

## Peace and Security

To understand a single scripture one must consider the context and even other related texts elsewhere in the Bible and the context of those scriptures too. So let us examine the entire first letter to the Thessalonians to see if it provides the information we need to understand who is being spoken about in chapter 5 verse 3.

The first part of Paul's letter is a greeting and a commendation. Paul also touches on their tribulation caused by the Jews, and even mentions "*the wrath that is coming*".

**1** Paul, Sil·va'nus, and Timothy, to the congregation of the Thes·sa·lo'ni·ans in union with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

May you have undeserved kindness and peace.

<sup>2</sup> We always thank God when we mention all of you in our prayers, <sup>3</sup> for we continually remember your faithful work, your loving labor, and your endurance because of your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father. <sup>4</sup> For we know, brothers loved by God, his choosing of you, <sup>5</sup> because the good news we preach did not come to you with speech alone but also with power and with holy spirit and with strong conviction, just as you know what sort of men we became among you for your sakes. <sup>6</sup> And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, seeing that you accepted the word under much tribulation with joy of holy spirit, <sup>7</sup> so that you became an example to all the believers in Mac·e·do'ni·a and in A·cha'ia.

<sup>8</sup> The fact is, not only has the word of Jehovah sounded out from you in Mac·e·do'ni·a and A·cha'ia but your faith in God has spread abroad in every place, so that we do not need to say anything. <sup>9</sup> For they themselves keep reporting about our first contact with you and how you turned to God from your idols to slave for a living and true God, <sup>10</sup> and to wait for his Son from the heavens, whom he raised up from the dead, namely, Jesus, who rescues us from **the wrath that is coming**.

## Part Two

In the second portion of the letter Paul tells of his own mistreatment by the Jews, and then elaborates on their suffering at the hands of the Jews.

**2** You yourselves surely know, brothers, that our visit to you has not been without results. <sup>2</sup> For although we had first suffered and been insolently treated in Phi·lip'pi, as you know, we mustered up boldness by means of our God to tell you the good news of God in the face of much opposition. <sup>3</sup> For the exhortation we give does not spring from error or from uncleanness or with deceit, <sup>4</sup> but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the good news, so we speak to please, not men, but God, who examines our hearts.

<sup>5</sup> In fact, you know that we never used flattering speech or put on any false front with greedy motives; God is witness! <sup>6</sup> Nor have we been seeking glory from men, either from you or from others, though we could be an expensive burden as apostles of Christ. <sup>7</sup> On the contrary, we became gentle in your midst, as when a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. <sup>8</sup> So having tender affection for you, we were determined to impart to you, not only the good news of God but also our very selves, because you became so beloved to us.

<sup>9</sup> Surely you remember, brothers, our labor and toil. We were working night and day, so that we would not put an expensive burden on any one of you, when we preached the good news of God to you. <sup>10</sup> You are witnesses, God is also, of how loyal and righteous and blameless we behaved toward you believers. <sup>11</sup> You well know that we kept exhorting and consoling you and bearing witness to each one of you, just as a father does his children, <sup>12</sup> so that you would go on walking worthily of God, who is calling you to his Kingdom and glory.

<sup>13</sup> Indeed, that is why we also thank God unceasingly, because when you received God's word, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God, which is also at work in you believers. <sup>14</sup> For you, brothers, became imitators of the congregations of God in union with Christ Jesus that are in Ju·de'a, because you suffered at the hands of your own countrymen the same things that they also are suffering at the hands of **the Jews**, <sup>15</sup> who even killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and

persecuted us. Furthermore, **they** are not pleasing God, but are against the interests of all men,<sup>16</sup> as **they** try to prevent us from speaking to people of the nations so that these might be saved. In this way **they** always fill up the measure of their sins. **But his wrath has at last come upon them.**

<sup>17</sup> But when we were separated from you, brothers, for just a short time (in person, not in our hearts), because of our strong desire, we made every effort to see you in person. <sup>18</sup> For this reason we wanted to come to you, yes I, Paul, tried not just once but twice; yet Satan cut across our path. <sup>19</sup> For what is our hope or joy or crown of exultation before our Lord Jesus at his presence? Is it not in fact you? <sup>20</sup> You certainly are our glory and joy.

