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Salvation In Thessalonians One. (2013)

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Salvation in Thessalonians One.

INTRODUCTION: since the primary focus of this study is upon Scriptures (in most chapters in One Thessalonians) that relate to salvation and are relevant to eternal life there are far too many different topics and titles to make a topics list, but I have faith that most who travel through each chapter will by the time they arrive at the end not only be enriched in their knowledge of salvation, but also enriched in God's love and God's grace in Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1

The Gospel came not only in word, but also in Power with full Conviction.

1 Thess. 1:4-5 ----- ⁴For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

Paul's words, "We know, brothers that God has chosen you" does not mean that God had predestined that they would be saved, but that by their strong faith and self-sacrificing behaviour and because of their faith Paul is confident the Thessalonians are saved. It is in this sense that Paul and those with him know that God has chosen them. Today we would say, "We know God has saved them." For further information concerning predestination see: "Ephesians 1" in, Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The word power in this verse does not refer to Paul's miraculous power, but the power of the Gospel to change a person's life, this is why Paul says, "The Gospel came to them not only in word, meaning not only intellectually but also in power and in the Holy Spirit. The Gospel came in power and in the Holy Spirit means it has the power to deliver sinners from the domain of darkness and transfer them into the Kingdom of God's beloved Son" (Col. 1:13) and to change their passions in such a manner that they now desire to live a life that honours God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the words, with full conviction means that they are fully made aware of their sin before God and are fully convinced that the Gospel message that Paul proclaimed is the true word of God and has the power to unite even the lowest of the sons and daughters of Adam with God and deliver them from death to eternal life.

The words you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake refer to Paul and those ministering with him being men who were prepared to suffer for their faith. It was in this way that the Thessalonian brothers and sisters were not only imitators of Paul and those with him but also imitators of Jesus. They were imitators in that they were suffering for the Gospel and it was in this manner that they that they became an example to all believers around them.

Waiting for God's Son from Heaven.

1 Thess. 1:10 ----- ¹⁰and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Waiting for God's Son from heaven, refers to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles: -

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Many sceptics today attempt to demean those who trust in Christ and degrade the Christian faith by mockingly saying that people have been waiting for the Lord to return for hundreds of years, but this is the wisdom of God. The Bible is written in such a manner that every generation is able to live with this glorious hope living in their heart and mind. No-doubt one of the reasons God designed it this way was because this eternal hope produces tremendous joy in the heart and mind that no-one can rob nor can anything take it away and it anchors the heart and mind and the emotions through hardship and troubling times. Added to this it should always be remembered that no believer has ever waited for hundreds of years since the instant they die is the instant they are with Christ and therefore the longest any of us will ever wait is one lifespan and to God and to eternity our lifespan is like a blinking of the eye.

Salvation and hope: when salvation to eternal life is spoken of as the hope of the faithful in Christ, it is not called hope because it might or might not happen, but because it is unseen and yet future. The hope itself is guaranteed because it is based on God's promise and he cannot lie. The apostle Paul wrote: -

- In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began (Titus 1:2).

The Christian hopes to be resurrected from the grave to be raised up to eternal life and everlasting glory to be made perfectly free from sin; to be everlastingly happy, but it is faith that gives these things a mental reality in the mind and it is under this influence of faith that those in Christ allow these unseen and yet future events to control their mind as if they were a reality now.

Faith and hope: the difference between faith and hope is that by faith alone we are sure of eternal salvation it is certain and guaranteed by faith whereas by hope we look forward with confidence that we will be raised to eternal life. All Christian hope stands on faith since it is, faith that secures and guarantees the promise of God. This is the reason faith and hope go together they are partners that complement each other since the same things that are the focus of our hope are the same things that our faith is trusting in. faith secures while hope looks forward to what is secured by faith.

Whom God raised from the dead: the words whom he raised from the dead show that it was God the Father who raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the grave and who will at the great resurrection raise to eternal life and everlasting glory all who have died in faith and are sleeping in Christ. This phenomenal event will not only change the entire world as we know it, but will by far supersede every other wonder God has done throughout the history of the world. God at Christ's resurrection raised only one man, but at the resurrection of believers God in the twinkling of an eye will literally raise thousands from the dead to eternal life.

