

2 THESSALONIANS 1 - “Greeting; God’s Final Judgment and Glory!”

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Latest Studies” under “Bible Studies” on the right side. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

Pastor Chuck Smith: The rapture is close. Jesus has warned us to watch for Him. Will you be ready when the Lord comes for His church?

Scripture References:

CHURCH SAVED FROM GREAT TRIBULATION

Romans 8:1 1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10

2 Peter 2:4-10 Revelation 3:10, 11

GOD’S PROMISE *John 14:1-3*

RAPTURE *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*

TRANSFORMATION *1*

Corinthians 15:51

READY FOR THE RAPTURE

Matthew 24:36-44 Matthew 25:1-13

Mark 13:32-37 Luke 17:26, 27, 34-37

Luke 21:34-36 1 Thessalonians

5:1-11 Smith, Chuck. The Rapture

(Kindle Locations 525-529).

J. Vernon McGee comments re the Rapture of the church: “The coming of Christ for His church is called the Rapture of the Church. It is not a doctrine to argue about. It is a doctrine to live. Unfortunately, there are many who believe Christ is coming after the Great Tribulation. There are those who believe He is coming before, and others who don’t believe that He is coming at all, and yet they say that they trust Him as their Savior. For all the groups there is one important question: **How does your interpretation affect your life? Does it do anything for you? If your view has no effect on your life, then you should reconsider what you believe. The expectation of the return of the Lord should be a motivating factor in the life of a believer.**”

2 Thessalonians -- THE GODLY CHARACTER OF A PERSECUTED CHURCH

Chapter 1 Encouraging the Thessalonians in the middle of tremendous persecution - to stand fast and continue - this is great chapter for encouragement

Chapter 2 Addressing a misconception concerning the Rapture of the Church

Chapter 3 Addressing a practical issue of the Rapture of the Church being an excuse to put off current responsibilities

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER ONE!

2nd Thessalonians probably follows the first letter by several months, likely around 51AD. Paul had to leave Thessalonica in a hurry. They were going to arrest Paul. So the brethren there encouraged Paul to leave the city. He had only been there a short time. So Paul, when they went on to Berea, and ministered there, he then sent Timothy and probably Silas, back to Thessalonica. Paul went from Berea to Athens. As Paul was in Athens, he was waiting for Silas and Timothy to join him. When they didn’t come, he went on down to Corinth, where Silas and Timothy finally did join Paul. They told him of the church in Thessalonica, how they were growing, how they were faring. But, there were some problems that came. There was some confusion concerning the coming of Jesus Christ, the rapture of the church, concerning some of the people who had died in the meantime before the Lord came. So Paul wrote his first letter to the Thessalonians. The one who delivered the letter probably came right back to Paul in Corinth and told him of some other problems, doctrinal problems, that they had in Thessalonica. **There seemed to develop a heavy persecution against the church in Thessalonica. Because they were being persecuted some of them thought that they had entered into the Great Tribulation.**

So Paul is writing the second letter to correct that wrongful concept, that they, the church were going and were in the Great Tribulation period. Yes, they were having persecution. They were going through tribulation, **but this was not the Great Tribulation, the judgment of the world that the Bible speaks about.**

So Paul writes the second letter to assure them that what they are experiencing is not the Great Tribulation. **He talks to them in chapter one about the persecution. In chapter two, he assures them that this Day of the Lord has not yet come, that the persecution that they have is really not the Great Tribulation. That won’t take place unto the antichrist, the man that is to be revealed, but that is the next teaching session.**

ONWARD CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS – Sabine Baring-Gould/Arthur Sullivan – Joslin Grove

*1 Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war, With the cross of Jesus going on before!
Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe; Forward into battle, see his banner go!*

Refrain: Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war, With the cross of Jesus going on before!

*2 Like a mighty army moves the church of God; Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod;
We are not divided; all one body we, One in hope and doctrine, one in charity. [Refrain]*

*3 Onward, then, ye people, join our happy throng, Blend with ours your voices in the triumph song;
Glory, laud, and honor, unto Christ the King; This thro’ countless ages men and angels sing. [Refrain]*

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

2 THESSALONIANS 1 -

"Greeting;

2Th 1:1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

2Th 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's Final Judgment and Glory!"

