

I Thessalonians 2: 17-20

*The Absence
of Paul and
Joy for New
Believers*

HHBC





I Thessalonians chapter 2: 17-20

Today's passage:

17 But we, brothers, having been orphaned from you by absence for a short while—in person, not in spirit—were all the more eager with great desire to see your face. 18 For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and Satan hindered us. 19 For who is our hope, or joy or crown of pride, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? Or is it not indeed you? 20 For you are our glory and joy.



I Thessalonians 2:17

17 But we, brothers, having been orphaned from you by absence for a short while—in person, not in spirit—were all the more eager with great desire to see your face.

1) Review:

- Paul, Timothy & Silas, having been run out of Philippi by the Jews- arrive in Thessalonica battered, beaten and bruised
- Paul goes to the synagogue and truthfully, methodically explains the gospel to the Jews there and the Gentile ‘satellites’ revolving around the Jewish religion and faith
- A small group of Jews and a good number of God-fearing Gentiles are saved (slaves and prominent women among them)
- The Thessalonican Jews run Paul, Timothy & Silas out of town. They go to Berea and have good success there. But the Thessalonican Jewish officials follow him to Berea, so they have to press on to Athens
- At Athens, Paul sends Timothy back to Thessalonica and sends Silas back to Philippi
- Paul then journeys to Corinth and is entrenched there. Silas & Timothy both return approx. 1 to 1.5 years later with news. Timothy has great news about Thessalonica
- Acts 18:6- Paul has greatly distressed on the Corinthian Jews’ resistance (they resisted and blasphemed) to the gospel message; so news of Thessalonican believers was tremendously sweet; and emboldens Paul all the more with the Corinthian believers.



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey



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2. ‘Brothers’:

- a) In 2:7- *“but we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares...”* and 2:11’s *“exhorting, encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father”* - These 2 previous verses establish Paul’s familial sense of belonging to the Thessalonian believers- and them- to him- as his offspring
- b) So ‘brothers’ is a natural relationship for them to Paul as well: brothers (and sisters) in Christ Jesus

3. ‘Having been orphaned from you by absence for a short while’

- a) Orphaned = ***aporphanizō***: separated from parents. Refer again 2(a) above- Paul was the father of these believers, and then fed them (milked them) tenderly spiritual food as a mother

“love adapts itself to the needs of those loved” So did Paul when new converts needed more than the food of babes (2:7). And what earthly father ever made good his relation to his own children as Paul to his beloved Thessalonians? Exhortation, comfort, testimony (2:11) never failed to stimulate, cheer and direct in the ways that befit the God that calls unto His own kingdom and glory (2:12).. [Wm. Kelly]

- b) In the Greek interlinear: ‘a short while’ = “for the time of an hour in face” and “not in heart”



I Thessalonians 2:18

18 For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and Satan hindered us.

1) Paul really, really wanted to see the Thessalonians again:

a) The verse is more accurately stated:

‘For we wished and desired to come to you, I indeed Paul- both once and twice (again)’

adapted from the Nestle Greek interlinear

b) Paul would take delight & pleasure in going up from (either Berea or Athens) another time to be with them face to face.

2) Who hindered us? **Satan**

a) Hindered (Vb. Aor. Active ind.) = **egkoptō** = *to cut into; impede one’s course by cutting off his way.*

b) McCalley: defines **egkoptō** as thwarting one’s way: as an army breaking up a road to make it impassable.

c) Note: Satan is named personally as the hinderer. McCalley, H.A. Ironside, Keathley, Merryman say that this is not an accident. He was personally interested in Paul’s progress.



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2) Who hindered us? **Satan** ... continued

Who Satan is:

- d) Satan = ***Satanas***: the Adversary (Opposer in purpose and act; incites apostasy in men; circumvents. Worshippers of idols and idols themselves are under his control)
- e) He is called the ***Diablos***: maligner, accuser, defamer also slanderer. This term stresses Satan's activity and final goal of impugning the character of God
- f) He is the ***Tempter***: employs deception to tempt: Eve, Christ, the Thessalonian believers in 1 Thes. 3:5 (next week's lesson). Of note: '**the tempter**' (Mat. 4:3's: "And the tempter came and said to Him: *'If you are the Son of God, then command these stones to become bread'* ") in Greek is simply: ***peirazō***
- g) He is the ***Advesary: antidikos*** in I Peter 5:8. Meaning the opposing lawyer in a lawsuit where accusations are made in court
- h) The ***Serpent***: the snake in ancient times was the emblem of cunning and wisdom. 2 Cor. 11:3 Paul says the serpent beguiled/seduced Eve.

ADAPTED FROM: MERRYMAN, I THES. STUDY; J. HAMPDEN KEATHLEY- I THES. AN EXEGETICAL AND DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARY, 1998



I Thessalonians 2:18

18 For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and Satan hindered us.

3) What did Satan do to hinder – thwart - impede Paul?

