

II THESSALONIANS

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I Thessalonians brief résumé. One of the earliest of Paul's letters ... circa 51AD. Paul said that the Thessalonians set a great example of faith ... love ... hope. They had a couple of issues. They suffered much persecution ... and they were unclear about Jesus' coming (Parousia). A third issue was that a number of the people in the congregation had given up working ... and had become shirkers.

1 Thessalonians 2:9-12 (NKJV)

9 For you remember, brethren, *our labor and toil; for labouring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you*, we preached to you the gospel of God. *(Paul reminded them that he worked ... he didn't seek financial reward from them)*

10 You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe;

11 as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children,

12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 (NKJV)

11 Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you.

12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you,

13 so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints. *(A key issue to them)*

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 (NKJV)

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, (*died*) 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. (*When will we see our dead brethren?*)

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.**

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.** (*The dead saints*)

17 **Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up** (= *Greek: Harpazo = Rupto in Latin = Rapture. "Rapture" ... the same as Resurrection [of the saints]*) **together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.** And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-4 (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 (on the outside) 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.** (*We'll be looking for it ... ready for it*)

1 Thessalonians 5:9 (NKJV)

9 For **God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,** (*in context ... the saints*)

are not appointed to wrath ... God's end-time judgment on the wicked)

Compare: the difference between satan's wrath (the Tribulation) and God's wrath (The Day of The Lord) ... they are not the same.

Matthew 24:29-31 (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.

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.

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.

Joel 2:30-31 (NKJV)

30 "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.

31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood,

Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.

So: Great Tribulation (Satan's wrath) --> Heavenly Signs --> Day of The Lord and God's Wrath

II THESSALONIANS

This letter is written shortly after the first letter (maybe months?) ... maybe the messenger of the 1st letter had returned with concern?

Major problem related to Jesus' return (some count 318 references to Jesus' return in the New Testament ... mentioned more times than any other doctrine). We should lift our eyes up from our problems now and again ... and have some regard to the fact that Jesus is coming back soon.

Many thought Jesus had returned already ... they looked around at the persecution and thought they were experiencing the Wrath of The Day of The Lord ... and must have missed out. Paul would have to "straighten them out".

Plus ... there was still a problem with people giving up their jobs! Perhaps ... they thought that they were so close to the end ... why bother? So some became pests ... nuisances and busy-bodies.

2 Thessalonians 1:1-4 (NKJV)

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,

4 so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, *(the persecutions were relatively severe? Paul had told them in the 1st letter not to be shaken by these problems that surrounded them)*

Most of us today live fairly comfortable lives. We've all got problems ... similar to most people ... it goes along with the human condition in a fallen world.

What we are talking about here is extreme persecution ... which is quite different. Like in the Middle East ... those who choose to worship God The Father and Jesus Christ ... who do not worship Allah. They are often tortured and killed if they don't give their loyalty to Allah. Compare 100,000 "Christians" killed each year (11 an hour) ... about 11 whilst this Bible Study is going on.

Some had concluded that troubles must be because they had ended up in God's Wrath in the Day of The Lord. Paul corrects!

2 Thessalonians 1:5-10 (NKJV)

5 which is **manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, (no one ever escapes anything ... unless they are covered by the shed blood of Jesus ... unless they repent. God forgets nothing) that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer;**

6 **since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, (they will be troubled by God in time ... He is watching)**

7 **and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed (Greek: Apokalupsis ... apocalypse) from heaven with His mighty angels,**

8 **in flaming fire taking vengeance* on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (*vengeance ... not personal vindictiveness ... but "complete justice")**

9 **These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,**

10 **when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.**

Again. The key theme is Jesus' return ... his coming ... to introduce Wrath on the wicked ... but ... GLORY TO THE SAINTS ... who will be with the Lord Jesus for ever.

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 (NKJV)

11 Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power,

12 that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember: No chapter breaks in Paul's letters.

2Thessalonians 2:1-2 (NKJV)

1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together* to Him, we ask you,

2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

No chapter break. Parousia: Key Theme

*Gathering together = Episunagoge (When we are all gathered together with Jesus in the air at His coming). Compare in the next verse.

Matthew 24:29-31 (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.

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.

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.

*Gather together = Episunago

There are at least 2 major events before Jesus Parousia. Here is the key:

2 Thessalonians 2:3-5 (NKJV)

3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless *the falling away comes first, (Apostasia)* and *the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,*

4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

Paul had explained about this falling away previously. They had obviously forgotten it.

Rick Warren says, "Prophecy is a distraction". Yet ... one Third of the Bible is about prophecy?! Even though a very young "Baby Church" ...Paul covered end-time events with the Thessalonians ... not just "soft stuff".

