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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

"they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so."

1

II Thessalonians



2

2 Thessalonians 2

"1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, 2 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.**

3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the **apostasy comes first**, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? 6 And you know what **restrains** him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. 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 that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,

10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they **did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.** 11 And for this reason God will send upon them a **deluding influence so that they might believe what is false,** 12 in order that they all may **be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness**."

3

Chronological progression of the End Times
(Matthew 24-25)

SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Matthew 24:3
"what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?"

"The beginning of birth pangs"	"TheGreat Tribulation"		
24:4-14	24:15-28	24:29-31	25:31-46
✓ False Christs will come ✓ Wars & rumors of wars ✓ Famine & earthquakes ✓ Believers hated by all ✓ Conflict within the ch. ✓ False prophets ✓ Many are mislead ✓ Increased lawlessness ✓ Love will grow cold ✓ World evangelism	✓ "Abomination of desolation" ✓ False signs ✓ Unparalleled tribulation		Judgment day Sheep eternal life Goats eternal punishment

4

2 Thessalonians 2 (interpretive paraphrase)

Expectations for MESSIAH'S COMING

"Be aware that **the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him,** has not yet happened. There will be many temptations to be confused or mislead.

1. Some feel that the 1st coming was our only hope.

It will not come until the **apostasy comes first**, and the **man of lawlessness**, the **son of destruction** who presents himself as God, demanding worship. You already know that there are is a force **that restrains** him from being fully revealed. There is a mystery of lawlessness already at work, but its sources will be exposed as Satanic.

2. Some feel that the 2nd coming is our only hope.

Many will be mislead by Satan **and will perish, because they did not respond to God with faith so as to be saved.** And for this reason God will turn them over to their wishes, exposing their heart and judging them for **not believing the truth, but rather taking pleasure in wickedness.**"

3. Some feel that for many people their is no hope.

5

Expectations for Messianic promises

"Be aware that **the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him,** has not yet happened. There will be many temptations to be confused or mislead.

1. This life is our only hope.

Acts 1:6

"Lord, is it **at this time** you are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"

The Kingdom has arrived and we should expect the Kingdom NOW.

- in this World
- on our Watch
- and in our Way



6

Expectations for Messianic promises

It will not come until the **apostasy comes first**, and the **man of lawlessness**, the **son of destruction** who presents himself as God, demanding worship. You already know that there are is a force **that restrains** him from being fully revealed. There is a mystery of lawlessness already at work, but its sources will be exposed as Satanic.

2. The next life in our only hope.

Things will get worse before they get better.

We are destined in this life to fail in godly living, social reform, and world peace

Could this be why "end times" prophecy is so popular.

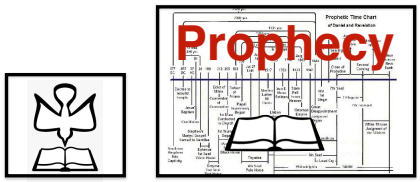
1 Corinthians 15:19

"If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied."



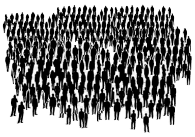
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(Typical Bible Church) Annual Conferences



Spiritual life







World Missions



8

Marks of a Disciple of Christ

- **Our hope is in this life and the next.** We are alien ambassadors in this life and adopted heirs in the next.
- **Copy what we see in JESUS and his APOSTLES** as aliens in a fallen world.
- **View our RESPONSE to trials as an OPPORTUNITY** to be an ambassador for the Kingdom as salt and light in witness to our faith & hope in Christ.
- **COUNT IT all joy with thanksgiving in the midst of difficult circumstances** that are not our responsibility or we cannot change.

9

Expectations for Messianic promises

Many will be mislead by Satan **and will perish, because they did not respond to God with faith so as to be saved.** And for this reason God will turn them over to their wishes, exposing their heart and judging them for **not believing the truth, and taking pleasure in wickedness.**"

3. For those who have never heard the Gospel, all is vanity.

One of the greatest challenges to the fairness of the evangelical Gospel is:

The seemingly "graceless" fate of those who have not heard the Gospel of Paul.

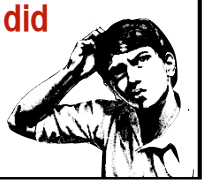
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What was the Gospel that was preached to those who lived before Jesus came & before Paul's explanation of the cross & resurrection were spread?

