

## Concerns for the Church

### EXEGESIS OF VERSES 17 & 18:

#### VERSE SEVENTEEN

**“But we brethren, having been torn away from you for a short time, in body not in heart, were all the more eager with great desire to see your face”.**

Ἡμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, ἀπορφανισθέντες ἀφ’ ὑμῶν πρὸς καιρὸν ὥρας, προσώπῳ οὐ καρδίᾳ, περισσοτέρως ἐσπουδάσαμεν τὸ πρόσωπον ὑμῶν ἰδεῖν ἐν πολλῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ.

(pron-1st-c-pl ἐγώ/ego **"we"** + conj δέ/de **"but"** + noun-v-m-pl ἀδελφός/adelfhos **"brethren"** + verb.aor.pass.prt.n.m.pl ἀπορφανίζω/aporphanidzo [hapax] **"having been torn away"** + prep-abl. ἀπό/apo **"from"** + pron-2nd-abl-c-pl σύ/su **"you"** + prep-acc. πρὸς/pros **"for"** + noun-a-m-s καιρός/kairos **"a time"** + noun-g-f-s ὥρα/hora **"of an hour"** + noun-l-m-s πρόσωπῳ/prosopo **"in body"** + neg. adv. οὐ/ou **"not"** + noun-l-f-s καρδία/kardia **"in heart"** + adv. περισσοτέρως/perissoteros **"much more"** + verb-aor.act.ind.1st.pl σπουδάζω/spoudadzo **"we were eager"** + noun-a-n-s w/ d.a. πρόσωπον/prosopon **"the face"** + pron-2nd-g-c-pl σύ/su **"of you"** + verb-aor.act.inf. εἶδον/eidon **"to see"** + prep-inst. ἐν/en **"with"** + adj-i-f-s πολὺς/polus **"much"** + noun-i-f-s ἐπιθυμία/epithumia **"desire"**).

#### VERSE EIGHTEEN

**“Therefore we wanted to come to you, I Paul more than once, but Satan hindered us”.**

διότι ἠθελήσαμεν ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἐγὼ μὲν Παῦλος καὶ ἅπαξ καὶ δῖς, καὶ ἐνέκοψεν ἡμᾶς ὁ Σατανᾶς.

(conj. διότι/dioti **"therefore"** + verb-aor.act.ind.1st.pl θέλω/thelo **"we wanted"** + verb-aor.act.inf. ἐρχομαι/erchomai **"to come"** + prep-acc. πρὸς/pros **"to"** + pron-2nd-a-c-pl σύ/su **"you"** + pron-1st-n-c-s ἐγώ/ego **"I"** + proper noun-n-m-s Παῦλος/Paulos **"Paul"** + conj. καὶ/kai **"both"** + adv. ἅπαξ/hapax **"once"** + conj. καὶ/kai **"and"** + adv. δῖς/dis **"again"** + conj. καὶ/kai **"but"** + verb-aor.act.ind.3rd.s ἐγκόπτω/enkopto **"hindered/impede"** + pron-1st-a-c-pl ἐγώ/ego **"us"** + noun-n-m-s w/ d.a. σατανᾶς/satanas).

### ANALYSIS OF VERSES 17 & 18:

1. Paul shifts gears a bit in verse seventeen where he notes that he and his associates wanted to go back to Thessalonica and see them.
2. He states **“But we brethren, having been torn away from you for a short time, in body not in heart, were all the more eager with great desire to see your face”.**

