

Don Hargrove
Faith Bible Church
Thursday, February 20, 2014
<http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

Personal Study of the Bible-65
2 Thessalonians 1- Spiritual Application:
The Rapture vs. Second Advent

Recall that First Thessalonians teaches about Christ's coming for His church:

1 Thessalonians 4:13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep 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, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall 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. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

First Thessalonians, as we have seen, teaches us that there is coming a Rapture when Christ will come to take away His bride, the Church. He will not be seen of the world at that time; but those who are His, including the dead in Christ, shall be "caught up"—"raptured" to meet Him. This is the teaching of *First* Thessalonians. Following the Rapture, after a period of seven years of tribulation for those left on the earth, Christ will appear to the world with His Church to establish His throne upon the earth, i.e. the Millennium. Unlike the Rapture which is in the clouds and only experienced by believers, at the Second Advent He will be seen of all people. His "coming," then, includes both of these two events, seven years apart.

Second Thessalonians really focuses on events associated with Christ's Second Advent, when He comes with mighty angels to judge the world. It provides details on events between the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:17) and the Second Advent that are prophesied in the Old Testament (the Church Age as such is not prophesied in the Old Testament): e.g., Jews occupying their own land; the gathering of Gentile nations against them; the Antichrist emerging as the world ruler, making a covenant with the Jews that he will break. Second Thessalonians was written because many Thessalonians had become "shaken in mind" and "troubled" by deceivers who were teaching that they were already passing through the Tribulation era. This epistle corrects those errors.

Read 2 Thessalonians 1. Note the salutation where Paul reminds them of the grace and peace of God the Father and the Lord Jesus (vs. 2). What a blessing to know that because of the work of Jesus Christ we will *NEVER* be objects of God's wrath—never, ever! We are in a permanent relationship of grace all because of the Person and work of Jesus Christ. As far as the spiritual life, what two spiritual virtues does Paul single out in verses 3-4? F_____ and I_____ .

This church suffered p_____n and a_____n (4) which caused s_____g (5), but God would repay with affliction those who had a_____ them (6).

Notice how Paul describes the Second Advent in verses 7-8: Christ will appear with His mighty a_____ in flaming f_____ (7), dealing out retribution on those who do not know God (unbelieving Gentiles) and those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (unbelieving Jews). All unbelievers will pay the penalty of e_____ destruction (9). This is not destruction in the sense of annihilation; rather, we are told that unbelievers will be separated *away* from the presence of the Lord (9). God will be glorified *in* His *saints* (rather than *by* them) because of what they are (saints) by His grace (10). Note the emphasis, once again, in verse 12, of the Lord being glorified *in* believers.

We did not exist 100 years ago and we will not exist on this earth (as we are now) in 100 years from now. By His grace we have been given life and the opportunity to learn of Him through the Word of God and the Holy Spirit in this short life on earth—a life which will count for all of eternity; we have the blessed opportunity to receive His grace day after day, grace upon grace! We have the opportunity to become liker and liker Christ. What a blessing!

Grace is all about what God has done for us and what He does through us. It is all of His matchless marvelous grace from beginning to end. It is not about us. We just happen to live in the Church Age, a special age of grace. Note the distinction between the Rapture of 1 Thessalonians and Second Advent in 2 Thessalonians. When He comes for the Church, He comes to take us out of the world to be with Him forever (1 Thess. 4:17)—there is not even a hint of His coming in wrath or judgment for His own. However, when He comes at the end of the Tribulation, He will come in judgment to the world. Again, after Christ comes in the air for His saints, He will later come to the earth with His saints to judge the world and set up His kingdom. For more details on Christ's Second Advent, read Zechariah 12:10; 14:1-21; Matthew 24:27-30; and Revelation 19:11-21.

Numbers 6:24 May The LORD bless you, and keep you; 25 may the LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; 26 may the LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.'

*In 'Ehyeh,
Pastor Don Hargrove*