**3** So when we could bear it no longer, we thought it best to stay on alone in Athens; <sup>2</sup> and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's minister in the good news about the Christ, to make you firm and comfort you regarding your faith, <sup>3</sup> so that no one might be shaken by these tribulations. For you yourselves know that we cannot avoid suffering such things. <sup>4</sup> For when we were with you, we used to tell you in advance that we would suffer tribulation, and that is what has happened, just as you know. <sup>5</sup> That is why, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn of your faithfulness, in case somehow the Tempter might have tempted you, and our labor might have turned out to be in vain.

<sup>6</sup> But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has given us the good news about your faithfulness and love, that you always continue to remember us fondly and that you long to see us in the same way as we also do you. <sup>7</sup> That is why, brothers, in all our distress and tribulation, we have been comforted because of you and the faithfulness you demonstrate. <sup>8</sup> Because we are revitalized if you are standing firm in the Lord. <sup>9</sup> For how can we show our thanks to God concerning you in return for the great joy we feel before our God on your account? <sup>10</sup> Night and day we make supplications as earnestly as we can to see you in person and to supply what is lacking in your faith.

<sup>11</sup> Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus make a way for us to come to you. <sup>12</sup> Moreover, may the Lord cause you to increase, yes, to abound in love for one another and for all, just as we do for you, <sup>13</sup> so that he may make your hearts firm, blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the presence of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones.

The Jews were inflicting violent persecution upon them, trying to prevent them from preaching to the nations. The Jews were even preventing Paul from visiting the Thessalonians in person. Paul referred to their fierce opposition as the works of Satan.

### Part Three

In the third part of his letter Paul gives them instructions on how they should conduct themselves and also teaches them about the resurrection.

**4** Finally, brothers, just as you received instruction from us on how you should walk in order to please God, just as you are in fact walking, we request you and appeal to you by the Lord Jesus to keep doing it more fully. <sup>2</sup> For you know the instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

<sup>3</sup> For this is the will of God, that you should be holy and abstain from sexual immorality. <sup>4</sup> Each one of you should know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, <sup>5</sup> not with greedy, uncontrolled sexual passion like the nations have that do not know God. <sup>6</sup> No one should go beyond proper limits and take advantage of his brother in this matter, because Jehovah exacts punishment for all these things, just as we told you previously and also strongly warned you. <sup>7</sup> For God has called us, not for uncleanness, but for holiness. <sup>8</sup> So, then, the man who disregards this is disregarding, not man, but God, who gives you his holy spirit.

<sup>9</sup> However, concerning brotherly love, you do not need us to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. <sup>10</sup> In fact, you are doing so toward all the brothers in all of Mac·e·do·ni·a. But we urge you, brothers, to go on doing so in fuller measure. <sup>11</sup> Make it your aim to live quietly and to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we instructed you, <sup>12</sup> so that you may walk decently in the eyes of people outside and not need anything.

<sup>13</sup> Moreover, brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who are sleeping in death, so that you may not sorrow as the rest do who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we have faith that Jesus died and rose again, so too God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep in death through Jesus. <sup>15</sup> For this is what we tell you by Jehovah's word, that we the living who survive to the presence of the Lord will in no way precede those who have fallen asleep in death; <sup>16</sup> because the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a commanding call, with an archangel's voice and with God's trumpet, and those who are dead in union with Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Afterward we the living who are surviving will, together with them, be caught away in clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we will always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> So keep comforting one another with these words.

#### Part Four

In the fourth section of his letter Paul again speaks about the coming wrath (Jehovah's day) and what will happen to those that say "*Peace and security!*" (Isa 51:17; Jer 4:4; Col 3:6; Rev 6:16) He also reminds them that they need to be wary of their own conduct so that they are not destroyed as well.

<sup>5</sup> Now as for the times and the seasons, brothers, you need nothing to be written to you. <sup>2</sup> For you yourselves know very well that **Jehovah's day** is coming exactly as a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup> Whenever it is that **they** are saying, "Peace and security!" then sudden destruction is to be instantly on **them**, just like birth pains on a pregnant woman, and **they** will by no means escape. <sup>4</sup> But you, brothers, you are not in darkness, so that the day should overtake you as it would thieves, <sup>5</sup> for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We belong neither to night nor to darkness.

