

# The Coming Of The Lord

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**Text:**

**Introduction:**

- I. Heb. 9:26-28: <sup>26</sup> He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, **He has appeared** to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. <sup>27</sup> And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, <sup>28</sup> so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him **He will appear a second time**, apart from sin, for salvation.
  - A. Just as Christ entered this world the first time in the **Incarnation**, He will one day return in the **“Second Coming”**
- II. Like the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord, the **Second Coming** of Jesus is one of the **cardinal doctrines** of the NT taught by:
  - A. **Jesus** (Mt. 16:27 // Mk. 8:38 // Lk. 9:26 [?]; Jn. 14:1-4)
    1. The Parable of the Ten Virgins (Mt. 25:1, 5-6, 10, 13)
    2. The Parable of the Talents (Mt. 25:14-15, 19, 27)
    3. The Parable of the Pounds (Lk. 19:12-13, 15, 23)
  - B. **Angels** (Acts 1:9-11)
  - C. **Peter** (1 Pet. 1:13; 5:4; 2 Pet. 3:7-12)
  - D. **John** (1 Jn. 2:28; 3:2; Rev. 1:7 [?])
  - E. **Hebrews Writer** (Heb. 9:28)
  - F. **Jude** (Jude 14)
  - G. **Paul** (1 Cor. 1:7-8; 11:26; Phil. 3:20-21; Tit. 2:13)
- III. And it is a **major theme** in Paul’s letters to the Thessalonians
  - A. References to the Second Coming are **scattered throughout** 1 Thessalonians – at the end of each chapter in our modern versions (1 Th. 1:10; 2:19-20; 3:11-13; 4:13-18; 5:23-24)
  - B. Paul addresses the subject in some detail in **one lengthy passage** (1 Th. 4:13-5:11)
  - C. Paul addresses the subject **at length once again** in 2 Thessalonians (2 Th. 1:6-10; 2:1-12)
    1. “[O]ver a quarter of 1 Thessalonians and nearly half of 2 Thessalonians deal with problems and issues regarding the parousia or coming of Christ from heaven.”  
(Wanamaker, 10)
- IV. **Four key terms** are used by NT writers to refer to the Second Coming
  - A. **“Coming”** or **“Presence”** (*parousia*) is used in the NT to refer to:
    1. A physical coming of men (1 Cor. 16:17; 2 Cor. 7:6-7; Phil. 1:26)
    2. Physical presence (2 Cor. 10:10; Phil. 2:12)
    3. The Incarnation (2 Pet. 1:16)
    4. The coming of Christ in AD 70 to destroy Jerusalem (Mt. 24:3, 27)

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5. The Second Coming (Mt. 24:37, 39; 1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Th. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Th. 2:1, 8; Jas. 5:7-8; 2 Pet. 3:4, 12; 1 Jn. 2:28)
  6. The coming of the lawless one (2 Th. 2:9)
- B. **“Revelation”** (*apokalupsis*) is used in the NT to refer to:
1. The revelation of God’s word (Lk. 2:32; Rom. 16:25; 1 Cor. 14:6, 26; Gal. 1:12; 2:2; Eph. 3:3; Rev. 1:1)
  2. Paul’s vision (2 Cor. 12:1, 7)
  3. The Second Coming (Rom. 2:5; 8:19; 1 Cor. 1:7; 2 Th. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:7, 13; 4:13)
- C. **“Appearing” or “Brightness”** (*epiphaneia*) is used in the NT to refer to:
1. The Incarnation (2 Tim. 1:10)
  2. The Second Coming (2 Th. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:1, 8; Tit. 2:13)
- D. **“Appearance”** (*phaneroo*) is used in the NT to refer to:
1. The Incarnation (1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:9-10; Heb. 9:26; 1 Pet. 1:20; 1 Jn. 1:2; 3:5, 8)
  2. Jesus’ revelation to Israel (Jn. 1:31)
  3. Post-resurrection appearances (Mk. 16:12, 14; Jn. 21:1, 14)
  4. The Second Coming (1 Cor. 4:5; Col. 3:4; 1 Pet. 5:4; 1 Jn. 2:28; 3:2)
- E. Note: For definitions of these key terms see Appendix A

## Body:

### I. Paul’s Teaching On The Second Coming

#### A. 1 Th. 1:9-10:

1. We are to **“serve** the living God” while we **“wait** for His Son.”
  - a. Jesus’ return is the **“blessed hope”** of the church (Tit. 2:13; 1 Cor. 1:7; Phil. 3:20)
  - b. *John R. W. Stott*: “It is immediately noteworthy that ‘serving’ and ‘waiting’ go together in the experience of converted people. Indeed, this is at first sight surprising, since ‘serving’ is active, while ‘waiting’ is passive. In Christian terms ‘serving’ is getting busy for Christ on earth, while ‘waiting’ is looking for Christ to come from heaven. Yet these two are not incompatible. On the contrary, each balances the other.” (41-42)
  - c. Paul didn’t say **“stop everything”** (e.g. dress in white robes and ascend a mountaintop) and **“wait.”** He said **“serve”** and **“wait”**
2. Jesus will return **from heaven** (cf. 1 Th. 4:16; 2 Th. 1:7)
  - a. This means that Jesus will come from the place of **God the Father** (Mt. 3:17; Lk. 11:13)
  - b. This denotes **Jesus’ sovereignty** (Jn. 3:31; Eph. 1:20-23; 1 Pet. 3.22) (Green, 109)
  - c. “This expectation presupposes that the Thessalonians were aware of the ascension of Jesus to the heavens (Acts 1.11; 2.34; Eph. 1.20; 2.6; Heb. 4.14; 9.24; 1 Pet. 3.22).” (Green, 109)

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3. This Jesus is the One **God raised from the dead** (lit. “from among the dead [plural]”)
    - a. The One who will return is none other than the historic Person, **Jesus of Nazareth**, who **died**, was **buried**, was **raised**, and **ascended** into heaven (Acts 1:11)
  4. When Jesus returns, He will **deliver** Christians from **the wrath** to come
    - a. *John R. W. Stott*: “God’s wrath is neither an impersonal process of cause and effect (as some scholars have tried to argue), nor a passionate, arbitrary or vindictive outburst of temper, but his holy and uncompromising antagonism to evil, with which he refuses to negotiate. One day his judgment will fall. It is from this terrible event that Jesus is our deliverer.” (42)
    - b. *Gene Green*: “The present tense of the verb rescues may imply that this deliverance has already begun. The wrath of God will be seen not simply at some future time (1 Thess. 5.9; 2 Thess. 1.6-10; Rom. 5.9) but as an eschatological event that has already begun in the present (1 Thess. 2.16; Rom. 1.18). However, the emphasis in this verse is on the future or coming wrath, which is certain if not also near at hand (Matt. 17.11; John 4.21; 14.3; Eph. 5.6; Col. 3.6).” (110-111)
  5. The Second Coming will mean **salvation** from God’s wrath for the righteous
- B. 1 Th. 2:19-20:**
1. Paul wanted so desperately to see the Thessalonians again (1 Th. 1:17-18), because **His joy** was all wrapped up in their **eternal salvation**
    - a. Paul speaks metaphorically of the “**crown**” (*stephanos*), the laurel wreath, awarded to the victor at the games (Morris, 13:59)
    - b. *Leon Morris*: “The word *kauchesis*, translated rejoicing, is sometimes rendered ‘boasting’ or ‘glorying’, and gives the impression of joy outwardly expressed as well as inwardly felt.” (13:59)
    - c. *David A. Hubbard*: “Paul’s hope, joy, and only grounds for boasting (rejoicing) were the thought of the souls he would present to Christ (cf. II Cor. 1:14; 11:2; Phil. 2:16).” (1352)
  2. The presence of the **Thessalonians** in the **presence** of the **Lord Jesus Christ** at his coming was the **great longing** of Paul’s soul
    - a. The word “**presence**” (*emprosthen*) suggests a **face-to-face encounter**
      - 1) Paul’s words remind me of that grand old hymn “**Glory For Me**”
        - a) Verse 1: When all my labors and trials are o’er,  
And I am safe on that beautiful shore,  
**Just to be near the dear Lord I adore,**  
Will through the ages be glory for me.
        - b) Verse 2: When, by the gift of His infinite grace,  
I am accorded in heaven a place,  
**Just to be there and to look on His face,**  
Will through the ages be glory for me.
        - c) Verse 3: Friends will be there I have loved long ago;  
Joy like a river around me will flow;

**Yet just a smile from my Savior, I know,**  
Will through the ages be glory for me.

- d) Chorus: Oh, that will be glory for me,  
Glory for me, glory for me,  
**When by His grace I shall look on His face,**  
**That will be glory, be glory for me.** (Bold emphasis added)

2) *Joe South*: “Don't it make you wanna go home now  
Don't it make you wanna go home  
All God's children get weary when they roam  
Don't it make you wanna go home  
Don't it make you wanna go home.”

- b. **“Lord Jesus Christ”** identifies Jesus as our **Master**, our **Savior**, and our **King** (“Anointed One”)
- c. **“His coming”** is the first occurrence of the word *Parousia* in this letter, but not the first allusion to the event (1 Th. 1:10)
- 1) *Robert L. Thomas*: “*Parousia* comes from two words: ‘to be’ and ‘present.’ It may point to the **moment of arrival** to initiate a visit or it may focus on **the stay initiated** by the arrival.” (Bold emphasis added, 11:262)
- d. You are our **glory and joy**
- 1) *John R. W. Stott*: “What Paul seems to mean, in this transport of love, is that his joy in this world and his glory in the next are tied up with the Thessalonians, whom Christ through the apostle’s ministry has so signally transformed.” (63-64)
3. The Second Coming will mean **celebration** for God’s people in Christ’s presence

### C. 1 Th. 3:11-13:

1. Paul concludes the first section of this letter (1 Th. 1:1-3:13) with a **prayer** to both **God the Father** and the **Lord Jesus Christ**
- a. Incidentally, this and other NT passages would seem to answer the question, **“May we pray to Jesus?”** (Jn. 14:12-14; Acts 1:23-26; 7:54-60; 22:17-21; 2 Cor. 12:7-10; 1 Th. 3:11-13; 2 Th. 2:16-17; 1 Tim. 1:12; 1 Jn. 5:13-15; Rev. 22:20)
- 1) Chart: “John 14:13-14”
2. In this prayer, Paul makes **two requests**
- a. That God and Christ will **facilitate Paul’s return** to Thessalonica
- 1) Paul had **wanted to return** to Thessalonica, but Satan had **prevented** that (1 Th. 2:16-17)
- 2) “The verb used here...may mean either ‘make straight’ or simply ‘direct.’ The former meaning ‘make straight’ would imply the need to remove obstacles and seems more likely to be Paul’s intent in this context.” (Martin, 33:111)
- 3) Paul’s prayer “is the counterpoint to the Satanic opposition that impeded their return previously (2.18).” (Green, 111)

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- a) Paul believed in **God's providence** (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8-10)
  - b) Paul believed God **could expedite** his return (Rom. 1:10)
  - 4) "Spiritual power is required to remove a spiritual hindrance. Therefore it only makes sense to ask in prayer that God might 'clear the way,' allowing Paul another visit to Thessalonica." (Martin, 33:111-112)
  - 5) Paul's prayer was **answered** about five years later when he **revisited Macedonia** on his Third Missionary Journey (Acts 19:21-22; 20:1-6; cf. 1 Cor. 16:5; 2 Cor. 1:16; 1 Tim. 1:3)
- b. That the Lord would make the Thessalonians **increase and abound in love**
- 1) "The prayer is not simply that their love increase but that it abound beyond limits, being exceedingly great and overflowing." (Green, 177)
  - 2) Paul wants the branches that bear fruit to **bear more fruit** (Jn. 15:2, 5, 8)
  - 3) Spiritual growth depends on:
    - a) The **working of God** (Phil. 1:6)
    - b) Our **own efforts** cooperating with God (Phil. 2:12-13)
  - 4) Love already **existed** (1 Th. 1:3; 3:6; 4:9-10), but there was still **room for growth** (3:12; Phil. 1:9; 3:13-17)
    - a) God **answered** this prayer (2 Th. 1:3)
  - 5) Love for **outsiders** would have included **their persecutors** (1 Th. 1:6; 2:14; 3:1-4)
    - a) Paul's teaching reflects the **teaching of Jesus** (Mt. 5:43-48; Lk. 6:32-35)
    - b) "Other NT commands concerning all men include pursuing peace (Ro 12:18), doing good (Gal 6:10), being patient (Php 4:5), praying (1Ti 2:1), showing consideration (Tit 3:2), and honoring (1Pe 2:17)." (*The MacArthur Study Bible*, n.p.)
3. The **purpose** of Paul's prayer was that:
- a. The Lord would establish their hearts **blameless in holiness**
    - 1) "'Heart' here, as in ii. 4, does not refer simply to the emotional side of man's nature, as in our use of the term, but is the comprehensive term for the whole inner nature, including thought, feeling, and willing. It stands for the whole personality. Paul's thought is that the whole personality of man can be established, strengthened, settled, given a sure confidence, only when there is a basis of abundant love." (Morris, 13:71)
    - 2) "**Blameless**" means "judged acceptable before God" (Martin, 33:113)
    - 3) "**Holiness**" is "the state of being consecrated or separated to God and, as a result of this relationship, being separated from sin." (Green, 180)
      - a) Chart: "Sanctification Is A Process"
  - b. Before **God, our Father**
    - 1) "It is quite possible for a man to have high moral standards, and even, humanly speaking, to be blameless, and yet not to be holy.... Holiness has an
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essential God-ward reference; it denotes the quality of being set apart for God, and the Christian should display it in pre-eminent measure.” (Morris, 13:71)

- c. At **the coming** of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Phil. 1:10; 1 Jn. 2:28)
- d. With all **His “saints”** [ASV; KJV; ESV; HCSB; ISV; LEB; NET; NASB; NKJV; NRSV; RSV; YLT] or **“holy ones”** [NAB; NCV; NIV]
  - 1) Who are these “saints” or “holy ones”?
    - a) **Christians**
    - b) **Angels**
    - c) **Both**
  - 2) Arguments for angels:
    - a) Angels will **accompany Jesus** at the Second Coming (Mt. 13:41; 25:31; Mk. 8:38; Lk. 9:26; 2 Th. 1:7; Jude 14-15; cf. 1 Enoch 1:9)
    - b) Angels are called **“holy ones”** in the OT (Dt. 33:2-3; Job 5:1; 15:15; Psa. 89:5, 7; Dan. 4:13; 8:13)
    - c) Paul alludes to **Zech. 14:5**, and it probably refers to **angels**
  - 3) Objections to angels:
    - a) Nowhere else does Paul refer to angels as **“saints”** or **“holy ones”**
    - b) **NT** does not refer to angels as **“holy ones”** or **“saints”**
    - c) **“Angels” do not fit** the overall context of the epistle
    - d) **“Saints” fit** the overall context of the epistle (1 Th. 1:10; 2:19-20; 3:11-13; 4:13-18; 5:23-24)
  - 4) Arguments for saints:
    - a) Paul commonly refers to Christians as **“saints”** (Rom. 1:7; 8:27; 12:13; 15:25; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:1-2; 14:33; 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; 2:19; 3:8; Phil. 1:1; 4:21-22; Col. 1:4, 26; 1 Tim. 5:10)
    - b) Christ will be **glorified in His saints** at His coming (2 Th. 1:10)
    - c) **“Holy ones”** (1 Th. 3:13) anticipates 1 Th. 4:3-8
    - d) **“All”** (1 Th. 3:13) anticipates 1 Th. 4:13-18
  - 5) Objections to saints:
    - a) Since the living and resurrected saints will **ascend** to meet Jesus when He descends (1 Th. 4:15-17), it is unlikely that the “holy ones” (1 Th. 3:13) are dead saints
      - 1] Response: Since at death **the soul leaves the body** (Jas. 2:26) and returns to God (Eccl. 12:7), the **disembodied souls of the saints could return with Christ** to be reunited with their resurrected & glorified bodies
  - 6) Arguments for both

a) The affirmative arguments for “angels” and “saints” mentioned above could mean that Paul refers to both angels and saints here

7) Objections to both:

a) “[T]here is almost nothing to be said for the view that both are intended.” (Ernest Best, 153, quoted in Ellingworth & Nida, 71)

4. The Second Coming will mean final and complete **sanctification** for the righteous

#### D. 1 Th. 4:13-18:

1. Paul did not want the Thessalonians to be **ignorant** concerning God’s plan for the dead in Christ

a. **Ignorance** can be **distressing, destructive, and deadly** for the child of God (cf. Hos. 4:6)

1) “Ignorance concerning spiritual realities is always bad for the believer. It leads to lack of comfort.” (Hendriksen, 109)

b. **Knowledge** is the solution

c. “The apostle refers to the deceased using the euphemistic *those who fall asleep* (as in 4.14-15; 5.10), although he has no reservations about calling them ‘the dead’ (4.16). This euphemistic way of speaking about the dead appears in both Jewish and Christian texts and implies nothing about the intermediate state [Gen. 47.30; Deut. 31.16; 1 Kings 2.10; 11.43; Isa. 14.8; 43.17; Jer. 51.39; 2 Macc. 12.45; *As. Mos.* 1.15; 10.14; 1 Enoch 100.5; *T. Joseph* 20.4; John 11.11-14; Acts 7.60; 13.36; 1 Cor. 7.39; 11.30; 15.6, 18, 51; 2 Pet. 3.4]. Some have erroneously concluded that this epithet for the dead implies that the soul sleeps after death, but the NT teaching clearly points to a conscious existence during the intermediate state (Luke 16.19-31; 23.39-43; Acts 7.55-60; 2 Cor. 5.6-10; Phil. 1.20-24; Rev. 6.9-11). At times the dead are described as ‘those who sleep’ with a view to the anticipated resurrection of their body (Dan. 12.2; 4 Ezra 7.32; Matt. 27.52; Mark 5.39-42; 1 Cor. 15.20). But the deceased are also referred to as ‘those who sleep’ in Greek and Latin literature and inscriptions, and for that reason we should understand the term as a simple synonym for ‘the dead’ without reading into it a more profound theological meaning. This was a common and universal way to speak of those who had died.” (Green, 110-111)

d. Why were the Thessalonians so distressed?

