



# Bible Student's Notebook<sup>TM</sup>

## The Herald of His Grace

### Weekly

Presenting *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XX  
Issue 499

## The Setting of Thessalonians

### How Thessalonians Fits in the Purposes of God for the Earth, Contrasted with God's Present Purposes

Part 1 of 2

by — Danny Russino

Much of the coming of the Lord is anticipated in Israel's typical, or "picture" deliverance from Gentile dominion in Egypt. The Passover's blood stopped the hand of the destroyer and Israel's firstborn were preserved. The remnant is preserved during the tribulation and wrath [until] the Lord returns to the earth to rescue Israel once again from Gentile dominion (Zechariah 12:9). Every Israeli eye will see the Lord at the right hand of God just prior to His descent to the earth, and then they will look closely on the One Whom they have pierced and mourn for Him (Matthew 24:29-30; 26:64).



Israel's history guides us in our understanding of New Testament end time events for Israel. Israel was brought to Mt. Sinai where those who had received the "gifts of the spirit" constructed the Tabernacle and its vessels of service. Israel was made ready to enter the kingdom. The "supernatural gifts" of the Acts period were also a foretaste of the coming antitype (Hebrews 6:4-5). At Mt. Sinai, the Lord descended to equip His people further with the Law. In the future, at the last trumpet, the Lord will descend in like manner and plant the New Covenant in Israel's heart as Jeremiah prophesied (Jeremiah 31:33).

Understanding the feasts will prevent us from taking the things of Israel and forcing them into this present secret dispensation of the grace of God (Ephesians 3:1-2, 7-9).

When the Lord descended to Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19), it was the beginning of Israel's typical kingdom. This beginning is a picture of Israel's future kingdom glory. Just as the Lord descended to them, so in 1 Thessalonians 4 He descends to Israel at the beginning of their future kingdom. We have identical elements and characters in both Exodus 19 and 1 Thessalonians 4.

Here are some wonderful features of the Lord's descent "out of heaven" way back then, which guides us in our understanding of this hope in the Acts period. Let us begin by reminding ourselves of the setting of the type and shadow:

*You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. And now if you will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure to Me above all the nations; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the sons of Israel (Exodus 19:4-6).*

In Exodus, these verses are dealing with Israel, the nations and all of the earth in the fulfillment passages of Matthew, 1 Thessalonians 4 and the book of Revelation. It was the earth and Israel in Exodus 19, and it is

(see *THESSALONIANS*, page 4395) ↗

## Bible Student's Notebook™ Weekly

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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This free weekly electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
  - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
  - union in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6);
  - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

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### ABBREVIATION KEY

<i>Scripture Version</i>	Concordance (Knoch)
(Unless otherwise noted all Scripture quotations are taken from the Bible Student's Version).	CL: A Critical Lexicon and Concordance (Bullinger)
CV: Concordant Literal Version	CWS: Complete Word Study Dictionary (Zodhiates)
DAR: Darby Translation	FoS: Figures of Speech (Bullinger)
DT: Dabhar Translation	SEC: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance
FF: Ferrar Fenton Bible	TGL: Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon
KJV: King James Version	UR: Unsearchable Riches
RE: Rotterdam's Emphasized Bible	VED: Vine's Expository Dictionary
WT: Weymouth Translation	YAC: Young's Analytical Concordance
YLT: Young's Literal Translation	
<i>Reference Sources</i>	<i>Reference Notations</i>
AA: Analytical Analysis (Welch)	cf. – compare
BDB: Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon	e.g. – for example
CB: Companion Bible Notes & Appendixes (Bullinger)	et al. – and others
CC: Concordant Commentary (Knoch)	etc. – et cetera (and so on)
CKC: Concordant Keyword	ff. – and the following
	i.e., – that is

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**THESSALONIANS** (continued from front page)

the earth and Israel in these new testament passages – not [meant for] the church today which is His body.

In Exodus 19 the Lord descended out of heaven to the earth in clouds. He descended to the earth with a trumpet blast, and there was thunder, lightning and earthquakes. He was accompanied by angels (Psalm 68:17), and all of Israel saw Him and were gathered together in one place. The Lord spoke with a voice and Moses went up to meet the Lord. Does this sound familiar?

Here are the Exodus 19 verses which are practically point-by-point repeated in 1 Thessalonians 4 and other New Testament passages which deal with Israel's future glory.

If the setting in Exodus 19 is Israel's typical deliverance, then it is safe to say that 1 Thessalonians 4 is not the deliverance of the church today. The setting in Exodus is a guide to 1 Thessalonians 4.

**The Lord's Coming in the Clouds**

*And Jehovah said to Moses, "Lo, I come to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you for the eon." And Moses told the words of the people to Jehovah (Exodus 19:9).*

For other references about clouds see Exodus 19:16; Deuteronomy 33:26; Daniel 7:13; Matthew 24:30; 26:64; 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and Revelation 1:7. In that day Israel will certainly believe the Lord after centuries of rejecting Him.