Jesus delivers us the wrath to come: (1 Thess. 1:10) is one of the reasons (there are many others) the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is called the Good News. Whoever by faith belongs to the family of Christ will be delivered from God's wrath to come and will not be judged and condemned and cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total and utter extinction), but will be resurrected to eternal life and everlasting glory which means all in Christ will be delivered from the darkness of death. For further information concerning this see the notes following (1 Thess. 4:13-18) (below) under the title: "Sleeping in Christ."

NOTE: some people find it difficult to comprehend God raising the dead, but think of it this way: we have super computers today that have in their memories literally trillions of bits of information and at the touch of a key any one of those bits is resurrected to us on a brightly coloured screen (it is most likely they will soon simply appear in the air), then with another touch of the key it all vanishes into the super memory and is gone, until we resurrect it again.

Knowing that God has given his creation a mortal mind and finite memory to be able to build such amazing computers should make it very easy to understand how God keeps us all in His immortal mind and eternal memory waiting for the right time to touch the supernatural keyboard of heaven and raise us once again to life. Added to this very few Christians have any trouble believing God created the universe that we live in so raising the dead in comparison is not such a difficult task for such an awesome, powerful and majestic God (Heb. 11:3).

1 Thessalonians 2

Preaching the Gospel to Please Man or to Please God.

1 Thess. 2:4-6 ----- ⁴but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the Gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. ⁵For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed— God is witness. ⁶Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ.

Paul's says, "I do not preach the Gospel to please man, but to please God this does not mean that he dogmatically and legalistically sticks to the letter of the law as a legalistic teacher does, but that he does not alter it to appeal to self, ego and pride.

Flattery: means using words of charm and sweet talk to entice others it carries the idea of a self-serving person behaving in a submissive flattering manner to persuade people with power or influence in order to achieve an advantage.

Greed: (covertness in KJV) means selfishness, by implication it carries the idea of fraudulency and extortion which means that flattery and greed in the context of (v5) carries the following three ideas: -

1. Paul does not use smooth talk and charm or enticing promises (i.e., the promise of healing or a prosperous life etc.,) in order to achieve an advantage or to persuade people into the faith.
2. Everything Paul does he does with honesty, integrity and for the glory of his Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ and not for his own advantage or his own glory.
3. Paul was not greedy, meaning he was not self-indulgent and extravagant, he would not indulge himself in the excessive lifestyle and indulgent luxurious living that that some ministers of the Gospel do.

God who tests our hearts: (v4) God uses trials, persecution and hardships to test our faith to see whether it is genuine. It is very easy to praise God when things are good, even the unbelieving world is joyful and thankful when life is charmed, the real test of a brother or sisters faith is when it faces an unexpected crisis in life it is then that true faith is revealed, (i.e., do they give up or endure?) The following words of Habakkuk are a perfect example of great faith.

- Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation (Habakkuk 3:17-18)

NOTICE: Habakkuk is not taking joy in the fact everything around him is falling apart, but in the God of his salvation. Likewise our joy is not set upon the things of this world, but upon our Saviour who in love laid his life down for us and the eternal Salvation we have through faith in him. Paul and those who ministered with him did not: -

- Seek glory, flattery, adulation or praise from people.
- Expect to get a free ride for serving God.
- Appeal to people with flattering words to entice them into the Gospel.
- Proclaim the gospel for praise or to get gifts or money.
- Viewed suffering for the Gospel as God testing their hearts and their faith.

Walk in a Manner Worthy of God, who calls you into His Own Glory.

1 Thess. 2:11-12 ----- ¹¹For you know how, like a father with his children ¹²we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own Kingdom and glory.

Though Paul taught the Scriptures to those who he brought to Christ he did not view himself only as a teacher, but rather as a father who cared for his children. In his letter to the Corinthians he wrote, for though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for I became your father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel (1 Cor. 4:15). These beautiful and endearing words of Paul reveal two things: -

1. When a repentant sinner comes to Christ they are delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into the Kingdom of God's beloved Son (Col 1:13) and in this sense they become a newly born spiritual child of God.
2. Though many teach the Bible, not all who teach are willing to sacrifice their own well-being for those who follow them as a natural father gives his life for his children as Paul and those ministering with him did for those they ministered to.