1) **Ignorance**: Paul and his companions had not taught the Thessalonians about the resurrection of the dead

a) This seems **highly unlikely** since:

1] Paul had taught the Thessalonians about the **resurrection of Jesus** (Acts 17:1-3)

2] Paul must have taught the Thessalonians at least something about **the Second Coming**, since he **takes it for granted** that they

understand this doctrine in this epistle (1 Th. 1:9-10; 2:19; 3:13; 5:23)

- 3] The Thessalonians had **accepted** Paul's teaching about the resurrection of Jesus (1 Th. 4:14)
  - 4] There is an **intimate relationship** between the resurrection of believers and the resurrection of Jesus (Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 6:14; 15:12-13, 20-23; 2 Cor. 4:14)
- b) Would Paul have taught the Thessalonians about the **resurrection of Jesus** without teaching them about the **resurrection of believers**?
    - 1] He mentions the **resurrection of the dead**, without any explanation (1 Th. 4:14, 16).
    - 2] Would Paul do that if the Thessalonians didn't **already know** something about what he was talking about?
- 2) **False teaching:** Gnostic false doctrine had infiltrated the church, denying a bodily resurrection in favor of a "spiritual" resurrection only
    - a) Although there is evidence in the NT of Gnosticism in an incipient form, **Gnosticism** as a movement **developed later**
    - b) This passage does not seem to be **a polemic against false doctrine**
      - 1] Paul is writing to **comfort** distressed Christians, not to **refute** false doctrine
  - 3) **Loss of hope:** The Thessalonians had lost hope in the Second Coming since certain Christians had died
    - a) Paul **does not defend** the doctrine of the Second Coming in this passage or anywhere else in this letter
    - b) The Thessalonians had **not lost hope in the Second Coming**; it was the basis of their hope (1 Th. 1:10)
  - 4) **Incorrect inferences:** The Thessalonians believed that the dead in Christ would be raised, but at a different time, and therefore they would miss out on the wonders of the Second Coming
    - a) This explanation does not account for the **overwhelming grief** of the Thessalonians
  - 5) **Assumption of the dead:** According to OT and Jewish apocalyptic literature, only the living could be translated to the heavens, and therefore the dead could not participate in this event
    - a) The Thessalonians were new (predominantly Gentile) believers and would **not have been acquainted** with fine details of Jewish apocalyptic literature

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- 6) **Lack of application:** Paul had taught the Thessalonians about the resurrection of the dead, but when confronted with the death of fellow-Christians, their emotions overwhelmed their knowledge
    - a) This explanation does not adequately account for Paul's discussion of the **resurrection** of the dead in Christ and the "**rapture**" of the living (1 Th. 4:15-17)
  - 7) **Misunderstanding:** The Thessalonians did not fully understand Paul's teaching about the resurrection of the dead; (Green, 213-215)
  - e. None of these explanations seem **entirely satisfactory**. #6 & #7 seem more likely than the others to me
  - f. Paul wanted the Thessalonians to understand God's plan for the dead in Christ, so they would **not sorrow as "others who have no hope"**
    - 1) It is not wrong for Christians to experience the **sorrow of separation**
      - a) **Jesus** (Jn. 11:35)
      - b) **Apostles** (Jn. 16:6, 20)
      - c) **Church in Jerusalem** (Acts 8:2)
      - d) **Saints in Joppa** (Acts 9:36-39)
      - e) **Ephesian elders** (Acts 20:37-38)
      - f) **Paul** (Phil. 2:25-27)
    - 2) But Christians should not experience the **sorrow of desperation** like those with no hope
    - 3) Only those **in Christ** can have **hope** in death
      - a) "Only believers have *hope* of life after death. The speculations and surmisings of pagan philosophy do not amount to a hope." (Vincent, 4:40)
2. God will **bring with Him** those who sleep in Jesus
- a. Paul explains **why** Christians should not grieve in the face of death
  - b. Paul's "**if we believe....**" assumes the truth of the condition (Martin, 33:145)
  - c. The resurrection of Jesus is **a guarantee** of the resurrection of Christians (Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 6:14; 2 Cor. 4:14)
    - 1) "If God did not abandon Jesus to death, he will not abandon the Christian dead either. On the contrary, he will raise them as he raised him, and he will then bring them with him, so that when he comes, they will come too." (Stott, 98)
  - d. Paul's statement "**God will bring....**" could be interpreted in two different ways, because the verb "**bring**" (*ago*) can mean either "**bring**" or "**take**," depending on the viewpoint of the observer
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- 1) God will **bring from heaven** with Jesus **the souls** of those who have fallen asleep in Him
    - a) Since at death **the soul leaves the body** (Jas. 2:26) and returns to God (Eccl. 12:7), the **disembodied souls of the saints could return with Christ** to be reunited with their resurrected & glorified bodies
  - 2) God will **take with Jesus** the resurrected dead from their graves into the clouds (Green, 220)
    - a) The conjunction **“for”** (*gar*) is a signal that what follows (1 Th. 5:15-17) is a **detailed explanation** of Paul’s statement “God will bring....”
    - b) “In translation, the point of reference must be made clear. In the context, this is the earth, where *we* are in verse 15. The translation would therefore be something like ‘God will take’ (or ‘take back’) ‘to himself.’ Very few translations make this clear, as *TEV* does, but *DuCL* has ‘God will draw to himself, together with Jesus, those who have died as Christians,’ and *NAB* has ‘will bring forth with him from the dead.’” (Ellingworth & Nida, 97)
    - c) Objection: “God will bring with him” (1 Th. 4:14) refers directly only to the dead in Christ. However 1 Th. 5:15-17 refers to two groups: the dead in Christ and the living in Christ (Hendriksen, 113-114)
- e. **“In Jesus”** is literally **“through [*dia*] Jesus.”** Grammatically it can modify:
- 1) **Those who sleep**
    - a) HCSB: Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same way God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep **through Jesus**.
    - b) This would be a statement of **association** (cf. Acts 15:32; 2 Cor. 2:4; Eph. 6:18; Heb. 13:22; 2 Tim. 2:2) (Green, 221)
  - 2) **God will bring**
    - a) ESV: For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, **through Jesus**, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. (Elias, 172-173)
    - b) This would be a statement of **agency**
3. The **living Christians will not precede** the dead in Christ at the Second Coming
    - a. **“By the word of the Lord”**: Paul makes his words as authoritative as possible
      - 1) “Paul was not giving his personal opinion but was relating Jesus’ teachings (cf. 4:2). It is uncertain if this refers to: (1) oral Christian tradition (cf. Acts 20:35); (2) Jesus’ sermons, like Matt. 24 or Mark 13 or Luke 21; (3) if this was part of Jesus’ personal revelation to Paul while in Arabia, Gal. 1:17, or (4) later, direct revelation like II Cor. 12:1ff.” (Utley, 109)
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b. **“We who are alive and remain”**: Did Paul expect the Second Coming to occur in his lifetime?

1) He **did**

a) Paul’s use of the **first person plural pronoun “we”** (*hemeis*) indicates that **he expected to be alive** when the Lord returned (cf. 1 Th. 4:15, 17; 1 Cor. 15:50-52)

2) He **did not**

a) Echoing the **teaching of Jesus** (Mt. 24:36-44; Mk. 13:32-37; Lk. 12:39-40), Paul taught that “the day of the Lord so comes **as a thief in the night**” (1 Th. 5:1-2)

1] “In view of Jesus’ teaching about our not knowing the day or hour of his coming (Matt 24:36; cf. Acts 1:7), surely Paul would not limit it to his own lifespan.” (Thomas, 11:278)

b) In other NT passages, Paul envisioned the possibility of **his own death before the Second Coming** (cf. 2 Cor. 5:1-9; Phil. 1:20-26; 2:17-18; 3:7-10; 2 Tim. 4:6-8)

c) “What case for the defence of Paul can be made? First, since Jesus himself stated that the day of the Parousia was known only to the Father [Mk. 13:32; Acts 1:6-7], and since Paul virtually said the same thing in this very letter (5:1), it is antecedently improbable that the apostle would assert what neither he nor anybody else knew. Secondly, he continued to hold together in his later letters two apparently incompatible perspectives, namely his expectation both of the Lord’s coming and of his own death and resurrection. In Philippians, for example, he combined his confident affirmations that ‘the Lord is near’ (Phil. 4:5) and that when he comes he will transform our bodies (3:20-21), with a longing to die (1:20-23) and ‘to attain to the resurrection from the dead’ (3:10-11). The case is similar in his Corinthian correspondence. On the one hand he could cry Maranatha (‘Come, O Lord’) [1 Cor. 16:22] and again use the first person plural that ‘We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed’ [1 Cor. 15:51], while on the other hand he could elaborate considerably on death and resurrection [1 Cor. 6:14; 15:12ff; 2 Cor. 4:1-5:10].

“Thirdly, Paul’s major practical emphasis in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 is on the need for watchfulness because the Parousia will come unexpectedly like a thief in the night. This was also the thrust of the teaching of Jesus, who said, ‘Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.’ [Mt. 24:42] Again, ‘Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.’ [Mt. 25:13] Now the call for watchfulness does not necessarily mean that the

Parousia *will* come in our life-time, but only that it *may*. This was Paul's position." (Stott, 100-101)

- 3) He believed that the Second Coming **could occur at any time**, but not necessarily in his lifetime
  - a) "When speaking of the end and envisioning himself in relation to it, Paul normally cast himself in the category of the living since he was alive at the time he wrote, but this was a convention, not a prediction." (Martin, 33:149)
  - c. "**Prevent**" (KJV) = "**precede**" (ASV; ESV; ISV; LEB; NAB; NASB; NIV; NKJV; NRSV; RSV; YLT) or "**go ahead of**" (NET) or "**go before**" (NCV)
  - d. "It is clear also that both groups — the survivors and the dead (or those fallen asleep) — are *believers*. Anyone can see at once that the apostle is not drawing a contrast between believers and unbelievers, as if, for example, believers would rise first, and unbelievers a thousand years later. He states:
 

"And *the dead* in Christ will rise first; then *we who are alive, who are left* shall be caught up together with them in clouds ..."

"*Both* groups ascend to meet the Lord. *Both* consist of nothing but believers." (Hendriksen, 115)
4. The Lord will **descend** and the dead in Christ will **rise first**
  - a. "**The Lord Himself**": Jesus will return, not one of His deputies or representatives. The *Parousia* will be a **Personal Coming**
  - b. "**Descend from heaven**": Jesus will return from **His throne** in heaven where He currently **rules** and **reigns** (Psa. 110:1; Mk. 16:19; Acts 2:32-33; 5:30-31; Col. 3:1; Heb. 10:12-13; 1 Pet. 3:21-22)
  - c. "**With a shout**": The *Parousia* will be an **Audible Coming**
    - 1) "The *shout* (*keleusma*) is a word of command, and is used of the shout of the charioteer to his horse or the hunter to his hounds. It is the cry of the rowers uttered by the ship's master, or to soldiers by their commander. Always there is the ring of authority and the note of urgency. It is not said who will utter the shout, but very likely it is the Lord. If not, then it is possible that the shout, the voice and the trump are three ways of referring to the same thing...." (Morris, 13:87)
    - 2) "Neither the origin nor the nature of this particular command is clear. The command could be issued from Jesus to the dead to arise (cf. John 5:28-29), from Jesus to his entourage to proceed (cf. 2 Thess 1:7), or from the archangel as either a cry of announcement (like the trumpet, cf. Rev 1:10) or an order to the heavenly host." (Martin, 33:151)
  - d. "**With the voice of the archangel**":
    - 1) Jude identifies **Michael** as "**the archangel**" (Jude 9)
    - 2) Daniel identifies Michael as "**one of the chief princes**" (Dan. 10:13)

- 3) In his vision, John sees **Michael “and his angels”** doing battle with the dragon and his angels (Rev. 12:7)

e. **“With the trumpet of God”:**

- 1) “According to the OT, the trumpet of God would **announce the coming of the day of the Lord** (Joel 2.1; Zeph. 1.15-16) and the time when **the dispersed people of God would be gathered** and **God would bring them salvation** (Isa. 27.13; Zech. 9.14-16), events that in Jewish literature were also associated with the sounding of the trumpet of God. Not only in our text but also in 1 Corinthians 15.52 the trumpet of God announces or commands the resurrection of the dead, while in Matthew 24.31 the trumpet of God calls together the dispersed people of God.” (Bold emphasis added, Green, 225)
- 2) “Used in conjunction the voice of the archangel and the shout of command and the trumpet depict **a grand fanfare. No one will be able to miss the event.** No one will fail to realize that something remarkable is about to occur.” (Bold emphasis added, Martin, 33:151-152)

f. **“The dead in Christ will rise first”:**

- 1) “As a sequel to this movement from heaven, ‘the dead in Christ’ will rise before anything else occurs. Far from being excluded from the *parousia*, they will be main participants in the first act of the Lord’s return.” (Thomas, 11:279)
- 2) “There is no possibility that those who have died in Christ will ever be separated from Christ. They died ‘through’ him (14); they sleep ‘in’ him (16); they will rise ‘with’ him; and they will come ‘with’ him too (14). Christ and his people belong to each other inseparably and indissolubly.” (Stott, 102-103)
- 3) The **contrast** in this passage is between the **righteous dead** and the **righteous living**, not the **righteous dead** and the **unrighteous dead**
- a) The **resurrection of the wicked** is not under consideration in this passage
- b) Other passages clearly teach that **all will be raised**, both the righteous and the wicked, **at the same time** (Jn. 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; 2 Th. 1:6-10)
- 4) “How will God raise the bodies of people who were buried hundreds of years ago? What about the bodies of those Christians who were burned to death and those whose ashes were thrown to the wind, and Christians who perished at sea? . . . . The God who created the universe out of nothing with a word is fully able to reassemble the decayed bodies of all His saints in a moment of time (cf. 1 Cor. 15:35-58).” (Constable, 2:704)

5. Then living Christians will be **caught up** with them to meet the Lord

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- a. “The expression ‘first ... then’ (*prōtos ... epeita*) was a common way to describe orderly succession. 4 Macc. 6.2-3; 1 Cor. 15.46 (and 15.6-7, 23); Xenophon, *Anabasis* 3.2.27; Diodorus Siculus 16.69.4.” (Green, 225, n. 148)
- b. “The English word ‘rapture’ is derived from the Latin *rapere*, meaning to seize. It corresponds to the Greek verb *harpazō*, which Paul uses here, and which expresses suddenness and violence, as when the centurion ordered his troops to take Paul by force in order to rescue him from a possible lynching [Acts 23:10]. Just so those still alive at the Parousia will be ‘swept up’ (JBP) or ‘snatched up’ *together with them in the clouds.*” (Stott, 103)
- c. The verb “**caught up**” (*harpazo*) can mean:
- 1) To take someone by force or violence (Mt. 11:12; 13:19; Jn. 6:15; 10:12, 28-29; Acts 23:10; Jude 23)
  - 2) To catch someone away (Acts 8:39; 2 Cor. 12:2, 4; Rev. 12:5)
- d. So the dead in Christ will be **raised**, then the living will be **changed** (1 Cor. 15:51-53), and together they will be “**caught up**” to meet the Lord in the clouds
- 1) That great “**gettin’ up morning**” will mean **reunion** with “the saved ones gone before” and the Lord Jesus Christ
  - 2) “Although these clouds may well be taken literally, nevertheless, they also have a symbolical meaning. They are associated with the coming of the Lord in majesty, for the punishment of the enemies of his saints, hence for the salvation of his people (cf. Dan. 7:13; then Matt. 26:64; finally, Ex. 19:16, 20; Ps. 97:2; Nah. 1:3).” (Hendriksen, 119)
  - 3) “‘To meet’ the Lord translates a term used only two other times in the New Testament. In the parable of the ten maidens the maidens are called out to ‘meet’ the groom and join the marriage procession (Matt 25:6). Outside Rome some Christian brethren came to ‘meet’ Paul and escort him back into the city (Acts 28:15). In secular Greek the word (*apantēsis*) was a technical term for meeting a visiting dignitary. A delegation honored the visitor by going outside the city and meeting him and his entourage on the road. Together the entire party would then proceed back into the city with great pomp and fanfare.” (Martin, 33:153)
6. Christians will **always be with the Lord**
- a. “[T]he main thrust of I Thess. 4:17 is not that we shall meet the Lord *in the air*, but that all believers together shall *meet the Lord, never to be separated from him.*” (Hendriksen, 119)
  - b. “The momentary encounter will lead to an everlasting fellowship. Thus the descending Lord and the ascending saints, heaven and earth, will be united.” (Stott, 105)
7. The Second Coming should mean **solace** for the righteous
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## E. 1 Th. 5:1-11:

1. The **day of the Lord** will come as **a thief** in the night (v. 1-3)
  - a. “*Times* and *occasions* represent two Greek words which in some contexts are clearly differentiated, *times* referring to time as recorded by clocks and calendars, and *occasions* referring to the ‘psychological moments’ at which the time is ripe (especially, for God to act). However, this distinction is not always maintained, particularly in such a set phrase as this, in which the two words are used together.” (Ellingworth & Nida, 105)
  - b. While the Thessalonians evidently had questions about **when** the Second Coming would occur, Paul had already taught them that it would be like the coming of **a thief** – unannounced and unexpected
    - 1) Paul could **add nothing more** to what he had already taught them
    - 2) They **already knew** what they needed to know about the timing of the Second Coming
      - a) “Once again the apostle appeals to what the Thessalonians already knew (1.4, 5; 2.1, 2, 5, 11; 3.3, 4; 4.2; 5.12; and see 2 Thess. 2.6; 3.7).” (Green, 231)
  - c. **The OT** provides the **background** for the concept of “the day of the Lord”
    - 1) It does not refer to a **particular day** as opposed to all others
    - 2) It is a “**type of time**” (e.g. “the day of reckoning”) involving three basic concepts:
      - a) Punishment of the **unfaithful in Israel**
      - b) Destruction of the **enemy nations**
      - c) Deliverance of the **righteous**
        - 1] “The day of the Lord in the Old Testament is a day of judgment. Yahweh will punish the evil within Israel (Amos 5:18-20) on that day, and the wicked among the nations will face a day of terrible wrath (Isa 13:6-13; Obad 15). Those who have not repented will face ‘destruction from the Almighty’ (Joel 1:13-15). Yet the punishment of the evil is at the same time the deliverance of the righteous (Joel 2:31-32; Zech 14:1-21; Mal 4:5).” (Martin, 33:158-159)
        - 2] “The phrase **day of the Lord** is common in the OT Prophets (see note on Amos 5:18-20). It refers to the great and terrible day when Yahweh will intervene to punish the disobedient (e.g., Isa. 13:6-16; Joel 1:13-15; 2:1-11; Obad. 15-20; Mal. 4:5) and to save the faithful (e.g., Isa. 27:2-13; Jer. 30:8-9; Joel 2:31-32; Obad. 21). In Paul’s letters it is equated with the second coming.” (ESV Study Bible, 2310)
        - 3] “[T]he *day of the Lord* becomes that eschatological event when the Lord comes to judge the inhabitants of the earth and to pour out his wrath because of sin (Isa. 13.6, 9; Ezek. 13.5; 30.3; Joel 1.15; 2.1, 11; 3.14; Amos 5.18, 20; Zeph. 1.7, 14; Zech. 1.14; Mal. 4.5; Acts 2.20; 1 Cor. 5.5; 2 Thess. 2.2; 2 Pet. 3.10). However, for the

people of God, the *day of the Lord* will be a day of salvation (Joel 2.21-32; 3.18; Obad. 15-21; Zech. 14.1-21).” (Green, 232)

- 3) It is described as:
- a) “The day of **redemption**” (Eph. 4:30; cf. Rom. 8:18-23)
  - b) “The day of **wrath**” (Job 21:30; Pr. 11:4; Zeph. 1:15; Rom. 2:5)
  - c) “The day of **judgment**” (Mt. 10:15; 11:22, 24; 12:36; Mk. 6:11; 2 Pet. 2:9; 1 Jn. 4:17)
  - d) “The day of **judgment and perdition of ungodly men**” (2 Pet. 3:7)
  - e) “The day of **vengeance**” (Isa. 63:4; Jer. 46:10)
  - f) “The day of **vengeance of our God**” (Isa. 61:2)
  - g) “The day of **doom**” (Job 21:30; Pr. 16:4; Jer. 17:17-18; 51:2; Amos 6:3)
  - h) “The day of **visitation**” (1 Pet. 2:12)
  - i) “The **great day**” (Jude 6)
  - j) “The great day of **His wrath**” (Rev. 6:17)
  - k) “**That Day**” (Lk. 10:12; 21:34; 2 Th. 1:10; 2:3; 2 Tim. 1:12, 18; 4:8)
  - l) “**This Day**” (1 Th. 5:4)
  - m) “The **last day**” (Jn. 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:24; 12:48)
- 4) It is associated with both **God**, the Father and **Christ**, the Son
- a) “The day of the **Lord of hosts**” (Isa. 2:12)
  - b) “The day of the **Lord**” (Isa. 13:6, 9; Ezek. 13:5; 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11; 3:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Zeph. 1:7; Zech. 14:1; 1 Th. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10)
  - c) “The day of the **Lord God of hosts**” (Jer. 46:10)
  - d) “The great and awesome day of **the Lord**” (Joel 2:31; Acts 2:20)
  - e) “The day of the **Lord upon all the nations**” (Obad. 15)
  - f) “The great day of **the Lord**” (Zeph. 1:14)
  - g) “The great and dreadful day of **the Lord**” (Mal. 4:5)
  - h) “The day of **the Lord Jesus**” (1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14)
  - i) “The day of **God**” (2 Pet. 3:12)
  - j) “The great day of **God Almighty**” (Rev. 16:14)
  - k) “The day of **Jesus Christ**” (Phil. 1:6)
  - l) “The day of **Christ**” (Phil. 1:10; 2:16; 2 Th. 2:2)
  - m) “The day of **our Lord Jesus Christ**” (1 Cor. 1:8)
  - n) “**His Day**” = the Son of Man (Lk. 17:24)
  - o) “The day when the **Son of Man is revealed**” (Lk. 17:30)
  - p) “The revelation of our **Lord Jesus Christ**” (1 Cor. 1:7)