**The Trumpet Blast Heralds His Descent**

*There shall not be a hand to touch it, but that he shall surely be stoned or shot through; whether beast or man, it shall not live. When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come up to the mountain (Exodus 19:13).*

For other Scriptures describing the trumpet blast as the Lord descends to the earth and Israel being gathered see Exodus 19:16, 19; 20:18; Joshua 6:5 (note the commander of the Lord's hosts was in the land – Joshua 5:14). See also Psalm 47:5; Isaiah 27:13; Joel 2:15-16, 18; Matthew 24:31; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and Revelation 11:15.

**Signs in Heaven Above and the Earth Beneath, and Again Clouds and Trumpet**

*And it happened on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mountain. And the voice of the trumpet was exceedingly loud, so that all the people in the camp trembled (Exodus 19:16).*

For other Scriptures which speak of thunder and lightning associated with Israel's deliverance and the Lord's descent to the earth see Exodus 9:23 and Revelation 11:19.

**The Lord Came Down to the Mountain, and a Voice Was Heard and Smoke Was Seen and the Earth Shook**

*And Mount Sinai was smoking, all of it, because Jehovah came down upon it in fire. And the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and became very strong, Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice (Exodus 19:18-19).*

Please note that the Lord came down to earth in Exodus 19, and the Lord's return to the earth was the expectation of the gospel and Acts period. The Scriptures overwhelmingly support this. The Lord did return to heaven after Exodus 19, but this will not be the case when the picture becomes a reality. See Matthew 24-25, noting the judgment of ser- ►

vants and nations on the earth. See also specifically Matthew 24:7; 27:51; Hebrews 12:26-29, Revelation 6:14-17; 11:16-19.

The Lord came down to the earth and Moses went up to meet Him. Moses represents that elect company who are privileged to “meet” the Lord in the future when He descends to the earth.

*And Jehovah came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And Jehovah called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up* (Exodus 19:20).

The people of Israel were gathered to meet the Lord (Exodus 19:17). Israel will be re-gathered when the Lord returns. See Jeremiah 31:10; Ezekiel 11:17; 34:12-14; Matthew 3:12; 24:31; Luke 13:34; John 11:52; II Thessalonians 2:1.

The people of Israel gathered when the Lord descended from heaven, but Moses was privileged to go up and meet the Lord as He descended. Again we note that, in this historic type or foreshadowing, the Lord did return to heaven; but Moses did not go into heaven with Him, since Moses and the people of Israel are the vehicles for God’s purposes on the earth. In the glorious future for Israel, the Lord will not return to heaven. He will descend to the Mount of Olives (Joel 2:27; Zechariah 14:4; Matthew 24:3; Acts 1:11; Romans 11:26).

The remnant of the Acts period, called the “Israel of God” in Galatians 6:16, will be privileged to meet the Lord as He descends to the earth, as we shall see in our examination of I Thessalonians 4. For remnant verses see Genesis 45:7 (where the rejected Joseph was recognized by his brothers the second time); Isaiah 1:9; 10:20-23; Romans 9:24-29; 11:5; Joel 2:32; Acts 2:39.

Before any further discussion, may I say that Christ is the only One Who is immortal. Dead believers are not in heaven. Christ does not bring immortal bodies from heaven with Him; they are asleep in Christ. More on this subject later.

*Now we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are reposing, lest you may sorrow according as the rest, also, who have no expectation. For, if we are believing that Jesus died and rose, thus also, those who are put to repose, will God, through Jesus, lead forth together with Him. For this we are saying to you by the word of the Lord, that we, the living, who are surviving to the presence of the Lord, should by no means outstrip those who are put to repose, for the Lord Himself will be descending from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the Chief Messenger, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall be rising first, Thereupon we, the living who are surviving, shall at the same time be snatched away together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And thus shall we always be together with the Lord. So that, console one another with these words (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).*

“Meet” occurs only four times in the New Testament. We should look carefully at it and understand fully what it means.

Paul comforts those whose loved ones had died. He said that the dead will be rising first, and that those who were living at that time would be snatched away. This occurs at the last trump, in the twinkle of an eye, when this mortal body puts on immortality (I Corinthians 15:51-57).

The word “meet” (*apantesis*) found in I Thessalonians 4:17 may add to the theory that we will go into heaven. “Meet” occurs only four times in the New Testament. We should look carefully at it and understand fully what it means. It occurs twice in Matthew 25 which, of course, deals with the kingdom on the earth. Let us examine this first usage of the word “meet.”

*Then likened shall be the kingdom of the heavens to ten virgins, who getting their torches, came out to meet the bridegroom* (Matthew 25:1).

