

# The Christian Hope: Four things the Word of God makes clear

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## 1. Christ will return to earth from heaven.

**2 Sam 7:** God's covenant with David: A descendant to sit on his throne, and rule forever.

**Psalms 2:** I (God) will give You (Messiah) the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. I will install my King on My holy mountain of Zion.

**Psalms 72:** He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. All kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him.

**Psalms 132:** For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: 'This is My resting place forever; Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.'

**Isaiah 2:** Jerusalem. Many nations will say, 'Let us go up to the mountain of the LORD . . . He will teach us his ways.'

**Isaiah 9:** Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end . . .

**Jesus:** The Son of Man will come with power and great glory (Mt 24:30; 25:31, etc.)

**Rev 11:** The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever.

We will spend eternity, not in a celestial "far distant shore," but on the restored, redeemed earth, freed from the curse (Ro 8:20-21).

**Daniel 7:** The Son of Man comes and is granted a kingdom, which the saints shall possess.

The "Parousia" (Greek: a coming-to-be-with; arrival; presence in person. Prefix *para* meaning 'alongside'/'next to'/'among', plus a noun form of the verb 'to be')

→This is the apostles' own hope and message. **Acts 3:** 'Repent therefore . . . so that God may send Jesus Christ, who must remain in heaven until the time for the restoration of all things.'

## 2. The righteous dead will be raised when He comes.

Resurrection *is* the victory over death.

•The patriarchs expected it: **Gen 13:** 'To you and to your offspring I will give this land forever.' (cf. Acts 7:5)

•Job expected it: **Job 19:** 'My Redeemer shall stand upon the earth; and even after my skin is destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God—I myself.'

•The prophets expected it: **Isaiah 26:** Your dead shall live; their bodies shall arise.

**Daniel 12:** Many who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake—to everlasting life . . .

•We expect it.

**Jesus:** John 11:25, 6:40. 'Everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.'

•The Bible tells us *when*: **1 Cor 15:** In Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order; Christ the firstfruits, then those who are His *at his coming*.

**Rev 20:** This is the first resurrection.

→This is the apostles' own hope and message. **Acts 24:15, 26:22-23.**

## 3. There will be a judgment, and the wicked will perish.

**Ps 1:** The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

**Ps 11:** Fire and brimstone and a burning wind shall be their portion.

**Isa 13:** 'I will punish the world for its evil . . .'

**Isa 26:** Behold, the Lord comes out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity . . .

**Mal 4:** The day that is coming shall burn them up.

**Jesus:** All the tribes of the earth will mourn (Mt 24:30). His angels will gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and all who work iniquity, and cast them into the furnace of fire (13:40-43).

→This is the apostles' own hope and message. **Romans 8:** The creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (cf. Ps 96:11-13). 'In this hope we were saved.'

#### 4. We must prove ourselves faithful.

‘We must through many tribulations enter the Kingdom of God’ (Acts 14:22)

**Job 23:** ‘When he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.’

**1 Peter 1:** Suffering is for the purpose of proving your faith genuine.

**1 Peter 5:** You must suffer a little while, then the God of grace will perfect, establish, & settle you.

**2 Tim 2:12/Heb 10:38/Col 1:23/Heb 3:6** →If!

**1 Th 3:** We are destined for afflictions.

→Christ intends not for us to escape, but to withstand.

## Jesus Shall Reign 375

*He will rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. Psalm 72:8*

1. Je - sus shall reign wher - e'er the sun Does its suc -  
 2. To Him shall end - less prayer be made, And end - less  
 3. Peo - ple and realms of ev - ery tongue Dwell on His  
 4. Let ev - ery crea - ture rise and bring His grate - ful

ces - sive jour - neys run; His king - dom spread from  
 prais - es crown His head. His name like sweet per -  
 love with sweet - est song, And in - fant voic - es  
 hon - ors to our King; An - gels de - scend with

shore to shore, Till moons shall wax and wane no more.  
 fume shall rise With ev - ery morn - ing sac - ri - fice.  
 shall pro - claim Their ear - ly bless - ings on His name.  
 songs a - gain, And earth re - peat the loud "A - men!"