- q) “The revelation of **Jesus Christ**” (1 Pet. 1:7)
- r) “When the **Lord Jesus** is revealed” = lit. “the revelation of the Lord Jesus” (2 Th. 1:7)
- s) “The day of **His coming**” (Mal. 3:2)
- t) “**His coming**” (1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Th. 2:19; 2 Th. 2:8; 2 Pet. 3:4; 1 Jn. 2:28)
- 5) There have been **many** days of the Lord, all foreshadowing the **final day of the Lord**
- a) Chart: “The Day Of Jehovah For...”
- d. Paul’s description here echoes the teaching of **Jesus** (Mt. 24:36, 42-44; Lk. 12:35-40; Rev. 3:3; 16:15) and **Peter** (2 Pet. 3:10)
- e. When the wicked are saying “**Peace and safety,**” **sudden destruction** will come
- 1) “Just as false prophets of old fraudulently forecast a bright future, in spite of the imminence of God’s judgment (Jer 6:14; 8:11; 14:13, 14; La 2:14; Eze 13:10, 16; Mic 3:5), so they will again in future days just before the final Day of the Lord destruction.” (*The MacArthur Study Bible*, n.p.)
  - 2) This “sudden destruction” (*olethros*) is **not annihilation**, but **separation** from God (2 Th. 1:9)
    - a) *Thayer*: “...fr. Hom. down, *ruin, destruction, death*: 1 Th. 5:3; 1 Tim. 6:9... *for the destruction of the flesh*, said of the external ills and troubles by which the lusts of the flesh are subdued and destroyed, 1 Co. 5:5.... i.q. **the loss of a life of blessedness after death, future misery**,.... 2 Th. 1:9....” (Bold emphasis added, 443)
    - b) “*Destruction* translates a word which in the New Testament (1) always refers to destruction by some supernatural power, and (2) never implies complete annihilation. The meaning is close to ‘punishment’ or even ‘God’s judgment.’” (Ellingworth & Nida, 107)
  - 3) This sudden destruction will be like the **labor pains** upon a pregnant woman
    - a) “The symbolic or metaphorical use of labor pains is found with great frequency in the OT (e.g., Ps. 48:6; Isa. 13:8; 21:3; 26:17-18; 37:3; 42:14; 66:7-8; Jer. 4:31; 6:24; 22:23; 30:4-7; 48:41; 50:43; Hos. 13:13; Mic. 4:9) and in the intertestamental literature (e.g., *1 En.* 62:4; *4 Ezra* 4:40-43; 16:37-39; *Sib. Or.* 5:514; 1QH<sup>a</sup> XI, 7-12; XIII, 30-31).” (Beale & Carson, 881-882)
    - b) The simile emphasizes the **unexpectedness** and the **inevitability** of the Second Coming
      - 1] “When genuine labor begins, there is no avoiding its conclusion. The judgment of that day once begun will carry through to its finale, and there is no circumventing it.” (Martin, 33:160-161)
      - 2] “Both illustrations teach that Christ’s coming will be sudden. Suddenly, in the middle of the night, a burglar breaks in. Suddenly, in the pregnancy of an expectant mother, labour begins. At the same time, there is an obvious difference between them.

For although both are sudden, the burglar is unexpected, whereas labour (once pregnancy has begun) is expected. So, putting the two metaphors together, we may say that Christ's coming will be (1) sudden and unexpected (like a burglar in the night), and (2) sudden and unavoidable (like labour at the end of pregnancy). In the first case there will be no warning, and in the second no escape." (Stott, 109)

2. The day of the Lord will **not overtake Christians as a thief** (v. 4-5)
  - a. Christians are **not in darkness**
    - 1) "In the Bible, *darkness* typically refers to moral or spiritual blindness, disobedience, or separation. This sphere of darkness is where the unbelieving world lives." (Larson, 9:69)
    - 2) "**Darkness** is more than ignorance; it is the unbelievers' moral and spiritual separation from God (cf. Jn 3:19, 20; II Cor 6:14; Eph 5:8; Col 1:12, 13)." (Hubbard, n.p.)
    - 3) The verb translated "**overtake**" (*katalambano*) can mean:
      - a) To **seize** so that one cannot escape (Mk. 9:18)
      - b) To **overtake** or **surprise** (Jn. 8:3, 4; 12:35)
      - c) To **comprehend** or **perceive** (Jn. 1:5; Acts 4:13; 10:34; 25:25; Eph. 3:18)
      - d) To **obtain** or **attain** (Rom. 9:30; 1 Cor. 9:24; Phil 3:12, 13)
    - 4) Most English versions translate the verb as "**overtake**" or "**surprise**" [ASV; KJV; ESV; HCSB; ISV; NET; NAB; NASB; NCV; NIV; NKJV; NRSV; RSV], but some translate it as "**catch**" [LEB; YLT]
  - b. Christians are "**sons of light and sons of the day**"
    - 1) "In the Semitic idiom to be a 'son' of something is to be characterized by that thing (e.g. 'a son of strength' means 'a strong man'); 'light' is the distinguishing characteristic of believers." (Morris, 13:95)
    - 2) "'Day' in this verse is not a direct reference to the day of the Lord. Sons of the day do await the dawning of the day of judgment. In this verse, however, 'day' is parallel in structure and thought to 'light' and the antithesis of night and dark. Thus it refers to daytime, not the day of judgment." (Martin, 33:210)
    - 3) Note the significant change from "you" to "we" "as Paul associates himself with his converts in the need to live uprightly, as those who will share in the blessings of the parousia." (Morris, 95-96)
    - 4) Although Christ's Second Coming will be **unannounced** and **unexpected**, faithful Christians will **not be surprised**, not because they **know when** He will return, but because they **stay ready**
3. As "sons of light," Christians should **live accordingly** (How Christians live should be guided by who they are)
  - a. Christians should **not sleep**

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- 1) “**Therefore**” or “**so then**” is a “strong expression for a necessary logical inference, and introduces an inescapable conclusion.” (Morris, 13:96)
  - 2) “Notice the three different uses of ‘sleep’ (*katheudō*) : (1) lack of moral alertness, (v. 6); (2) physical rest, (v. 7); (3) death, (v. 10).” (Utley, 115)
- b. Christians should **watch** and **be sober**
- 1) “Both of these verbs are...present hortatory subjunctives; Paul was appealing for consistent vigilance. The first word, translated ‘let us be alert,’ means ‘to stay awake.’ Literally, it is that which is expected of a watchman who must not sleep at his post. It was often used metaphorically of the preparedness of those awaiting the Lord’s return (Luke 12:37; Matt 24:42-43; 1 Pet 5:8; Rev 3:2-3; 16:15).” (Martin, 33:164)
  - 2) Paul’s command here echoes **the command of the Lord** to His apostles in the Olivet Discourse (Mt. 24:42; 25:13; Mk. 13:35, 37; Lk. 21:36)
  - 3) In the NT, the verb “**be sober**” (*nepho*) “always carries the metaphorical sense of exercising moral self-control or self-restraint and having clear thinking in the face of adversity or danger (2 Tim. 4.5; 1 Pet. 5.8), especially as Christ’s revelation and the end of all things approaches (1 Pet. 1.13; 4.7).” (Green, 238)
  - 4) **Watchfulness** and **sobriety** are characteristic activities of the **daytime**. **Sleep** and **drunkenness** are characteristic activities of the **nighttime**
    - a) “The kind of conduct Paul is opposing belongs to the night, not the day, and he has already pointed out that his readers are ‘sons of day’. The expressions used here are not metaphorical; Paul is simply saying that night is the time when people sleep and night is the time when they get drunk (cf. Acts 2:15).” (Morris, 13:96)
- c. Christians should be **sober**, putting on **their armor**
- 1) The **breastplate** of **faith** and **love**
    - a) “Perhaps ‘the mention of vigilance suggested the idea of a sentry armed and on duty’ (Lightfoot). Paul has an aorist participle (*putting on*), which suggests the taking of a decisive, once-for-all step. The metaphor of the Christian’s armour attracted Paul and he uses it a number of times (Rom. 13:12-13; 2 Cor. 6:7; 10:4; Eph. 6:13-17). The details are not always the same, which is a warning against pressing the metaphor too closely.” (Morris, 13:97)
    - b) “Isaiah 59:17 may have been Paul’s inspiration for the image, but if so, he adapted Isaiah’s picture by placing the armor not on God (as Isaiah did) but on the believer. Gentile readers probably would have thought first not of Isaiah 59 but of the ubiquitous Roman soldier.” (Martin, 33:165-166)
  - 2) The **helmet** of the **hope of salvation**
    - a) “In each case there is an appositional genitive, so that *faith and love* are the *breastplate*, and *the hope of salvation* is the *helmet*.” (Morris, 13:97)
    - b) “*The hope of salvation* is not a vague expectation but rather the settled assurance of future deliverance (see 1.10; Rom. 8.24).” (Green, 241)
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- c) “The hope of salvation sustains our courage amid all the trials of life by holding out to us the prospect of eternal blessedness. Vigilance is of no avail unless armed by faith, hope, and love.” (Gloag, 103)
- d) “Typically, Paul now urges his readers to exercise qualities which, at the beginning of his letter, he has praised them for already possessing (cf. also 3:12; 4:1).” (Ellingworth & Nida, 111)
- d. God did not appoint Christians to **wrath** but to obtain **salvation** through Christ
- 1) “The words translated *did not choose* (cf. Phps; *RSV NEB* Knox Brc [cf. Mft] ‘has not destined,’ *KJV* ‘hath not appointed,’ *JB* ‘never meant us to experience the Retribution’) have been understood in rather different ways, as the various English translations just quoted show. The ordinary meaning of this common verb is ‘to put.’ One of its extended meanings is ‘to put in a particular position or office,’ and thus ‘to appoint.’ ‘To destine’ is the meaning chosen here by many commentators and translators, but it is rare elsewhere. It is not the more usual word for ‘choose’ (found, for example, in 1 Corinthians 1:27), nor is it the word for ‘predestine’ (found in Romans 8:29-30 and Ephesians 1:5, 11). The closest parallel is Acts 13:47 (quoting Isaiah 49:6), where *TEV* translates ‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles.’ The Greek verb does not imply choosing certain persons from among a larger group, and the reference to the future contained in the English ‘destine’ is found, not in the Greek verb itself, but in the following words, ‘for wrath.’” (Ellingworth & Nida, 112)
  - 2) “Salvation is here presented as a future event, contrasted with the reception of wrath on the day of judgment. Paul, in fact, presented the deliverance of the Christian in three time frames: past (e.g., Eph 2:5, 8), present (e.g., 1 Cor 1:18; 15:2; 2 Cor 2:15), and future (e.g., Rom 2:7; 5:9).” (Martin, 33:167)
  - 3) Note: More than one commentator allows his **Calvinistic theology** to intrude upon his exegesis of this statement
    - a) “Paul is here speaking of salvation in its eschatological aspect and the point is that that is yet to be ‘acquired’ (cf. Rom. 13:11). **This does not mean that it is obtained by human effort**, and Paul immediately goes on to say that it is obtained *through our Lord Jesus Christ*. Whatever activity be ascribed to the believer, salvation is God’s gift through Christ (for the divine and the human in salvation cf. Eph. 2:8-10; Phil. 2:12-13).” (Bold emphasis added, Morris, 13:98)
    - b) “Our ‘hope of salvation’ is well founded, therefore. **It stands firmly on the solid rock of God’s will and Christ’s death, and not on the shifting sands of our own performance or feelings**. The ultimate reason why we should be bold rather than faint-hearted in anticipation of the Parousia lies not in who we are (children of the day and of the light) but on who God is, as revealed in the cross (the giver of salvation and life).” (Bold emphasis added, Stott, 114)
  - 4) But these “Calvinistic explanations” **effectively nullify** Paul’s instructions and warnings
    - a) “Throughout 5:1-11, the Thessalonian believers are summoned both to claim their identity as children of day and to conduct themselves
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accordingly. The reminder that God has appointed us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation seeks to instill in these converts a confidence rooted in the ultimate victory which is already assured through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. **This confidence, however, does not permit the luxury of a passive reliance on God's omnipotent election. Those who believe also behave.**" (Bold emphasis added, Elias, 201)

- 5) Note: **Pretribulationists** argue from this statement that the Church will be **"raptured"** or taken out of the earth **before the Tribulation** (Believer's Study Bible, n.p.)
- 6) Salvation from God's wrath can only be obtained **through Christ "who died for us"**
  - a) "*Through our Lord Jesus Christ* expresses secondary agency. It is God who is the primary agent in salvation, and this is made possible by means of the Lord Jesus Christ." (Ellingworth & Nida, 113)
  - b) "This is one of the few texts in the Thessalonian letters where the author mentions the cross of Christ (see 2.15; 4.14), and the only place in these books where the purpose of Christ's death is explained (cf. Rom. 14.9; 2 Cor. 5.15, 21; Gal. 1.4). The death of Jesus was *for us*, words that point to his substitutionary death for our sins (see 1 Cor. 15.3). The absence of a fuller elaboration of the theology of the cross at this point implies that the first readers already understood the teaching about the death of Christ. This was part of the initial instruction the church had received (see Acts 17.3), and it became the foundation of the church's confession (1 Thess. 4.14)." (Green, 243)
  - c) "To say that *Christ died for us* is an apparently simple statement, but it raises great problems of theological interpretation, and some (fortunately smaller) problems for the translator, centering on the meaning of the word *for*. Greek uses two main prepositions in similar contexts, and it is dangerous to press too hard the distinction between them. The one used here (*huper*) tends to have a fairly general meaning: 'on behalf of' or 'for the sake of,' rather than 'instead of' or 'in place of.'" (Ellingworth & Nida, 113)
- 7) The purpose of Christ's death was so that **"we should live together with Him"**
  - a) "Whether we wake or sleep" cannot mean:
    - 1] Awake or asleep in **an ethical sense** (*i.e.* spiritually awake or spiritually asleep), because Paul has already explained that "those who are spiritually asleep will be surprised by the coming of the Lord..." (Gloag, 104)
      - a] "Paul was certainly not saying here that both the 'sons of the light' who are 'alert' and the non-Christians who are 'asleep' and who 'belong to the night' will live in Christ." (Martin, 168)
    - 2] Awake or asleep in a **natural sense** (*i.e.* physically awake or physically asleep), because this would be "a mere trifling observation (Gloag, 104)
  - b) It must mean:

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- 1] Awake or asleep in a **metaphorical sense** (*i.e.* alive or dead) cf. 1 Th. 4:13-15
- 2] “There is here certainly a change of metaphor: ‘sleep’ in ver.6 denotes religious carelessness; in ver. 7, natural sleep; and here, death.” (Gloag, 104)
- c) Note: Once again, more than one commentator allows his **Calvinistic theology** to intrude upon his exegesis of this statement
- 1] “An explanation that is exegetically preferable and of less difficulty takes *grēgorōmen* (‘we are awake’) and *katheudōmen* (‘we are asleep’) in an ethical sense as in v. 6. **Since future salvation has been so fully provided by Christ’s finished work, it cannot be cancelled by lack of readiness. Moral preparedness or unpreparedness does not affect the issue one way or the other.** Though at first this suggestion seems to nullify Paul’s earlier exhortation to alertness (v. 6), it must be acknowledged that this meaning for *grēgoreō* is well established in other places besides the present paragraph (Matt 24:42; 25:13; Mark 13:35, 37; Rev 3:3; 16:15) (Hogg and Vine, p. 172; Oepke, TDNT, 2:338). This conclusion also recognizes the established meaning of *katheudō* in the present context and accords with the strong case for the secure position of the believers (5:4, 5, 9).” (Bold emphasis added, Thomas, 11:286)
- a] Note: Thomas recognizes the difficulty with this explanation, but then basically dismisses it with a wave of his hand
- 2] “An alternative way of reading 5:10 is to understand it as **an attempt to allow for human frailty.** Might *katheudō* (‘to sleep’) signify not unbelievers but Christians who are spiritually dull? Believers should be vigilant and self-controlled. They are to persevere in the Christian life. But what if that vigilance wanes? **Does believers’ salvation hinge on their own vigilance or on the work of Christ?** Paul was assuring his readers here of the security of those for whom Christ died. **Human vigilance may flag, but Christ’s sacrifice will not fail to deliver the believer from wrath, even believers who have fallen asleep at their post.**” (Bold emphasis added, Martin, 33:168-169)
- d) But once again these “Calvinistic explanations” **effectively nullify** Paul’s instructions and warnings
- 1] “Indeed, why would Paul here (and many places elsewhere) bother to admonish believers to live upright moral lives if this is a matter of indifference? To interpret the benefits of Christ’s death as so sufficient that believers can bask in their assurance of eternal security, regardless of their ongoing spiritual and moral response, **essentially undermines this call to spiritual vitality and moral faithfulness.**” (Bold emphasis added, Elias, 202)
- e) “**Live together with Him**” refers to the **eternal life** that Christians will enjoy after the Second Coming
- 1] It cannot refer to **our life with Christ now**
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2] The context is **eschatological**

- a] The **helmet** we are to wear is the “**hope** of salvation” (v. 8)
- b] The **wrath** is “**the wrath to come**” (1 Th. 1:10) that will be poured out on the wicked at the Second Coming (v. 9)
- c] “As in 4.16-17, the theology of v. 10 has to do with the resurrection of the dead and the catching away of the living and the dead ‘to be with the Lord forever’ (cf. the use of ‘to live’ with reference to the resurrection in Acts 1.3; Rom. 14.9a; 2 Cor. 13.4a; Rev. 2.8; 20.4-5).” (Green, 244)

e. Christians should **comfort** and **edify** one another (cf. 1 Th. 4:18)

- 1) “The world can be a tough and unfriendly place, as we all know to our cost. It is easy to get hurt by it. In addition, bereavement can be a very painful experience. We are also prone to fear when we think of Christ’s coming to judge. These emotions can tear us apart. We can become dispirited and depressed. But God means his church to be a community of mutual support.” (Stott, 114-115)
- 2) Paul’s instructions emphasize “the reciprocity of Christian care” (Stott, 115)

4. The Second Coming should mean **sobriety** for the righteousF. **1 Th. 5:23-24:**

- 1. Paul often describes God as the **God of peace** towards the end of his letters (Rom. 15:33; 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:9; 2 Thess. 3:16; cf. Heb. 13:20)
- 2. Paul prays that the God of peace will do two things:
  - a. **Sanctify** the Thessalonians completely
    - 1) “Throughout the Epistle Paul has been concerned with sanctification (3:13; 4:3, 4, 7, 8). Now he prays that God will sanctify (separate to himself) the readers of the Epistle ‘through and through.’” (Thomas, 11:294)
    - 2) “The term translated ‘through and through’ (*holoteleis*) is a compound that connotes the doing of something completely (*holos*) and carrying through to the finish (*telos*).” (Martin, 33:189)
    - 3) “The ‘God of peace’ is the one requested to accomplish the complete and final sanctification of the church. Only through his power does the church exist, and only through his power can it endure and be acceptable to him at the parousia. At the same time, it is evident from the presence of the exhortations in the letter (4:1-5:22) that for Paul’s prayer to become reality, God’s will to sanctify (in its ethical sense especially) must be matched by the believers’ willingness to see their lives transformed.” (Martin, 33:189)
  - b. **Preserve** their soul, spirit, and body blamelessly
    - 1) “The object of v. 23a, ‘you,’ parallels ‘your whole spirit, soul and body,’ which is the subject of ‘be kept’ in v. 23b.” (Martin, 33:189)
    - 2) “To ‘be kept’ renders a word (*tēreō*) with military connotations. It implies the guarding of something to keep it safe.” (Martin, 33:189)