2Th 1:3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,

2Th 1:4 so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure.

The Judgment at Christ's Coming

2Th 1:5 which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted (reckoned) worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer;
2Th 1:6 since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,

v. 1 A greeting from Paul, *Silvanus, and Timothy*, who would have all known by the Thessalonians. They all had been there when the church was planted. *To the church...* Founding the church on his second missionary journey, Paul was only in the city for about a month, only a short time being forced out by enemies of the gospel. But *the church* left behind was alive and active. Paul's deep concern for this young church, prompted this letter, which is though to have followed the first letter within a rather short period of time....*church of Thessalonians in God our Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ*. That is the greatest place for a church to be, to be! Established in our fellowship with God and with our Lord Jesus Christ.

v. 2 *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*: Paul brought his customary greeting to the Thessalonian Christians, hailing them in the *grace* and *peace* of God the Father. Grace and peace! Always in that order. One cannot know the peace of God until you have experienced the grace of God within your life. Titus 2:11-15

vs. 3-4 The Thessalonian church brought Paul much joy and thanksgiving to God for them. *We are bound (ought to, paying an owed debt, obligated, fitting to thankfully pray for them and their fruitfulness) to thank God always for you*: The word here is strong! The giving of thanks for God's great work was an *obligation* - We was *bound* to do so, and it was *fitting*, because of the work God did for us. *Because your faith grows exceedingly*: God was being thanked because the Thessalonians had *exceedingly* growing *faith*; abounding *love*; *patience and faith in all . . . persecutions and tribulations*, they were enduring. This *faith* and *abounding love (agape)* caused Paul to *boast* of the Thessalonians, in their difficult circumstances to other churches. The Thessalonian church was experiencing persecution, heavy persecution. Perhaps that is the reason for their growth in faith and for their abounding love. Also, it's interesting how that *persecution seems to bind the church together*.

vs. 5-6 *...manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God*: Their standing fast, their enduring, in the persecution and tribulations, is a manifestation or demonstration of His righteous judgment of God in giving His people the power and the ability to continue to walk with Him and grow in Him, in the midst of that kind of persecution and tribulation. Often we think that God is absent when we suffer, calling God's righteous judgment into question. **Paul took the exact opposite position and insisted that their suffering was evidence of the righteous judgment of God.** Where *suffering is coupled with righteous endurance, God's work is done*. The fires of persecution and tribulation were like the purifying fires of a refiner, burning away the dross from the gold, bringing forth a pure, precious metal. *counted worthy* - Reckoned as worthy, as in a judicial decree. Paul's prayer is that the worthiness of Jesus may be accounted to them. *Since it is a righteous thing with God*: Many people believe that God's love and His judgment contradict each other. But God's judgment is based on the great spiritual principle that it is a *righteous thing with God to repay* those who do evil. Since God is *righteous*, He will *repay all evil*, and it will all be judged and accounted for either at the cross or in hell. *To repay with tribulation those who trouble you*: God was also shown as *righteous* when those who persecuted the Thessalonians were repaid with *tribulation*, like the fire of a pure and holy judgment, according to their evil works. They probably believed they did God a favor when they persecuted the Christians, but the *righteous* God would *repay* them and not reward them.

v. 1 As members of the body of Christ, we are to be in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

v. 2 These two are always related and must be understood in that order – *grace and peace!* It's always *grace* first, then *peace!* Do our lives visibly reflect our knowing the peace of God and experiencing His grace?

vs. 3-4 We believers are to give thanks to God not only when He does us kindnesses, but also when we consider the kindness and faithfulness, which He has shown towards other believers! Note how that persecution seems to bind the church together. Could it be said of us that regardless of how hot the persecution and tribulations, we would be steadfast in our endurance of our patience and faith, faith that only knows and trusts in Jesus? Notice, Paul's boasting is the work of God in the lives of the believers!

vs. 5-6 The church, suffering under persecution might seem like a lack of *the righteous judgment of God*, but in fact that the believers, under severe persecution, are standing fast, enduring the persecution and tribulations, is a manifestation, working evidence, of *the righteous judgment of God!* Believers who endure persecution faithfully will escape the righteous judgment of God, whereas those who persecute the church will be repaid with the righteous judgment of God. This persecution, its endurance by believers and those who cause it will be related to their receiving *the righteous judgement of God*. It will actually justify the judgment that God is going to bring upon them. This should make us more zealous for evangelism. We need to pray for the enemies of the gospel!