<sup>6</sup> So, then, let us not sleep on as the rest do, but let us stay awake and keep our senses. <sup>7</sup> For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. <sup>8</sup> But as for us who belong to the day, let us keep our senses and put on the breastplate of faith and love and the hope of salvation as a helmet <sup>9</sup> because God assigned us, not to wrath, but to the acquiring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>10</sup> He died for us, so that whether we stay awake or are asleep, we should live together with him. <sup>11</sup> Therefore, keep encouraging one another and building one another up, just as you are in fact doing.

#### Part Five

In the last section Paul provides further guidance before closing his letter.

<sup>12</sup> Now we request you, brothers, to show respect for those who are working hard among you and presiding over you in the Lord and admonishing you; <sup>13</sup> and to give them extraordinary consideration in love because of their work. Be peaceable with one another. <sup>14</sup> On the other hand, we urge you, brothers, to warn the disorderly, speak consolingly to those who are depressed, support the weak, be patient toward all. <sup>15</sup> See that no one repays injury for injury to anyone, but always pursue what is good toward one another and to all others.

<sup>16</sup> Always be rejoicing. <sup>17</sup> Pray constantly. <sup>18</sup> Give thanks for everything. This is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. <sup>19</sup> Do not put out the fire of the spirit. <sup>20</sup> Do not treat prophecies with contempt. <sup>21</sup> Make sure of all things; hold fast to what is fine. <sup>22</sup> Abstain from every form of wickedness.

<sup>23</sup> May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely. And may the spirit and soul and body of you brothers, sound in every respect, be preserved blameless at the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> The one who is calling you is faithful, and he will surely do so.

<sup>25</sup> Brothers, keep praying for us.

<sup>26</sup> Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.

<sup>27</sup> I am putting you under the solemn obligation by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.

<sup>28</sup> The undeserved kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

- end of Paul's letter -

## my thoughts

Throughout his letter Paul identifies the Jews as the antagonists. (Acts chapter 17 provides more examples of how the Jews were persecuting them.)

Three times Paul refers to Armageddon—twice as the coming "*wrath*" and once as "*Jehovah's day*"—showing that those parts of the letter are linked together. So it seems to me that those Jews who are identified in chapter 2 verses 14 through 16 (as "*they*" and "*them*") are the same ones being referred to in chapter 5 verse 3 (also as "*they*" and "*them*") since both locations are speaking about the same event. And with their persecution by the Jews being the main topic of Paul's letter, that also points to the Jews as the "*they*" and "*them*" of chapter 5 verse 3.

I think that Paul is using the message in chapter 5 verse 3 to comfort the Christians in Thessalonica. He is reassuring them that "*Jehovah's day*" will bring "*sudden destruction*" to those that are persecuting them, ending their tribulation at the hands of the Jews.

I also think that the description of Jehovah's day "*coming exactly as a thief in the night*" tells us what type of proclamation that the statement of "*Peace and security*" will be. In the night, before a thief strikes, all is calm. There is no need for alarm. The home owner feels at peace and feels secure. So i do not think that it will be a call for peace and security, but that it will be a proclamation that they have peace and security.

In Ezekiel and Daniel (see below) the Jews are considering themselves to have "*security*" and to be living "*without disturbance*" (at peace). And Amos also prophesies that they will be "*saying*" that they are beyond the reach of calamity (have peace and security) just as 1st Thessalonians 5:3 does.

**(Ezekiel 38:10, 11)** "This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: 'In that day thoughts will come into your heart, and you will devise an evil plan. <sup>11</sup> You will say: "I will invade the land of unprotected settlements. I will come against those living in security, without disturbance, all of them living in settlements unprotected by walls, bars, or gates."

It says they are living in "*unprotected settlements*", without walls, bars, or gates. Though the country of Israel has border walls, most of the individual settlements within Israel do not. There are even Israeli settlements in among the Muslim population in the part of Israel called the West Bank that could be described as unprotected but without disturbance since the Muslims tend to leave them alone. (See my article "End-Time Kings")

**(Daniel 8:25)** And by his cunning he will use deception to succeed; and in his heart he will exalt himself; and during a time of security he will bring many to ruin. He will even stand up against the Prince of princes, but he will be broken without human hand.

**(Amos 9:10)** They will die by the sword, all the sinners of my people, Those who are saying, "The calamity will not come near us or reach us."

