

THE THESSALONIAN LETTERS & THE 2ND COMING OF
CHRIST Text: 1 Thess. 1:8-10

INTRO: The main theme of Paul's letters to the saints in Thessalonica is the 2nd coming of Christ. The 2nd coming is referred to in every chapter of 1 Thessalonians & in 2 of the 3 chapters of 2 Thess. The main purpose of 2 Thess seems to be to correct a mistaken impression the Thessalonian brethren had concerning that event. Let us take a closer look at the facts about the 2nd coming of Christ as unfolded in Paul's 2 letters to the Thessalonians.

I. THE MAJOR THEME OF 1 THESSALONIANS.

A. 1:9-10.

1. Jesus will come from heaven.
2. There is wrath to come for those who have not made proper preparation.

B. 2:19. Paul's hope, joy & crown of rejoicing would be the Thessalonian brethren who had made proper preparation.

C. 3:12-13. Those who have accepted deliverance thru Christ & who keep growing in faith & love, will be found blameless & holy.

D. 4:13-18.

1. There is a sense in which loved ones who died in Christ are already with the Lord, Phil. 1:23.
2. With regard to the resurrection, those who have died in Christ will have no advantage over those who are alive in Christ when He returns.
3. Christ's coming will not be secret--it will be attended with shouting, voice of an archangel, trumpet blowing, etc.
4. Note carefully: the passage does not speak of or imply 2 future resurrections. It speaks of 2 events:
 - a. a resurrection. Acts 24:13

b. an ascension.

E. 5:1-4.

1. The time of the 2nd coming will be unannounced, a surprise.
2. It will happen suddenly.
3. It will bring certain destruction to those who live in darkness.

II. IN 2 THESSALONIANS, PAUL CONTINUES ON THE SUBJECT OF CHRIST'S 2ND COMING. We will look at the passages in 2 Thess. in reverse order.

A. 2:1-7.

1. The apostles did not teach the immediacy of the 2nd coming, but the suddenness & unexpectedness of it.
 - a. Paul had told the Thessalonians this earlier, but they had missed the point, vs. 5.
 - b. Peter suggested a lengthy time lapse between the 1st & 2nd advents of Jesus, 2 Pet. 3:3-4, 10.
 - c. Jesus Himself had suggested that His return would not be as soon as expected, Matt. 24:48; 25:5, 19.
 - d. Later, John, in vision, saw Christ & the saints ruling for "1,000 years" before the final judgment & resurrection, Rev 20:4-5.
2. Before Christ's return, there must be an apostasy, Acts 20:28-30.
3. It must be noted that, tho the apostles did not necessarily teach that the 2nd coming was imminent, they taught in such a way as to

suggest that it might occur in their lifetime or in the lifetime of those they taught. The mystery of lawlessness was already at work. Several years had already passed since Christ's ascension.

B. 1:6-10.

1. God's righteousness demands that He reward the faithful & punish those who persist in ungodliness.
2. For the righteous, the 2nd coming will be a day of rejoicing & the fulfillment of all their hope.
3. For the unrighteous, the 2nd coming will be a day of gloom & destruction.
4. For Christ, the 2nd coming will be the beginning of the full glory to which He has eternally been entitled.
5. All those who have failed to obey the gospel will be among the lost. MK 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-41.

CONCLUSION: Heb. 5:9; Matt. 7:21; Rev. 22:14.

Exton, PA, December 27, 1987

Highway 29, Liberty Hill, TX, June 3, 1989 (meeting)

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, June 6, 1989 (meeting)

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, July 28, 1996