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OBSERVATION

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2Th 1:7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,
2Th 1:8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
2Th 1:9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

2Th 1:10 when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

v. 7 And to give you who are troubled rest: The Thessalonian Christians were persecuted and had tribulation; and God used it for His glory. But the time of persecution would not last. A day of *rest* is promised for every believer.

vs. 8-9 In flaming fire taking vengeance: This is what the day of judgment will be like for those who persecuted the Thessalonians. For the persecutors, those who do not know God, and those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus, that will be a day of *vengeance* (the application of full justice) and *everlasting destruction*. In flaming fire: Hell is a place where there is no good at all! There, people are *from the presence of the Lord*, in the sense of being apart from anything *good* or *blessed* in God’s presence. *From the presence of the Lord* sums up the Bible’s understanding of hell. Nothing must be said more about its horrors, other than hell will be completely devoid of God and every aspect of His character, except one: His unrelenting holy justice. Jesus is coming in judgment. The Bible teaches us that God has appointed Him as the judge over all things. He will be coming with His angels in fiery judgment taking vengeance on those that know not God and those that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. As we read in (**Hebrews 10:30-31**), *vengeance is Mine, saith the Lord. I will repay! It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God. ...punished with everlasting destruction:* We must remember that the punishment of the wicked is *everlasting* (*aiōnios* perpetual; also used of past time, or past and future as well; eternal, forever, everlasting, world (began). Just as the blessings of heaven are eternal, the penalty of hell is also eternal. The perpetual duration of this death is eternal and has no end.” Banished forever *from the presence of* God and the glory of God’s kingdom. What a tragic fate awaits those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ! Those who know not God and don’t obey the gospel, what a horrible fate! *These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power!* **Mat 25:46** *And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”*

v.10 when He comes, in that Day, . Jesus is coming! He’s coming in power and in glory. Then shall they see the sign of the Son of Man, Jesus said, coming with clouds and great glory! He is coming to be glorified in His saints. He is coming to be glorified by the saints. He coming to establish the Kingdom of God upon the earth. He is coming with ten thousands of His saints, first of all to execute the judgment upon a Christ rejecting world and then to establish a world after God’s heart and God’s desires. *To be glorified in (not “by”) His saints and to be admired* (*thaumazō* - to wonder; to admire: -it’s going to take our breath away!) *among all those who believe:* For the persecuted *saints*, those *who believe*, they will have God *glorified in* them on *that Day*. They will see and admire Jesus more than ever. They will feel a sudden, breath-taking wonderment of sacred delight; they will be startled with the surprising glory of the Lord’s work in them; ‘We thought He would do great things, but this! This is greater than conception!’ Every believer will be a wonder to himself. ‘I thought my bliss would be great, but not like this!’

vs. 7-8 What promises believers, who suffer for Christ, have! Here we are told believers will be given rest when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, but *those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel*, will be *in flaming fire taking vengeance* from God.

v. 9 Any human being not in Christ will be *punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power!* *Everlasting (aionios)* used many times in the Bible in the phrase “eternal life” means eternal! It means “forever”!

v.10 It will be a glorious world, the Kingdom age. We will see the world that God intended when He comes to be glorified in His saints, to be admired in all of them that believe. Our Lord reigning! What glory that will be! *Imagine what it’s going to be like when we stand face to face with our Savior! Here, we’re told we’re going to be sensing a sudden, breathtaking wonderment of the surprising glory of the Lord’s work done in and through the lives of those who believed the testimony of the gospel!*