2 Thessalonians 2:6-12 (NKJV)

6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.

7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he (*not the Holy Spirit*) who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

8 **And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.** (Destroyed by Jesus at His Parousia ... so not someone who is already dead. This Man of Sin is alive today and will be alive when Jesus returns)

9 **The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,** (NB: the lawless one is empowered/influenced by satan ... a very powerful deceiver)

10 **and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth,** that they might be saved.

11 **And for this reason God will send them strong delusion,** that they should believe the lie,

12 **that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**

There are warnings to us: Verse 3 Don't be deceived
Verse 10 Love The Truth ... or you will be deceived by the lawless one/apostasy

So we need to be alert to end-time events. Prophecy is important. If we don't know what to expect ... what to look for ... we will be deceived.

(That's one of the reasons why we have spent a number of weeks earlier in the year in Daniel and Revelation).

Matthew 16:1-3 (NKJV)

1 Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven.

2 He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red';

3 and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' **Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.**

Jesus criticised these religious people (church goers). For example: Paul said Jesus' parousia will not happen before: 1. The falling away and 2. The Man of Sin is revealed. Many people today believe in pre-trib --> imminence --> Jesus could come this afternoon! No signs are necessary.

What is apostasy? Who is the Man of Sin? What is restraining him? Many ideas!! But for sure ... Jesus isn't coming back till these two events. Imminence is impossible!

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17 (NKJV)

3 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, 14 to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15 **Therefore, brethren, **stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.*** (*Good advice*)

16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace,

17 comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

***Stand fast/firm ... why?**

- persecutions
- deception

- coming glory

2 Thessalonians 3:1-5 (NKJV)

1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you,

2 and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

3 But **the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.** (*Could be and probably is Satan ... or did Paul mean the Man of Sin?*)

4 And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.

5 Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

2 Thessalonians 3:6 (NKJV)

6 **But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly*** and not according to the tradition which he received from us. (**NASB = "lives an unruly life". AMP = "living as a shirker" ... the Greek has the meaning of undisciplined lives*)

2 Thessalonians 3:7-9 (NKJV)

7 **For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you;**

8 **nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you,** (*Paul worked as an example to these Thessalonians*)

9 not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

2 Thessalonians 3:10 (NKJV)

10 **For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: *If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.* (At the Church's expense)**

This is a lifestyle choice ... someone who has decided to be an idler ... shirker ... parasites ... depending on everyone else to support them. Not talking about a temporary hardship such as illness or redundancy.

2 Thessalonians 3:11 (NKJV)

11 **For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.**

NASB: "acting like busybodies"

NRSV: "not doing any work"

TEV: "Who do nothing except meddle in other people's business"

2 Thessalonians 3:12-15 (NKJV)

12 Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.

14 And **if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him**, that he may be ashamed. (**NET:** "do not associate closely with them")

15 **Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.**

Don't be intimate. Not a best buddy. Okay to be polite ... courteous ... but keep it limited. Don't treat someone as a spiritual leper ... but as a brother ... in danger ... who need to wake up!

2 Thessalonians 3:16-18 (NKJV)

16 **Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way.** The Lord be with you all.

17 The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.

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

ADDENDUM TO II THESSALONIANS 2

? Man of Sin/Lawless one to be revealed (Apokalupto)

? Sits as God in the Temple of God

? Something/someone currently restrains until taken out of the way

20 or 25 years ago ...in the PCG ... they thought that:

- The Temple = WWCG
- The Man of Sin = Joe Tkach Snr
- One restraining = HWA

At the time ... it seemed plausible.

It remains unclear :) ... but ... as with much prophecy ... we see through a glass darkly.

- Paul had already explained these things when first in Thessalonica
- Paul didn't just make up ideas! Firmly based on revealed scripture
- The Bereans searched the scriptures to check Paul out
- Where in the Old Testament do we find a lawless individual ... bringer of destruction ... associated with the Temple or Holy Place? Anywhere? Yes.

Daniel 9:27 (NKJV)

27 Then he (this prince or anti-christ) shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; (shabua ... 7 years)

But in the middle of the week

He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.

And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined,

Is poured out on the desolate.”

Daniel 11:31, 35-37 (NKJV)

31 And forces shall be mustered by him, and **they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, (three and a half years before the end) and place there the abomination of desolation.**

35 And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.

36 **“Then the king (of the North) shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished;** for what has been determined shall be done.

37 **He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all.** *(The Man of Sin does this)*

Matthew 24:15 (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), (this is all yet future ... before Parousia)**

Both Daniel and Jesus refer to a wicked individual ... in the Holy Place ... before the Lord’s return.