Walk in a manner worthy of God: (v12) not every brother and sister in Christ is called into full time ministry, but all are called to encourage each other in the faith and to live their life in a manner that honours God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God calls you into His own kingdom: this statement (v12) clearly shows that those who are saved to eternal life are called into a Kingdom. Those outside of this Kingdom are invited into it through the Good News of the Gospel and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Following are the two most common theories today amongst religious leaders concerning this Kingdom: -

1. The Kingdom of God exists worldwide as an invisible spiritual Kingdom in the hearts and minds of those who are in Christ. Those who hold to this theory believe this Kingdom dwelling in the hearts and minds of faithful brothers and sisters in Christ amongst all nations is manifested outwardly in speech and behaviour that honours God and through the faithful global church and individual brothers and sisters who belong to the family of Christ.
2. The Kingdom will not exist until the Lord Jesus Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

Since both of these theories contain glorious truths they can be easily harmonised. Prior to the resurrection no-one, not even the apostles fully understood that Jesus was going to be put to death and rise again. They basically preached only the Kingdom of God to come on earth because they never really fully understood God's plan of salvation and that Jesus was the eternal King, but after the resurrection the apostles focus is on the King of the Kingdom rather than the actual Kingdom itself, this is because whoever belongs to the King will inherit the Kingdom. Jesus the King is the royal and golden path into the Kingdom while the Kingdom is the inheritance of those who belong to the King.

The Kingdom of God has existed, in different forms and shapes throughout history. It existed in the Old Testament under the Judges, David and Solomon and many other kings of Israel. It was not a perfect Kingdom and never has been. Jesus was not the King and many of the kings that did reign were far from godly nevertheless it, is God's Kingdom because God was the King. Today there is an invisible and spiritual Kingdom of God existing through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ which has taken on a different shape and form to that of the Old Testament Kingdom.

When Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God literal and visible Kingdom on earth God's Kingdom will take on a different shape again, but even this is not the final and ultimate shape of the Kingdom as it will once again change its appearance at the Great White Throne judgment when God descends to earth and is ALL in ALL.

These different shapes and forms of God's Kingdom shine a brilliant light on the truth that it is the King who determines whose Kingdom it is and not the shape or form of it. Even though all four Kingdom mentioned have been different in shape, form and appearance they are all called God's Kingdom simply because God and the Lord Jesus Christ is their King whether the Kingdom is seen or unseen.

For further information see the title: "Kingdom" (ON WEBSITE MENU).

God calls you into His own glory (v12) these majestic words transcends the mind of the ardent Bible student to the following awe-inspiring mystery that will take place at the sound of the last trumpet when our natural mortal, dishonourable, and perishable body is not only raised to be a spiritual imperishable body in glory, power and immortality, but also raised in the image of the Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life (1 Cor. 15:42-51) this is the breath-taking and eternal glory God is calling those in Christ into.

1 Thessalonians 3

May Christ Establish your Hearts Blameless in Holiness before God.

1 Thess. 3:12-13 ----- ¹²may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, ¹³so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

The words blameless and holiness before God in this context does not mean without sin, only one man throughout history has ever been able to achieve that perfection and he is the Son of God the Lord Jesus Christ. Having our hearts blameless in holiness in this context is about loving our brothers and sisters in Christ which means showing each other compassion, kindness, mercy, grace and forgiveness etc., and about showing the same love to those outside the Kingdom of God as we do to those in the Kingdom of God.

When we stand before the Lord at his return we will not be given a doctrinal exam to do, but we will be judged according to our devotion to Christ and how we have fulfilled Jesus command, "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Matt. 22:37-40) (Mark 12:28-31) this command of Jesus is called the royal law (James 2:8) in the New Testament. This is because it means do not deliberately, harm or hurt other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves, loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others, it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself. The thing God hates the most is when we do harm to another person, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, mentally, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do-good to others. It is interesting to notice that the major crime that God points out in Noah's time and one of the main reasons for the flood was because of all the violence in the land.

- Micah wrote: "What the LORD requires of mankind is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God" (Micah 6:5-10).
- Isaiah says: "The LORD loves justice, hates robbery and wrong doing" (Isaiah 61:8).
- Jeremiah said: "Those who know God practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, because it is in these things that God delights" (Jer. 9:24).

The great prophets Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah clearly show us that the people the LORD loves are not only those who acknowledge God, but who also uphold justice, do not lie, deceive or make promises they do not intend to keep, but speak the truth, do what is right, show respect and give help to others when able and make choices that lead to peace. These are the things the LORD delights in and that bring His favour.

Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount: the constant theme throughout Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is doing what is right before God by seeking the way of peace in all situations. Jesus calls Christians to treat people fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. This means living a life that honours God and the Lord Jesus Christ is about doing all we can do to protect people from harm and being dominated by the thought, "What action can I take or do that will help and encourage this person." It is all about doing right to others. This is the reason the message Jesus spoke on the mountain is referred to as, "The Famous Sermon" because the principals if followed not only by Christians but all humanity are the only way to peace (Matt 5). A wicked person is primarily one who deliberately and consciously denies the existence of God and does harm to other humans.

For further information on Jesus Famous Sermon see: -

- Matthew 5 in Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

1 Thessalonians 4

The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thess. 4:13-18 ----- ¹³But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep that you may not grieve as others (non-believers) do who have no hope. ¹⁴For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

¹⁶For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Fallen asleep this context refers to those who have died with faith in Christ. Scripture refers to them as being asleep in Christ because for them death is only temporary. From God's perspective they are simply taking a long nap until the Angel of the Lord comes and wakes them up.

Sleeping in Christ: when a person who belongs to Christ dies, the Bible says, that they have no knowledge and know nothing, they are totally unaware of it and are therefore in a perfect state of peace, this state is called sleeping in Christ and because they have no consciousness there, is no time. It is very similar to someone in a deep sleep there is no awareness of time, when the person wakes they have no idea of whether four, seven or twelve hours have passed. Likewise because there is no time in death the moment a Christian dies is the moment they are in the Kingdom of God and with the LORD, for them it is instant, even though many years may have passed by in our world's time. David died thousands of years ago, but the moment he is resurrected will be like the moment he breathed his last breath, because for him there is no awareness of time, so it is for every Christian from death to Christ is instant.

Death to the Christian is similar to a person in a coma: a person in a coma has no consciousness of time, time does not exist to them, when they wake, they often think only a day or so has gone by, when in actual fact several years may have passed yet they think they are waking up, the same day, or next day after they went to sleep. The person in the coma or in death is totally unaware of any time that they have spent in the coma or being dead. Death to those who belong to Christ is much the same as the person in the coma, the dead or those who are sleeping in Christ have absolutely no consciousness of time so for them, the moment they die, is the moment they are instantly with the Lord, even though many years may have passed during the time they have been dead (i.e., sleeping in Christ).

It is the same principal as a person who goes into hospital for an operation: the patient is given an anaesthetic and put to sleep, surgeons cut them up and take bits out, over the next few hours, yet the patient is totally unaware of it they wake up and have absolutely no idea of the time that has passed, therefore when Paul says: -

- We are of good courage, and we would rather be away (absent in the KJV) from the body and at home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8).

It is a true statement, even though he may have spent years sleeping in Christ.

NOTE: a second reason a Christians death is called sleeping in Christ is because their death is only temporary, being asleep in Christ means everyone who dies in Christ is kept in the eternal mind and memory of God.

Jesus said: -

- Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them falls to the ground without the father knowing it and even the hairs of our head are all numbered therefore we should not fear death because we are of more value than many sparrows (Matthew 10:29-31).

The entire person, (i.e., body, spirit, mind and consciousness) remains sleeping in Christ, until the first resurrection (Rev. 20:5) when all who are asleep in the Lord are woken up at the blast of the angels trumpet and raised from the dead to everlasting glory and clothed with an eternal and immortal body.

NOTE: some people find it difficult to comprehend God raising the dead, but think of it this way: we have super computers today that have in their memories literally trillions of bits of information and at the touch of a key any one of those bits is

resurrected to us on a brightly coloured screen (soon it is most likely they will simply appear in the air), then with another touch of the key it all vanishes into the super memory and is gone, until we resurrect it again. Knowing that God has given his creation a mortal mind and finite memory to be able to build such amazing computers should make it very easy to understand how God keeps us all in His immortal mind and eternal memory waiting for the right time to touch the supernatural keyboard of heaven and raise us once again to life. Added to this very few Christians have any trouble believing God created the universe that we live in so raising the dead in comparison is not such a difficult task for such an awesome, powerful and majestic God (Heb. 11:3).

For further information see the titles: -

- Sleeping in the Grave and Sleeping in Christ.
- Death (What happens when we Die).