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

2Th 1:11 *Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this (the) calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power.*

2Th 1:12 *that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

v. 11 This is a great prayer for every believer to pray for other believers. *Therefore we also pray always:* Since the Thessalonian Christians were in the midst of persecution and tribulation, they needed prayer. Here, Paul assured them that he and his associates pray always for them. *That our God would count you worthy of this calling:* Jesus in talking to His disciples about the Great Tribulation and the cataclysmic judgments of God that will be taking place during that period of time, said to them in (Luke 21:36), “*Pray always that you’ll be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are coming to pass upon the earth and to stand before the Son of Man.*” If Jesus told us to pray always to be accounted worthy, then I think it would be a wise thing for us to be praying. Lord I want to be worthy to escape the great judgment that is coming upon the earth. I want to be standing, Lord, before You in glory.

Compare - Jon Courson: Application Commentary – New Testament pgs. 1687-1691 The Rapture Controversy - Twelve Biblical Reasons Supporting Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church:

In the heavenly scene, (Revelation 4:10-5:14), we especially want to notice song in verse 9! That’s the song of the church! Only the church can sing that song. That’s not the song of redeemed Israel. We get that later in the Book of Revelation. That’s the song of the church. He has redeemed us out of all of the families of the earth, out of all of the nations. He has made us unto our God, kings and priests. We will reign with Him upon the earth. It is not until chapter six, when He begins to break the seals, that the Great Tribulation on the earth is initiated. And we read there in chapter six, where they cried to the rocks and the mountain, fall on us and hide us from the face of the Lamb for the day of His wrath has come and who shall be able to stand? In 1 Thess. 5:9 Paul told them, God has not appointed us unto wrath. Now he is saying, pray, I’ve been praying that you’ve been counted worthy even as Jesus said, pray that you will accounted worthy to escape these things, that is the things of the Great Tribulation, and that you’ll be standing before the Son of Man. So Paul said I’m praying always for you, that God would count you worthy of this calling and to fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power! What a wonderful prayer! God, may Your people be counted worthy. May You fill them with all of Your goodness and with faith and with power!

v. 12 We live *worthy* of His call when *the name of our Lord Jesus Christ is glorified in* us. We understand that this means more than the name of our Lord Jesus as a word, but also as a representation of His character. We live *worthy* of His call when we are *glorified in* Him, when He alone is our source of glory and exaltation, and who we are in Jesus is more important than who we are in anything else. Often and tragically, the name of Jesus Christ is blasphemed because of the actions of some people, claiming to be Christians, doing something that brings the name of Christ into disrepute. We pray oh, God, may we never bring shame to the name of my Lord Jesus Christ! Help us, Lord, that Your name might be glorified in us and through us. *and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.* It’s only through grace, do we stand and can we stand. Were it not for the grace of God, none of us would be saved. God’s love and God’s grace reached down. It touched our hearts and lives and bestowed upon us the glorious gift of salvation, by our simple faith and trust in His Word and in His promises.

v. 11 The expectation of the second coming of Christ should put us upon prayer to God for ourselves and others. We should watch and pray, so our Savior directs his disciples (Luk 21:36), *Watch therefore, and pray always, that you may be counted worthy to stand before the Son of man.*

The prayer here is a great prayer of what to pray for -- That God would begin His good work of grace in them and that He would carry on the good work that has begun. It is my prayer and my desire that I’m there in that heavenly scene. As He takes the scroll, I’ll be singing, worthy is the Lamb to take the scroll and loose the seals for He was slain and has redeemed us by His blood. I don’t know the tune yet, but I’ll pick up on it in a hurry! I’ve got the lyrics down. All I need is the tune. But, I’ll be there singing. That’s my prayer! Lord, I want to be there in glory to see You in Your glory. And that’s what Jesus prayed for us (John 17:20-26). Father, I pray for those that will believe on Me through the witness of the disciples, that they might see Me in the glory that I had with You before the world ever existed. And that’s my longing, my prayer! That should be our constant prayer, Lord, count me in! One of your servants to see You, Lord, when You are glorified there in Heaven!