Before we read too quickly, when is the “then” of this first verse? It is in the time when the Lord returns to the earth as He had been describing in the previous chapter. In Matthew 24:29-31 we read of the Lord descending out of heaven in the clouds and with the trumpet blast, just as we do in 1 Thessalonians 4. At

that time, when He returns to the earth, "then" the wise virgins will go to "meet" Him. air, then they return to the earth with the Lord.

*Now in the middle of the night a clamor occurs: "Lo! the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!" (Matthew 25:6).*

These virgins are not going away with the bridegroom. In eastern marriages the bridegroom comes to the bride's home. There the marriage supper is enjoyed. The wise virgins represent those who "watched" (Matthew 25:13), and were thus rewarded with a meeting with the Bridegroom as He came to the marriage.

This "meeting" has *nothing* to do with the Lord "appearing" in the heavenly places. This is the Lord coming back to the earth. We know this from the very context of these first occurrences of this word "meet."

*Now, whenever the Son of Mankind may be coming in His glory, and all the holy messengers with Him, then shall He be seated on the throne of His glory, and in front of Him shall be gathered all the nations. And He shall be severing them from one another even as a shepherd is severing the sheep from the kids (Matthew 25:31-32).*

The throne of His Glory is on the earth, and the nations are on the earth (Joel 3). The Lord will come with all of His holy messengers, and these are the "saints" or "holy ones" of Jude 14 and I Thessalonians 3:13.

The next occurrence of this word "meet" is in Acts.

*And thence the brethren, hearing about us, come to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Taverns, perceiving whom, Paul, thanking God, took courage (Act 28:15).*

The brothers from Rome came to "meet" Paul. The brothers from Rome did not jump in a ship and turn around and go back to Jerusalem with Paul. Paul continued on to Rome. Those believers who are "snatched away" go to a meeting in the clouds in the

In every case this word "meet" does not mean continuing on into the place from where the one being met came. On the contrary, it means to go out and meet the one coming to the place from which those meeting him came. In other words, I Thessalonians 4 is about that company of that time going up from the earth to meet the Lord in the air as He descends to the earth out of heaven.

Let us also note that those caught up to meet the Lord were caught up only to the air – the air being the place of the clouds:

*Thereupon we, the living who are surviving, shall at the same time be snatched away together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And thus shall we always be together with the Lord (I Thessalonians 4:17).*

*For who is our expectation, or joy, or wreath of glorying? Or is it not even you, in front of our Lord Jesus, in His presence? (I Thessalonians 2:19).*

In the verse above, the word "presence" is from the Greek word *parousia*. It is translated "beside-being," "being near" or "arrival of." The believers were going to "meet" Him only when He arrived. Please see the Acts period references where *parousia* means "arrival," not "departure" (I Corinthians 16:17; II Corinthians 7:6; 10:10).

*Parousia* was used in ancient manuscripts to denote the arrival of a dignitary, not the departure of anyone to go and be where the dignitary originated. *Parousia* is used by Paul seven

times in both letters to the Thessalonians. Here are a few more occurrences:

*Now may the Lord cause you to increase and superabound in love for one another and for all, even as we also for you, to establish your hearts unblamable in holiness in front of our God and Father, in the presence of our Lord Jesus with ►*

all His saints (I Thessalonians 3:12-13).

Now may the God of peace Himself be hallowing you wholly; and may your unimpaired spirit and soul and body be kept blameless in the **presence** of our Lord Jesus Christ! (I Thessalonians 5:23).

The hope of the Acts period was the Lord's *parousia*, that is, His personal presence on the earth. This is what they expected in their lifetime, and Paul wanted the Thessalonians to be blameless right up until that day of glory. The second letter to the Thessalonians also will prove that the hope was all earthbound. In II Thessalonians Paul wrote of prophetic things regarding Israel and her final days. In chapter 2 Paul repeats that the Lord Jesus was coming back to the earth, and they would be gathered to meet Him in the clouds as He descended.

Now we are asking you, brethren, for the sake of the **presence** of our Lord Jesus Christ and our **assembling** to Him (II Thessalonians 2:1).

Then Paul goes on to set this return of the Lord in exact frames of reference so that his friends would not be deceived. These terms of reference are the very things which show that the hope of the Thessalonians is not ours today.

... that you be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be alarmed, either through spirit, or through word, or through an epistle as through us, as that the day of the Lord is present. No one should be deluding you by any method, for, should not the apostasy be coming first and the man of lawlessness be unveiled, the son of destruction, who is opposing and lifting himself up over everyone termed a god or an object of veneration, so that he is seated in the temple of God, demonstrating that he himself is God? Do you not remember that, still being with you, I told you these things? And now you are aware what is detaining, for him to be unveiled in his own era. For the secret of lawlessness is already operating. Only when the present detainer may be coming to be out of the midst, then will be unveiled the lawless one (whom the Lord Jesus will despatch with the spirit of His mouth and will discard by the advent of His presence, whose

presence is in accord with the operation of Satan, with all power and signs and false miracles and with every seduction of injustice among those who are perishing, because they do not receive the love of the truth for their salvation (II Thessalonians 2:2-10).

