

END-TIME PROPHECY IN THE BOOK OF THESSALONIANS

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We were looking last week at the “**Wrath of God**” and dipped into Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians. **Other than the Book of Revelation ... Paul’s two letters to the Thessalonians give more information about end-time prophecy than anywhere else in the New Testament.**

Jesus gave one key sign of His Coming — the Abomination of Desolation in the Holy Place. Paul gives the same key sign to the brethren in Thessaloniki — though using different language.

If we’re interested in end-time prophecy ... these two short letters are very helpful.

Let’s review!

These were probably Paul’s earliest letters — written about 51 AD.

It seems that the Thessalonians had got themselves into a panic about Jesus’ Coming.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-2

1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming (PAROUSIA) 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.

They thought that they’d missed Jesus’ Return. Why? And how could Paul re-assure them?

1 Thessalonians 1:1-4

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,
To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

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

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

3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

4 knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

1 Thessalonians 1:8-10

8 For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.

9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

A couple of things to bring out here:

- They are waiting for the Lord Jesus to come back.
- “Delivers us from the wrath to come”. Wrath here isn’t “eternal destruction” of people generally. But a specific period of wrath — The Day of The Lord.

It’s a “technical term” ... referring to Jesus’ return and the devastating impact of the 7 Trumpets and the 7 Bowls.

The Great Tribulation ... Abomination of Desolation ... Jesus’ coming ... then the Wrath of God (His judgment).

The Great Tribulation is destruction from men and Satan. God’s wrath is different ... and comes after the Tribulation is over.

1 Thessalonians 2:13-16

13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you

welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

14 **For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus.** For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans,

15 **who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men,**

16 **forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but *wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.**

*Paul is talking about the future Destruction of Jerusalem — which came in 70 AD — which was to be a type of the Wrath of God. Over 1 million Jews in Jerusalem were killed — and the city laid waste. (According to Josephus).

1 Thessalonians 2:17-20

17 **But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured more eagerly to see your face with great desire.**

18 **Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us.** (*Interesting to see that Satan can hinder us from doing things that we would want to do — that God would be pleased with us doing*)

19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? **Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?**

20 **For you are our glory and joy.**

Jesus at His Coming. Greek word for “coming” is: **Parousia**. An important word! We’ll see it often in prophetic passages. That is “**The Coming**” from heaven of Jesus to His people. Very specific in its meaning.

It looks like Paul and his audience had Jesus’ Coming very much on their minds. They were Alert! It was on their minds all of the time. **What about us? THE MOST IMPORTANT THING THERE IS IN OUR LIVES!!**

1 Thessalonians 3:1-5

1 Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone,

2 **and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith,**

3 **that no one should be shaken by these afflictions;** for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this.

4 For, in fact, **we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know.**

5 For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, **I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you,** and our labor might be in vain.

“Afflictions”! They were already at risk of being shaken!

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

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** (*that is the quality of life we should be living — being Holy even as God is Holy!*) **before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints/angels.**
(*The Coming —Parousia*)

There is only 1 Parousia! **The Coming!** ☺

1 Thessalonians 4:1-2

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.**

Live right! — while we wait for The Coming. Have some regard for God’s values and standards.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

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.**

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.** (*The Coming — Parousia*)

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.** (*they get priority*)

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.

18 **Therefore comfort one another with these words.**

Verse 17: “Caught Up”. This is the classic “rapture” verse. **The Greek word here is: HARPAZO.** The word “rapture” comes from the Latin. It just means **to snatch away or catch away.** It’s not secret!

We tend not to use rapture terminology — but the rapture itself is Biblical! 😊 **It happens at The Coming (Parousia).** **The catching up of the saints to meet Christ in the air.**

1 Thessalonians 5:1-2

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.**

The **DAY OF THE LORD** = the beginning of God’s judgment and **WRATH** on the earth — **DESTRUCTION.** The First Trumpet blows on that day.

1 Thessalonians 5:3

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.** (*“They” = those on the outside. Not the believers*)

SUDDEN DESTRUCTION — THE DAY OF THE LORD.

1 Thessalonians 5:4-8

4 **But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.** (*“You” = YOU BELIEVERS!*)

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. (*“WATCH” — for The Coming*)

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.** (*especially in the last few years*)

BELIEVERS SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED.

Faith ... love ... hope ... linked to the end-time. The Coming and the Wrath.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

9 **For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,** (*salvation here is rescue from the coming wrath*)

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.

“Salvation” here is deliverance — by the catching away — from the Wrath.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

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.

Be preserved at The Coming (Parousia).

We can certainly see that Jesus' Coming is a key teaching.

Something they're all looking forward to.

Also key is physical deliverance from the **wrath** — **THE PUNISHMENT OF GOD ON THE WICKED OF THOSE DAYS.**

But: within just a few months ... major anxiety had broken out!

They thought they had missed the "catching-away" ... and were now in "the Wrath of God"!

2 Thessalonians 1:3-5

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,**

5 which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, **that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer;**

PERSECUTIONS ... TRIBULATIONS... SUFFERING — a lot of things going on in Thessalonica.

2 Thessalonians 1:6-8

6 since **it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,** (*Wait! Because God is going to give Tribulation back on those who are tribulating you*)

7 and to give you who are troubled **rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed 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.**

Jesus in flaming fire — taking vengeance.

2 Thessalonians 1:9-10

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.

The wicked will be punished when Jesus returns.

This letter starts with the description of the WRATH OF GOD — which starts with Jesus' Coming.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-2

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.**

The Coming (Parousia). Only one Parousia.

They were shaken! They were anxious! Their conditions were so difficult — they assumed they were in the Wrath! They'd missed "The Rapture"! Oops!

"Gathering together" in Greek is: **EPISUNAGOGE**. We can see it in:

Matthew 24:29-31

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” = EPISUNAGOGE)

At Jesus’ coming ... the angels will “gather together” the saints (EPISUNAGOGE).

Matthew 24 is the same event as I and II Thessalonians.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

3 **Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, 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.**

Relax!! The Day can’t just “happen”! There is an unmistakable sign!!

And it’s the same sign that Jesus gave! An Abomination standing in the Holy Place. THE MAN OF SIN!

There’s no way they can miss this sign! So they’re not in the Wrath to come.

2 Thessalonians 2:5-8

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

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 who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.**

8 **And then the lawless one** (*The man of Sin*) **will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.**

Jesus will destroy the Man of Sin at His Coming — Parousia.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

9 **The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,**

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 will be dangerous levels of Satanic deception at this time. An Antichrist in place of Christ and the world will yield to him.

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

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.**

BE COMFORTED!

2 Thessalonians 3:1-3

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.**

2 Thessalonians 3:16-18

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.**

TAKE-AWAYS

- I and II Thessalonians has more to say about The Coming than any other place in the New Testament other than the Book of Revelation
- Major deception lies ahead
- Major sign to show us we're in the end-times (Man of Sin = Abomination of Desolation)
- We saints (who love The Truth) will be delivered from the destruction of God's Wrath
- Till then — we must be prepared to “endure unto the end” — delivered by the “catching away”

The brethren in Thessalonica were very mindful of The Coming ... the Parousia — SO MUST WE!!