# The Christian Hope

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## 2 Thessalonians 1

### 1. Catching up with the Thessalonians.

Growing in faith and in love:

Compare **1 Th 1:2-3** (faith/love/endurance [of hope]) with:

- **2 Th 3:2, 5, 10** (regarding faith). and
- **2 Th 3:12 & 4:9-10** (regarding love)

Their persecutions have continued (perhaps intensified):

Previously: **Acts 17:5-14; 1 Th 1:6-7, 2:14-16, 3:3-5**

and now: **2 Th 1:3-4**

They were already a model to other churches

Previously: **1 Th 1:6-9a**

and still: **2 Th 1:4**

### 2. Consider First Baptist's progress of late; expect (and ask?!) the Lord to keep pushing us to greater maturity and solidity—love, faith, and endurance. This only happens through discipline, affliction, etc. The “school of hard knocks” *is* school!

### 3. “Worthy of the Kingdom of God.” The Thessalonians showed themselves worthy.

Consider also Rev 3:4; Phil 1:27; Col 1:10.

And by contrast, consider Rev 16:4-7

God will do what is *fitting*. His judgment will be shown to be just.

### 4. What lies before us, First Baptist?

We must face the Lord, and render our account.

If God loves us as sons (and He says He does), He's going to put us through our paces (Heb 12:5-11)

Every single day, in every situation of life, we are being put through our paces.

Life *is* tribulation. It's important that we make progress, and that we see to it that the others are making progress too.

Faith must *grow!* Love must *grow!* Faithfulness (endurance) is only proved by going through the testing. Will God be able to say of you (and us-as-a-congregation) that He “fulfilled all the good pleasure of His goodness” in you?

Pray for each other, that He will count us worthy—let us strive to *be* counted worthy.

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### 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10

1. Recall one of the aspects of the Christian hope from our opening night: Christ's vengeance  
Simultaneously He will (v. 7) "give you rest" (or "relief") and (v. 6) "pay back trouble to those who trouble you." Notice 3 occurrences of the word "tribulation" (= the same as "affliction" or "trouble")
2. The Bible's unanimous testimony is to a single future return of Jesus, in magnificent glory, when "every eye will see him," and when he will take vengeance on "those who trouble you," and "give rest to you who are in tribulation."
3. The "revelation" of Jesus Christ—what it means  
Gk. *apokalyptō/apokalypsis* = "reveal"/"revelation"  
Gk. *phaneroō* = "to make manifest"/"to reveal"  
(in the passive voice = "to be made manifest"/"to appear visibly")
4. The deliverance of the saints, and the outpouring of Christ's indignation upon the enemies, are the same event. It is impossible to separate them by a space of years, as the secret rapture ("Left Behind") system supposes. The Christian hope is the visible, triumphant, return of Jesus—The Day of the Lord is *a day*. Consider:  
Acts 1:11  
2 Th 1:6-10  
Col 3:4  
Joel 2:11 & 3:16
5. Test Everything! 1 Th 5:21  
Weigh what you hear; put it through rigorous examination; love the truth.
6. Scriptures to consider, which show that our hope is the revelation (*apokalypsis*; unveiling) of Jesus Christ, both to JUDGE and to SAVE—on the same day.  
  
Luke 17:22-30  
Romans 2:3-11  
Romans 8:18-24a  
1 Cor 1:7  
1 Peter 1:3-9 & 13  
1 Peter 4:12-13  
1 Peter 5:1  
1 John 3:2 (uses *phaneroō*, which means "made manifest")
7. The plain things are the main things! All-one-day (the Day of the Lord, when Christ shall be REVEALED) is taught plainly. It is derivable from Scripture, and has thorough support. The secret-rapture scenario, on the other hand, cannot be found plainly taught in Scripture. It must be derived from suppositions, indirect inferences, and assumptions which the reader has to bring with him. It cannot withstand rigorous examination.