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- 3) The term “**blameless**” (*amemptos*) “has been found in inscriptions at Thessalonica. It means free from blame or accusations, therefore, morally pure. It possibly reflects the OT term ‘blameless’ that meant free of defects and, therefore, available for sacrifice.” (Utley, 120)
  - 4) “The prayer for the preservation of the saints until the coming of the Lord (v. 23b) reflects back on encouragements to persist in hope despite affliction (1:3, 10; 2:14-16; 3:5; 5:10-11).” (Martin, 33:188-189)
3. The primary question to be answered in this passages is this: **How did Paul view the nature of man?** Is he **bipartite** (*i.e.* soul & body) or **tripartite** (*i.e.* spirit, soul, & body)?
- a. Usually the NT describes man as having **two parts**, the one material and the other immaterial
    - 1) Chart: “The Nature Of Man”
    - 2) Chart: “The Dual Nature Of Man”
  - b. The words “**spirit**” and “**soul**” are often **synonymous terms**
    - 1) Chart: “‘Soul’ = ‘Spirit’”
  - c. However, the “**spirit**” and the “**soul**” appear to be **distinguished** from one another in some passages
    - 1) Chart: ‘Spirit’ ≠ ‘Soul’”
4. What is the **nature of man**?
- a. Paul describes man as a **tripartite being** (*i.e.* spirit, soul, & body)
    - 1) Affirmative arguments:
      - a) This is the **simplest** and **most obvious** interpretation
      - b) “That Paul saw man as a threefold substance in this verse has been generally recognized since the early fathers.” (Thomas, 295)
      - c) “The symmetrical arrangement of three nouns with their articles and their connection by means of two ‘ands’ (*kai*) renders this the most natural explanation.” (Thomas, 295)
    - 2) Objections:
      - a) “Apart from 1 Thess. 5:23 he [Paul] nowhere employs trichotomistic language with respect to the nature of man.” (cf. Rom. 8:10; 1 Cor. 5:5; 7:34; II Cor. 7:1; Eph. 2:3; Col. 2:5) (Hendriksen, 146-147, n. 113)
      - 1] Response: The fact that Paul does not make this distinction in other passages does not mean that he could not make it here
    - 3) These three parts of man have been variously interpreted:
      - a) Chart: “Spirit, Soul, & Body”
  - b. Paul really describes man as a **bipartite being** (*i.e.* soul = spirit & body)
    - 1) Paul does not distinguish between “**spirit**” and “**soul**” in this passage. He is speaking **rhetorically**
      - a) Affirmative arguments:
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- 1] Paul is speaking as we do when we say, “Put your **heart** and **soul** into it”
  - 2] Paul is speaking as Jesus did when He said that we must **love God** with all our “**heart**,” “**soul**,” “**mind**,” and “**strength**” (Mk. 12:30)
- b) Objections:
- 1] In the illustration, it is obvious that “**heart**” and “**soul**” are being used **interchangeably**
  - 2] In this passage, Paul mentions three items “**spirit**,” “**soul**,” and “**body**,” and “**body**” is certainly **not interchangeable** with “**soul**” or “**spirit**.” Therefore, it is quite likely that all three terms are being **distinguished** from one another in some way
  - 3] Elsewhere, Paul makes a distinction between the “**natural** (*psuchikos*) man” and the “**spiritual** (*pneumatikos*) man” (1 Cor. 2:14-15)
  - 4] “**Heart**,” “**soul**,” “**mind**,” and “**strength**” (Mk. 12:30) do not mean the same thing
- 2) Paul does not distinguish between “**spirit**” and “**soul**” in this passage. He describes the **same immaterial substance** according to **two different functions**
- a) “**Spirit**” = immaterial substance in relation to God  
“**Soul**” = immaterial substance in relation to the lower realm (the seat of sensations, affections, desires, *etc.*)
- b) Affirmative arguments:
- 1] Repeatedly, man is described as a **bipartite being** (*i.e.* soul & body or spirit & body) (*cf.* Mt. 10:28; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Cor. 5:3; 3 Jn. 2)
  - 2] “**Spirit**” and “**soul**” both refer to man’s immaterial substance, but to **two different functions** of that immaterial substance
    - a] “Two terms for the same immaterial substance simply view it according to its two functions, relationship to God and relationship to the lower realm of sensations, affections, desires, *etc.*...” (Thomas, 294)
  - 3] Paul parallels “**spirit**” (*pneuma*) with “**soul**” or “**mind**” (*psyche*) (Phil. 1:27)
- c) Objections:
- 1] Although it may be possible, one would not normally interpret **three apparently coordinate terms** (“spirit,” “soul,” & “body”) joined by **two identical conjunctions** (“and”) in this way
    - a] In other words, if “**soul**” and “**body**” are two **different substances**, then it is unlikely that “**spirit**” and “**soul**” are two **different functions** of the **same substance**

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- 2] Sometimes Paul parallels “**spirit**” (*pneuma*) with “**flesh**” or “**body**” (*sarx*), with which it cannot be identified (2 Cor. 2:13 & 7:5)
  - 3] **Clear-cut distinctions** between “**spirit**” (*pneuma*) and “**soul**” (*psyche*) indicate they **cannot be used interchangeably** (cf. Heb. 4:12)
  - 4] It is doubtful that Paul would pray for **man’s functional capabilities** rather than **two substantial parts** of his make-up (Thomas, 294-295)
- 3) Paul describes the “**spirit**” (*i.e.* the entire person) in terms of its “**soul**” (immaterial substance) and “**body**” (material substance)
- a) Affirmative arguments:
    - 1] The passage should be translated something like this:
      - a] “And may the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your **entire person**, your **soul** and **body**, be kept irreproachable for the day of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Hendriksen, 148, n. 113)
    - 2] “**Spirit**” can sometimes refer to the **entire person**
      - a] “Your **spirit**” (Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23; Phile. 25) = “**you**” (1 Th. 5:28)
    - 3] “Sanctify **you** completely” corresponds to “may your whole **spirit**, **soul**, and **body** be preserved blameless....”
    - 4] “*Kai...kai....*” means “**both...and....**” (cf. Rom. 11:33)
  - b) Objections:
    - 1] “[I]n the Greek original the word which Masson, etc., correctly render ‘entire’ is in the predicate position. Hence, as I see it, the original does not really say, ‘And may your entire spirit,’ but ‘And entire (or ‘and without flaw’) may be your spirit.’ The Berkeley Version correctly retains the predicate position of the adjective when it translates: ‘May your spirit be without flaw and your soul and body maintained blameless.’” (Hendriksen, 148, n. 113)
    - 2] While the word *psuche* (“soul”) sometimes refers to the **entire person**, the word *pneuma* (“spirit”) is **not used in this way**
      - a] “The meaning *living being, self, person*, especially frequent in passages which can be traced back to Hebrew originals, but by no means confined to such passages, is always ψυχή. Under this heading some would include only the following: Matt. 11:29; Mark 8:36; Acts 2:41, 43; 3:23; 7:14; 27:37; Rom. 2:9; 13:1; I Cor. 15:45; I Peter 3:20; and Rev. 16:3. Others, on the basis of a comparison of parallel passages, would add such references as Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45, cf. I Tim. 2:6; John 10:11, 15, 17; and many more (note ‘my soul’ is ‘I’ in Matt. 12:18; and ‘my soul’ is ‘thy Holy One’ and is ‘he’ in Acts 2:27, 31).” (Hendriksen, 149, n. 113)
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- b] After a lengthy discussion of this interpretation, Hendriksen observes: “In my study of all the Pauline passages in which *πνευμα* is used I have not found a single one in which it has the meaning ‘person,’ in the sense of one’s soul and body.” (Hendriksen, 149-150, n. 113)
- 4) Paul does distinguish between “**spirit**,” “**soul**” and “**body**” in this passage, but “**spirit**” refers to the **Holy Spirit**, “**soul**” to the inner man, and “**body**” to the physical body
- a) Affirmative arguments:
- 1] “**Spirit**” often refers to the **Holy Spirit** (Mt. 12:31; Mk. 1:10, 12; Jn. 3:34; Acts 8:29; Rom. 8:16, 26-27; 1 Cor. 12:4, 7-9, 11, 13; 2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 3:5; Phil. 2:1; 1 Th. 5:19; 1 Tim. 4:1; 1 Jn. 4:13; Rev. 2:7)
  - 2] The “Spirit” **indwells** the Christian (Rom. 8:9, 11; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:14; Jas. 4:5)
- b) Objections:
- 1] Paul would not have prayed that the **Holy Spirit** (or a portion of the Holy Spirit) might be **sanctified completely** or **preserved blameless** at the coming of the Lord
- c. Paul is **not dissecting** human personality but emphasizing the **totality of personality**
- 1) “Rather than teaching man as having only three parts, Paul was probably using the three terms here to identify the different aspects of personhood he wished to emphasize. The *spirit* is the highest and most unique part of man that enables him to communicate with God. The *soul* is the part of man that makes him conscious of himself; it is the seat of his personality. The *body*, of course, is the physical part through which the inner person expresses himself and by which he is immediately recognized.” (Constable, 2:710)
  - 2) Affirmative arguments:
    - a) This is suggested by the terms “**completely**” (or “through and through”) and “**whole**”
    - b) **Comparable expressions** stress wholeness, not a dissection of human personality (cf. Dt. 6:5; Mk. 12:30; Lk. 10:27)
  - 3) Objections:
    - a) If Paul is merely emphasizing wholeness, why didn’t he use this **already well-known formula** for completeness?
    - b) The alleged analogous expressions do not include the “**body**” as Paul does here
5. Regardless of how this question is answered, the emphasis in the passage is on the **complete sanctification and preservation** of Christians
- a. “The three terms used in v. 23, ‘spirit, soul and body,’ occur in a context stressing wholeness. Paul was not emphasizing the threefold nature of humanity but the deliverance of the ‘whole’ (*holoklēron*) person. The adjective ‘whole’ is

first in the clause. The term is qualitative, indicating something that has integrity, is intact, complete, and undamaged.” (Martin, 33:189)

- b. “Paul’s overriding purpose is to pray that every aspect of his readers’ existence may belong completely to God, and so be kept safe at the coming of Christ.” (Ellingworth & Nida, 126)
6. Paul affirms that **God is faithful** and that **He will do** what Paul has asked
    - a. “For Paul, *he who calls you* is always God the Father (cf. 2:12; 4:7). Here, as in 23b, Paul follows Jewish practice in referring to God without naming him directly.” (Ellingworth & Nida, 127)
    - b. “The present tense of the participle *καλῶν* (‘the one calling’) stresses that God does not merely call Christians once and then leave them on their own. Instead God continues to call the followers of Christ to salvation.” (Wanamaker, 207)
    - c. “The prayer is offered in the certainty that it will be answered, a certainty that arises because God *is faithful* (cf. 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13; 2 Cor. 1:18; 2 Thess. 3:3; 2 Tim. 2:13; Heb. 10:23; 11:11).” (Morris, 13:108)
  7. The Second Coming will mean **sanctification** for the righteous

#### G. 2 Th. 1:6-10

1. The coming of the Lord will bring “the **righteous judgment** of God”
  - a. There is “**manifest evidence**” of God’s righteous judgment
    - 1) The term translated “**manifest evidence**” (*endeigma*) “refers to the result of a demonstration and thus means ‘a sign,’ ‘proof,’ or ‘evidence.’” (Chapman, 2484)
  - b. What is this “**manifest evidence**”?
    - 1) There are three possibilities:
      - a) The **persecution** of the Thessalonians
      - b) The **faith** and **perseverance** of the Thessalonians in their persecution
      - c) **Both**
    - 2) I think Paul was referring to **both**
      - a) The **persecution** of the Thessalonians was “manifest evidence” that their **wicked persecutors** should be **punished** (vv. 6, 8-9)
      - b) The Thessalonians’ **faith** and **perseverance** in their persecution was “manifest evidence” that they were **faithful** to the Lord and should be **rewarded** (vv. 5, 7, 10)
        - 1] Since Christians “**must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God**” (Acts 14:22) and **suffering is the path to glory** (Rom. 8:17; 1 Pet. 4:12-14), steadfast endurance in persecution demonstrates that one “may be **counted worthy** of the (eternal or heavenly) kingdom of God” (2 Tim. 4:8; 2 Pet. 1:11)
          - a] “The verb *kataxiōō* means not ‘to make worthy’ but ‘to declare worthy’, ‘to count worthy’ (like that other great Pauline word *dikaioō*, ‘to justify’ in the sense ‘to declare as just’). The apostle is excluding human merit even in a

passage where he is drawing attention to a noteworthy piece of endurance....” (Morris, 118)

2] When Paul says “**for which you also suffer,**” he places their suffering in **context**

a] “Senseless, purposeless suffering is intolerable. But for a vital cause one may suffer and consider it a small thing (Rom 8:18; Phil 1:29; 2 Cor 4:7-12). To the unstated but perpetual question of the sufferer (why?), Paul provided the answer: for the kingdom of God (cf. Acts 14:22). In the New Testament as a whole, the present suffering of the godly is often balanced by a celebration of the glories to come and/ or by an assurance that God will punish the persecutors of the righteous (Luke 6:21-23; Rom 8:17; Heb 12:1-2; Jas 1:12; 1 Pet 1:3-9; 4:12-19; Jude 10-13).” (Martin, 33:207)

c) “Since vv. 5-10 elaborate both on the reward of the faithful and the punishment of the persecutors, it probably is best to understand that the evidence Paul mentioned was both the persecution of the church and their perseverance in the faith in spite of it. Thus God is just when he punishes the wicked and when he rewards the faithful.” (Martin, 33:205-206)

2. The righteous judgment of God will mean **retribution** or **repayment** for both the wicked and the righteous

a. “It is a *righteous* thing for God to judge sin and condemn sinners. A holy God cannot leave sin unjudged. People who say, ‘I cannot believe that a loving God would judge sinners and send people to hell’ understand neither the holiness of God nor the awfulness of sin. While it is true that ‘God is love’ (1 John 4:8), it is also true that ‘God is light’ (1 John 1:5), and in His holiness He must deal with sin.” (Wiersbe, 2:194)

b. “Paul grounds the certainty of final judgment in the righteous nature of God. Because God is just we must expect the ultimate righting of wrongs....” (Morris, 118)

c. The wicked will be repaid with **tribulation**

1) “[T]he words ‘tribulation’ and ‘trouble’ are cognate, and hence the verse ought to be rendered as in the R.V., ‘If so be that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you.’” (Gloag, 2)

2) This “trouble” is “**everlasting destruction**” (v. 9)

d. The righteous will be repaid with **rest**

1) “The word ‘rest’ here is a noun in the accusative, not a verb, as English readers might at the first glance suppose. It literally denotes relaxation, ease.” (Gloag, 2)

2) “...Paul thinks of *relief* (*anesin*, which means release of tension; it was used of the slackening of a taut bowstring) for the *troubled*.” (Morris, 119)

3) “**With us**” refers to Paul, Silas, and Timothy

4) “Paul was suffering too (cf. I Cor. 4:9-13; II Cor. 4:8-12; 6:4-10; 11:24-27).” (Utley, 126), and he longed for this blessed “rest” as well