- a) The reasons are never given- But he did something or a few things at least twice
- b) One of Satan's hinderances could have been the situation with Jason

4) Satan vis a vis the Will of God

- a) Satan is under the limitation of the permissive Will of God; God uses Satan's wiles as a tool for His purposes.
- b) McCalley: says some hinderances to our well-laid plans are from the H.S. (e.g. Paul was blocked from preaching in Bithynia. But some are satanic— as Paul's case in getting back to Thessalonica



I Thessalonians 2:19-20

19 For who is our hope, or joy or crown of pride, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? Or is it not indeed you? 20 For you are our glory and joy.

1) Wuest translation:

- a) For what is our hope or joy or victor's laurel wreath of glorying? Are not even you yourselves such in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?
- b) Crown = **stephanos** = victor's twined-laurel wreath at a Greek athletic competition

The Five Crowns:

- Victor's Crown: I Cor 9:25
- Church Founder's Crown / Crown of rejoicing for soul winning: I Thes 2:19,20
- Rapture Lover's Crown: II Tim 4:8
- Elder's Crown for Service: I Pet 5:2-4
- Trial Crown/ (Crown of Life): James 1:12; Rev 2:10

ADAPTED FROM: THINGS TO COME; J. DWIGHT PENTECOST; ZONDERVAN, 1964; PGS 219-222; & PETERMAN, VERN: BIBLICAL CROWNS & REWARDS



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2) “in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming”:

- a) *‘presence’*: **emprosthēn**. The idea of being before someone face to face. II Cor. 3:18’s ‘unveiled face’ the Greek word for face is **prosopon** (looking at, beholding)
- b) *‘coming’*: is our main theme for I Thess.: the **parousia** of the Lord; his physical presence as a result of Him arriving to meet us in the air.
- c) **emprosthēn**, **parousia** and **prosopon** (though not in the verse, but implied) seem to be wrapped up and intertwined in meaning in Vs. 19 in a yet future, glorious ball of hope and joy. In an instant, we will find ourselves standing before the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Life, in newly transformed bodies
- d) In this moment, He takes custody of us forever and ever on into eternity

3) Implied in Vs. 19 is the Bema Judgment Seat of Christ:

- a) Fast review of the Bema: a raised platform, mounted by steps, a tribunal used as the official seat of a judge. An evaluation by Christ for things done by believers, whether good or bad.
Bad works: burn. Works done through the power & energy of the H.S.: remain



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3) Bema Judgment Seat of Christ, *continued*:

- b) William Kelly: This judgment is related to the glorification of God through the manifestation of His righteousness in/(through) the believer.
- c) Separates the **destructible works** done from the **eternal indestructible works** done in body.
- d) For the works remaining with eternal value: believer can be given a victor's wreath

4) Beyond the Bema: Paul's personal joy

- a) While the Bema is implied in verse 19, Paul is also waxing about the birth, growth and stability of the Thessalonian church, surviving and thriving under trials and persecution
- b) Verse 20 makes it clear that they themselves are Paul's joy and crown (independent of the crowns & rewards he has coming at the Bema)
- c) Paul's joy will be made complete when at the Rapture; in the air, he sees a company of the Thessalonian men and women he led to the Lord; looking across a vast sea of people and seeing them after 2,000+ years—

ADAPTED FROM: THINGS TO COME; J. DWIGHT PENTECOST; ZONDERVAN, 1964; PGS 219-222 (BEMA SEAT)



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3) Beyond the Bema: Paul's personal joy, *continued* . . .

- d) Darby's translation: renders it (you are our) "crown of ***boasting***"
- e) Boasting in himself, or the Thessalonians and the work of the H.S. through them?
- f) "Persons— (*ie. Thessalonians*)- whose excellence is to accrue to the glory of others— (*ie. Paul*)- are called their ***doxa***"- glory

(F): STONG'S NOTE ON I THES. 2:20 NT1391; BLUE LETTER BIBLE (C) 2021



I Thessalonians 2:17-20



Why Would God allow Paul to be harassed, hindered and run from Thessalonica?

- After just 3 weeks to a month and a half of instruction?
- And then have the Thessalonians blocked from having more time with Paul?
- And as an added difficulty have Satan personally involved in the operation?
- This though extends into next week's Chap. 3 vs. 1-5 lesson

I like the reasons "I and II Thessalonians-Prospect of Glory" published in Denver in 1970 gives-

- I. As a display of His glory, he wanted to demonstrate that Satan cannot annul (after approx. a year and a half of being orphaned from Paul) a genuine work of the Holy Spirit, and how it can stand the test of time.
- II. Perhaps to show: 2 or 3 weeks of intense effort will result in permanent fruit- even if experienced leadership is absent- if the source is the supernatural work of the H.S.