

Sunday October 8<sup>th</sup> 2023  
From Time to Time – Part 8

1). Jon 1:1 *Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.” 3 But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.*

We have seen during the course of our study that these first three verses in the Book of Jonah present a history of the Jewish people from the time of the nation’s inception to the time of the resurrection/rapture of the church. A history that includes the return of a remnant to the land in 1948, and the days in which we currently find ourselves. Days which will very soon come to an end – Jon 1:4 *But the LORD sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up.....*

Beginning with v4, the Book of Jonah then deals with the future history of the Jewish people following the resurrection/rapture of the church. That seen through the time of Jacob’s trouble, Daniel’s seventieth week and beyond.

a). And with respect to the resurrection/rapture of the church we had revisited a familiar deception that had surfaced close to the beginning of this dispensation, a deception which has been dealt with at some length in a previous study - 2 Pe 3:1 *Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, 3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.”*

And we can determine that at the heart of this deception lies the deliberate refusal to accept by faith that God works within specifically established timeframes, refusing to accept that what He had done in the past within a certain timeframe, foreshadows that which He will do in the future, and a deliberate refusal to accept that He does not deviate from these set times, even if the length of those times is such, that to the natural eye it appears as if He is not going to do anything. But such a deception should find no place among us – 1 Th 5:1 *But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. 11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*

And these verses of course contain that which Paul had written at the end of his first letter to the Thessalonian church. He had no need to write to them ‘concerning the times and the seasons’ because they were not in darkness concerning the coming of the Day of the Lord; that Day in which Christians will find themselves at the resurrection/rapture of the church as they are removed from Man’s Day into the heavens, that Day which will then be manifested upon the earth following the end of the tribulation, the end of Daniel’s seventieth week.

b). Despite knowing ‘the times and the seasons’ however, a deceptive doctrine had been spread among the Thessalonian Christians, purporting to have come from Paul, that had thrown them into confusion. We will look at this through Wuest’s expanded translation – 2 Th 2:1 *Now, I am requesting you, brethren, with regard to the coming and personal*

*presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, even our being assembled together to Him, 2 not soon to become unsettled, the source of this unsettled state being your minds, neither be thrown into confusion, either by a spirit [a believer in the Christian assembly claiming the authority of divine revelation and claiming to give the saints a word from God], or through a word [received personally] as from us or through a letter falsely alleged to be written by us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come and is now present.*

The deceptive doctrine that had caused confusion among the Thessalonian Christians was that the tribulation had passed, and Day of the Lord was present on the earth at that time. The problem was that what they knew of the Day of the Lord on the earth did not match the conditions they found themselves in, hence their confusion. And in order to set them straight, Paul reminded them of things he had told them when he had been ministering to them on a previous visit, things concerning specific events within a specific time that would show the falseness of what they had been told and bring their understanding back in line with that which God has said in the Scriptures.

c). Now, as we get ready to look at what Paul had reminded them of, let's first remember that all Scripture has context, and context is always vital to help us understand exactly what we are looking at. And to state the obvious, 2 Thessalonians comes after 1 Thessalonians, with Paul's first letter to this church providing the context for his second.

2). And Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians deals centrally with one thing – 1 Th 1:5 *For **our gospel** did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.*

It deals with the gospel that Paul proclaimed among them. The same gospel that Paul refers to as – 1 Th 1:8 *So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only **the gospel of God**, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.*

1 Th 2:4 *But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel [the good news to be given to those who are already saved], even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.*

This as we know, is that facet of the 'good news' that Paul had been entrusted with to take to those who had already responded positively to the other facet of the 'good news', the gospel of grace. This then was a message that was, and is, exclusively for the saved, those who have already passed from death to life. And it is dealt with this way in – Col 1:26 *the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. 27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is **Christ preached among you, the hope of glory.** 28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. 29 To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.*

It was and is, a message concerning 'every man' being presented before Christ at His Judgment Seat, that 'every man' might receive the salvation of his soul – 1 Th 2:10 *You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; 11 **as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, 12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.***