v.12 *Our good works should so shine before men that others may glorify God, that Christ may be glorified in and by us, and then we shall be glorified in and with him.*

Lord, we would pray that it would not take persecution to bring about a greater faith and a greater love and patience. But develop these qualities in us and help us, Lord, that we might be a credit unto You and that our lives might bring glory to the name of Jesus Christ. We thank You for the work of Your Spirit in Your church. Please work by Your Spirit in each of our hearts. Draw us close to You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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Jon Courson: Application Commentary – New Testament pgs. 1687-1691 The Rapture Controversy

Twelve Biblical Reasons Supporting Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church:

The Rapture Controversy: A Topical Study of Revelation 3:10 The Book of Acts tells us the Berean believers were more noble than their neighbors in Thessalonica because the Bereans searched the Scriptures to validate what Paul taught them (17:11). So, too, I want our church family to be able to say, “Here’s why we believe what we do.” To this end, I would like to submit to you thirteen reasons why I believe the church will be raptured before the Tribulation. “Well, I have friends who say the church will go through the Tribulation. Why get all concerned about this issue?” you might say. My answer is because I believe one’s view on Bible prophecy and the timing of the Rapture will affect the way one lives out his faith. Why does the debate continue concerning the timing of this event? I believe it is due to misunderstanding in three areas: The Elect For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened. Matthew 24:21, 22 On the basis of this verse, people say “Aha! Here we see the elect in the Tribulation”—failing to realize that the term “elect” refers to three groups of people: Christians (Colossians 3:12), Israel (Isaiah 45:4), and those who will be saved in the Tribulation (Matthew 24:21, 22). To which of the elect does Jesus refer in Matthew 24:21? I believe the answer lies in the verse preceding it... But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day. Matthew 24:20 Even to this day, transportation in Israel is shut down on the Sabbath. Since the Sabbath means nothing to Gentile nations, the application to Israel is clear. The Trumpets In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 1 Corinthians 15:52 On the basis of this verse, people say, “Aha! According to Revelation 11, the seventh, or last trump signaling the Rapture, will take place midway through the Tribulation.” But wait a minute. The seventh trumpet of Revelation 11 is sounded by angels, whereas 1 Thessalonians 4:16 makes it clear that the last trump is sounded by God. In Exodus 19, God sounded the first trump when the Jews were gathered at the foot of Mount Sinai to hear the law. The last trump will sound when the church is gathered to meet the Lord in the air and taken to heaven. Thus, the Jews hear the first trump; the church hears the last. The following thirteen reasons are why I believe this trump of God will sound before the Tribulation....

1. The doctrine is to be a comforting one (1 Thessalonians 4:18). The belief that the Rapture happens after or in the middle of the Tribulation is anything but comforting because it means believers must endure unbelievable agony before they are taken to heaven.

2. The Tribulation is the outpouring of the wrath of the Lamb—and God has not appointed us to wrath (1 Thessalonians 5:9–11). The wrath that should have been hurled at you and poured out on me was absorbed by our Hero, our Lord, our Savior on the Cross of Calvary.

3. Rapture before the Tribulation is illustrated in Genesis 19, where we see angels delivering Lot and his family before the destruction of Sodom. How do I know this is a picture of the Rapture? Because in reference to this, Peter writes, “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations” (2 Peter 2:9). The word translated “temptations” is the same word translated “tribulation.”

4. Rapture before the Tribulation is illustrated in Enoch, who was taken to heaven prior to the Flood (Genesis 5:24). “Wrong analogy,” some protest. “The correct picture is Noah who went through the tribulation of the Flood.” But wait a minute. Noah is not a picture of the church, but of Israel, who will indeed go through the Tribulation—and will at last come to Jesus as a result.

5. Rapture before the Tribulation is illustrated in Daniel 3. When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar, they were thrown into a fiery furnace. But where was their friend Daniel? Either he did, indeed, bow to Nebuchadnezzar—which is completely contrary to the rest of the book—or, his omission is in itself a picture of the Rapture. Bible scholars believe that, very likely, he was away on official business as an emissary. All we know with certainty, however, is that he was taken out of the scene.