Both titles are in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Paul tells those who have faith in Christ not to grieve over their dead as non-believers do" (v13). Paul is teaching every brother and sister in Christ to live in the mindset that their loved ones who have died are in fact only sleeping until the Lord returns in contrast to unbelievers who have no hope of being resurrected to eternal life and everlasting glory.

Caught up to meet the Lord in the air: notice the statement, "The living and the dead will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (v17) does not actually say that they will be caught up to heaven, the word (*air*) from Strong's Concordance comes from the Greek word (*aer*) and means to breathe or blow (i.e., air as surrounding) there is no implication that it means heaven. Throughout the history of Christianity there has always been two main theories regarding the Lord Jesus Christ return.

1. The dead and those who are alive will be caught up to heaven and forever be with the Lord in heaven. Most who believe this do not think they are going to be sitting on clouds playing harps with the angels, but rather that they will be in an eternal world of glory full of joy and peace and free of suffering and sorrow a place that by far supersedes any beauty and bliss our finite mortal and corrupted minds can comprehend.
2. The Lord will return in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. For further information concerning this glorious new age, see the notes following (1 Thess. 1:10) (above) under the title: "Waiting for God's Son from Heaven."

To argue over which of these two scenario's is the right one or even worse divide would be foolishness since both ideas contain glorious eternal truths and both can be easily harmonized since the Bible teaches that at the end of Christ glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory, which means that both scenarios can be embraced especially since the Bible gives us very little information of what ETERNITY will look like when it comes to all creation in all its eternal glory and majestic fullness.

For further information see titles: -

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

NOTE.

It should be mentioned that if the theory any faithful brother or sister holds regarding Christ return proves to be wrong they will not be cast away from the Lord when he returns. This is because the focus, joy and excitement of both groups, is the return of the Lord himself.

It is also interesting to notice that prior to Christ's death and resurrection the focus is the Kingdom of God whereas after his resurrection the focus of the writers is mostly upon the truth that all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and faithfully follow him will be resurrected to eternal glory they don't go into detail of where that glory will be other than saying we will have an Immortal body, be full of everlasting happiness and never again suffer or experience sorrow added this awe-inspiring wonder we will be with the Lord for all eternity and for those who know his love this is enough.

Those who live with this promised and eternal hope of Christ return as the anchor of their mind will never be emotionally or mentally crushed and the hidden glory of this belief will radiate streams of peace and deep joy throughout their nervous system which will result in an emotional feeling of happiness which will continue to increase as they grow in the love and grace of the Lord. This no-doubt is one of the reasons Paul says, encourage one another with this hope (v18) in contrast to trusting in success, prosperity, riches, material possessions or fame which are all temporary and will eventually fail.

The judgement of the Lord.

When we stand before the Lord no-one will be told to sit down and do a doctrinal exam to see if we are deserving of eternal life, rather we will be judged by God's two greatest commandments in the entire Bible which are: -

1. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (Matt. 22:37-38).
2. You shall love your neighbour as yourself (Matt. 22:39).

It is not how correct or perfect our doctrines are (outside of the message of the cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ) that we will be judged by, but our actions and behaviour toward others especially our brothers and sisters in Christ these are the things that will determine whether we will suffer loss or gain at the judgment seat of Christ.

Paul wrote: -

- No one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw each one's work will become manifest, for the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done and if their work survives they will receive a reward, but if anyone's work is burned up they will suffer loss though they themselves will be saved, but only as through fire (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

For further information concerning love your neighbour as yourself, see the notes following (1 Thess. 3:12-13) (above) under the title: -

May Christ Establish your Hearts Blameless in Holiness before God.

The Day of the Lord will come like a Thief in the Night.

1 Thess. 5:1-3 ----- ¹Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. ²For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman and they will not escape.

When a thief comes in the night those being robbed are in darkness and totally unaware that the thief is coming. Once they are alerted that the thief has robbed them they are struck with sudden fear and shock when they find that all the things they treasured and valued have been taken therefore the words, the Lord will come like a thief in the night implies the following three things: -

1. The Lord will come unexpectedly.
2. His return will take people by surprise and come upon them suddenly and with fear and shock.
3. The Lord will return as the King of kings and Lord of lords and take total control of the world's governments, leaders and rulers, the economies, banking systems, trade and the way money is distributed amongst the rich and the poor amongst the global world.

In the night: could literally mean in the night or that the people of the world are spiritually blind (i.e., in spiritual darkness).