2 Th 2:14 *to which He called you by our gospel, **for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

And Paul's gospel, which he calls in 1 Timothy, 'the gospel of the glory of Christ', is inseparable from the antitype of that seen in Genesis Chapter 24, the Holy Spirit's search for a bride for God's Son. As such, all of Paul's letters provide additional commentary on that foundational type. We will remember where we find Paul's first mention in the Scriptures - Acts 7:57 *Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; 58 and they cast him out of the city and stoned him.*

*And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.*

Paul, the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name Saul, is introduced at the end of Acts Chapter 7, consenting to the death of Stephen, who had just proclaimed the re-offer of the Kingdom of the heavens to Israel's religious leaders, a proclamation so powerful that the heavens had been opened to reveal Christ standing at the right hand of the Father, ready to return to the earth. A proclamation that was met with such violent rejection that it effectively marked the terminal point for the re-offer of the Kingdom of the heavens by the church, although this is not declared until the end of Acts Chapter 28, by the then converted Paul - Acts 28:28 *"Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!"* 29 *And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves.* 30 *Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him,* 31 *preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.*

And we will remember that the re-offer of the Kingdom of the heavens by the church began to be made to that same generation of Jews who were alive at the Lord's first Advent, on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was sent to begin His mission in the antitype of Abraham's oldest servant. And in conjunction with the Holy Spirit's mission, Paul was converted and commissioned to take the gospel of the glory of Christ, the gospel of God, our gospel, inseparable from 'the mystery', the Word of the Kingdom, to the Gentiles who had received the gospel of grace.

a). And it is the conclusion of the Holy Spirit's mission that Paul draws the Thessalonians attention to - 1 Th 4:13 *But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.* 14 *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.* 15 *For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.* 16 *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ*

*will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

*Ge 24:61 Then Rebekah and her maids arose, and they rode on the camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and departed. 62 Now Isaac came from the way of Beer Lahai Roi, for he dwelt in the South. 63 And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening; and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels were coming. 64 Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel; 65 for she had said to the servant, "Who is this man walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took a veil and covered herself. 66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. 67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.*

In the type from Genesis Chapter 24, we see Rebekah 'and her maids' riding on the ten camels, taken by the oldest servant to meet Isaac who had been meditating in the field, in the evening, picturing the resurrection/rapture of all Christians in the evening of Man's Day –

*2 Co 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

As Rebekah and her maids met with Isaac, it was Rebekah alone who covered herself with a veil, a picture of the wedding garment, and Rebekah alone, not 'her maids', who married Isaac. Providing a foundational type for the distinction that will be made between the faithful and unfaithful Christian at the Judgment Seat. The same distinction that we have witnessed in the parables of the talents and the minas and the wise and foolish virgins. That which we have also seen through Ruth and Orpah and Abraham and Lot and established in the foundation through the Woman being built from a part of Adam's body. The very same distinction that Paul drew attention to in 1 Thessalonians - *1 Th 5:1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.*

2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord [the removal of all Christians from Man's Day into the Lord's Day] so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they [unfaithful Christians] say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. 4 But you, brethren, [faithful Christians] are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, [at the Judgment Seat] but to obtain salvation [the salvation of the soul] through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. 11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

And so, following Paul's final remarks the first letter to the Thessalonians comes to an end, with Paul having brought the Thessalonians to the purpose for the proclamation of the gospel of the glory of Christ, the Word of the Kingdom, our gospel, the gospel of God, that he had preached among them. Which was that they be found faithful as they appear before the Lord at His Judgment following the resurrection/rapture, at the conclusion of the Holy Spirit's mission. The time when they will be removed from Man's Day into the Lord's Day, where they will receive the salvation of their souls and the privilege to ascend Christ's throne with Him in the Millennial Kingdom, through the events at the Judgment Seat – 1 Th 2:19 *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?* 20 *For you are our glory and joy.*

This then, is the concluding point for 1 Thessalonians and Paul's second letter picks up from where the first left off, dealing with faithful and unfaithful Christians once again, and because he is still dealing with Christians, the setting is now in the time following the resurrection/rapture and following the end of the tribulation, in the time when the Lord's Day is manifest in the earth and rulership will begin for those who were counted faithful at the Judgment Seat – 2 Th 1:3 *We are*

*bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, 4 so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, 5 which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; 6 since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, 7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, [at the end of the tribulation] 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. [in these verses we again see both faithful and unfaithful Christians, but now we see them with respect to the consequences of the Judgment Seat within the timeframe of the Millennial Kingdom] 9 These shall be punished with everlasting [age lasting] destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed. 11 Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, [rulership in the Seventh Day] and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, 12 that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

And this first Chapter of 2 Thessalonians leads into and provides the immediate context for these verses from Chapter 2 - 2 Th 2:1 *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; for that Day will not come unless the falling away [apostasy] comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 7 For the mystery of*



*lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

Let's please keep in mind that the deception introduced among the Thessalonians was that the tribulation was past, and that the Lord's Day was then present on the earth at that time. And so, the reference in v1 to 'our being assembled together with Him', cannot be speaking of the resurrection/rapture, but the gathering together with Him of Christians in positions of rulership following the end of the tribulation, the end of Daniel's seventieth week, when the Lord's Day, which has always been in the heavens, will be manifest in the earth. And these verses must be placed within the context of where Paul concluded his first letter to the Thessalonians, a conclusion that had dealt with Christians, both faithful and unfaithful at the resurrection/rapture. Paul then, dealt with events concerning the faithful and the unfaithful before the tribulation and the gathering together of the joint heirs and the exclusion of the unfaithful from positions in the Kingdom following the tribulation. Nothing is said of the tribulation itself with respect to Christians as this is the time of Jacob's trouble and has absolutely NOTHING whatsoever to do with the church.

b). And we see from these opening verses of 2 Thessalonians Chapter 2, that Paul reminds them that two things must take place before the Day of the Lord can be present on the earth. There must be the 'falling away, the apostasy, and the man of sin must be revealed. And at the time when Paul wrote this letter to these Christians neither of these two things had happened. We can see from the Scripture that the man of sin can only be revealed 'in his own time', the time specifically designated for his revealing. But before this man can be revealed there must first be 'the falling away', the apostasy, and then the removal of 'He who now

restrains'. Before these two events, the apostasy, and the removal of 'He who now restrains', the man of sin CANNOT be revealed, after them he MUST be revealed, as this will be his own time. Only after these events can the tribulation begin and only after the tribulation can the Lord's Day be present on the earth and faithful Christians be gathered together with Christ to exercise positions of rulership with unfaithful Christians having been rejected from these positions.

c). And both these events, the apostasy, and the removal of He who restrains, are easy to understand if we follow the Scriptures.

3). To begin, we must keep in mind that the 'falling away', the apostasy, is not a single, one-time event, but is the concluding work of the 'mystery of lawlessness', and contextually this work can only have to do with Christians, those who are already saved by grace through faith. I can remember from previous unenlightened days, that the 'falling away' was looked on as being a rejection of Christianity, something that was said to be proven through the growth of secular ideology and the expansion of Islam. And that this 'falling away' was to be the situation right before the great world-wide revival that would usher in the Kingdom of Christ. This of course is complete nonsense.

a). 'Falling away', apostasy, is seen in Scripture with respect to Christians and concerns one thing only, the Word of the Kingdom. It is to come into a mature understanding of the Word of the Kingdom and then to turn away from it. Something that had been brought to pass as this dispensation began as the 'mystery of lawlessness' did its destructive work. It was the mystery of lawlessness that was at work in the Garden to deceive the Woman in order to bring about the fall of those God had created to rule – Ge 3:6 *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.*

We see the mystery of lawlessness again at work through the evil report given by the ten spies to the first generation of Israel to come out of Egypt

at Kadesh Barnea – Nu 14:1 *So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. 2 And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, “If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! 3 Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?” 4 So they said to one another, “Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.”*

But it is during this dispensation that the mystery of lawlessness is bringing about its concluding work, having given rise to a turning away from the Word of Truth to embrace the lie – 2 Pe 2:1 *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.*

And that which brought this situation about we have seen many times during our studies of the Scriptures - Mt 13:33 *Another parable He spoke to them: “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.”*

But to deal with it one more time within our present context will have to wait until next time, if we remain and the Lord is willing, and we have prayed.