6. Jesus told us to pray that we would be raptured before the Tribulation. In speaking of the Tribulation in His Olivet Discourse, Jesus said, “*Watch and pray always that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things*” (see Luke 21:36). How are we accounted worthy? One way: We are worthy because of what Jesus did for us on the Cross of Calvary.

7. Pre-Tribulation Rapture makes sense historically and scripturally. In accordance with Jewish custom, when a man came of age to marry, he would add a room on to his father’s house for himself and his bride. When the addition was complete, and when the father gave the go-ahead, a trumpet would sound, and the bridegroom would go to meet his bride. Following the wedding ceremony, the bridegroom would take his bride to his father’s house, where they would be tucked away for seven days in the newly completed “bridal suite.” At the end of seven days, the bridegroom would come out with his bride and introduce her to the community. That’s exactly what’s going to happen with us. Jesus, our Bridegroom, is preparing a place for us in heaven, His Father’s house (John 14:2). At the appointed time known only by the Father, a trumpet will sound and Jesus will meet us, His bride, in the air to escort us up to the “Bridal Suite” He has prepared for us. We will remain with Him in heaven for seven years before we are presented to the world, where we will rule and reign with Him.

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8. Pre-Tribulation Rapture follows the outline of the Book of Revelation. If you don’t embrace a Pre-Tribulation view, your understanding of Revelation becomes as twisted as a pretzel because you’ve got to put chapters 4 and 5 after chapter 11, if you hold to a Mid-Tribulation stance; after chapter 19 if you take a Post-Tribulation point of view. Only a Pre-Tribulation placement of the Rapture allows for a consistent flow of the Book of Revelation.

9. Pre-Tribulation Rapture allows for the conditional aspect of the Tribulation. To the church at Thyatira, Jesus said, *“If you don’t repent, you will experience Tribulation”* (see *Revelation 2:22*). If the Rapture won’t occur until after the Tribulation, what would be the reason for this warning of Jesus? “Well, didn’t Jesus say in this world we would have tribulation?” you ask. Yes, but the crushing the believer goes through in the world is from Satan. The Tribulation of chapters 6–19, on the other hand, is from God as He pours out His wrath on a Christ-rejecting world. Folks, God will not allow anyone to get hit from both sides. If we experience tribulation in the world because of our faith, we will not 22

10. Pre-Tribulation Rapture allows for the unknown time of the Lord’s return. According to Daniel’s prophecy, three and a half biblical years (a Biblical year being three hundred sixty days) from the day Antichrist enters the temple and demands worship midway through the Tribulation, the Lord will return. Consequently, if believers were on earth during the Tribulation, they would be able to predict the exact time of the Second Coming—three and a half biblical years, or forty-two months, or one thousand two hundred sixty days after Antichrist enters the temple. The problem is, *1 Thessalonians 5:2* and *Matthew 24:36* make it clear that **no one knows the hour of His coming**. Therefore, it follows that believers must be absent at this time.

11. The Tribulation is unnecessary for the church. Referred to as the time of Jacob’s trouble, the Tribulation targets Israel, for through it she will be awakened and at last see Jesus as the Messiah (Deuteronomy 4:29, 30). The promises God made to Abraham and to the Jewish people have not been forgotten, gang. God will work with Israel in the days of the Tribulation. He will make Himself known to them—and they shall indeed be saved.

