### **John 10:28-29 (NKJV)**

28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone **snatch them** out of My hand.

29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to **snatch them** out of My Father's hand.

Rapture is Biblical ... but not secret rapture ... before Great Tribulation. The secret rapture ... or "pre trib" is an enormously popular belief. Tens of millions believe in it.

You may recollect The "Left Behind" series by Tim La Haye. It was a best seller ... over 60 million copies sold. Plus the movies. All based on the pre-trib secret rapture.

They also believe the rapture can happen any time ... even in the next hour ... during this Bible Study. No Biblical signs are necessary. Nothing else has to happen in the world. They call this the Doctrine of Imminence. You've got to be ready saints!!

Doctrine of Imminence Jesus' secret return to rapture the church is imminent. We must be ready. Then all believers will be whisked away before the Tribulation starts. No need to look out for signs ... like the Ram vs the He-goat ... or Abomination of Desolation ... gone ... secretly ... long before then! [It would be great if it were true :)]

Here are a few quotations:

John Nelson Darby: "No events, no earthly circumstances, intervene or modify the direct summons [to be raptured]...[T]here is no event, I repeat, between us and [being raptured to] heaven."

John Walvoord: "There is no teaching of any intervening event. The prospect of being taken to heaven at the coming of Christ is not qualified by description of any signs or prerequisite events."

John A. Sproule: "Christ can return for His Church *at any moment* and that no predicted event will intervene before that return" (emphasis his).

John MacArthur: "There are no other events that must occur on the prophetic calendar before Christ comes to meet us in the air. He could come at any moment."

Thomas Ice: "[I]mminency means that the rapture could take place at any moment. While other events *may* take place before the rapture, no event *must* precede it. If prior events are required before the rapture, then the rapture could not be described as imminent" (emphasis his).

Well. When we get to 2 Thessalonians ... we will see 2 major signs that must come first ... before the return of Jesus.

Still talking about Parousia.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 (NKJV)**

**1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.**

**2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.**

3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

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

7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

No chapter break ... the continuation of the topic of Parousia. Verse 2 ... "Thief in the night" ... so will it take US by surprise? No! Verse 3 ... It takes "THEM" by surprise. Verse 4: You saints ... you the called ... we can watch ... heed ... be ready! Verse 6: Watch and be ready.

In verse 9 ... "God's wrath" could be the end result of all sinners? But in context ... it's the Judgment at the arrival of Christ ... at His Parousia. Compare:

**Revelation 15:1 (NKJV)**

1 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete. *(He is pouring out the wrath on the wicked)*

#### Revelation 16:1-2 (NKJV)

1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth."

2 So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. *(Don't be persuaded to receive the mark of the Beast)*

#### Revelation 16:8-9 (NKJV)

8 Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire.

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.

#### Revelation 16:10-11 (NKJV)

10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain.

11 They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

So these are the vials that are poured out on wicked people. Remember also that the Day of The Lord and His Wrath and the Great Tribulation are entirely two separate events. Jesus' return begins the time of the Day of The Lord ... contains many events (wrath) and eventual Kingdom being established.

Most pre-trib rapture believers blur these two as just one event. But ... they categorically are not.

The Tribulation comes first ... war ... destruction ... the Beast healed and the False Prophet/Antichrist. Then ... after the Tribulation has been running for a time ... the Heavenly signs ... then after all of that ... Jesus' return and the Day of The Lord.

We can see that the Great Tribulation ... and the time of God's Wrath ... are separate events by comparing just 2 scriptures.

The Key Milestone ... the time of the cosmic ... Heavenly Signs. The sun being darkened ... the moon turns deep red like blood ... the stars/meteorites falling in huge numbers. No mistaking it ... the whole world can see it.

Something important happens before the Heavenly Signs ... and something after:

#### **Matthew 24:1-3 (NKJV)**

1 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.

2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

#### **Matthew 24:15-16 (NKJV)**

15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

Be observant!! Why?

**Matthew 24:21-22 (NKJV)**

21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

**Matthew 24:29 (NKJV)**

29 "Immediately *after the tribulation* of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

**Matthew 24:30 (NKJV)**

30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

**Matthew 24:31 (NKJV)**

31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

So. First ... the Tribulation ... then the cosmic signs. So why do those who believe in the rapture not see this?

This happens after the Tribulation.

**Revelation 6:12-13 (NKJV)**

12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.

13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.

Then ... Jesus' return and The Day of The Lord's Wrath.

#### **Revelation 6:15-17 (NKJV)**

15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,

16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!

17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

So. The order is: Abomination of Desolation and the Great Tribulation ... massive destruction and loss of life ... then Heavenly Signs ... then the Day of The Lord and His Wrath as Jesus returns.

A consistent picture throughout. But millions still believe they'll be whisked away to safety ... to bliss ... before the Tribulation. There's nothing to worry about. They are in for a major shock when they find themselves in the Great Tribulation!!

#### **1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 (NKJV)**

9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

#### **1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NKJV)**

11 **Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.**

Comfort ... encourage ... not going into the Wrath of God. Hope of salvation!

### **1 Thessalonians 5:12-18 (NKJV)**

12 **And we urge you, brethren, to recognise those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you,**  
13 **and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.**

14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.

15 **See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.** *(we shouldn't try to "get back at people". God will take vengeance. No one escapes from their wrongdoing ... unless they repent)*

16 **Rejoice always,** *(this is the shortest verse in the Bible. 14 letters in the Greek. "Jesus Wept" has 16 letters in the Greek)*

17 **pray without ceasing,**

18 **in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**

Final thoughts.

### **I Thessalonians 5:19-28**

19 **Do not quench the Spirit.**

20 **Do not despise prophecies.**

21 **Test all things; hold fast what is good.**

22 **Abstain from every form of evil.**

23 **Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

24 He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

25 Brethren, pray for us.

26 Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.

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

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