

A Scared World Needs a FEARLESS CHURCH
Wednesday September 5, 2018
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1Thessalonians 4:13-18 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. ¹⁴ For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. ¹⁵ According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

The premise of our study is that we can be a "Fearless Church" in a "scared world" because we have the "blessed hope."

Titus 2:13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

The blessed hope is our belief that Christ will return from heaven personally and historically.

Apostles Creed: The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

In the New Testament, the theological virtue of hope is consistently linked with the courage to hang tough.

1 Thessalonians 1:3 We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Return: *Parousia* is an ancient Greek word meaning presence, arrival, or official visit.

Caution: We all know there are strongly held but differing opinions regarding the "how" of Christ's return. However, the "how"—beyond a few basics—is a "disputable matter."

Augustine: "In essentials, unity; in doubtful matters, liberty; in all things, charity."

The Absolute Essentials of Christ's Return (The *Parousia*)

Acts 1:9-11 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and **a cloud** hid him from their sight. ¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, **will come back** in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Two things the angels stressed were Christ's historical return and that he would come in a cloud of glory.

Matthew 24:30-31 "Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the **Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven**, with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Take-Away: Jesus is coming back, so be ready.

Jän's Disputable View

Hermeneutical Principle: Difficult verses must be interpreted in light of clear verses.

If one simply reads the clear passages in the New Testament that refer to the Second Coming (1Thessalonians 4, 2Thessalonians 2, and Matthew 24) the reader gathers an uncomplicated understanding of the *Parousia*. The reader also notices that Paul and Jesus proclaimed the same basic view.

2Thessalonians 2:1- 3 Concerning **the coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, ² not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. ³ Don't let anyone deceive you in any way,

In 2Thessalonians Paul was writing to scared and confused Christians. Therefore, he laid out the basics for the reader so that even the most simple-minded Christian could grasp the important things.

The Four Clear Signs of the *Parousia*

2Thessalonians 2:3-12 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God ⁵ Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? ⁶ And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. ⁷ For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, ¹⁰ and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹ For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie ¹² and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

1. The Great Rebellion: this will be a generalized period of rebellion against God's law ("lawlessness") and sound doctrine. The "powerful delusion" appears to be that one can be a spiritual person without adhering to God's moral law and the "essentials."

Matthew 24:10-12 At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,

2Timothy 4:3-4 For the time will come when people will not put up with **sound doctrine**. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴ They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths...

2. The Appearance of the Lawless One: this will be an individual who personifies the spirit of the age of lawlessness.

2Thessalonians 2:4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's **temple**, proclaiming himself to be God

Matthew 24:15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the **abomination that causes desolation**,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—

Christ will destroy the Man of Lawlessness at his Parousia. **2Thess 2:8** ...destroy by the splendor of his coming.

3. The Great Persecution

2Tim 3:1 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the **last days**.

Matthew 24:9 "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me

4. The Great Evangelization

Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.