Paul clearly says in this passage that the "Day" for which they were looking did not come until after apostasy and deception, and the "abomination of desolation" was set up in Israel's Temple in Jerusalem. What has Israel's Temple to do with any heavenly purpose? Thessalonians is a context of Israel's prophecy, and prophecy about Israel is not prophecy about us today.

The Day of the Lord is one great subject of prophecy, and the reader is encouraged to search through the prophets regarding this great day and read the elements in those Old Testament passages. The book of the Revelation is all about this "Day of the Lord" (Revelation 1:10), and so are the epistles to the Thessalonians. Remember, prophecy is not about the church which is His body. It was hidden (concealed) from the eons in God (Ephesians 3:8-9; Colossians 1:26).

The setting of Thessalonians is all prophetic and easily identified with Israel and the last years of the current eon. Please consider these words and phrases which link II Thessalonians with Daniel, Isaiah, Matthew, Corinthians and Revelation as well as other Acts period epistles:

... the Day of the Lord ... shall not come unless (2:2).

... apostasy be coming first ... the man of lawlessness ... the son of destruction (2:3).

... lifting himself up ... seated in the temple of God, demonstrating that he himself is God (2:4).

... the secret of lawlessness is already operating, Only when the present detainer may be coming to be out of the midst (2:7).

... then will be unveiled the lawless one (2:8).

... whose presence is with all power and signs

and false miracles (2:9).

Notice that nothing is "taken out of the way" in 2:7, but rather something comes "out of the midst" (CV).

Let us see how Thessalonians fits in the purposes of God for the earth by comparing Scripture with Scripture. In the book of the Revelation we have the terrible trinity: Satan and the two beasts.

Satan is identified as the "old serpent" (Revelation 12:9) who, having been cast out of heaven, attempts to destroy the faithful remnant, and then makes war on Israel (Revelation 12:12-17). Eventually Satan is bound for 1000 years (Revelation 20:2-3), then released and eventually cast into the lake of fire with the wild beast and false prophet and will be tormented for the eons of the eons (Revelation 20:7-10).

Satan's purposes against God and Israel are facilitated by the two beasts. We read about the first beast (the antichrist) in Revelation 13:1-8. We notice that this individual is a great military power, as :4 says, "who is able to battle with it?" We notice that this beast has a pseudo resurrection (:3), and it made war with "the saints." This is not the church which is Christ's body, but Israel. This military engagement lasts 3-½ years, and the antichrist is empowered by Satan, the dragon.

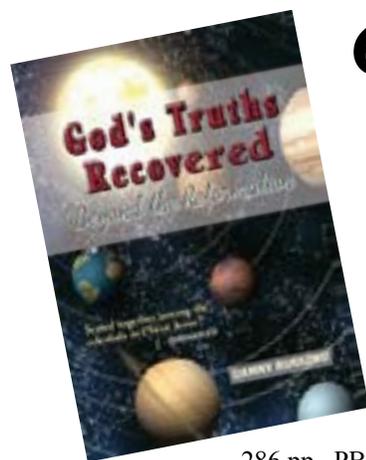
The setting of II Thessalonians is exactly the same setting of Matthew 24, the prophecies previously listed and the book of Revelation. The "second coming" of

our Lord is after the final 3-½ years of Israel's history, which years are called the "day of Jacob's trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7). During that time the remnant wandering in the wilderness will be praying, "lead us not into tribulation but deliver us from the evil one." If these things of prophecy, Revelation and Matthew have nothing to do with our Lord as Head of the church which is His body in the heavenly places, then how can the same things in Thessalonians be about us and our hope today?

After those horrific final 3-½ years, our Lord descends to the earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords and He saves Israel by destroying the armies set against them. These events were in view during the Acts period, and the believers of that time were waiting for the Lord's return. They were waiting for His return because they would go and meet Him as He descended, after which they would rule and reign with Him on the earth. However, Israel and the hope associated with her was put aside and postponed at the end of Acts. These things will all take place in the future.

The "rapture" is a false concept of a past and postponed hope dragged into the present. The "rapture" theory is a human endeavor which mixes the hope before us today with the earthly purposes of God for Israel. The "rapture" takes the hope of Paul's epistles for today, which have nothing to do with the earth, and forces it into an earthly context, thus blinding nearly all of Christendom to the hope for today.

(to be continued)



286 pp., PB

See order form.

## God's Truths Recovered: Beyond the Reformation

by – Daniel Russino

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