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- e. “The Lord will come, and the world will see a radical reversal. The afflictors of the church will reap affliction from the Lord, and those afflicted for the sake of the Lord will reap rest in his marvelous presence.” (Martin, 33:206)
3. The coming of the Lord will bring “the **revelation** of the Lord Jesus”
- a. “**When the Lord Jesus is revealed**” (NKJV; KJV; ESV; ISV; NET; NASB; NIV; NRSV; RSV) = lit. “**the revelation of the Lord Jesus**” (ASV; HCSB; LEB; NAB; YLT)
- 1) “The final consummation is a *parousia* (1 Thess. 3:13, etc.); now we find that it is also *apokalypsis* (as in 1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:7, 13, etc.), i.e. an uncovering, a disclosure. It is the revelation of a Person at present concealed.” (Morris, 119)
- b. From **heaven** (cf. 1 Th. 1:10; 4:16)
- 1) This indicates not just Jesus’ **origin**, but it also stresses his **authority**. Jesus will come “from the dwelling place of God with the authority of God to execute judgment and recompense” (Green, 289)
- c. With His **mighty angels**
- 1) “‘Powerful’ translates a genitive noun, not an adjective, and is open to a variety of interpretations. Literally the text reads that the Lord will come ‘with the angels of the power of him.’ Power could modify either ‘angels’ or ‘him.’ The word order of the Greek text and the context in general suggests that ‘of power’ refers not to powerful angels but angels who are a part of and an expression of the power of the Lord. Best’s suggestion that a preferable translation would be either ‘the angels by which he exercises power’ or ‘which belong to his power’ is a good one.” (Martin, 33:210)
- 2) Other NT passages also indicate that angels will **accompany Jesus** at the Second Coming (Mt. 13:41; 25:31; Mk. 8:38; Lk. 9:26; 2 Th. 1:7; Jude 14-15)
- d. In **flaming fire**
- 1) “[D]id Paul write ‘in a fire of flame’ [*en pyri phlogos*] or ‘in a flame of fire’ [*en phogi pyros*]? Most commentators, as well as the text of NA<sup>27</sup>, prefer the first reading on the grounds that it has slightly stronger textual support and is the more difficult reading. The second reading is then explained as a copyist’s assimilation either to Isa. 66:15 or other less likely texts such as Ps. 29:7; Isa. 29:6; Dan. 7:9....” (Carson & Beale, 884)
- 2) **Blazing fire** is associated with:
- a) OT **theophanies** (Ex. 3:2; 19:18; 24:17; Dt. 5:4; Dan. 7:9-10)
- b) **God’s judgment** on the wicked (Dt. 32:22; Psa. 50:3; 97:3; Isa. 29:6; 30:27-30, 33; 66:15-16; Jer. 4:4; 15:14; 17:4; 21:12; Ezek. 21:31; 22:20; Nah. 1:6; Zeph. 1:18; 3:8; Mal. 4:1; 2 Pet. 3:7, 10)
- 3) “Human language is stretched almost to its breaking-point in order to convey the terrible character of the coming of the Lord in relation to the wicked....” (Hendriksen, 159-160)
4. The coming of the Lord will bring the “**vengeance**” of the Lord
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- a. “*Vengeance* is an unfortunate rendering, as implying, in popular usage, personal vindictiveness. . . . It is the full awarding of justice to all parties.” (Vincent, 4:55)
- 1) NASB: “dealing out retribution”
  - 2) LEB: “giving punishment”
  - 3) NET: “mete out punishment”
  - 4) NAB: “inflicting punishment”
  - 5) “The word stem for vengeance is the same as that for ‘right’ (v. 5) and ‘just’ (v. 6). It has no overtones of selfish vindictiveness or revenge, but proceeds from the justice of God to accomplish appropriate punishment for criminal offenses.” (Thomas, 11:313)
- b. “*He will punish* points to an activity that belongs to God alone (Deut. 32:35), and its ascription to Christ shows that Paul regarded him as divine in the fullest sense (in vv. 5-6 he spoke of God as judge). The word means not arbitrary punishment, but something like ‘he will do justice upon’ (NEB).” (Morris, 119-120)
- c. The Lord’s retribution will be inflicted upon:
- 1) Those who do not **know God**
  - 2) Those who do not **obey the gospel**
- d. **Who** is Paul talking about?
- 1) “Both clauses begin with the definite article, and such a construction would normally indicate that the author was thinking of two distinct groups.” (Martin, 33:212)
  - 2) Some believe that Paul is talking about **Gentiles** and **Jews**
    - a) **Gentiles** are described as those who **do not know God** (Job 18:21; Psa. 79:6; Jer. 10:25; Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 1:21; Gal. 4:8-9; 1 Th. 4:5)
    - b) **Jews** are described as those who **do not obey God** (Isa. 66:4)
    - 1] Objection: These two expressions do not always refer exclusively to Gentiles and Jews
      - a] Sometimes **Jews** are described as those who **do not know God** (Jer. 4:22; 9:6; Hos. 4:1; 5:4; Jn. 8:55)
      - b] Sometimes **Gentiles** (and Jews) are described as those who **do not obey the gospel** (Rom. 2:12-16; 10:16; 11:30-32) (Carson & Beale, 884; Elias, 259)
      - c] “‘Know’ in this context refers to obedience as much as knowledge, and given this sense of the word both Gentiles and Jews may not ‘know God’ (see John 8:54-55; Jer 9:6). Both unbelieving Jews and unbelieving Gentiles were willfully disobedient to the gospel as far as Paul was concerned (Rom 1:18-20; 2:12-16). Thus either a Jew or a Gentile could be described as one who does not know and does not obey God. Rather than presenting two groups, these two parallel clauses probably reflect the Old Testament background of the passage and utilize parallelism to describe a single group: unbelievers of any ethnicity.” (Martin, 33:212)
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- 3) Others believe that Paul is describing **one group** with parallel expressions
- a) “Furthermore, the two clauses with their OT allusions are better read as being in synonymous parallelism, whereby the second clause restates or clarifies the first....—a reading that is supported by the parallelism also found in the immediately following verse (‘from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might’). Finally, it is doubtful whether the predominantly Gentile church at Thessalonica had knowledge of the OT sufficient to discern in Paul’s allusions a reference to Gentiles and Jews as distinct groups..... Therefore, it is best to see Paul as describing a single group consisting of all those who will receive divine retribution for their failure to know God and obey the gospel.” (Carson & Beale, 884-885)
- 4) I think Paul could be describing **two different groups**, but without any reference to **ethnicity**
- a) Those who **do not know God** could refer to the **irreligious**
  - b) Those who **do not obey the gospel** could refer to the **religious** but **unconverted** and/or **disobedient**
    - 1] “The NT frequently describes the act of conversion as obedience to the *gospel* (Acts 6.7; Rom. 1.5; 6.17; 10.16; 15.18; 16.26; Heb. 5.9; 1 Pet. 1.2, 14, 22). Such a description of the event cues us to the fact that the *gospel* is both the promise and offer of salvation and the demand of obedience to its call. It calls humans to respond to the good news of God, but if the divine initiative is rejected, the very same gospel becomes the criteria by which God will judge the person (Rom. 2.16). In fact, in the judicial sphere the word *obey* (*hypakouousin*) means ‘strict obedience to an order or a law.’ God calls humans through his gospel (2.14), and those who do not respond can only hope for judgment.” (Green, 291)
5. The coming of the Lord will bring the punishment of **everlasting destruction**
- a. **“Punished”** is lit. **“pay the penalty”**
    - 1) NASB: “These will **pay the penalty** of eternal destruction....” (cf. HCSB; LEB; NET; NAB)
  - b. This destruction is **not annihilation**
    - 1) “*Olethros* (‘destruction’) does not refer to annihilation.... The word in LXX and NT usages never has this meaning but rather turns on the thought of separation from God and loss of everything worthwhile in life.... Just as endless life belongs to Christians, endless destruction belongs to those opposed to Christ (Matt 25:41, 46).” (Thomas, 11:313)
    - 2) “*Destruction* means not ‘annihilation’ but complete ruin. It is the loss of all that makes life worth living. Coupled with *everlasting* (better ‘eternal’, as RSV), it is the opposite of eternal life.” (Morris, 120)
    - 3) “The very fact that this ‘destruction’ (cf. I Thess. 5:3; I Cor. 5:5; I Tim. 6:9) is ‘everlasting’ shows that it does not amount to ‘annihilation’ or ‘going out of existence.’ On the contrary it indicates an existence ‘away from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might.’” (Hendriksen, 160)
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- c. This destruction is **everlasting**
- 1) “There will be no deliberations, no appeals, no lessening of the sentence, no possibilities for parole. Judgment will be final and irrevocable.” (Larson, 9:92)
  - 2) “Abandon all hope, ye who enter here” (Dante, “Inferno,” *Divine Comedy*)
- d. This destruction is **from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might**
- 1) These are **parallel expressions**
    - a) “**Glory**” means something like “the visible manifestation of the greatness of God” (Morris, 120)
    - 2) “For the horror of this end will not be so much the pain which may accompany it as the tragedy which is inherent in it, namely that human beings made by God, like God, and for God, should spend eternity without God, irrevocably banished from his presence.” (Stott, 154) (Mt. 7:21-23; 25:41)
    - 3) This is a sharp contrast to the eternal destiny of Christians who will “**always be with the Lord**” (1 Th. 4:17; 5:10)
6. The coming of the Lord will be a time of **glorification**
- a. Jesus will be “**glorified** in His saints”
    - 1) “The Greek is literally ‘when he comes to be glorified in his saints’ (cf. KJV RSV). The word for ‘glory’ is an unusual compound, repeated in verse 12, literally ‘in-glorified in his saints.’” (Ellingworth & Nida, 150)
    - 2) This statement is explained in different ways:
      - a) Jesus will be glorified **by** His saints (*i.e.* they will be the instruments of His glorification)
        - 1] The **overall thought** of the passage supports this view (Green, 295)
      - b) Jesus will be glorified **among** or **in the midst of** His saints (cf. Ps. 89:7)
        - 1] The **parallelism** with “admired among all those who believe” supports this view
    - c) Jesus’ glory will be **reflected in** His saints
      - 1] “He will be glorified *in* (not merely *among*) them; that is, they will reflect his light, his attributes as, in principle, they do even now (II Cor. 3:18). Every vestige of sin will have been banished from their soul. They will mirror forth his image and walk in the light of his countenance (Ps. 89:15-17). In this *he* will rejoice. In this the angels, too, in seeing it, will rejoice. And in this each of the redeemed, seeing the reflection of Christ’s image in all the other redeemed, will rejoice. Moreover, not only will Christ rejoice in the reflection of his own image in them, but he will also rejoice in their joy! Cf. Zeph. 3:17. And his rejoicing in *their* joy will reflect glory on him! Thus, take it in any sense, he will be glorified in his saints. Cf. Is. 49:3...” (Hendriksen, 161)
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- 3) “The issue centers on the meaning of the preposition *en* (‘in’), which could be instrumental (Christ is glorified by or through believers), causal (believers are the cause or reason for Christ to be glorified), or locative (Christ’s glorification takes place in the presence of believers). Although a case can be made for each option, the locative sense is supported by three factors.... The locative meaning (1) agrees with the meaning of *en* in Ps. 88:8 LXX, (2) matches the parallel phrase ‘to be marveled at in all who believe,’ and (3) contrasts well the fate of the Thessalonians’ tormentors, who will be excluded ‘from the presence of the Lord’ (1:9).” (Carson & Beale, 885)
- 4) “The exact purport of this depends on how we understand the repeated preposition *en*, which NIV translates first *in his holy people* and secondly *among all* believers. *En* could also be translated ‘by’ or ‘through’. So how will the coming Lord Jesus be glorified in relation to his people? Not ‘among’ them, as if they will be the theatre or stadium in which he appears; nor ‘by’ them, as if they will be the spectators, the audience who watch and worship; nor ‘through’ or ‘by means of’ them, as if they will be mirrors which reflect his image and glory; but rather ‘in’ them, as if they will be a filament, which itself glows with light and heat when the electric current passes through it.
- “....So when Jesus is revealed in his glory, he will be glorified in his people. We will not only see, but share, his glory. We will be more than a filament which glows temporarily, only to become dark and cold again when the current is switched off. We will be radically and permanently changed, being transformed into his likeness. And in our transformation his glory will be seen in us, for we will glow for ever with the glory of Christ, as indeed he glowed with the glory of his Father [Jn. 14:13].” (Stott, 149-150)
- b. Jesus will be “**admired among all those who believe**”
- 1) “As with the opening half, here too Paul’s language echoes the OT, this time Ps. 67:36 LXX (68:35 ET): ‘God will be marveled at in the presence of his holy ones’ .... Once again we see how Paul takes an OT text that originally refers to God and applies it to Christ.” (Carson & Beale, 884-885)
- 2) “*Believe* in verse 10a and *have believed* in verse 10b refer to acts which took place at a particular point in the past, probably the point at which Paul’s readers first became Christians.” (Ellingworth & Nida, 151)
- c. This glorification will be possible because “**our testimony among you was believed**”
- 1) “The *testimony* is nothing less than the apostolic proclamation of the gospel (Matt. 24.14; Luke 21.13; Acts 4.33; 1 Cor. 1.6; 2 Tim. 1.8), to which the Thessalonians responded in faith at the time of their conversion (cf. 1 Thess. 2.13). This reaction to the divine initiative in the gospel (cf. 2.13-14) places the members of the church in contrast with ‘those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus’ (v. 8). The ultimate destiny of a person or a group of people at the time of the final revelation of the Lord depends on their response to the message of the gospel delivered by the apostolic witnesses.” (Green, 295)

## H. 2 Th. 2:1-12

1. See Lee Wildman's outline "The Man Of Sin" for an analysis of this passage

## II. NT Teaching On The Second Coming (Summarized in 10 Words)

### A. The Second Coming will be **Personal**

1. The Bible speaks of many **figurative, representative, impersonal comings** of the Lord
  - a. Chart: "The Comings Of The Lord"
2. But the **Second Coming**, the **Final Coming**, will be a **literal** and **personal coming** of Jesus Christ 1 Th. 4:16; Heb. 9:27-28
  - a. Jesus is not **sending someone else** or **coming by proxy**. He is coming in the majesty of His own **personal presence**

### B. The Second Coming will be **Visible**

1. As the apostles watched Jesus ascend into Heaven, the angel promised that He would **come back "in like manner"** Acts 1:9-11
2. The NT tells us that when Christ returns, He will be **manifested** Col. 3:4; 1 Jn. 3:1-2
  - a. "**Manifested**" (*phaneroo*)
    - 1) *BAGD*: "reveal, make known, show....1. a things -- a. act.... b. pass. become visible or known, be revealed.... 2. a person -- a. act...show or reveal oneself.... b. pass. -- α. be made known....β. show or reveal oneself, be revealed, appear...to someone....Of the Second Advent Col 3:4a; 1 Pet 5:4; 1 J 2:28; 3:2b...." (852-853)
    - 2) *Thayer*: "to make manifest or visible or known what has been hidden or unknown, to manifest, whether by words, or deeds, or in any other way....pass. used of something hitherto non-existent but now made actual and visible, realized, 1 Jn. iii. 2.... b. with an acc. of the person, to expose to view, make manifest, show one....of his future return from heaven....of Christ now hidden from sight in heaven but hereafter to return visibly, Col. iii. 4...." (#5319, 648)
    - 3) *Vine*: "to make visible, clear, manifest, known....The true meaning is to uncover, lay bare, reveal...." (#5319, 708)
3. The Second Coming of the Savior is described as a "**revelation**" 1 Pet. 1:7, 13
  - a. "**Revelation**" (*apokalupsis*)
    - 1) *BAGD*: "revelation, disclosure.... 1. of the revelation of truth gener.... 2. of revelations of a particular kind, through visions, etc.... 3. in the eschatolog. sense of the disclosure of secrets belonging to the last days....Of the parousia.... 4. in book form...." (92)
    - 2) *Thayer*: "an uncovering; 1. prop. a laying bare, making naked.... 2. tropically, in N.T. and eccl. language.... a. a disclosure of truth, instruction, concerning divine things before unknown -- esp. those relating to the Christian salvation -- given to the soul by God himself, or by the ascended Christ, esp. through the operation of the Holy Spirit (1 Co. ii. 10), and so to be distinguished from other methods of instruction.... b. ...as used of events by which things or states or persons hitherto withdrawn from view are made visible to all, manifestation, appearance...." (#602, 62)

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- 3) *Vine*: “an uncovering...’ is used in the N.T. of (a) the drawing away by Christ of the veil of darkness covering the Gentiles.... (b) ‘the mystery,’ the purpose of God in this age.... (c) the communication of the knowledge of God to the soul.... (d) an expression of the mind of God for the instruction of the church.... (e) the Lord Jesus Christ, to the saints at His Parousia.... (f) the Lord Jesus Christ when He comes to dispense the judgments of God.... (g) the saints, to the creation, in association with Christ in His glorious reign.... (h) the symbolic forecast of the final judgments of God....” (#602, 964-965)
4. When Jesus returns mankind will **see Him come**
- In the **clouds** (Acts 1:9-11)
  - With His **angels** (Mt. 25:31; 2 Th. 1:7; Jude 14-15)
  - In **flaming fire** (2 Th. 1:7)
5. This fact forever exposes **the fallacy** of:
- The JW’s doctrine of the **invisible coming** of the Lord in 1914
    - “This second presence (*par-ou-si’a*) of Christ the Messiah was to be invisible and the unmistakable sign he gave shows conclusively that this return of Christ began in the year 1914. Since that time Christ has turned his attention toward earth’s affairs and is dividing the people and educating the true Christians in preparation for their survival during the great storm of Armageddon....” (*Make Sure of All Things*, 319)
    - If Christ’s return is **visible**, then He **did not return invisibly** in 1914 as the JW’s claim
  - The premillennial doctrine of **the Rapture**
    - If Christ’s return is **visible**, then the premillennial idea that the righteous will be raptured from off the earth, and the wicked will be **left scratching their heads** and wondering what happened to their righteous neighbors cannot be correct
- C. The Second Coming will be **Audible**
- The **shout** of the archangel and the **trump** of God will signal Christ’s return 1 Th. 4:16
  - At this great noise, **all will know** that the end of the world is here
- D. The Second Coming is **Unpredictable**
- The Bible very clearly teaches that **no one knows** when the Lord will return Mt. 24:36, 42, 44, 50; 25:13; Mk. 13:32-37; Lk. 12:35-40
    - The day of the Lord will come **like a thief** in the night 1 Th. 5:1-4; 2 Pet. 3:10
      - Thieves come **unannounced** and **unexpected**
    - The day of the Lord will be an **ordinary day** with “**business as usual**” Mt. 24:37-39
    - The day of the Lord will come when **the wicked least expect it** 1 Th. 5:3; Mt. 24:44;
    - Jesus promised to return when He was **not expected** Lk. 12:40
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2. Despite these clear warnings in the word of God, **men have been predicting** when the Lord would return virtually since the time of the apostles
    - a. The **early Christians** in the church at Thessalonica were so convinced that the Lord's return was imminent that some of them **quit working**
      - 1) The apostle Paul wrote his second letter to the church in part to correct this misunderstanding cf. 2 Th. 2:1-5
    - b. **Tichonius**, a religious writer of the 4th century predicted that Christ would return in **381**
    - c. **Hippolytus** (170-236) and **Lactantius** (250-330) both predicted that **500** would be the time for the Second Coming
    - d. **Many prognosticators** claimed that Christ would return in **1000**
    - e. **Benedictus Aretius of Berne** (1505-1547) calculated that **1572** would be the time of Christ's return
    - f. **Michael Stiefel** (1486-1567), an acquaintance of Martin Luther, concluded that Christ would come and Judgment would begin at 8:00 a.m., **October 19, 1533**
    - g. **Christopher Columbus**, who believed he was fulfilling prophecy in his world explorations, believed that the world would end in **1656**
    - h. **1666** was a year that attracted much speculative attention, since it was 1000 years plus 666, "the number of the Antichrist"
    - i. **Isaac Newton**, noted for his research concerning the law of gravity, predicted that Christ would come in **1715**
    - j. **William Whiston**, who succeeded Newton as Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge and translated the works of Flavius Josephus into English, also believed that Christ would return in **1715**
    - k. **Johann Albrecht Bengel** (1687-1752) concluded that the Millennium would begin **June 18, 1836**
    - l. **John Wesley**, the founder of Methodism, favored the **1836** date, as well
    - m. In 1836 **William Miller**, a Baptist who became an ancestor of the Seventh Day Adventists, delivered a series of lectures entitled "Evidence From Scripture And History Of The Second Coming Of Christ About The Year 1843." When that date failed, he predicted that the world would end **October 22, 1844**
      - 1) *Rick Duggin*: "He was so sure that this was the correct time that he sent out literature warning people to get ready. Hundreds of Millerites gave away their personal belongings as the date drew near. On October 22, the disciples of Miller dressed in white robes, left their homes, and gathered on hilltops, in Cemeteries, and in trees to show their readiness to be 'caught up.' When night came they built fires and continued their watch. Hours passed. Soon shouts of joy turned into sobs of sorrow. When they saw that they had been deceived again, the disciples went home, some in anger, some weeping, some broken hearted, vowing never to trust God or man again. Such are the consequences of speculating on matters that God has not revealed." ("The Second Coming Of Christ," *Westvue Messenger*, Nov. 1985, 28:11:2)
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- n. **Joseph Wolff** (1795-1862) journeyed across America, Europe, Africa, and Asia proclaiming that Christ would appear in **1847**
  - o. **Johaann Philipp Petri** used the same method of calculation that was later used by William Miller and selected **1847** as the date of Christ's return
  - p. **The Irvingites** of England selected the year **1864**
  - q. **Hans Wood** selected the year **1880**
  - r. **Charles Hindley** picked the year **1881**
  - s. **Joanna Southcott**, a woman given to "visions," said Christ would come **October 19, 1884**
  - t. **Joseph Smith**, founder of the Mormon Church, taught that Christ would come no later than **1891**
  - u. **Charles Taze Russell**, writing about 1888, asserted that by the year **1914** "all present governments will be overthrown and dissolved" (*Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. 2, p. 99)
    - 1) *Luther W. Martin*: "Russell also declared; that Jesus 'will then be present as earth's new Ruler'; and that 'neither Israel nor the world of mankind...will any longer be trodden down, oppressed and misruled by beastly Gentile powers. The Kingdom of God and his Christ will then be established in the earth' (*Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. 2, p. 98, quoted in "Date Setters," *Guardian of Truth*, Sept. 15, 1994, 38:18:563)
  - v. *Luther W. Martin*: "When the First World War's Armistice came at the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month (Nov. 11, 1918), a goodly number of folk concluded that the 'midnight' hour of Matthew 25:6 was not far behind." ("Date Setters," *Guardian of Truth*, Sept. 15, 1994, 38:18:563)
  - w. **Edward D. Griffin** proclaimed in 1813, "the complete establishment of the millennial kingdom" in about **1921** or **1922**
  - x. **Joseph Franklin Rutherford**, the successor to Charles T. Russell, wrote a book in 1920, entitled *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, in which he foretold that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would be resurrected in **1925** and would become the visible and legal representatives of a new order on earth
  - y. **Herbert W. Armstrong**, who founded the Worldwide Church of God, predicted that Christ would return on **Jan. 7, 1972**
  - z. The **Watchtower Society** strongly implied that **1975** would mark the time of Christ's Second Coming
    - 1) "1975 will mark the end of 6,000 years of human history since Adam's creation." (*The Watchtower*, Aug. 15, 1968, p. 494)
  - a. In his book *The Late Great Planet Earth*, **Hal Lindsey** argued that the "signs" of Matthew 24 indicated that Jesus would return to earth by about **1988**
  - b. **Edgar C. Whisenant** distributed 4.5 million copies of his book, *Eighty-eight Reasons Why the Rapture will Be in 1988*, but when it didn't happen, he said that he had accidentally miscalculated the date, and then he sold thousands more copies of *The Final Shout: Rapture Report 1989*
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- 1) Brent Lewis reports that he has reprinted this book every year since then, merely changing the date as each new year arrives (“Those Who Don’t Know Enough To Know They Don’t Know,” *Christianity Magazine*, Feb. 1995, 12:2:57)
  - c. On October 20, 1991 a full-page ad in *USA Today* predicted that beginning on **October 28, 1992**, “50 million people will die in earthquakes, 50 million from collapsed buildings, 1.4 billion from World War III and 1.4 billion from a separate Armageddon.” (“Those Who Don’t Know Enough To Know They Don’t Know,” *Christianity Magazine*, Feb. 1995, 12:2:57)
    - 1) This came from a mixture of Korean sects, the worldwide Hyoo-go (Rapture) movement, who combine fanaticism with visions and end-time zeal
  - d. **Harold Camping**, evangelical preacher and founder of Family Radio and Open forum, predicted that Christ would return in **1994**
    - 1) He wrote a bestseller published by Vantage Press entitled *1994* which was ranked by *Bookstore Journal* as the best-selling prophecy book on the market in Feb. 1993
    - 2) *Harold Camping*: “If this study is accurate, and I believe with all my heart it is, there will be no extensions of time. There will be no time for second guessing. When **September 6, 1994**, arrives, no one else can become saved, the end has come.” (Quoted in Brent Lewis, “Those Who Don’t Know Enough To Know They Don’t Know,” *Christianity Magazine*, Feb. 1995, 12:2:57)
  2. All of these men and movements have **one thing in common**. They have all been **WRONG!**
  3. And that tells us that they are **false prophets** cf. Dt. 18:20-22
  4. While men continue to tell us that “**It Won’t Be Very Long**” and “**Jesus Is Coming Soon**,” the NT teaches that **no one knows** the day or the hour of our Lord’s return
    - a. It teaches that Christ will **not return until**
      - 1) Men have been given **every opportunity to repent** 2 Pet. 3:9-10
      - 2) The **times of restitution** of all things Acts 3:21
      - 3) The **day** that God has appointed arrives Acts 17:30-31
    - b. That means “**It Might Be Very Long**” and “**Jesus Might Not Be Coming Soon**”
  - B. The Second Coming is **inevitable**
    1. No matter how long the Lord delays His return, no matter how long man waits, no matter how many times the end-time prognosticators fail in their predictions concerning the time of the Second Coming, **the time will come** 2 Pet. 3:3-10
    2. The longer the Lord **delays** His return, the greater the temptation to
      - a. **Doubt** His coming 2 Pet. 3:3-4
      - b. **Neglect** our proper preparation Lk. 12:42-48
    3. There is **a reason** for the Lord’s delay and that is **the longsuffering** of God. He wants to give every one **every opportunity to be saved** 2 Pet. 3:9
  - C. The Second Coming is **inescapable**
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1. **All** will be there, no one will be able to **escape** or **avoid** it
  - a. *Perry B. Cotham*: “What a spectacle that will be! All the children of men will be there: the living, the multitudinous hosts of the dead, from every place and of every age of the world from the time of Adam to that of the Lord’s return. The small and the great, the good and the bad, the rich and the poor, the wise and the simple, all races and all tongues, will appear before the great white throne. For, before Christ’s tribunal shall be gathered *all nations*, both the *living* and the *dead*. What a vast assembly!” (“The Second Coming Of Christ,” pp. 15-16)
  - b. **All nations** will be assembled before Him Mt. 25:31-32
  - c. Jesus will judge **the living** and **the dead** 2 Tim. 4:1
  - d. He will judge **all** 2 Cor. 5:10
  - e. He will judge **the world** Acts 17:30-31
2. There will be **no escape** 1 Th. 5:3