3. Our word translated as “torn away” is the aorist, passive participle of ἀπορφανίζω/aporphanidzo. The word literally means “to be orphaned or bereaved” in the passive voice. Hence the idea of having a loved one taken from a person is in view.
4. Of course no one has died, but Paul uses this dramatic term to describe what was an abrupt separation that caused him sorrow.
5. It was his desire to stay on at Thessalonica for a bit longer, but he was forcibly removed from his Royal Family (cp. Acts 17:10).
6. However he notes that it has only been for a “short time”. He also notes that while this is only a bodily separation. They are still thinking about and praying for them so they are still with them “in heart” (cp. I Thess. 2:13; 3:9-13; 5:23, 24; II Thess. 1:3, 11-12).
7. However note the strong desire that he has for face-to-face fellowship with this group.
8. He notes that they “were all the more eager with great desire to see your face”.
9. Our word for “desire” is the instrumental, feminine singular noun, ἐπιθυμία/epithumia, “a desire, longing, yearning”.
10. It is modified by the adjective, πολὺς/polus, “great, much”. Hence Paul really wanted to get back to Thessalonica and see these believers face-to-face.
11. While letters were written to believers time and again, the apostles and their associates really preferred to be face-to-face with their audience as the dynamic is simply better (cp. I Cor. 11:34; III John 1:13-15).
12. However he was not able to as of the date of the writing of this letter.
13. He notes in verse eighteen, **“Therefore we wanted to come to you, I Paul more than once, but Satan hindered us”**.
14. Note that Paul emphatically inserts his name here. It was Paul himself especially that wanted to return to Thessalonica and attempted to do so more than once.
15. Paul and his associates had attempted to visit on more than one occasion, but they were hindered by Satan on multiple occasions.
16. Our word for “Satan” is the nominative masculine, singular of the noun, σατανᾶς/satanas.
17. It literally means “enemy or adversary”. It is one of the titles the anointed cherub, Heylel, received when he sinned and led a rebellion against God prior to the creation of man.
18. It is featured with the definite article. Hence “the enemy/adversary”.
19. Because the term has become synonymous with the devil, it is usually treated as a proper noun.
20. Note that Paul claims that Satan hindered them from visiting the church in Thessalonica.
21. Such may raise one’s ire upon first reading the statement. However it should not be surprising.
22. If Satan opposes God, Himself, why would we be surprised that he and his organization targets churches?!! We are after all God’s people.
23. Satan and his organization are seen as attacking the church and individual believer’s throughout the Bible (Zech. 3:1; I Pet. 5:8; II Cor. 2:11).
24. He of course cannot do any of these things without gaining approval from God (Job 1, 2; Luke 22:31).

25. In other passages, Paul was unable to go to certain places because the Holy Spirit forbid it (Acts 16:16, 7; Rom 1:13).
26. Here, it was not God who forbid Paul to go, but Satan intervened and prevented it.
27. Paul does not state how this was accomplished. Only that Satan worked in a way to prevent him from travelling to Thessalonica.
28. It may be that things were still so stirred up that it simply wasn't a good time to travel there.
29. Again, he could not do this unless God allowed it.
30. Sometimes God allows us to be tested by being victimized by Satan and his organization working various schemes.
31. The Bible tells us that we are in a spiritual war and that we have angelic principalities which are against us (Eph. 6:11).
32. Hence we should expect that Satan's organization will work behind the scenes to disrupt churches, trip up believers, spread false doctrine and discredit adjusted communicators.
33. One prong of attack is to infiltrate churches and spread heresy or simply disrupt the assembly in any way they can (II Cor. 11:12-14; II Tim. 2:17. 4:13; III John 1:9, 10).
34. However we need not assume that every adversity in one's life is a satanic attack. Sometimes we are being tested at the hands of people or the cosmic order of things.
35. Sometimes we merely suffer from common human problems (CHPs).
36. Note that Paul does not need to explain who Satan is or review the Doctrine of Angels or the Angelic Conflict at this time, demonstrating once again that this group had quite a bit of BD under its belt (cp. II Thess. 2:9).
37. It is evident that there were teachers in place who had no doubt taught them much since the time of Paul's absence as well (I Thess. 5:12).

## EXEGESIS OF VERSES 19 & 20:

### VERSE NINETEEN

**“For who is our hope or joy or our wreath of boasting? Is it not even you before the Lord at His coming?”**

τίς γὰρ ἡμῶν ἐλπὶς ἢ χαρὰ ἢ στέφανος καυχῆσεως- ἢ οὐχὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς- ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ παρουσίᾳ;

(interg. pron. τίς/tis "**who?**" + conj. γὰρ/gar "**for**" + to be verb [supplied] "**is**" pron-1st-g-c-pl ἐγώ/ego "**our**" + noun-f-s ἐλπὶς/elpis "**hope**" + conj. ἢ/e "**or**" + noun-f-s-s χαρά/chara "**joy**" + conj. ἢ/e "**or**" + noun-n-m-s στέφανος/stephanos "**wreath/crown**" + noun-g-f-s καύχησις/kauchesis "**of boasting**" + conj. ἢ/e [untranslated] + neg. part. οὐχί/ouchi "**not**" + conj. καὶ/kai "**even**" + pron-gen-c-pl σύ/su "**you**" + prep-gen. ἔμπροσθεν/emprosthen "**before**" + noun-g-m-s w/ d.a. κύριος/kurios "**the Lord**" + prep-loc. ἐν/en "**at**" + pron-3rd-g-m-s αὐτός/autos "**his**" + noun-l-f-s w/ d.a. παρουσία/parousia "**the coming**").