Galatians 3

"8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations shall be blessed in you." 9 So then those **who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer**."

Could this include those who did not know Christ, yet believed in a Redeemer God?



11

Romans 10

"12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; 13 for "***Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved***." 14 How then shall they call upon Him in whom **they have not believed**? And how shall they believe in Him whom **they have not heard**? And how shall **they hear without a preacher**? 15 And how shall they preach unless **they are sent**? Just as it is written, "*How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things*!" 16 However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah says, "*Lord, who has believed our report*?" 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."

The Gospel was preached to Abraham who believed and was justified before Jesus was born or known.

12

But notice how the text continues:

Romans 10

"18 But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have; "***Their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world***." 19 But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? At the first Moses says, "*I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation, By a nation without understanding will I anger you.*" 20 And Isaiah is very bold and says, "***I was found by those who sought Me not, I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me***." 21 But as for Israel He says, "***All the day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people***.""

13

Psalm 19

"1 The **heavens** are telling of the glory of God; and their **expanse** is declaring the work of His hands. 2 **Day to day** pours forth speech, and **night to night** reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. 4 Their line has gone out **through all the earth**, and their utterances **to the end of the world**. In them He has placed a tent for the sun, 5 Which is **as a bridegroom** coming out of his chamber; it rejoices **as a strong man** to run his course. 6 Its rising is from one end of the heavens, and its circuit to the other end of them; and there is **nothing hidden from its heat**."

What kind of preaching has Israel heard?

The general revelation of nature and history as mentioned in Rom.1

14

Romans 1

"20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 **For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.**"

Acts 10

"34 And opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, 35 but in every nation **the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him**.""

15

The Jews already had sufficient information to believe so as to be justified before God.

1. ***The problem of unbelief is not for lack of exposure to truth.***
2. ***The problem of unbelief is not for lack of God's will to save.***
3. ***The problem of unbelief rests with the will of individuals to honor God and give thanks based on what they know.***

16

The Old Testament examples of God's grace going beyond the Abrahamic covenant.

- **Holy Pagans - Job, Abimelich** (king of Gerar - Gen.20:1-18), **Jethro** (a priest of Midian - Ex.18:1-12).
- **Abraham** and other believing Jews who lived before Jesus was born, crucified, and raised.
- **The Ninevites** - God received their repentance (Jonah 3:5).
- **Abel, Enoch, Noah,** being neither Jews nor Christians, pleased God because they sought Him with the faith response which pleases Him (Heb.11:6)

Malachi 1:11 "From the rising of the sun to its setting, my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts."

Isaiah 19:25 "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance."

17

The New Testament examples of God's grace going beyond the Abrahamic covenant.

- **Melchizedek** (a Canaanite priest - Gen.14:17-24) Heb.6-7.
- **The Magi** (wise men) (Matt.2:1-12)
- **Luke 18:9-14** God forgives the publican who simply asks for mercy.
- **Matthew 10:15; 11:22; 12:41-42** Some of the unexpected inhabitants of heaven - the Ninevites, the queen of Sheba, the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah.
- **Acts 10:34-35** "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right."
- **Acts 14:16-17** "In the past, He let all nations go their own way. Yet He has not left Himself without testimony."

18

"I have never been able to conjure up (as some great evangelical missionaries have) the appalling vision of the millions who are not only perishing but who will inevitably perish. On the other hand, as I have said, I cannot be a universalist. Between these extremes I cherish the hope that the majority of the human race will be saved."

John Stott
Essentials: a Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue p327

19

"Implicit faith"

(Justin Martyr, John Wesley, John Stott, C.S. Lewis, Vatican II)



The Saved ⟷ ***The Lost***

Believers in God as the Redeemer	Special dispensations	
Confessional faith in Jesus as the Christ	Infants, mentally challenged, etc.	Those who reject the revelation of God that they have been given.
Those with faith in God the Redeemer (before Jesus)	Those who would believe if they heard Paul's Gospel	

20

The Lord of Mysteries

Israel knew God's covenant
The mercies of the Lord divine
Not seeing clear God's mystery
Of Gentiles grafted to His vine.



But when the light of God's broad plan
The mystery hid in ages past
Is brought to light at Calvary
A new perspective then is cast.





So when we contemplate the host
Who know not Christ but fear God still
We can't but wonder at the thought
Are other mysteries in His will?

21

II Thessalonians



22