NOTICE: it does not say when there is peace, but when people are saying, "Peace and security" (v3) which could imply that the Middle East or the entire world has suffered so many wars and acts of terrorism that the collective voice of the world's population is crying for "Peace and security." It is most likely that it will be at this period of time when people are calling for, "Peace and security" that Paul says, "There will be sudden destruction."

Labour pains: Paul's use of the words, labour pains (v3) here is brilliant because it immediately takes the mind of the ardent Bible student to the following words that Paul wrote to the Roman brothers and sisters in Christ: -

- We know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies for the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God (Rom. 8:19-24).

The labour pains of a pregnant woman not only continue to increase, but they become more rapid until they are almost unbearable the poor Mum to be is at this point screaming in pain to be delivered of her child, but; and this is the glory once she is holding that new born child in her arms all the pain is overtaken by overwhelming love and joy. Likewise as a pregnant woman's labour pains increase in strength and become more rapid until the child is born so too will the labour pains of the earth. There will be an increase in natural disasters and the world's suffering as this world approaches the Day of the Lord. When this destruction comes there will be no escape the world's governments, man's heroes, weapons of war and the world's global banks though containing trillions of dollars will not be able to save the world from this coming destruction. Only when the earth gives birth to the sons and daughters of God will there be peace and a glorious new age will begin.

NOTE: this is not about the end of the world, but the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and a total change of the world's governments, authorities, leaders and trade, economies and banking systems as we know them today. The Bible personifies the earth as a pregnant woman who is struggling to give birth to the sons and daughters of God. This breathtaking and awe-inspiring world changing event will take place when the Lord returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

Children of Light.

1 Thess. 5:4-5 ----- ⁴But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.

Children of the light refers to those who trust in Christ and live to honour God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and who are eagerly looking forward to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. These verses show that brothers and sisters in Christ should not be surprised (overtake in KJV) by the return of the Lord or the trouble that is to come.

The Breastplate of Faith and Love.

1 Thess. 5:6-8 ----- ⁶So then let us not sleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

Let us not sleep: in this context means zealously continue in the faith and living to honour God and the name of the Lord as opposed to becoming apathetic or indifferent and continue to be passionate about the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and watch with patience for the signs that point to his imminent return.

Night: in this context speaks of spiritual darkness and living in the flesh (i.e., living from self, ego, pride and greed, etc.).

The day: speaks of spiritual enlightenment and living in the Spirit (i.e., love, kindness, compassion, mercy, grace and forgiveness etc.).

Be sober: carries the following three ideas: -

1. Always be the one who is in control of your mind never, give it up to another.
2. Keep the mind filled with the word of God in contrast to allowing it to be influenced (intoxicated) by the enticing and deceptive teachings of false religious leaders or the spiritual teachers of the world.
3. Flee from the sinful and unlawful pleasures and temptations of the world.

Breastplate of faith and love: means having the full assurance that salvation is by faith and grace and not by works and self-effort and having love dwelling in the heart and the mind so that whatever is said or done is clothed in love.

For a helmet the hope of salvation: carries the following two ideas; -

1. Being fully aware that salvation is not dependent on works of the law or adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days or keeping religious customs and traditions etc.
2. Being fully assured that salvation to eternal life is solely dependent on faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and God grace we cannot earn it or add to it since it is God's pure and free gift given to the faithful who are devoted to His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTE: when salvation to eternal life is spoken of as the hope of the faithful in Christ, it is not called hope because it might or might not happen, but because it is unseen and yet future. The hope itself is guaranteed because it is based on God's promise and he cannot lie.

Whether Awake or Asleep we Might Live with the Lord.

1 Thess. 5:9-11 ----- ⁹For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Throughout history there has been and sadly still are many faithful brothers and sisters in Christ whose family homes have been destroyed and who have lost loved ones and greatly suffered because of tornados, earthquakes and floods etc., therefore God's wrath as used in these verses cannot refer to natural disasters that trouble the world. When we notice that God's wrath in the context of what Paul is saying is linked to those who will obtain salvation to eternal life it becomes clear that the wrath of God in this context refers to the opposite of eternal life which is the grave as the place of death which is the destination of all who deny the existence of God, contrasted to the faithful who belong to the family of the Lord Jesus Christ being resurrected and saved to eternal life and everlasting glory.

For further information concerning death see the title: -

- Death (What happens when we Die) in, Death ON WEBSITE MENU.

End.