### VERSE TWENTY

**“For you are our glory and our joy”.**

ὑμεῖς γάρ ἐστε ἡ δόξα ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ χαρά.

(pron-2nd-n-c-pl σύ/su "**you**" + conj. γὰρ/gar "**for**" + verb-pres.act.ind.2nd-pl εἰμί/eimi "**are**" + noun-n-f-s w/ d.a. δόξα/doxa "**the glory**" + pron-1st-g-c-pl ἐγώ/ego "**of us**" + conj. καὶ/kai "**and**" + noun-n-f-s w/ d.a. χαρά/chara "**the joy**").

## ANALYSIS OF VERSES 19 & 20:

1. Paul now demonstrates just what the Thessalonians mean to him.
2. He asks in verse nineteen, **“For who is our hope or joy or our wreath of boasting? Is it not even you before the Lord at His coming?”**

3. Again, the postpositive, γάρ/gar, “for”, links the first question to what immediately preceded it with regard to Paul wanting on more than one occasion to come to them but was hindered by Satan.
4. It is because this group of believers is his hope, joy and wreath of boasting.
5. In other words, their positive volition as seen in their faith and high level of application gives them hope for SG<sup>3</sup>, as well as giving them joy in ph<sup>2</sup>.
6. Our word for “wreath” is the nominative, masculine, singular noun, στέφανος/Stephanos, “wreath/crown”.
7. Here it is translated as “wreath” and is analogous to the victor’s wreath worn by the winner in the games (I Cor. 9:24-27).
8. In the ancient games, only the winner won the wreath (no gold, silver and bronze metals).
9. It is analogous to the +V as it is the small minority of believers that will finish their course and hold to the end. Such ones will be handsomely rewarded by the Lord while most shrink back in shame (I John 2:28).
10. The SG<sup>3</sup> they have hope in is tied to their receiving the winner’s wreath at the bema, what Paul calls here “His coming”.
11. Our word for “coming” is the locative, feminine, singular noun, παρουσία/parousia, “presence, arrival, a being present”. It refers to the return of Jesus Christ either at the Rapture or at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent, context determining.
12. In this instance it is a reference to the Rapture at which point all Church Age Saints will stand before the Lord to have our works judged, good or bad (I Cor. 3:12; 4:5).
13. Paul is stating here that he and his associates path to receiving the wreath, called here the “wreath of boasting” is connected to the Thessalonian Church.
14. The boasting is righteous boasting done in a ph<sup>3</sup> context where the believer has finished his course, of course all of the real glory goes to God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
15. Communicators and members of the congregation are dependent on one another to receive the glorious wreath at the Bema (II Cor. 1:14; Phil. 2:16).
16. Adjusted communicators can have a righteous boast that they kept on teaching the truth and adjusted sheep can boast that they heard the truth, believed it and applied till the end of their lives.
17. Elsewhere the wreath is called:
  - a. The wreath of glory (I Pet. 5:4).
  - b. The wreath of Life (James 1:12)
  - c. The wreath of Righteousness (II Tim. 4:8).
18. There is not more than one wreath, but four different designations given to the same wreath which will be awarded to the saints who have finished their course.
19. It is not *solely* connected to this group of believers. However, as communicators of the Gospel, their wreath is linked to their loyal application in teaching God’s word in their ph<sup>2</sup> niches.
20. They must faithfully minister and hold till the end, only then will they be able to receive the wreath at Jesus’ return (I Cor. 9:27; Rev. 22:12).

21. Such is the case for all of us. We must continue on with the Truth of BD in our niche, whatever that niche may be, and hold till the end, whether that end is via death or rapture (II Tim. 4:8).
22. Paul and his associates' application toward the Thessalonians (as well as the other churches) is tied to his future blessings. Hence he again confirms **“For you are our glory and our joy”**.
23. Because the most important project that he has ever undergone is tied to his teaching and ministering to the churches, the Thessalonians are key to his “glory”. Such gives him joy in both a ph2 and potentially in ph3 (cp. II Cor. 1:14; Phil 2:16; 4:1). .

**The End of Chapter Two  
August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024**

**Work Cited:**

MacArthur, John, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (I & II Thessalonians) ©2002, Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL.