

***"The Day of the Lord - Peter & Paul,
Different Messengers for Different Times, Part 2"***

Review: Our Lord's Comings — The Differences Shall Be Great Indeed

- ***According to the Lord: Tribulation Shall Come First, But Salvation As Well***
- ***According to Paul: God's Comfort Is Always Offered by His Grace***

- ***According to the Lord: Tribulation Shall Come First, But Salvation As Well***

1 Thessalonians 5:1-5

1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

...

1 Thessalonians 5:9-10

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

- Take note here of the reference to "thief in the night". Our apostle uses this expression, as does Peter also (2 Peter 3:10). Similar language is used by our Lord in his earthly ministry as he was teaching concerning preparations for the coming Tribulation (Matthew 24:43). Remember that he taught much concerning preparations and the signs that will on that day indicate that his return is near.
- A proper recognition of the "signs of the times" was needed, since otherwise they could not endure to the end and flee into the wilderness where they would be protected in a special place.
- But Paul repeats several times that the Thessalonian believers were not in darkness nor in those times (1 Thessalonians 5:4-5) and that therefore that that teaching of the Lord was not directly relevant to them. The change in the dispensational working of God.

So, while the watching and waiting were appropriate and required for those believers living in the Tribulation, they are not for us. Why? Because the work of the Lord in the lives of believers living in the current dispensation of the grace of God is very different from the work of the Lord in the coming dispensation. Paul's conclusion in 1 Thessalonians 5, where he summarizes this with the repeated use of the word "comfort" in strict contrast to the "wrath" and "tribulation," must be noted, or we risk confusion regarding the most important issues of our day. Not recognizing the working of God through his abundant grace today is, by comparison, critical indeed, just as not recognizing the signs of the times will be for those living in the tribulation. Amen.

- We would all do well to consider the practical implications of these dispensational differences, or confusion in our minds and a lack of a proper and spiritual hope in our hearts will be the result.

Our Outline Today:

- ***According to Peter & John: God's Judgment Is Promised with Deliverance for the Obedient Elect***
- ***What Did Peter Really Believe Regarding Paul's Ministry and Message?***
- ***Next Time: The 1000-year millennial kingdom and all that means!***

I. Our Lord's Return According to Peter & John: God's Judgment Is Promised with Deliverance for the Obedient Elect:

- Our apostle Paul was sent by the risen and ascended Lord to the Gentiles with the gospel of the grace of God and with a distinctive, even unique, ministry. Peter and John, members of the Twelve, were sent to the Jews with a different message and ministry.
- As Peter and John write in their letters to their own, the Jews, during the Time of Jacob's Trouble, everything on earth will be focused on God's people, the Jews. For surely, as scripture makes so clear, the Lord God is not finished with them yet. If he were, our future would be so uncertain as to be of little certain and eternal value. For all depends on the faithfulness of Almighty God, doesn't it?

[READ] 2 Peter 3:8-10, 13-16

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day [is] with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11 [Seeing] then [that] all these things shall be dissolved, what manner [of persons] ought ye to be in [all] holy conversation and godliness,

12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

15 And account [that] the longsuffering of our Lord [is] salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

16 As also in all [his] epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as [they do] also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction [*one letter of Paul to the Jews, the rest to the Gentiles*].

- Yes, Peter writes, their expectation of the Lord's soon return has not been met. It seems that that plan of the Lord has been postponed. Indeed it had, as a new dispensation had begun. But the Lord will, Peter exclaims, still return according to his promise. The Lord had not abandoned them even though he suspended that dispensational plan and had begun another. It becomes a very interesting study of God's Word when we compare scripture with scripture, doesn't it?

Now, he says, "the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation", quite a different situation indeed compared to fervently expecting the signs of the Lord's return soon, perhaps. The contrast with the teaching on signs and wonders and on works is clear.

But did Peter truly understand grace? In some ways I am sure that he did. He did know that God had transferred the focus of his working to Paul as apostle of the Gentiles. He must also have known that a new and very different dispensation had been initiated. But beyond that, I do not know. I will comment further on Peter's view of Paul and his message at the end of this study.

So, Peter knew a change had occurred, and even a change in the gospel and its ministry had been introduced by the risen Christ. Paul had been

raised up and given a unique and different commission than what the Twelve apostles were given:

Galatians 2:7-14

7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision was unto Peter;

8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

10 Only *they would* that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Acts 15:7-12

7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us;

9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

- God had given multiple miraculous signs, and that had made the difference. Peter was convinced. We will come back to that a little later.

Let's proceed to the apostle John's "apocalypse" or "revelation" of Jesus Christ. Here we will see a revelation or unveiling indeed of our Lord in his second coming to this earth to establish his Kingdom, yes, but also to secure his own people and nation, the Jews. Remember, our Lord Jesus Christ, Messiah, in the Kingdom will fulfill the land promises given so many times to his own nation and people.

Revelation 1:7-8

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they [also] which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

- Importantly, note here that this is a public event. "Every eye" shall see. But it will be too late for many who will experience terror in His coming, for he will bring eternal judgment.

This is so different from the Rapture, which is apparently invisible, instantaneous, and "in a twinkling of an eye".

- But importantly, and this is the apostle's meaning and intent here, this coming is for the judgment of unbelievers in addition to the blessing of his elect nation, and that is highlighted here. Revelation chapters 19 & 21 present similar teachings.

[READ] Revelation 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name.

- Here a major theme of this book is found, that of the "overcomers". This term is used 3 times in 1 John and 8 times here in the Revelation. I will comment more on that in a moment. For now, it refers to those who will endure and not fall prey to the lies of the enemy by receiving the Mark of the Beast.

Revelation 14:9-11

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. *[See also Revelation 13:7, 15:2, 16:2, 20:4]*

- As those chapters between 13 and 19 reveal, the second half of the Tribulation period is truly "... great, so that none *is* like it: it *is* even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." By the sovereign work of Almighty God, the elect of Israel shall be protected from their enemies and delivered or saved "out" of it, as Jeremiah 30:7 indicates. They shall see the signs, respond obediently, and be delivered.

Daniel reveals the same:

Daniel 12:1-3

1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

- The bottom line here is that the Lord's Second Coming to earth is visible to all and will be a time of great suffering on earth, as he will wage war against those who have been captured by satan's lies during the Tribulation period and his "lying wonders". So many received the Mark of the Beast due to those, as we have seen in our study here. Verse Revelation 19:20 is specific in that teaching:

[READ] Revelation 19:20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

- This is a scene of great judgment to be poured out on this earth. His own elect would also be lost in the conflict if not for his shortening of the period

(Matthew 24:22). Why shortening? Is it because of the heat physically, as many say? Or is it perhaps because of the intense attacks of satan's willing servants combined with the weakness of the flesh and spirit of believers? Personally, I think the latter, but both may be involved.

- We see here Christ's coming to earth in victory over all his enemies and along with that, the suffering of his own people as satan attempts their total destruction. What a difference there is between all of this and our meeting with Christ in the air! Amen and amen.
- Now, to complete this study today in the Revelation of the apostle John:

[READ] Revelation 20:1-4

1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Revelation 21:1-3, 7

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God [is] with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, [and be] their God.

...

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

- The "overcomers" are the ones who endure until the end and are therefore those who are saved. This is a major theme in the Revelation, but also in 1 John and in the Revelation, with many references as noted earlier. For example:

Revelation 3:5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

- It is these overcomers that Peter, John, and the rest of the Twelve were ministering to in their writings. They existed then and will be many in number during the Tribulation period. Only those in the Tribulation that endure until the end will be saved, and the Jews saved will compose the elect nation. Amen.

What a great difference there is between this message and Paul's. So with those many differences, even with the essence of the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of the grace of God, it is no wonder that Peter had some difficulties with Paul's message. And it is the same for so many today who try to mix these messages, for it affects our understanding of how God is working today and affects our hope and our lives. The next thing on the prophetic agenda for us is our upward calling, not the signs of the return of the Lord. Amen.

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- *What Did Peter Really Believe Regarding Paul's Ministry and Message?*

II. What Did Peter Really Believe Regarding Paul's Ministry and Message?

- There are two passages that reveal much about Peter's thinking about Paul, and we all need to know. But we will begin with Paul's view of Peter. In Paul's Galatians' letter, he writes of Peter with boldness, and much sadness and disappointment, even grief:

[READ] Galatians 2:11-14

11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

- This circumstance was not necessarily the same one referred to in Acts 15, but may have occurred somewhat later, after Paul had endured the "thorn in the flesh" for years. Peter's comment on it all is found in his second letter. We read this earlier:

2 Peter 3:15-16

15 And account [that] the longsuffering of our Lord [is] salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

16 As also in all [his] epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as [they do] also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. *[one letter of Paul to the Jews, the rest to the Gentiles]*

- And then this one, Peter's second and last letter, probably written later in his life, perhaps from Rome, perhaps even after Paul's martyrdom under the hand of Nero. Peter recognized Paul's apostleship. But he did not understand the grace message very well, it seems. That was demonstrated by his unwillingness to stand for the truths of grace when it counted, as in Antioch. He knew that without God's grace, no one could be saved. Yes. But grace in the living of one's life was an area of confusion for him due to his Jewish convictions, it seems.
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Conclusions & Application:

- What a blessing it is, considering these other revelations of the Second Coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ to this earth; what a blessing indeed it is to know that it is his "COMFORT" that he offers us. The Rapture is the next event on our horizon, not the tribulation period, and after those trials, the Second Coming! We are not the Jews living in the Time of Jacob's Trouble. We are the church, which is his Body! Amen and amen.
- What a difference: For all of this to be accomplished, the gracious work of the Lord will be so magnificent indeed. Praise his holy name. That we have been included in such a magnificent plan of glory, together with Christ Jesus, is such a transforming thought that it should make a difference always. Amen and amen.
- Next Time: The 1000-year millennial kingdom and all that means!