#### D. The Second Coming is **Eschatological**

1. The word “**eschatology**” means “**the study of last things,**” and so when I say that the Second Coming is eschatological, I mean that the Second Coming of Jesus will “**wind up**” **this earthly scene**
  - a. Jesus will **come unexpectedly** like a **thief** in the night (Mt. 24:36, 42-44; 1 Th. 5:1-6)
  - b. When He comes with **His angels** (Mt. 16:27; 25:31; 2 Th. 1:7), He will descend from **heaven** in **glory** with a **shout**, with the voice of the **archangel**, and with the **trump** of God (1 Th. 4:16)
  - c. **All the dead**, both the righteous and the wicked, will be **raised** at the **same hour** (Jn. 5:28-29; Acts 24:15) with **incorruptible bodies** (1 Cor. 15:35-52) on the **last day** (Jn. 6:39-40, 44, 54; 11:24)
  - d. Those who are **still living** when Christ returns will be **changed** in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. 15:50-53)
  - e. The righteous will be **caught up** to meet the Lord in the air (1 Th. 4:13-17), and they will **glorify** and **magnify** their Savior (2 Th. 1:9-10)
  - f. The heavens and the earth will be **destroyed** (2 Pet. 3:7-12)
  - g. Jesus will sit on the throne of His glory to **judge the world** in righteousness (Mt. 25:31; Acts 17:30-31)
  - h. All men will be gathered before Him to **give an account** of the deeds done in the body (Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10), and they will be **judged by the word of Christ** on the last day (Jn. 12:48)
  - i. Jesus will make a **separation** between the righteous and the wicked and pronounce the **eternal destinies** of each (Mt. 25:31-46)
  - j. Jesus will **deliver up the kingdom** to God, and he will again be **subjected** to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24-28)
    - 1) Jesus is not returning to **establish His kingdom**, as the premillennialist would have us believe, but to **return His present authority** to the Father

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- 2) Jesus has **already established** His kingdom Acts 2:30-36
  - k. The righteous will enjoy the **bliss of heaven** for eternity, and the wicked will be **tormented in hell** (Mt. 25:46; 2 Th. 1:6-10)
  - 2. There will be **no time for a 1,000 year reign** on the earth as the premillennialists and the dispensationalists would have us believe
    - a. The righteous will be raised on the **last day** Jn. 6:39-40, 44, 54; 11:24
    - b. They will be raised at the **last trump** 1 Cor. 15:52
    - c. All the dead will be raised at the **same time** Jn. 5:28-29; Acts 24:15
    - d. The wicked will be judged the **last day** Jn. 12:48
    - e. The reward for the righteous will be received in the **last time** 1 Pet. 1:5
  - 3. The Second Coming of our Lord will be **the end of this earthly existence** 1 Cor. 1:7-8; 15:23-24
- E. The Second Coming is **Judicial**
- 1. When Jesus came into the world the first time, He did not come as a **Judge** Jn. 3:16-17
  - 2. But when Jesus returns, He will come as **the Judge** of all mankind Acts 17:30-31; 2 Tim. 4:1
    - a. We can be assured that this judgment will come because **God raised Jesus from the dead**
  - 3. When Jesus sits on the throne of His judgment
    - a. All men will **stand** before Him Mt. 25:31-32a
    - b. A **separation** will be made between the righteous and the wicked Mt. 25:32b-33
    - c. Every man will **give an account** for the things done in his body 2 Cor. 5:10
      - 1) Jesus will judge our **words** Mt. 12:36-37
      - 2) And our **works** Eccl. 12:14; Rom. 2:6
      - 3) And the **secrets** of our hearts Eccl. 12:14; Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 4:5
    - d. Each of us will be judged by the standard of **Christ's words** Jn. 12:48
    - e. All will **bow** before Him and **confess** Rom. 14:10-12, but for the wicked it will be **too late** then
    - f. Every man will be **rewarded** according to his deeds Rom. 2:5-11
    - g. The righteous will hear **His words of welcome** and will be ushered into the **glorious bliss of heaven** Mt. 25:34ff, 46
    - h. The wicked will hear **His words of rejection** and will be banished into the **torturous doom of hell** Mt. 25:41ff, 46
- F. The Second Coming is **Potential**
- 1. By that I mean that the Second Coming of our Lord **could occur at any moment** Mt. 24:45-51
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2. While the Lord might delay His coming for another **5 years** or another **500 years** or another **5000 years** or for that matter another **5 million years**, He could come in the next **5 minutes** -- He could come in the next **5 seconds**

G. The Second Coming is **Motivational**

1. Because of the **momentous things** that will take place at the Second Coming and because it **could occur at just any moment**, the Second Coming of Jesus is intended to **motivate us to godly living** 2 Pet. 3:14-18
2. The Second Coming should cause us to be:
  - a. An **expectant** people 2 Pet. 3:11-13; 1 Th. 5:4-8; 2 Tim. 4:6-8; Tit. 2:13
    - 1) We need to have the attitude of NT Christians cf. 1 Cor. 16:22
  - b. A **hopeful** people 1 Th. 4:13-18; 1 Pet. 1:3-7
  - c. A **joyful** people 1 Pet. 4:12-13
  - d. A **patient** people Jas. 5:7-11; Heb. 10:36-37
    - 1) A slogan that greets every young man who enters the gates of the U.S. Naval Academy says: "On the plains of hesitation lie the blackened bones of countless millions, who, at the dawn of victory, sat down to rest, and resting -- died!"
  - e. A **fearful** people 1 Pet. 1:17-19
  - f. A **prepared** people Mk. 13:32-37; Mt. 24:42, 47; 25:1-13; 1 Th. 5:4-11
  - g. A **pure** people 1 Pet. 1:13-16; 2 Pet. 3:10-14; 1 Jn. 3:2-3; Tit. 2:11-14
  - h. An **active** people Lk. 12:41-48; 1 Cor. 15:58
  - i. A **faithful** people Mt. 10:22; Col. 1:21-23; Heb. 3:5-14; Rev. 2:10; cf. Lk. 18:8

II. **Paul's Teaching On The Second Coming Vs. Premillennialism**

A. Explanation & Argumentation:

1. **The OT Kingdom Prophecies**
  - a. While the OT prophets prophesied of **the Messianic kingdom**, they did not prophesy of **the church**
    - 1) Note: The **church** was a part of **God's eternal plan** (Eph. 3:10-11), but He **didn't tell anyone** about it
2. **The Incarnation:**
  - a. Jesus came to earth to **establish the Messianic kingdom** and fulfill the promises that God had made to the Jews, but **the Jews rejected Him** as the Messiah (Jn. 1:11)
    - 1) Rather than set up His kingdom, **Christ was crucified** instead
  - b. Because of their rejection, Jesus did not establish **the Messianic kingdom** but established **the church** instead as a substitute (an intercalation)
    - 1) The **church** is not **spiritual Israel**

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- 2) Note: The **kingdom of heaven in mystery form** (not the church) was established at the first advent (cf. Mt. 13:11). The **church** is a part of the kingdom of heaven in its **mystery form**
  - c. The **prophetic clock stopped** and everything was left in **suspended animation**
  3. **The Church Age** (The Great Parenthesis):
    - a. During the Church Age:
      - 1) The Jews will begin to **gather in Palestine**
      - 2) The **Jewish temple will be rebuilt** (or at least started)
    - b. Near the end of the Church Age, the **“signs of the times”** (Mt. 24:6-7) will begin to indicate that **the “rapture”** of the saints is near
      - 1) **Wars and rumors of wars**
      - 2) **Earthquakes**
      - 3) **Famine**
      - 4) **Social unrest**
      - 5) Etc.
  4. **The Rapture** (The Translation – The First Resurrection):
    - a. The word **“rapture”** comes from the Latin word *rapere* found in the expression **“caught up”** in the Latin translation of 1 Thessalonians 4:17 (Miller, 119)
    - b. Christ will return **for** His saints
    - c. The **dead in Christ** will be resurrected, the **living saints** will be changed, and together they will be **caught away** from the earth to meet the Lord in the air (1 Th. 4:13-18; 2 Th. 2:1; Mt. 24:40-41)
      - 1) This is the **general resurrection of the righteous**
      - 2) The unbelieving world will **hear nothing**, and **see nothing**, except that the people in question will have **disappeared**
        - a) Bumper sticker: **“In case of the rapture, this car is unmanned!”**
      - 3) Note: Premillennialists are divided as to the time sequence of the rapture and the tribulation
        - a) **Pre-tribulationists** believe that the rapture will occur before the tribulation begins
        - b) **Mid-tribulationists** believe that the rapture will occur in the middle of the tribulation
        - c) **Post-tribulationists** believe that the rapture will occur after the tribulation ends
      - 4) After the rapture has occurred, there will be **no children of God on earth**
      - 5) Premillennialists argue that the **“day of the Lord”** falls into **two parts**
        - a) “The future ‘Day of the Lord’ which unleashes God’s wrath, falls into two parts: 1) the end of the 7 year tribulation period (cf. Rev 19:11-21), and 2) the end of the Millennium. These two are actually 1,000 years

apart and Peter refers to the end of the 1,000 year period in connection with the final “Day of the Lord” (cf. 2Pe 3:10; Rev 20:7-15). Here, Paul refers to that aspect of the “Day of the Lord,” which concludes the tribulation period.” (*The MacArthur Study Bible*, n.p.)

- b) “**The day of the Lord** is an all-encompassing term to describe the period that begins with the Great Tribulation, and includes the second coming of Christ and the millennial kingdom.” (*The KJV Study Bible*, n.p.)

5. **The Marriage Supper Of The Lamb:**

- a. The raptured saints will enjoy a period of **bliss** and **peace** with Jesus in heaven for seven years
- b. During this time, the church with Christ in heaven will be:
- 1) **Judged** (2 Cor. 5:10)
  - 2) **Rewarded** (1 Cor. 3:14)
  - 3) **Married** (Rev. 19:7-9)

6. **The Tribulation:**

- a. Meanwhile back on earth, since there will not be a single true believer left in the world, **wickedness will be running rampant** in a period of “**tribulation**” on the earth for this seven year period of time (cf. Dan. 9:24-27)
- 1) Some believe that this period of time will be **shortened** (cf. Mt. 24:22)
- b. The **Holy Spirit** will be removed as “**the restrainer of sin**” (cf. 2 Th. 2:6-7)
- 1) As a result, the world will become **more vile** than it has ever been in human history
- c. The **Antichrist** will be revealed
- 1) The Antichrist will **appear friendly** to the Jewish people
  - 2) Many Jews will be **converted**
    - a) But who will **convert these Jews** with the church gone?
- d. There will be relative **peace** and **prosperity** under the Antichrist for the first 3½ years
- e. The last 3½ years will be a period of **unprecedented horror** – **The Great Tribulation** (Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Mt. 24:21; Rev. 7:14; 12:6, 14; 11:2-3; 13:5)
- 1) The Antichrist will **turn against the Jews**
  - 2) There will be the most **intense persecution** the world has ever seen
  - 3) Israel will be **regathered** from all the ends of the earth
    - a) **Judged** by the Lord in the wilderness
    - b) **Restored** in blessing to their own land to be a blessing to all the nations of the earth

7. **The Revelation** (The Second Coming – The Second Resurrection):

- a. At the end of the seven years, Christ will come down to earth **with** His saints (cf. 2 Th. 2:2)

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- b. At this time the “**tribulation saints**” (those converted to Christ during the tribulation period) and **OT saints** will be raised from the dead
8. **The Battle of Armageddon:**
- a. Christ Jesus comes in visible glory with His angels as **King of kings** and **Lord of lords**
  - b. **The Battle of Armageddon** will be fought between the forces of good and evil
    - 1) The Battle of Armageddon marks the **end of all war** on earth
9. **The Millennial Reign:**
- a. Satan is **conquered, bound**, and consigned to **the abyss** for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3)
  - b. Christ establishes the **millennial kingdom**, where He will reign in **Jerusalem** in the **tabernacle of David**, on the **throne of David**, for **1,000 years**. (Rev. 20:4-6)
  - c. The **kingdom promises** to Israel will be fulfilled
    - 1) The Jews will have been **restored to Palestine**, exalted, blessed, and favored
    - 2) The earth will be full of the **knowledge of Jehovah** (Isa. 11:9)
    - 3) The Lord will be **king over all the earth** (Zech. 14:9; Psa. 2:8; Isa. 42:4; Jer. 23:5; Dan. 2:35, 44-45; 7:24-27; Lk. 1:31-33)
    - 4) There will be a **cleavage in the Mount of Olives** when Christ comes (Zech. 14:4; Mt. 24:3; Acts 1:11-12)
    - 5) There will be a **river of living water** flowing from Jerusalem (Zech. 14:8; cf. Ezek. 47:1; Joel 3:18)
    - 6) Jerusalem will be **exalted** (Zech. 14:10)
    - 7) **Peace** will reign throughout the earth
    - 8) There will be **increased longevity** (Isa. 65:20; Psa. 90:10)
    - 9) **Animal nature** will be radically changed (Isa. 65:25; 11:6-9; Hos. 2:18)
    - 10) The whole of nature will be **newly productive** (Isa. 35:1, 6-7; 41:17-20; 55:12-13; Rom. 8:22)
  - d. When Christ sits on the throne of His glory, **the nations** are brought before Him to be judged as to the treatment of His brethren, the remnant of Israel during the Great Tribulation
    - 1) The nations will be **subjects** of the King (Psa. 72:11; 86:9; Dan. 7:13-14; Mic. 4:2; Zech. 8:22)
    - 2) The **Church** will reign with Christ (2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 5:10; 20:6)
  - e. The **temple** will be rebuilt
  - f. The **Levitical priesthood** will be reestablished (Isa. 66:21-23; Heb. 7:12)
  - g. **Animal sacrifices** will be reinstated for the Jews (Isa. 60:7; Ezek. 43:18 – 46:24; Heb. 10:4, 14)
  - h. **The Second Resurrection:** The wicked will be raised
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10. **The Gog & Magog revolt:**
    - a. After the 1,000 year-reign, Satan will be **loosed** for a little season
    - b. He will gather his forces from **Gog and Magog**, and they will surround the camp of the saints
    - c. Satan and his forces will be **finally defeated** and cast into **the lack of fire**
    - d. All the wicked dead will be raised [The Third Resurrection]
  11. **The destruction of the world:**
    - a. The **heavens** and the **earth** will be destroyed (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; Heb. 1:10-12; 2 Pet. 3:3-13; Rev. 20:11; 21:1)
  12. **The Final Judgment**
  13. **The Eternal State:**
    - a. The wicked will be banished to **hell**, and the righteous will dwell with God in **heaven** (Rev. 20:12-15; 21:8; 22:10-15)
  14. Note: Premillennialists **differ** among themselves as to a number of **the specifics** that are to occur in this overall framework:
    - a. The **restoration** of the Jews to Palestine
    - b. The **rebuilding** of the temple
- B. Evaluation & Refutation:
1. **The rejection of Jesus by the Jews was foreknown and foretold by God**
    - a. It did not **catch God by surprise**
    - b. The OT prophets **prophesied Jesus' rejection** by the Jews
      - 1) About 700 years before Jesus was born, **Isaiah** prophesied that He would be **rejected** by His own people and **put to death** Isa. 53:1ff, 3
        - a) **NT writers** repeatedly cite Isa. 53 as a **prophecy of Christ's Passion**
          - 1] Isa. 53:1-12: Lk. 24:27, 46; 1 Pet. 1:11
          - 2] Isa. 53:1: Jn. 12:38; Rom. 10:16
          - 3] Isa. 53:2: Mt. 2:23
          - 4] Isa. 53:3: Mk. 9:12
          - 5] Isa. 53:4: Mt. 8:17; 1 Pet. 2:24
          - 6] Isa. 53:5: Rom. 4:25; Mt. 26:67; 1 Pet. 2:25
          - 7] Isa. 53:5-6: Jn. 1:29
          - 8] Isa. 53:6: 1 Pet. 2:25
          - 9] Isa. 53:7: Mt. 26:63; 27:12, 14; Mk. 14:60-61; 1 Pet. 2:23
          - 10] Isa. 53:7-8 (LXX): Acts 8:32-33
          - 11] Isa. 53:8-9: Mt. 26:24; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 Jn. 3:2
          - 12] Isa. 53:11: Rom. 5:19

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- 13] Isa. 53:12; Mt. 27:38; Lk. 22:37; 23:34; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 2:24  
(Jones, n.p.)
- 2) Psalm 118 foretells the **Messiah's rejection** (Psa. 118:22-24)
- a) Several NT passages apply this passage to Jesus
- 1] Psa. 118:22; Mt. 21:42; Mk. 12:10-11; Lk. 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:4, 7 (Jones, n.p.)
- c. Jesus said that **His Passion was prophesied** by the OT prophets Lk. 18:31-33; 24:44-46
- d. Christ's suffering was a part of **God's eternal plan** (Acts 2:22-23; 3:17-18)
- e. If Jesus had been **accepted by the Jews**, there would be **no remedy for sin**
- f. **Psalm 2** clearly indicates that the Jews' rejection of Jesus did not **thwart God's plan** to establish the Messianic kingdom
- 1) The nations and the kings will **plot against Jehovah and His Anointed** (Psa. 2:1-3)
- a) This refers to **the crucifixion** of Jesus (Acts 4:24-28)
- 2) Despite the opposition of the nations, **Jehovah will set His King on His holy hill of Zion** (Psa. 2:4-6)
- a) On Pentecost, Peter proclaimed Jesus as both **Lord** and **Christ** (Acts 2:36)
- 3) The nations will be **given to the Son** for His inheritance (Psa. 2:7-8)
- 4) The Son will **break the nations** with a rod of iron (Psa. 2:9)
- g. Jesus warned the Jews that the kingdom would be **given to another nation** (Mt. 21:42-44; cf. 1 Pet. 2:6-10)
2. **Jesus established His kingdom in the first century**
- a. There was an **"air of expectancy"** for the Messianic kingdom in the first century
- 1) **Simeon** was waiting for the **consolation of Israel** (Lk. 2:25)
- 2) **Anna** was looking for the **redemption of Jerusalem** (Lk. 2:38)
- 3) The **thief on the cross** asked Jesus to remember him when **"You come into your kingdom"** (Lk. 23:42)
- 4) **Joseph of Arimathaea** was waiting for the **kingdom of God** (Mk. 15:42-43; Lk. 23:50-51)
- 5) The **apostles** asked: **"Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"** (Acts 1:6)
- b. John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles prophesied that the establishment of the Messianic kingdom was **"at hand"** (Mt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7); and the seventy prophesied that it was **"near"** (Lk. 10:9, 11)
- c. Jesus specifically said that the **"time is fulfilled"** (Mk. 1:14-15)
- 1) Predictions with a **time element** cannot be **postponed**
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- a) *Frank Himmel*: “If I predict that a certain team will win the World Series, but do not say when, then whenever they win my prediction will be fulfilled. But if I specify 1999 as the year, and they do not win until 2005, I cannot say my prediction was ‘postponed.’ I must admit it was false.  
 “So it is with Bible prophecy. When Daniel put a time element on the establishment of God’s kingdom – in the days of the Roman kings (Dan. 2:44) – that eliminated every other time, before or after. Either his prophecy came to pass or he must be rejected altogether as a false prophet (see Dt. 18:22).” (“Was The Kingdom Postponed?,” *The Speaker*, Nov. 1998, 38:11:3)
- d. Jesus prophesied that the kingdom would be established within **the lifetime of His contemporaries** Mk. 9:1
- e. Christ claimed **all authority** in heaven and on earth Mt. 28:18
- f. When Jesus **ascended to heaven**:
- 1) He sat down on the **right hand of God** (Mk. 16:19; cf. Lk. 22:69; Heb. 1:1-3; 10:12; 12:2)
  - 2) He sat on His **Father’s throne** (Acts 2:30-33; Rev. 3:21)
  - 3) He was seated far above all **principality, power, might and dominion** (Eph. 1:20-23)
  - 4) He was given a **kingdom** (Dan. 7:13-14)
- g. Zechariah prophesied that the Messiah would **rule** and be a **priest** on his throne Zech. 6:12-13
- h. On Pentecost, Peter declared that the **Messianic kingdom was established** when Jesus ascended to the right hand of God Acts 2:30, 34-36
- i. Following the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus, the kingdom is spoken of as **being in existence**
- j. At the Second Coming, Jesus will **deliver up**, not **set up** His kingdom (1 Cor. 15:23-26)
- 1) “In 1 C. 15:24 the reference can only be to the cessation of Christ’s dominion.” (Kittel, 2:171)
3. **The church was part of the eternal purpose of God**
- a. The church was not **an afterthought**; it was a part of the **eternal purpose** of God (Eph. 3:8-11)
  - b. And the prophets wrote about **the church** (Isa. 2:1-4; 11:10-16; 27:13; 49:6; Mic. 4:1-8; cf. Acts 26:21-23)
4. **The “signs of the times” do not indicate the imminent return of Christ**
- a. The so-called **“signs of the times”** were mentioned by Jesus in the **Olivet Discourse** (Mt. 24:4-8; Mk. 13:5-8; Lk. 21:8-19)
  - b. In that discourse, Jesus prophesied the **destruction of the temple** in Jerusalem (Mt. 24:1-2; Mk. 13:1-2; Lk. 21:5-6)
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- c. Jesus said of this destruction: “Assuredly, I say to you, **this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.**” (Mt. 24:34)
  - d. He also warned his disciples **not to be deceived** by the “signs of the times” (Mt. 24:4-8)
  - e. So these so-called “signs of the times” were not even **reliable indicators of Jerusalem’s destruction**, much less the Second Coming
5. **There will be no secret Rapture of the church**
- a. The word **“Rapture”** comes from the Latin word *raptura* which is translated **“caught up”** in 1 Thessalonians 4:17
  - b. While this passage talks about a **“Rapture” of the saints**, its teaching is very different than what Premillennial preachers say about **“The Rapture”**
    - 1) Chart: “Rapture Vs. Resurrection”
    - 2) This passage does not discuss **the destiny of the wicked**
      - a) Chart: “Only Two Groups”
    - 3) But other passages tell us that **all the dead**, both righteous and wicked, will be **raised at the same time**
      - a) Chart: “One Resurrection For All”
      - b) Chart: “All Will Hear”
  - c. Premillennialists make a distinction between the **“Rapture”** and the **“Revelation”**
    - 1) Chart: ““Rapture” Vs. ‘Revelation’”
    - 2) Chart: “2 Th. 1:6-10: Rapture & Revelation”
    - 3) Chart: “Wiersbe On 2 Th. 1:6-10”
    - 4) Chart: “2 Th. 2:1-8: Rapture & Revelation”
    - 5) Chart: “The Day Of Christ”
  - d. But NT writers make **no such distinction**. They use the different key terms **for the same event**
    - 1) Chart: “Interchangeable Terms”
    - 2) The famous denominational preacher and author, **G. Campbell Morgan**, was interviewed in *Christianity Today* (Aug. 31, 1959). Please note this exchange:
      - a) *Paul Jackson*: “After your long and full study and extensive exposition of the Bible, do you find any Scriptural warrant for the distinction which Bible teachers draw between the second coming of the Lord FOR his own (the rapture) and the coming of the Lord WITH his own (the revelation) with a time period of 3½ to 7 seven years between?”
      - b) *G. Campbell Morgan*: “Emphatically not! I know this view very well. In the earlier years of my ministry I taught it and incorporated it in one of my books (*God’s Method With Man*). But further study so convinced me of the error of this teaching that I actually went to the expense of
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buying the plates from the publisher and destroying them. **The idea of a separate and secret coming of Christ is a vagary of prophetic interpretation without any Biblical basis whatsoever.**" (Bold emphasis added, quoted by Rick Lanning, "The Rapture," Unpublished Sermon Outline)

- e. The NT does not teach the Premillennial doctrine of the Rapture
6. **The prophesied tribulation has already occurred**
  - a. The **great tribulation** prophesied by Jesus in His Olivet Discourse (Mt. 24:21) occurred in the lifetime of His contemporaries Mt. 24:34
  - b. The **tribulation** prophesied of in the book of Revelation (Rev. 7:14) occurred shortly after the book was written (Rev. 1:1, 3; 22:10)
7. **The "Antichrist" was a first century phenomenon**
  - a. **John** is the only NT writer that uses the term "**Antichrist**" (1 Jn. 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 Jn. 7)
  - b. His writings reveal **all that we can know** for sure about the Antichrist
    - 1) Anti (against) + Christ = **Against Christ**, not instead of Christ
    - 2) "Last hour" in **first century** (1 Jn. 2:18)
    - 3) **Many**, not just one (1 Jn. 2:18)
    - 4) **Present**, not future (1 Jn. 2:18; 4:3)
    - 5) Went out from **among Christians** (1 Jn. 2:19)
  - c. The Antichrist is **anyone, anywhere, anytime** who is **against Christ**
  - d. The **spirit of antichrist**:
    - 1) Denies that Jesus is **the Christ** (1 Jn. 2:22)
    - 2) Denies **the Father** and **the Son** (1 Jn. 2:22; 4:3; 2 Jn. 7; cf. Jn. 10:30; 5:23)
    - 3) Denies the **Incarnation** (1 Jn. 4:3; 2 Jn. 7)
    - 4) **Deceives** Christians (1 Jn. 2:26)
8. **God has fulfilled all of His promises to the Jews**
  - a. The **nation promise** was fulfilled in **Egypt** and **Sinai** (Gen. 46:3; Ex. 1:7; Dt. 1:9-11; 10:22; 26:5; 1 Ki. 3:8; Heb. 11:11-12; Ex. 19:3-6)
  - b. The **land promise** was fulfilled when the **Israelites conquered Canaan** (Josh. 11:23; 21:43-45; 23:14; 2 Sam. 8:3; 1 Ki. 4:2; 1 Chr. 18:3; 2 Chr. 9:26; Neh. 9:7-8, 23-24)
  - c. The **Messianic promise** was fulfilled in the **death of Jesus** (Lk. 24:44-47; Jn. 17:4; Acts 3:17-26; 26:6-7)
  - d. The **hope of Israel** is found in the **spiritual blessings** in Christ (Acts 3:17-26; 26:6-7; Eph. 3:6; Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 2:11-12, 19-20)
9. **Jesus' kingdom is spiritual, not physical** (Jn. 18:36)
  - a. Jesus is the **Prince of peace** and his warfare against Satan is **spiritual** (Isa. 9:6; 2 Cor. 10:4-5; Eph. 6:10-17; 1 Tim. 6:12)
10. **A reversion to Judaism during the millennium is absurd**

- a. The **law of Moses** has been replaced by the **gospel of Christ** (Mt. 26:28; Rom. 7:4-7; Heb. 10:9-10; Gal. 2:21; Col. 2:14-16; Eph. 2:14-16)
- b. The NT is an **everlasting covenant** (Heb. 13:20)
- c. Jesus' **one-time sacrifice for sin** makes animal sacrifices obsolete

11. **Revelation 20 does not support Premillennial doctrine**

- a. It does not mention:
  - 1) **The Second Coming**
  - 2) **Christ on earth**
  - 3) **Reign on earth**
  - 4) **Jerusalem**
  - 5) **David's throne**
  - 6) **Prominence for the Jews** (Return or Conversion)
  - 7) **Utopia on earth**
  - 8) **All Christians**
  - 9) **The duration of the reign of Christ**
- b. The resurrection under consideration in this highly symbolic book, is a figurative, **symbolic resurrection** (cf. Rom. 11:15; Eph. 2:4-6; Col. 3:1)

III. **Paul's Teaching On The Second Coming Vs. Realized Eschatology**

A. Explanation & Argumentation:

- 1. Jesus would **come in judgment on Jerusalem** (Mal. 4:1, 5; Mt. 23:37-39; 24:3, 27, 30; 26:64; Mk. 13:26; Lk. 21:27)
  - a. The disciples ask Jesus concerning **the time** and **the sign** of the coming destruction of the temple
    - 1) Chart: "The Disciples' Questions"
    - 2) By comparing the three accounts, it is obvious that the disciples linked the **destruction of Jerusalem** with the **coming of the Lord** and the **end of the age/world**
  - b. The questions of the disciples are **significant**
    - 1) The address that follows is given to **answer these questions**
    - 2) Therefore, our understanding of **the disciples' questions** is important to our understanding of **Jesus' answer**
  - c. At this time the apostles did not understand Jesus' teaching concerning His **death, burial, resurrection, and ascension**
    - 1) At that time, He was still with them, and they did not **expect Him to leave**
    - 2) They **did not understand**:
      - a) **1 year** before His death (Mt. 16:21-23)
      - b) **6 months** before His death (Lk. 9:43-45)

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- c) **3 months** before His death (Lk. 18:31-34)
  - d) **1 week** before His death (Lk. 19:11)
  - e) **1 night** before His death (Jn. 14:1-6; 16:16-22)
  - f) **3 days** after His death (Lk. 24:9-11; Jn. 20:8-10)
  - g) **43 days** after His death (Acts 1:6)
- d. Therefore, it is highly unlikely, if not impossible, that they would have been asking about **the “Second Coming”**
- 1) *Sam Dawson*: “They didn’t expect Jesus to go away the night before he died. They would not have asked about a final return, which they, at that time, didn’t believe in.” (*Essays on Eschatology*, 45)
- e. Furthermore, the language that the disciples used does not, in and of itself, prove that they were thinking of **the Second Coming** or **the end of the world**
- 1) The phrase **“Your coming”** [*parousia*, lit., “presence”] could very easily refer to an **invisible, impersonal “coming” in judgment** cf. Isa. 19:1; Mt. 10:23; 26:64
  - 2) The phrase the **“end of the world”** [*aion*, lit., “age”] could very easily refer to the **end of the “age”** cf. 1 Cor. 10:11; Heb. 9:26
    - a) In Jewish thought, there were **two ages**:
      - 1] **“This age”** = Pre-Messianic age
      - 2] **“The age to come”** = Messianic age
  - 3) In the Parable of the **Wheat** and the **Tares**, Jesus spoke of a **harvest** at the **end of the age** Mt. 13:30, 39-43
    - a) When Jesus asked the apostles: **“Have you understood all these things?”**, they replied **“Yes, Lord”** (Mt. 13:51)
    - b) So they were not confused about the **“end of the age”**
  - 4) So when the disciples asked Jesus “Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of **the end of the age?”** (Mt. 24:3), they knew that the **“end of the age”** was the **coming of Christ in judgment on the Jewish nation** and the destruction of the temple
  - 5) Therefore, they were asking about **the end of the Pre-Messianic age** -- the age when “these things” would be accomplished
    - a) The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 was described as **“the end”** (Mt. 24:3, 6, 13-14; Mk. 13:7, 13; Lk. 21:9)
- f. If the apostles **didn’t ask** about the “Second Coming,” why would Jesus have **talked about it**?
- g. While many postulate a **transition** in the Olivet Discourse from the destruction of Jerusalem to the Second Coming (at Mt. 24:36) there are good reasons to doubt any such transition
- 1) **A comparison of Lk. 17:22-37 with Mt. 24:1-51** indicates that there is no transition from a discussion of Jerusalem’s destruction to the Second Coming in Jesus’ Olivet discourse
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- a) Chart: “Is There A Transition?”
  - b) If Jesus’ language implied a change of subject in Mt. 24, then the same language would have Jesus **jumping back and forth** between the destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Coming in Lk. 17
    - 1] Chart: “All These Transitions???”
    - 2) If the word “**end**” is referring to the **end of time** or **the Second Coming** and there is **a transition** or change of subjects somewhere in the chapter, we would expect Jesus to use the word “**end**” in the **latter part** of the chapter, but this is not the case. The word **occurs before the supposed transition** (Mt. 24:6, 13, 14)
    - 3) Jesus uses the word “**coming**” throughout this discourse without regard to any supposed transition (Mt. 24:3, 27, 30 & Mt. 24:37, 39, 42, 44) which suggests that there is **no transition**
2. The NT repeatedly refers to an **imminent coming of the Lord**
    - a. Chart: “An Imminent Coming”
      - 1) Note: In the NT the expression “**this generation**” always refers to **Jesus’ contemporary generation** (Mt. 11:16; 12:41-42; 23:36; 24:34; Mk. 8:12; 13:30; Lk. 7:31; 11:30-32, 50-51; 17:25; 21:32)
  3. The **only imminent coming** of Jesus was **His coming in judgment on Jerusalem**
    - a. Plural pronouns “**you,**” “**our,**” “**us,**” “**we**” (1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Th. 4:15-16; 5:4) indicate a fulfillment within the lifetime of those addressed
      - 1) Chart: “Specific Pronouns”
      - 2) *Sam Dawson*: “Paul taught the imminent return of Christ [1 Th. 4:15-16], and included himself among those who would still be alive when the resurrection of the dead in Christ happened.” (*Essays on Eschatology*, 15)
    - b. Reply:
      - 1) If the “**coming of the Lord**” was **AD 70** and Paul included himself when he said “**we,**” he was **wrong**, because he was **executed before AD 70**
      - 2) Those passages do not promise that Jesus **would return** in their lifetime; they teach that they should **be ready if He returns**
      - 3) Furthermore, plural pronouns can be used in a **generic sense**, rather than a specific sense (cf. Gen. 49:1, 10)
  4. Therefore, **Jesus’ “Second Coming”** was **His coming in judgment on Jerusalem in AD 70**
    - a. *F. W. Farrar*: “It was to this event [the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, ksk], the most awful in history that we must apply **those prophecies of Christ’s coming** in which every one of the Apostles and Evangelists describe it as **near at hand**. To those prophecies our Lord Himself fixed these three most definite limitations -- the one, that **before that generation passed away all these things would be fulfilled**; another that **some standing there should not taste death till they saw the Son of Man coming in His kingdom**; the third, that **the Apostles should not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come**. It is strange that these distinct limitations should not be regarded as the decisive
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proof that **the Fall of Jerusalem was, in the fullest sense, the Second Advent of the Son of Man**, which was primarily contemplated by the earliest voices of prophecy.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Early Days of Christianity*, 489-490)

B. Evaluation & Refutation:

1. There are **several things** that can be said about RE’s contention that the apostles’ could not have asked Jesus about **some other “coming”** than His coming in judgment on Jerusalem
  - a. RE’s assume several things concerning **“the end of the age”** (Mt. 13:39-40, 49; 24:3) and **“the end”** (Mt. 10:22;
    - 1) They assume that the terms **“the age”** and **“this age”** always **mean the same thing**
      - a) Chart: “Same Term – Different Meanings”
      - b) Chart: “Laying On Of Hands”
    - 2) They assume that the terms **“the age”** and **“this age”** refers to **the Jewish Age**
    - 3) They assume that **Jesus was talking about the Jewish Age**
    - 4) They assume that when the disciples said they understood, they **really did understand**
      - a) **Job’s friends** thought they understood the reason for Job’s suffering -- “Piety pays, perversity punishes” (cf. Job 4:6-8; 8:20); but they didn’t (cf. Job 9:21; 23:11-12; 27:1-6; 31:6)
      - b) **The apostles** were very slow to understand:
        - 1] Jesus’ **teaching** (Mt. 15:10-20; 16:5-12)
        - 2] Jesus’ **miracles** (Mk. 6:30ff, 51-52)
        - 3] Jesus’ **death** (Mt. 16:21-23; Mk. 9:30-32; Lk. 18:31-34; Jn. 14:1-5; 16:16-20; Lk. 24:44-47)
          - a] Even though Jesus told them of His death plainly
      - c) If we accept the apostles’ words, we still **don’t know what they understood**
        - 1] A “harvest” at the end of **the Jewish Age**
        - 2] A “harvest” at the end of **the world**
          - a] *Aion* can mean **world** (cf. Heb. 1:2; 11:3)
  - 5) They assume that the apostles were using the **same terminology the same way in two different contexts** (more than a year apart) (A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels*, Elec. Ed., n.p.)
    - a) One can use the **same term** in **different ways** in the **same context**, much less different contexts (cf. Mt. 8:22)
    - b) Illust.: “I took my money out of my piggy **bank** and deposited it at Sun Trust **Bank** downtown. While on the way I saw a man fishing on the river **bank**.”

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- 6) They assume that **“the end”** always refers to **the same event**
    - a) Bible writers speak of **many different “ends”**
      - 1] Chart: “The End”
    - b) **“The end”** could refer to many different things:
      - 1] The end of **persecution** (Mt. 10:17-23)
      - 2] The **destruction of Jerusalem** (Mt. 24:6, 13-14; Mk. 13:7, 13; Lk. 21:9; , Mt. 10:17-23; 1 Pet. 4:7)
        - a] **“All things”** must be understood in light of its context (*cf.* Lk. 18:31-33; 1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23)
      - 3] The end of **Jesus’ trial** (Mt. 26:58)
      - 4] The end of **Jesus’ life** (Jn. 13:1)
      - 5] The **end of life** (1 Cor. 1:8; 2 Cor. 1:13; Heb. 3:6, 14; 6:11-12; Rev. 2:26)
      - 6] The **Final Coming** (*i.e.* Second Coming) (1 Cor. 15:24)
  - b. Jesus can teach **beyond man’s understanding**
    - 1) Chart: “Jesus Can Teach Beyond Man’s Understanding”
    - 2) So the apostles’ lack of understanding **would not preclude** Jesus’ teaching on both the **destruction of Jerusalem** and the **Second Coming**
  - c. The **same language** in Luke 17 and Matthew 24 is not necessarily used in the **same way** in both passages
    - 1) Luke 17 is not a **parallel passage** with Matthew 24
    - 2) The **same language** can mean **different things** in **different contexts**
      - a) Chart: “Metaphors & Meaning”
  - d. There are **significant contrasts** between the first part of the Olivet Discourse and the last
    - 1) Chart: “Significant Contrasts”
  - e. The material that is **unique to Matthew’s account** of the Olivet Discourse seems to relate to the disciples’ question: “And what will be **the sign of Your coming**, and of **the end of the age?**” (Mt. 24:3)
    - 1) Chart: “The Disciples’ Questions”
2. Jesus’ coming in judgment on Jerusalem is **not the only coming of the Lord**. The NT refers to **many “comings of the Lord”**
    - a. Chart: ““Comings’ Of The Lord”
    - b. If there are **many different comings of the Lord**, then there could be a **future coming of the Lord** after AD 70
    - c. RE Question: Since so many NT passages that talk about the **“coming of the Lord”** do in fact refer to **His coming in judgment on Jerusalem**, why not all of them?
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- 1) Answer: For the same reason that the baptism that Jesus experienced in His Passion (Mt. 20:22-23; Mk. 10:38-39), the “**baptism of suffering**,” is not **water baptism**. **THE CONTEXT WILL NOT ALLOW IT!**
  3. Jesus’ coming in judgment on Jerusalem is **not the only imminent coming of the Lord**. The NT refers to **imminent comings** of the Lord that could not be the **destruction of Jerusalem**
    - a. Chart: “Imminent Comings (Not AD 70)”
    - b. Jesus came representatively through **the Holy Spirit** (Jn. 14:16-18, 28)
      - 1) Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to the apostles. There is no good reason to believe that Jesus’ words “**I will come to you**” refers to anything else but this
      - 2) Before His ascension, Jesus promised the apostles Holy Spirit baptism “**not many days from now**” (Acts 1:4-5)
      - 3) The apostles received Holy Spirit baptism on **Pentecost** ten days later (Acts 2:1-4)
      - 4) Therefore, this was an **imminent coming** of the Lord that was **not the destruction of Jerusalem**
    - c. Jesus’ coming to **punish or bless the 7 churches of Asia**
      - 1) He promised to come **quickly** (Rev. 2:5, 16; 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20)
      - 2) But His coming to **punish or bless** was dependent on their **repentance or faithfulness** (Rev. 2:5, 16; 3:3, 11, 19-20)
      - 3) Jesus’ coming in judgment on Jerusalem was **not dependent on repentance**
        - a) When Jesus prophesied Jerusalem’s destruction it was **too late for repentance** (Mt. 23:31-39; 24:29-31)
      - 4) Therefore, this was an **imminent coming** of the Lord that was **not the destruction of Jerusalem**
    - d. Thus, the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 was **not the only imminent coming** of the Lord
    - e. Chart: “Comings Of The Lord: Conditional & Unconditional”
    - f. If there are **imminent comings** of the Lord that cannot refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, RE’s must prove, and not just assume, that **any particular imminent coming refers to the destruction of Jerusalem**
  4. The NT also speaks of a **delayed coming** of the Lord that was **not imminent**
    - a. The coming of the Son of Man will be **like the coming of the flood** (Mt. 24:36-39)
      - 1) The “the Divine longsuffering **waited** in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared” (1 Pet. 3:20) for **120 years** (Gen. 6:3)
    - b. In the Parable of the Faithful and Evil Servant, the master **delayed his return** (Mt. 24:48-51)
    - c. In the Parable of the Ten Virgins, the bridegroom **delayed his coming** (Mt. 25:5)
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- d. In the Parable of the Talents, the lord returned “**after a long time**” to settle accounts (Mt. 25:19)
  - e. The coming of the Lord would not occur until there was a **falling away and the man of sin** would be revealed (2 Th. 2:1-5)
  - f. Scoffers were asking “**Where is the promise of His coming?**” (2 Pet. 3:4)
  - 5. There is a **coming of the Lord** in Scripture that **does not “fit”** the destruction of Jerusalem
    - a. There is a coming of the Lord to **judge all nations** Mt. 25:31-33
      - 1) Were **all nations** judged in AD 70?
    - b. There is a coming of the Lord **like the ascension** Acts 1:9-11
      - 1) Jesus ascended **bodily** and **visibly** in a **literal** ascension
      - 2) What would the apostles have **understood** the angels to mean?
      - 3) Jesus did not come **bodily** and **visibly** and **literally** (in the sense that the apostles would have understood the angels’ language) in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70
      - 4) “**In like manner**” modifies “**will so come,**” not “**This same Jesus**”
        - a) *Kenneth Gentry*: “The Greek *hon tropon* literally means ‘**what manner.**’ The Greek phrase ‘never indicates mere certainty or vague resemblance; but **wherever it occurs in the New Testament, denotes identity of mode or manner**’ (A. Alexander, Acts, ad loc.). Consequently, we have express biblical warrant to expect a **visible, bodily, glorious** return of Christ paralleling in kind the ascension.” (“A Brief Analysis of Full Preterism or Hyper Preterism,” <http://fide-o.com/2009/05/full-preterism/>)
        - b) *Barclay M. Newman*: “*In the same way* refers to **the manner of the Lord’s return**, that is, on the clouds of heaven, as is depicted in other passages of the New Testament. This may be rendered in some languages as ‘just like he went.’” (*A Handbook on The Acts of the Apostles*, 21)
        - c) “Not another and in a different way, but this same Jesus in the same way, would descend for believers as they had seen Him ascend from them.” (KJVBC, 2129)
          - 1] Chart: “The Return Of Jesus”
    - 5) “When the **plain sense** makes **good sense** any other sense is **nonsense**”
  - c. There is a coming of the Lord that is **personal, audible, and visible** 1 Th. 4:13-18
    - 1) Nothing like this occurred in AD 70
    - 2) RE Objection: The “**dead**” are the **OT saints** and the **living** are the **NT saints**
      - a) Chart: “Are ‘The Dead’ OT Saints?”
      - b) The “**dead**” are:
        - 1] “Those who have **fallen asleep**” (1 Th. 4:13)
        - 2] “Those who **sleep in Jesus**” (1 Th. 4:13)
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- 3] “Those who are **asleep**” (1 Th. 4:15)
- 4] “The dead **in Christ**” (1 Th. 4:16)
- c) How does a person **get into Christ**? He is **baptized** into Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27)
- d) Were **OT saints baptized** into Christ?
- 3) **RE Objection**: The **same kind of language** is used in passages referring to the destruction of Jerusalem
- a) **Chart**: “Mt. 24 & 1 Th. 4 & 5”
- b) To ask “Is it **possible** that Mt. 24 and 1 Th. 4 & 5 refer to the same event?” is the **wrong question**. We should ask “Is it **probable** or **certain**?”
- 1] **Possibility** doesn’t prove **probability**, and it certainly doesn’t prove **certainty**
- a] **Illust.**: Is it **possible** that Mark Furman planted the bloody glove and the LAPD manipulated the blood evidence in the O. J. Simpson case? Is it **probable**? Is it **certain**?
- c) **Similar or even identical language** can refer to **different things in different contexts**
- 1] *D. R. Dungan*: “Rule 8. It must be remembered that figures are not always used with the same meaning.--A lion may not always symbolize the same thought, nor need a sheep, water, or fire always be employed for the purpose of expressing the same calamity or blessing.  
“There is a very grave error among an untaught class of exegetes in compelling every word that has, at any time, been used figuratively, to always represent the same thought as in that passage. .... Many seem disposed to regard themselves as at liberty to make anything out of the Bible which their theology may demand or their whims require. And if, at any time, they find a passage that will not harmonize with that view, then the next thing is to find one or more words in the text used elsewhere in a figurative sense, and then demand that such use be the Biblical dictionary on the meaning of that word, and hence that it must be the meaning in that place. .... “ (*Hermeneutics: A Text-Book*, 1888, 216-217)
- 2] **Chart**: “Metaphors & Meaning”
- 3] RE’s argue like JW’s. They apply **one meaning** across the board
- a] **Chart**: “JW’s On ‘Soul’ & ‘Spirit’”
- d) If God’s judgments in time are **typical** of God’s final judgment, then we should not be surprised that **similar language** is used to describe all of God’s judgments
- e) While there are **certain similarities** between Mt. 24 and 1 Th. 4 & 5, there are also some **significant differences**
- 1] **Chart**: “Are They Really Parallel?”
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- d. **“If it doesn’t fit, you can’t acquit!”**
6. **Meaning** must always be determined by **context**, and the **immediate context** must **take precedence** in determining meaning over other contexts
7. If the **“Second Coming”** (Heb. 9:28) occurred in **AD 70**:
  - a. What is so remarkable about **Jesus’ statement about John**? (Jn. 21:20-23)
  - b. Why can’t we **judge** the hidden things of the heart? (1 Cor. 4:1-5)
  - c. Why do we still observe the **Lord’s Supper**? (1 Cor. 11:23-26)
    - 1) Paul says that in the Lord’s Supper we “proclaim the Lord’s death **till He comes**”
    - 2) If Jesus **came in AD 70**, and He is **not coming again**:
      - a) Does the Lord’s Supper **no longer proclaim** Christ’s death?
      - b) Is the Lord’s Supper **no longer applicable** today?
  - d. Why is Realized Eschatology **“unrealized”** in **early post-apostolic writings**?
    - 1) See Almon Williams (“AD 70: The End?” *The Doctrine of Last Things*, 1986, 216-219)
    - 2) See Terry Varner (*Studies in Biblical Eschatology*, 1:78-97)

#### Conclusion:

- I. Christ first came to earth as a **babe in a manger** (Lk. 2:7). He will return as the **King of kings** (Rev. 17:14)
- II. He came in the **likeness of men** (Jn. 1:14; Phil. 2:5-8). He will return in the **glory of God** (Mk. 8:38)
- III. He came as the **servant of servants** (Mt. 20:28). He will return as **the Lord of lords** (Rev. 17:14)
- IV. He first came in **the flesh to save** (Heb. 2:14-15). He will return in **the spirit to judge** (2 Tim. 4:1)
- V. *Homer Hailey*: “The second coming of the Lord is the great day of all days. In it and that which follows is realized the consummation of the Christian system and the eternal purpose of God. It should be anticipated by Christians with joyous expectation.”
- VI. “There’s a great day coming....are you ready for that day to come?”

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## Appendix A: Definitions of Key Terms

### I. Parousia:

- A. *BDAG*: “1. **the state of being present at a place, presence...** 1 Cor 16:17; Phil 2:12... *his bodily presence is weak* i.e. when he is present in person, he appears to be weak 2 Cor 10:10.—Of God (Jos., Ant. 3, 80; 203; 9, 55).... 2. **arrival as the first stage in presence, coming, advent**.... a. of human beings, in the usual sense 2 Cor 7:6f... *my coming to you again, my return to you* Phil 1:26.... b. in a special technical sense...of Christ (and the Antichrist). .... On the one hand the word served as a sacred expr. for the coming of a hidden divinity, who makes his presence felt by a revelation of his power, or whose presence is celebrated in the cult.... —On the other hand,  $\pi$ . became the official term for a visit of a person of high rank, esp. of kings and emperors visiting a province.... These two technical expressions can approach each other closely in mng., can shade off into one another, or even coincide....  $\alpha$ . of Christ, and nearly always of his Messianic Advent in glory to judge the world at the end of this age....  $\beta$ . in our lit. prob. only in a few late pass. of Jesus’ *advent* in the Incarnation....  $\gamma$ . Sense  $\alpha$  gave rise to an opposing use of  $\pi$ . to designate the *coming* of the Antichrist.... *whose coming is in keeping with / in line with Satan’s power* 2 Th 2:9....” (780-781)
- B. *Thayer*: “1. *presence*: 1 Co. 16:17; 2 Co. 10:10.... 2. the presence of one coming, hence *the coming, arrival, adven*.... 2 Co. 7:6 sq.; 2 Th. 2:9....In the N. T. esp. of *the advent*, i.e. the future, visible, *return* from heaven of Jesus, the Messiah, to raise the dead, hold the last judgment, and set up formally and gloriously the kingdom of God....” (#3952, 490)
- C. *Vine*: “...lit., ‘a presence,’ *para*, ‘with,’ and *ousia*, ‘being’ (from *eimi*, ‘to be’), denotes both an ‘arrival’ and a consequent ‘presence with.’ For instance, in a papyrus letter a lady speaks of the necessity of her *parousia* in a place in order to attend to matters relating to her property there. Paul speaks of his *parousia* in Philippi, Phil. 2:12 (in contrast to his *apousia*, ‘his absence’...). Other words denote ‘the arrival’ (see *eisodos* and *eleusis*, above). *Parousia* is used to describe the presence of Christ with His disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, 2 Pet. 1:16. When used of the return of Christ, at the rapture of the church, it signifies, not merely His momentary ‘coming’ for His saints, but His presence with them from that moment until His revelation and manifestation to the world. In some passages the word gives prominence to the beginning of that period, the course of the period being implied, 1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:1; Jas. 5:7-8; 2 Pet. 3:4. In some, the course is prominent, Matt. 24:3, 37; 1 Thess. 3:13; 1 John 2:28; in others the conclusion of the period, Matt. 24:27; 2 Thess. 2:8.
- “The word is also used of the Lawless One, the Man of Sin, his access to power and his doings in the world during his *parousia*, 2 Thess. 2:9. In addition to Phil. 2:12 (above), it is used in the same way of the apostle, or his companions, in 1 Cor. 16:17; 2 Cor. 7:6-7; 10:10; Phil. 1:26; of the Day of God, 2 Pet. 3:12.” (2:111)

### II. “Revelation” (*apokalupsis*):

- A. *BDAG*: “...the lit. sense ‘uncovering’ as of head (s. Philod. above) does not appear in our lit., which uses the term in transcendent associations. 1. **making fully known, revelation, disclosure** a. of the revelation of truth gener.... b. of revelations of a particular kind, through visions, etc..... c. of the disclosure of secrets belonging to the last days....Of the Parousia.... 2. as part of a book title **Revelation**....” (112)
- B. *Thayer*: “...an uncovering; 1. prop. a laying bare, making naked.... 2. tropically, in N. T. and eccl. language.... a. a disclosure of truth, *instruction*, concerning divine things before unknown—esp. those relating to the Christian salvation—given to the soul by God himself, or by the ascended Christ, esp. through the operation of the Holy Spirit (1 Co. 2:10), and so

to be distinguished from other methods of instruction.... **b.** equiv. to τὸ ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι as used of events by which things or states or persons hitherto withdrawn from view are made visible to all, *manifestation, appearance*....” (#602, 62)

- C. *Vine*: “...lit., ‘an uncovering, unveiling’ (*apo*, ‘from,’ *kalupto*, ‘to hide, cover’), denotes ‘a revelation, or appearing’ (Eng., apocalypse). It is translated ‘the appearing’ in 1 Pet. 1:7, KJV (RV, ‘revelation’). See coming, manifestation, revelation.” (2:32)

### III. “Appearing” or “Brightness” (*epiphaneia*):

- A. *BDAG*: “...gener. ‘appearing, appearance’, esp. also the splendid appearance.... As a t.t. relating to transcendence it refers to a visible and freq. sudden manifestation of a hidden divinity, either in the form of a personal appearance, or by some deed of power or oracular communication by which its presence is made known.... In our lit., except for Papias, only of Christ’s appearing on earth. 1. **act of appearing, appearance** in our lit. that of Jesus, of his a. first appearance on earth **2 Ti 1:10**.... b. appearance in judgment **1 Ti 6:14; 2 Ti 4:1, 8... Tit 2:13... 2 Th 2:8** *the appearance of his coming*; the combination is not overly redundant, for ε̇. refers to the salvation that goes into effect when the π. takes place.... 2. **that which can ordinarily be seen, surface appearance**....” (385-386)
- B. *Thayer*: “...*an appearing, appearance*....often used by the Greeks of a glorious manifestation of the gods, and esp. of their advent to help.... In the N.T. the ‘advent’ of Christ, -- not only that which has already taken place and by which his presence and power appear in the saving light he has shed upon mankind, 2 Tim. 1:10.... but also that illustrious return from heaven to earth hereafter to occur: 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:1, 8; Tit. 2:13....” (#2015, 245-246)
- C. *Vine*: “... ‘epiphany,’ lit., ‘a shining forth,’ was used of the ‘appearance’ of a god to men, and of an enemy to an army in the field, etc. In the NT it occurs of (a) the advent of the Savior when the Word became flesh, 2 Tim. 1:10; (b) the coming of the Lord Jesus into the air to the meeting with His saints, 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:1, 8; (c) the shining forth of the glory of the Lord Jesus ‘as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west,’ Matt. 24:27, immediately consequent on the unveiling, *apokalupsis*, of His *Parousia* in the air with His saints, 2 Thess. 2:8; Titus 2:13.” (2:32)

### IV. “Appearance” (*phaneroo*):

- A. *BDAG*: “... 1. **to cause to become visible, reveal, expose publicly**.... a. of persons α. act. of the Risen Lord **J 21:1a**....—Esp. of Christ....of his appearance in the world... **1 Ti 3:16**....—Of the appearing of the Risen Lord... **J 21:14**....Of the Second Advent **Col 3:4a; 1 Pt 5:4; 1J 2:28; 3:2b**....” (1048)
- B. *Thayer*: “...*to make manifest or visible or known* what has been hidden or unknown, *to manifest*, whether by words, or deeds, or in any other way.... pass. used of something hitherto non-existent but now *made actual and visible, realized*, 1 Jn. 3:2.... to bring to light or make manifest, by the advent, life, death, resurrection, of Jesus Christ.... **b.** with an acc. of the person, *to expose to view, make manifest, show* one...of Christ coming forth from his retirement in Galilee and showing himself publicly at Jerusalem, Jn. 7:4....of the risen Christ, Jn. 21:1; pass. *to be made manifest, to show one’s self, appear*....: of Christ previously hidden from view in heaven but after his incarnation made visible on earth as a man among men, Heb. 9:26....of his future return from heaven, *ibid.* 28); 1 Pet. 1:20; 1 Jn. 3:5, 8.... of Christ now hidden from sight in heaven but hereafter to return visibly, Col. 3:4 (cf. 3); 1 Pet. 5:4; 1 Jn. 2:28.... of Christians, who after the Saviour’s return will be manifested... Col. 3:4. Pass. *to become known, to be plainly recognized, thoroughly understood*: who and what one is....” (648)

- C. *Vine*: "...signifies, in the active voice, 'to manifest'; in the passive voice, 'to be manifested'; so, regularly, in the RV, instead of 'to appear.' See 2 Cor. 7:12; Col. 3:4; Heb. 9:26; 1 Pet. 5:4; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Rev. 3:18. To be manifested, in the Scriptural sense of the word, is more than to 'appear.' A person may 'appear' in a false guise or without a disclosure of what he truly is; to be manifested is to be revealed in one's true character; this is especially the meaning of *phaneroo*, see, e.g., John 3:21; 1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:10-11; Eph. 5:13." (2:31-32)

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