12. Pre-Tribulation Rapture squares with the prophecy of Daniel. At the end of Daniel 9, Daniel was given the timetable for all of Jewish history in units of heptads, or weeks. It is clear from this all-important passage of Scripture that the sixty-nine weeks of Daniel refer to the time between the commandment to rebuild the temple, given in 445 B.C. by Artaxerxes, and the coming of Messiah, fulfilled perfectly on Palm Sunday when Jesus rode Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. But Daniel was also told, “Seventy weeks are determined upon Israel.” To what does the seventieth week of Daniel refer? To the Tribulation. You see, the seventy weeks of Daniel refer to Israel. The church was not present for the first sixty-nine weeks. And the seventieth week doesn’t begin until after the church is raptured. In other words, if the church was not present in the first sixty-nine weeks, why would she be present in the last week? She won’t. She’ll be in heaven. Those are twelve reasons I believe the Rapture will occur before the Tribulation. But the most important one is the following: **A Pre-Tribulation Rapture viewpoint makes one seek first the kingdom.** *“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing”* (*Matthew 24:45, 46*). Who is the one who will have authority and purpose in eternity? He who is watching for Jesus’ coming. But this is impossible for those who believe the Tribulation precedes the Rapture because they must first watch for Antichrist, then the rebuilding of the temple, and finally the Abomination of Desolation when Antichrist demands to be worshiped as God. Two factors kept the early church on fire: the empowering of the Holy Ghost and the belief that Jesus would return during their lifetime. “But He didn’t come back in their day,” you say. And you’re right—but do you think those early believers are in heaven now, saying, “We didn’t get bogged down in materialism or trivial pursuits. We sought the Lord. We witnessed fervently. We lived for the kingdom. If only we knew He wasn’t coming, we could have played more racquetball”? No! They’re ecstatic that they chose to do what Jesus says to do in every generation—to watch, to be ready, to live for His coming. Whether or not you believe in a pre-Tribulation Rapture will not affect where you’ll ultimately end up. If you’re a believer, you’ll be in heaven no matter what position you hold. **But your viewpoint concerning the Rapture very definitely affects how you live your life this side of eternity. If you do not believe in a pre-Tribulation Rapture, you cannot look for Jesus Christ because, according to your eschatological viewpoint, Antichrist must appear first.** Therefore, you find yourself scanning the news, checking out current events, watching the global scene for Antichrist rather than for Jesus. And this puts believers in a “survivalist” mentality. “We’re going through the Tribulation,” they say. “We better get ready.” Is this what Jesus meant? Does He want us storing gold and guns? Or does He want us living every day in hopeful anticipation that today could be the day we go to heaven? “I want you looking for Jesus every day,” John said, “because he who has the hope of the imminent, sudden appearing of Christ and the Rapture of the church purifies himself” (see 1 John 3:3). That is why I believe your view on the Rapture is of utmost importance. **Live in constant expectancy of Jesus’ return, gang. Be watching and be ready.**

2 THESSALONIANS 1 - “Greeting; God’s Final Judgment and Glory!”

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Latest Studies” under “Bible Studies” on the right side. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

UPCOMING SCHEDULE OF NO CLASSES! –(planning on meeting weekly unless otherwise advised)

- **NO CLASSES WEEK OF 9/17-9/18** (HK, CHINA, ASIA CONF.)
- **NO CLASSES WEEK OF 10/15-10/16** (CYPRUS, MIDDLE EAST CONF.)

Personal Prayer Request:

Please pray for fruitfulness and effectiveness re my upcoming Asia Trip to churches in Hong Kong and China (9/14-16) and to the CC Asia Conference in Thailand. (9/17-9/20).

Teaching itinerary:

Hong Kong church: 9/14; 7pm to fellowship including a number of young people who are in various stages of belief and limited Bible awareness (CA time 4am, 9/14—assuming you’ll be asleep at that hour, prayer the day before would be so appreciated!

Church in China; 9/16; 10am Sunday morning service (CA time 7pm, 9/15)

Church in HK; 9/16; 4pm Sunday afternoon/evening service (CA time 1am, 9/16- again, assuming you’ll be asleep at that hour, prayer the day before would be so appreciated!

Morning devotions/prayer meeting in Thailand, 6:30am; 9/18-9/20 (CA time 4:30pm 9/17-19).

Prayer for travel mercies, good health, mutual imparting of spiritual gifts, empowerment of the Holy Spirit, that the Lord’s will be perfectly done!

Thank you so much!

Phil Twente

2 THESSALONIANS 1 - “Greeting; God’s Final Judgment and Glory!”

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