## The Christian Hope

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### 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5

1. The meat of the matter: Paul's aim is to correct an error. Some rumor or possibly forged letter had misled the Thessalonians, and Paul needs to clarify. 2 Thessalonians is not meant to confuse, but to clarify.
2. Apostolic doctrine *alone* is to be regarded as truth. Anything at variance with it is false, even if offered innocently.
3. The evil one uses numerous methods to confuse and deceive the Church. He gains several advantages by doing so.
  - a. Christians feel little urgency to "go into training."
  - b. His pawn, the Man of Sin, will not be recognized as such; rather, he will win hearts.
  - c. The Great Commission is given low priority.
  - d. Misled and unstable Christians will fall into doubt and despair about the Bible's truth when their hopes fail to materialize.
4. Our topic: "The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him." Rapture/Parousia/Day of the Lord. The error: that it was imminent. Expected 'any day now,' or maybe even 'it arrived already.' The result: agitation of mind, and fear.
5. The correction/clarification: something not spelled out in detail in Paul's *first* letter to them, here made plain: The day will not come unless: the apostasy first, and Antichrist, *then* the Lord will come, and gather us to himself.
6. The same as the Lord's own teaching (Matt 24; Mk 13; Lk 21). Same sequence:  
Falling Away ~ Abomination ~ Great Tribulation ~ the Revelation of the Son of Man in glory ~ the Gathering of the Saints.  
  
*To the church* Paul says, plain as day: That day (our gathering) will not come until . . .
7. *There is no other gathering to be on the lookout for.* Passages that seem to suggest a pretribulational "gathering" only say that if you read that doctrine into them. In fact these passages have been misunderstood because of incorrect assumptions.
  - "thief in the night" = imminence?
  - "meet the Lord in the air" = heaven?
  - compare 1 Thess 4-5, and 2 Thess 1-2 with Matt 24/Mk 13, line up what matches, and the truth jumps out at you.
8. The Bible's consistent witness is to a single future return of Jesus. It is pastors' duty to correct mistakes, and to make sure their flocks are not distracted and led astray.

## The Christian Hope

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### 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

1. Events that must occur before “the coming of the Lord and our gathering to Him.” Three things for our consideration in this passage: the apostasy, the Man of Lawlessness, the restraining influence.
2. Notice, verse 5: Paul had taught the Thessalonians about all this subject in person. This letter, therefore, is just a *reminder*, to keep them on track (cf. vss 1-3), not an in-depth exposition. We’ll have to see what else Scripture says on these matters.
3. On the “apostasy”:
  - a. Matt 24:3-14. Christ’s own words in response to a direct question about His coming. Many will be deceived; many will fall away; lawlessness will abound; be careful you are not led astray.
  - b. 1 Tim 4:1-7. Impostors and infiltrators will distort the word of God. You, Timothy, guard the apostles’ doctrine. Be careful your people are not led astray.
  - c. 2 Tim 3:1-9, 13; 4:1-5. People led astray by “a form of godliness” which “will grow worse and worse.” Many will put their trust in “fables”—that is, made up spirituality. The Lord will come *on account of* such abundance of transgression (cf. Isa 59:12-21).
  - d. 2 Peter 2. The apostasy is not just the rebellion of *the world* against God, but it also affects *the church*. Lawlessness will be the prevailing character of the time. 2 Pe 3:17: “Beware lest you also . . .”
  - e. Jude 16-19. Just because something is “spiritual” doesn’t mean it’s the Holy Spirit! And don’t think that demons always manifest themselves in obviously evil things.
4. Where do we stand today? “The mystery of lawlessness is already at work” (v. 7). The seeds of the apostasy are already planted, germinating, spreading roots and sprouting leaves.
  - a. See the world in increasing rebellion
  - b. See the church in increasing rebellion

## The Christian Hope

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### 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

1. Last week: apostasy the eventual product of increasing lawlessness; tonight: the man of lawlessness.
2. Notice, first, that Christian *togetherness* is protection against the temptation to lawlessness. Cf. Judges 21:15 with Heb 10:24-25. There's "safety in numbers."
3. On the "Antichrist":
  - a. *anti-* can mean "against" or "instead of." Both are in 2 Th 2:4.
  - b. Rev 13:3-9. "He who has an ear, let him hear." Revelation and 2 Th are advance warning to churches. Not just given to us for curiosity's sake. Jesus is going to destroy this man by his coming (2 Th 2:8), so if you don't see this man, then Jesus isn't coming just yet.
  - c. Rev 13:12-15. Lying power, signs, and wonders performed by a "prophet." People who are looking for miracles today are setting themselves up for deception. False apostles and false prophets abound. "Test the spirits!" 1 John 4:1-6.
4. Where do we stand today? The antichrist is not yet revealed; he is still hidden. We can get help from the Scriptures, so that "the day will not take us by surprise."
  - a. Daniel's prophecies about a similar man. Antiochus Epiphanes (died 164 B.C.) did many things parallel to what the Antichrist will do in the future. See Dan 7:7-28; 8:5-27; 11:25-45. He plundered and desecrated the Temple, sacrificed a pig, set up an idol of Jupiter in the Temple (the "abomination of desolation," Dan 11:31). He outlawed Judaism, imposed paganism, claimed deity for himself ("Epiphanes"), put many Jews to death. See First Maccabees 1 for history (attached).
  - b. Jesus, answering the disciples' question about the signs of his return, refers *back* to Daniel's prophecies, and tells us to "understand" (Mt 24:15). Antiochus and his abominations were already history by then, but He said "When *you* see it." The future blasphemer will be a parallel to Antiochus, a "variation on the theme," but worse. What parts of Daniel have been fulfilled, and what hasn't been?
  - c. "He will sit in the temple of God." 2 Th 2:4
    - i. A literal temple? There isn't one—right now, anyway
    - ii. Could the Church be the temple? The Reformers' interpretation
    - iii. Keep an open mind, and keep watch.

# THE FIRST BOOK OF THE MACCABEES

## Chapter 1

<sup>1</sup> And it happened, after that Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian, who came out of the land of Chettiim, had smitten Darius king of the Persians and Medes, that he reigned in his stead, the first over Greece, <sup>2</sup> and made many wars, and won many strong holds, and slew the kings of the earth, <sup>3</sup> and went through to the ends of the earth, and took spoils of many nations, insomuch that the earth was quiet before him; whereupon he was exalted and his heart was lifted up. <sup>4</sup> And he gathered a mighty strong host and ruled over countries, and nations, and kings, who became tributaries unto him.

<sup>5</sup> And after these things he fell sick, and perceived that he should die. <sup>6</sup> Wherefore he called his servants, such as were honourable, and had been brought up with him from his youth, and parted his kingdom among them, while he was yet alive. <sup>7</sup> So Alexander reigned twelve years, and then died. <sup>8</sup> And his servants bare rule every one in his place. <sup>9</sup> And after his death they all put crowns upon themselves; so did their sons after them many years: and evils were multiplied in the earth.

<sup>10</sup> And there came out of them a wicked root Antiochus surnamed Epiphanes, son of Antiochus the king, who had been an hostage at Rome, and he reigned in the hundred and thirty and seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks.

<sup>11</sup> In those days went there out of Israel wicked men, who persuaded many, saying, Let us go and make a covenant with the heathen that are round about us: for since we departed from them we have had much sorrow. <sup>12</sup> So this device pleased them well. <sup>13</sup> Then certain of the people were so forward herein, that they went to the king, who gave them license to do after the ordinances of the heathen: <sup>14</sup> whereupon they built a place of exercise at Jerusalem according to the customs of the heathen: <sup>15</sup> and made themselves uncircumcised, and forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the heathen, and were sold to do mischief.

<sup>16</sup> Now when the kingdom was established before Antiochus, he thought to reign over Egypt that he might have the dominion of two realms. <sup>17</sup> Wherefore he entered into Egypt with a great multitude, with chariots, and elephants, and horsemen, and a great navy, <sup>18</sup> and made war against Ptolemy king of Egypt: but Ptolemy was afraid of him, and fled; and many were wounded to death. <sup>19</sup> Thus they got the strong cities in the land of Egypt and he took the spoils thereof.

<sup>20</sup> And after that Antiochus had smitten Egypt, he returned again in the hundred forty and third year, and went up against Israel and Jerusalem with a great multitude, <sup>21</sup> and entered proudly into the sanctuary, and took away the golden altar, and the candlestick of light, and all the vessels thereof, <sup>22</sup> and the table of the shewbread, and the pouring vessels, and the vials, and the censers of gold, and the veil, and the crown, and the golden ornaments that were before the temple, all which he pulled off. <sup>23</sup> He took also the silver and the gold, and the precious vessels: also he took the hidden treasures which he found. <sup>24</sup> And when he had taken all away, he went into his own land, having made a great massacre, and spoken very proudly. <sup>25</sup> Therefore there was a great mourning in Israel, in every place where they were; <sup>26</sup> so that the princes and elders mourned, the virgins and young men were made feeble, and the beauty of women was changed. <sup>27</sup> Every bridegroom took up lamentation, and she that sat in the marriage chamber was in heaviness, <sup>28</sup> the land also was moved for the inhabitants thereof, and all the house of Jacob was covered with confusion.

