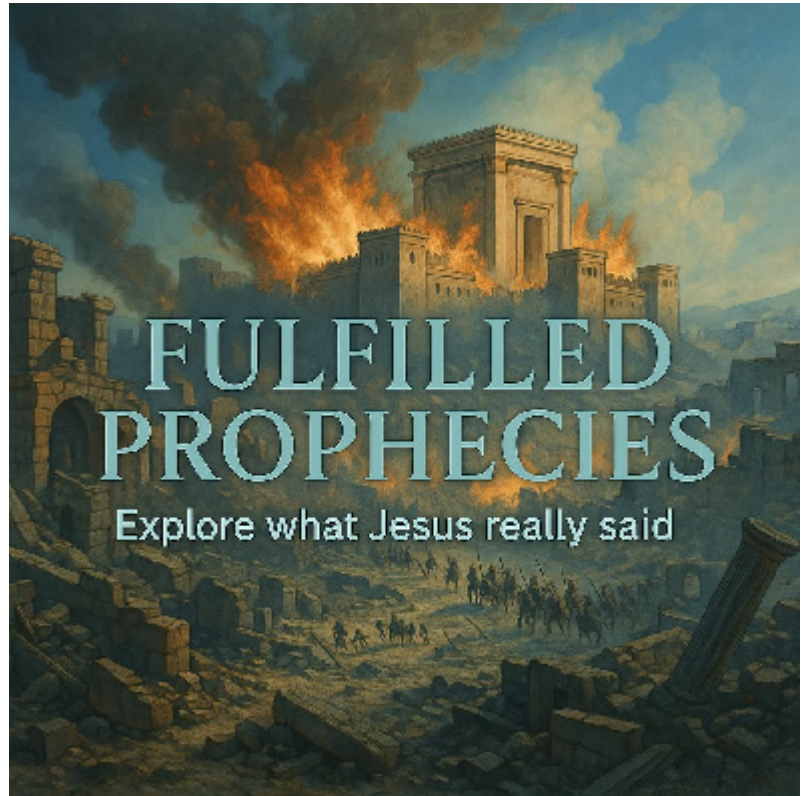


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2 Thessalonians - How could the Thessalonians be deceived about Jesus' arrival?



By Dan Maines

How could the Thessalonians be deceived about Jesus' arrival?

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 (NKJV)

2 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.
3 Let no one deceive you by any means...

How could they be deceived about Jesus' arrival? If the whole earth is going to be burned up, wouldn't they notice Jesus' return?

If the Second Coming was, as most view it today, Paul could have just said, "Look out the window, the earth is still here, so the Lord has obviously not come."

They thought Jesus had already come. They had no relief. So they must have viewed the nature of the Second Coming differently than most people today view it.

The Second Coming happened the 1st century, the believers at Thessalonica were waiting for the Coming of Christ, they expected it in their lifetime, and it happened in their lifetime. God gave them rest from their affliction by destroying the Jewish temple, nation, and people.

Most Pastors want to eliminate these verses from their teachings. They have to make things up to justify the context. Here is what one Pastor says to cover up the truth. He says "The Thessalonians would receive their "relief" or "rest" at death."

Now what kind of relief is that? Is there any comfort in that teaching? That would make Paul a liar. Especially when Paul just told them God will repay with affliction those who afflict them.

Do you know why Paul wrote the second letter to the Thessalonians? Paul heard that there were some doctrinal

issues. So he wrote a second letter to correct those misconceptions. In the first chapter he speaks about their suffering, it was real, they were hurting, and so he comforts them and writes:

therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. 5 This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. 6 For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 2

Thessalonians 1:4-8 NASB

He comforts them with the Doctrine of the Second Coming. Notice that he says, "God will repay with affliction those who afflict you." Who were "those who afflict you"? It was the Jews! Verse 7 says that God will give them relief from their suffering-when? "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire." Paul says that they will have relief from their suffering at the Second Coming:

and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 2 Thessalonians 1:7 NASB

Another Pastor says Although the Second Coming did not occur

in their lifetime, it was their hope.

What! their hope to die? Paul told them Jesus would give them relief in their lifetime! Many Pastors go on to say Paul, Silas and Timothy, as well as the Thessalonians did not receive relief or rest.

The Thessalonians trusted Paul and believed that Jesus would come from heaven in their lifetime.

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

Thessalonians 1:10 ESV The "wrath to come" would be the Jewish war in the first century, not some future war or judgment in the 21st century.

Now, if the Second Coming is still future, we have a problem! If Paul was giving them false hope, how can we believe anything he says? If Jesus did not come in the lifetime of those living first century Thessalonian Christians and give them relief from their persecution, as promised by Paul, then Paul lied to them. If his prediction failed, he is a false prophet! And I don't think he failed!!!

It seems that somebody wrote one or more fictitious letters and signed Paul's name to them, and circulated it up there in the Thessalonian Church. And that forgery obviously was saying that the Second Coming had already happened. This was causing great difficulty among the believers in Thessalonica. So, Paul writes the Second Thessalonian letter to correct this misunderstanding.

Notice that Paul closes this Second Thessalonian letter with:

I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write. 2 Thessalonians 3:17 NASB Paul is essentially saying:" You can easily tell a genuine letter from me, because I will always close it with my own handwriting, and I will sign it with my own hand" (his personal mark in every Epistle).

The Second Coming was immanent in the 1st century, the believers at Thessalonica were waiting for the Coming of Christ, they expected it in their lifetime, and it happened in their lifetime. God gave them rest from their affliction by destroying the Jewish temple, nation, and people.

I think that you could get most Christians to agree on that. To deny the fact of the Second Coming is to deny the inspiration of Scripture. I believe that the time of the Second Coming is clear. I believe that to deny the time statements that the Bible gives of the Second Coming is also to deny inspiration.

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