

2 Thessalonians 1-2:12

1 Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the same salutation as the first letter. It is from the ministry team, not just Paul. We say that Paul is the author, but literally it was the Holy Spirit through these three.

3 We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.

The letter begins in typical style with thanksgiving and prayers. What Paul and team are thanking God for is the same thing most shepherds are thankful for, a growing faith (Luke 17:5-6) and an increase in love for one another.

1Thessalonians 4:9-10; Philippians 1:9 Is our faith growing and love increasing? How can we see that that be true of us?

4 Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. 5 All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering.

The writers continue with their encouragement. Were the Thessalonians doubting their ability to persevere through the trials they were facing? The word used here for "endure" implies becoming stronger, or coming out on top through it.

Who needs our encouragement? Who is enduring a trial with consistent faith that we might hold up as an example? God's judgment call was giving them the faith to believe, calling them out of darkness into the light. If they failed would His judgment have been wrong? They suffered the persecution of their society because of their faithfulness to their convictions. In what ways do we suffer for the Kingdom? Worthy - Ephesians 4:1

6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.

The statement is based on the character of God. God will pay back everyone for what they have done, for both evil and good. Those who harm His body, the church, will face retribution – justice! There is a Day of Justice coming in which everyone will have to give an account for all they have done. Revelation 6:10; 1Peter 4:5

8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power 10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

Remember, it is not just hearing, but obeying that matters. Romans 2:7-8; Matthew 7:24; 1Peter 4:17 Verse 10 tells us that God will be glorified in His holy people. His life in us, the transformation He has worked in us, will bring Him glory. We will marvel at the amazing things He has done as we see Him clearly.

The writers encouraged them with the fact that they were included in these prophetic promises. Do you know that you are too?!

11 With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. 12 We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

With what in mind? With the fact that Lord is coming to be glorified in His people and marveled at by the believers. Because that day of reckoning will come they (notice the use of 'we') constantly pray for them. They believed in prayer. We need to pray more for one another and those we influence for the kingdom. They prayed God would count them worthy of the calling. Every one of us has a calling on our lives, but we all have this calling to glorify the Lord. When our lives slide back into sin, we are not proving ourselves worthy. It is not that we earn anything; it is that we respond to the grace given us which glorifies God. Pray that we continue to respond to it so that all the good things God has willed for our lives come to pass. Ephesians 2:10

Chapter 2

1 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, 2 not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come.

He addressed this in the first letter, chapter 4:14-16. It seems they had a preoccupation with the Lord's return, worried about what it meant to those who had already died, and about when it would take place. There were false prophecies that told them it had already happened, teachings that declared it was past, and even a fake letter. Didn't they have a copy of Matthew's Gospel? Matthew 24:29-31 Paul taught we would be kept from the judgments that would come upon they world. Ephesians 5:6 Perhaps they were seeing the persecution they were enduring as the wrath of God.

3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. 5 Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things?

The Day of the Lord was not coming until the rebellion and the man of lawlessness is revealed. This brings up a problem for pre-trib folks. There would have had to

have been an understanding that Paul was referring to the wrath part of the Day of the Lord and not the rapture alone.

It seems that before the Lord's return there will be a great turning away (rebellion) from the truth. This will prepare the way for the anti-Christ. Many teach there will be a great revival. Both could happen. I see more Scripture speaking of decline.

1Timothy 4:1; 2Timothy 3:1-3; 4:3-4

The man of lawlessness is the Antichrist. There are many antichrists, (1John 2:18) but this is The Antichrist. If the current thought in Evangelical circles is correct, this is referring to the mid-way point through the seven year tribulation when he breaks the covenant and declares he is God. Daniel 7:25; 8:12-14 Paul must have taught on this during his short stay in Thessalonica.

6 And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. 7 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.

Are the authors referring to the Holy Spirit or the church? Verse 6 is neuter and 7 is masculine. Some consider this to be human government that the antichrist will overthrow. Does taken out of the way mean completely removed or just no longer holding back?

8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.

The Word of God created all things. The Word will overthrow this one who has dared to defy the Living God. Daniel 7:10-11; Revelation 19:15; 20-21

9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders,

10 and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

The Antichrist will be a miracle worker. People are only deceived because they refuse to love the truth and be saved. You have to want something other than the wonderful salvation offered to us by our loving Savior to swallow the lie. Revelation 13:3-5, 11-15; 19:20; John 3:19-21

11 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie 12 and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

Since they rejected the love of the truth, God allowed the delusion of Satan to capture their hearts. First is a rejection of truth. Then the restraining hand that keeps us from the wickedness in our own hearts is removed, and the result is the horrors of unrestrained sin. In this case it will be one final false religion that tells people what they want to hear, a god after their own evil desires. Romans 1:21-25