<sup>29</sup> And after two years fully expired the king sent his chief collector of tribute unto the cities of Juda, who came unto Jerusalem with a great multitude, <sup>30</sup> and spake peaceable words unto them, but all



## THE FIRST BOOK OF THE MACCABEES (continued)

was deceit: for when they had given him credence, he fell suddenly upon the city, and smote it very sore, and destroyed much people of Israel. <sup>31</sup> And when he had taken the spoils of the city, he set it on fire, and pulled down the houses and walls thereof on every side. <sup>32</sup> But the women and children took they captive, and possessed the cattle. <sup>33</sup> Then builded they the city of David with a great and strong wall, and with mighty towers, and made it a strong hold for them. <sup>34</sup> And they put therein a sinful nation, wicked men, and fortified themselves therein. <sup>35</sup> They stored it also with armour and victuals, and when they had gathered together the spoils of Jerusalem, they laid them up there, and so they became a sore snare: <sup>36</sup> for it was a place to lie in wait against the sanctuary, and an evil adversary to Israel. <sup>37</sup> Thus they shed innocent blood on every side of the sanctuary, and defiled it: <sup>38</sup> insomuch that the inhabitants of Jerusalem fled because of them: whereupon the city was made an habitation of strangers, and became strange to those that were born in her; and her own children left her. <sup>39</sup> Her sanctuary was laid waste like a wilderness, her feasts were turned into mourning, her sabbaths into reproach, her honour into contempt. <sup>40</sup> As had been her glory, so was her dishonour increased, and her excellency was turned into mourning.

<sup>41</sup> Moreover king Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom, that all should be one people, <sup>42</sup> and every one should leave his laws: so all the heathen agreed according to the commandment of the king. <sup>43</sup> Yea, many also of the Israelites consented to his religion, and sacrificed unto idols, and profaned the sabbath. <sup>44</sup> For the king had sent letters by messengers unto Jerusalem and the cities of Juda that they should follow the strange laws of the land, <sup>45</sup> and forbid burnt offerings, and sacrifice, and drink offerings, in the temple; and that they should profane the sabbaths and festival days: <sup>46</sup> and pollute the sanctuary and holy people: <sup>47</sup> set up altars, and groves, and chapels of idols, and sacrifice swine's flesh, and unclean beasts: <sup>48</sup> that they should also leave their children uncircumcised, and make their souls abominable with all manner of uncleanness and profanation: <sup>49</sup> to the end they might forget the law, and change all the ordinances. <sup>50</sup> And whosoever would not do according to the commandment of the king, he said, he should die.

<sup>51</sup> In the selfsame manner wrote he to his whole kingdom, and appointed overseers over all the people, commanding the cities of Juda to sacrifice, city by city. <sup>52</sup> Then many of the people were gathered unto them, to wit every one that forsook the law; and so they committed evils in the land; <sup>53</sup> and drove the Israelites into secret places, even wheresoever they could flee for succour.

<sup>54</sup> Now the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred forty and fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Juda on every side; <sup>55</sup> and burnt incense at the doors of their houses, and in the streets. <sup>56</sup> And when they had rent in pieces the books of the law which they found, they burnt them with fire. <sup>57</sup> And whosoever was found with any the book of the testament, or if any committed to the law, the king's commandment was, that they should put him to death. <sup>58</sup> Thus did they by their authority unto the Israelites every month, to as many as were found in the cities. <sup>59</sup> Now the five and twentieth day of the month they did sacrifice upon the idol altar, which was upon the altar of God. <sup>60</sup> At which time according to the commandment they put to death certain women, that had caused their children to be circumcised. <sup>61</sup> And they hanged the infants about their necks, and rifled their houses, and slew them that had circumcised them.

<sup>62</sup> Howbeit many in Israel were fully resolved and confirmed in themselves not to eat any unclean thing. <sup>63</sup> Wherefore the rather to die, that they might not be defiled with meats, and that they might not profane the holy covenant: so then they died. <sup>64</sup> And there was very great wrath upon Israel.