## "There is Peace"

Are the similar prophecies in Jeremiah and Ezekiel referring to the same event? Here are the excerpts from those books:

**(Jeremiah 6:13-15)** "For from the least to the greatest, each one is making dishonest gain; From the prophet to the priest, each one is practicing fraud. <sup>14</sup> And they try to heal the breakdown of my people lightly, saying, 'There is peace! There is peace!' When there is no peace. <sup>15</sup> Do they feel ashamed of the detestable things they have done? They feel no shame at all! They do not even know how to feel humiliated! So they will fall among the fallen. When I bring punishment on them they will stumble," says Jehovah.

**(Jeremiah 8:8-12)** 'How can you say: "We are wise, and we have the law of Jehovah"? For in fact, the lying stylus of the scribes has been used only for falsehood. <sup>9</sup> The wise have been put to shame. They have become terrified and will be caught. Look! They have rejected the word of Jehovah, And what wisdom do they have? <sup>10</sup> So I will give their wives to other men, Their fields to other owners; For from the least to the greatest,

each one is making dishonest gain; From the prophet to the priest, each one is practicing fraud. <sup>11</sup> And they try to heal the breakdown of the daughter of my people lightly, saying, "There is peace! There is peace!" When there is no peace. <sup>12</sup> Do they feel ashamed of the detestable things they have done? They feel no shame at all! They do not even know how to feel humiliated! So they will fall among the fallen. When I bring punishment on them they will stumble,' says Jehovah.

**(Ezekiel 13:1-16)** And the word of Jehovah again came to me, saying: <sup>2</sup> "Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel, and say to those who fabricate their own prophecies, 'Hear the word of Jehovah.' <sup>3</sup> This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: "Woe to the stupid prophets, who follow their own spirit, when they have seen nothing! <sup>4</sup> O Israel, your prophets have become like foxes among the ruins. <sup>5</sup> You will not go to the broken places in the stone walls to rebuild them for the house of Israel, so that Israel may keep standing in the battle in the day of Jehovah." <sup>6</sup> "They have seen false visions and foretold a lie, those who are saying, 'The word of Jehovah is,' when Jehovah himself has not sent them, and they have waited for their word to come true. <sup>7</sup> Is it not a false vision that you have seen and a lie that you have foretold when you say, 'The word of Jehovah is,' when I have not said anything?"

<sup>8</sup> "Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: "Because you have spoken what is false and your visions are a lie, I am against you,' declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah." <sup>9</sup> My hand is against the prophets whose visions are false and who foretell a lie. They will not be among the people with whom I confide; nor will they be written in the registry of the house of Israel; nor will they return to the land of Israel; and you will have to know that I am the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. <sup>10</sup> All of this is because they have led my people astray by saying, "There is peace!" when there is no peace. When a flimsy partition wall is built, they are plastering it with whitewash.'

<sup>11</sup> "Tell those plastering with whitewash that it will fall. A torrential downpour will come, hailstones will fall, and powerful windstorms will break it down. <sup>12</sup> And when the wall falls you will be asked, 'Where is your coating of plaster?'

<sup>13</sup> "Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: 'I will cause powerful windstorms to burst forth in my wrath, and a torrential downpour in my anger, and hailstones in destructive fury. <sup>14</sup> I will tear down the wall that you plastered with whitewash and bring it down to the earth, and its foundation will be exposed. When the city falls, you will perish within her; and you will have to know that I am Jehovah.'

<sup>15</sup> "When I fully unleash my wrath upon the wall and upon those who plastered it with whitewash, I will say to you: "The wall is no more, and those plastering it are no more. <sup>16</sup> The prophets of Israel are gone, those who prophesy to Jerusalem and who see visions of peace for her, when there is no peace," declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.

Perhaps the "wall" that is spoken of in Ezekiel 13:10-15 is referring to the "Iron Dome" that the Israeli people are putting so much confidence in these days for protection. Perhaps its whitewashing refers to the lies their government tell them, that the Iron Dome will protect them, when the Israeli government knows it would do very little against a large scale assault—a "*torrential downpour*"—of enemy rockets. But the false sense of security that the Iron Dome provides helps keep the Israeli population calm and under control.

As you watch the world scene for the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, do not limit your search to the exact quote of "*peace and security*". Also watch for a proclamation that has the same meaning.

What do you think of this hypothesis?

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