



Thoughts from Second Thessalonians ...

Confusion about Christ's Coming

The charlatans of the world have always generated as much confusion as possible about Jesus' second coming. Many work to convince people that Jesus is not coming again, period. Others work to persuade the gullible that Jesus' second coming has already occurred. Others work to destroy the nature of His coming, or create confusion about the time. One of the reasons for all this confusion is to demotivate the saints. A clear understanding of Jesus' return is one of the key ingredients in the brethren's ability to maintain their focus and enthusiasm; instead confusion results in a corresponding loss of motivation.

● **"Our gathering together"** — Jesus, said the apostle Paul, is coming again to deal "out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel." This is part of the motivation that the apostle is bringing to the attention of the disciples in Thessalonica, noting that "it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you." Thus, if there is no second coming or if the coming has already occurred, then these words are nonsense. "Now we request you, brethren," is the earnest appeal of the apostle, "with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him ..." (2 Thessalonians 2:1). Three things are obvious from Paul's opening gambit here: Jesus is coming; that coming is still in the future as he writes; and the saints will be gathered together with Him at His coming. "He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet," said Jesus concerning the Son of Man, "and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other" (Matthew 24:31).

● **"Be not disturbed"** — The forces of confusion — then, as now — were using every avenue available to create confusion and disruption. In regard to Jesus' second coming, appeals Paul, "that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come" (2 Thessalonians 2:2). Once again, there are some conclusions that can be drawn from Paul's comments. It is to be noted that the evil spirits do speak, and claim that they come with the authority of the apostles behind them. Also, messages drift through the brethren that are false; in this case, the rumor in motion was that Jesus had already come and they had missed Him. In addition, bogus letters — claiming to be from the apostles — were circulating among the brethren. These things still happen in modern times. The advantage the modern saint has is that he knows that the only information available is that which is contained in scripture; anything else is clearly from some source other than God.

● **The apostasy** — Paul did not want the saints in Thessalonica to be disturbed by false rumors — regardless of their source — that Jesus had returned and they had missed that event. "Let no one in any way deceive you," is his injunction, "for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first ..." (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The scripture predicts a massive falling away (apostasy) from the original faith, and that the Lord's return would not happen before that occurrence. "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith," Paul informed Timothy (1 Timothy 4:1). The grand apostasy was coming, and no saint of the first century should be deceived by any rumors or letters or spirit "revelations" that the second coming had occurred.

The modern saint should be aware that a massive falling away from the original faith has occurred, and should not be discouraged by that. The spirits, their messages, their letters might have convinced others along the way to participate in false doctrine, but the saint of God can fully rely on what is written in God's holy word. But he had best be knowledgeable!

The
massive
"falling away"
did occur

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