

2 Thessalonians Chapter 1

2 Thessalonians 1:1 "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:"

We see the same three names associated with this letter as we did with the first letter. Silvanus here is Silas "Latin". The Latin for Timothy is Timotheus. We see in this greeting, Paul is agreeing that these Thessalonians are in Christ. This is not a church that has strayed away. It is a church that has made up its mind that the Lord Jesus is coming back right then. It is grounded and rooted in the Father and in the Lord Jesus.

2 Thessalonians 1:2 "Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

This is a greeting that Paul uses very often. It makes this letter most assuredly Paul's letter.

2 Thessalonians 1:3 "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;"

"We are bound to thank God": There is a spiritual obligation to thank God in prayer when He accomplishes great things in the lives of His saints. That was the case with the obedient Thessalonians, who had demonstrated growth in faith and love since the first letter. This was in direct answer to Paul's prayers (1 Thess. 1:3; 3:12).

"Your faith groweth": Paul cannot help but say once again how impressed he is with their spiritual growth (1 Thess. 1:2-10). This no doubt, reflects the brevity of his stay there. Their testimony suggests that his earlier fears have been dispelled (1 Thess. 3:5-10).

Paul has no complaint about their faith, or their charity. This is a church that is growing in the knowledge of God. They are more than generous helping with the other's needs. The only thing that could be wrong with this is if they are doing this because they think the Lord will be back immediately. If they are giving from a free heart, there is no error in that.

2 Thessalonians 1:4 "So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:"

"Patience and faith": Nowhere was their growth in faith and love (verse 3), more evident than in the way they patiently and faithfully endured hostilities and suffering from the enemies of Christ. Although there was no need to speak, since the Thessalonians' lives spoke clearly enough (1 Thess. 1:8). Paul's joy before the Lord over their perseverance bubbled up.

Paul is using this church at Thessalonica as an example to the other churches of how they should conduct their affairs. He knows the persecutions have been great, they have endured them like good soldiers.

They are not only generous in their giving, but they are patient, as well. It seems that Paul can find no fault with them. Paul is simply amazed at their faith and patience under such tribulations and persecutions.

2 Thessalonians 1:5 "[Which is] a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:"

“Token” means literally “evidence.”

“Of the righteous judgment of God”: Another translation would be “for” the righteous. Paul is not saying that their suffering reflects God’s judgment rather that it will be “evidence” used in judgment against those who persecute them. God will righteously repay trouble to the wicked (verses 6-8).

“Counted worthy”: Their suffering does not qualify them for the kingdom. Instead it is a privilege extended to those who are genuinely members of the kingdom.

"Manifest" is to make real. It seems they are enduring this suffering for the possibility of being counted worthy before God.

“Suffer”: Having a right attitude towards suffering is essential and that required attitude is concern for the kingdom of God. They were not self-centered, but concentrated on God’s kingdom. Their focus was not on personal comfort, fulfillment and happiness, but on the glory of God and the fulfillment of His purposes.

They were not moaning about the injustice of their persecutions. Rather, they were patiently enduring the sufferings they did not deserve (verse 4). This very attitude was positive proof that God’s wise process of purging, purifying, and perfecting through suffering was working to make His beloved people worthy of the kingdom (2:12), by being perfected (James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 5:10).

For believers, afflictions are to be expected (1 Thess. 3:3), as they live and develop Christian character in a satanic world. Suffering is not to be thought of as evidence that God has forsaken them, but evidence that He is with them. Perfecting them (Matt. 5:10; Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 12:10).

So, the Thessalonians demonstrated that their salvation, determined by faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ, was genuine because they, like Christ, were willing to suffer because of God and His kingdom. They suffered unjustly as objects of man’s wrath against Christ and His kingdom (Acts 5:41; Phil. 3:10; Col 1:24). “Kingdom of God” is used here in its spiritual sense of salvation.

Romans 8:17 "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified together."

1 Peter 2:20 "For what glory [is it], if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer [for it], ye take it patiently, this [is] acceptable with God."

2 Thessalonians 1:6 "Seeing [it is] a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;"

“It is a righteous thing” refers back to the righteous judgment of God cited in the previous verse.

“God to recompense”: Just as the righteous judgment of God works to perfect believers (verse 5), so it works to “repay the wicked (verse 8). Vindication and retribution are to be exercised by God, not man, in matters of spiritual persecution (Deut. 32:35; Prov. 25:21-22; Rom. 12:19-21; 1 Thess. 5:15; Rev. 19:2). When God repays and how God repays are to be determined by Him.

If these people remain patient and in the faith even when they are being persecuted; the people doing the persecuting will be punished by God.

Romans 12:20 "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."

God fights our battles for us. Vengeance is His, not ours. We should be kind to our enemies, as well as our friends.

2 Thessalonians 1:7 "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,"

Paul was a fellow sufferer for the just cause of Christ. He, like the Thessalonians, hoped for that ultimate rest and reward for their suffering for the kingdom that was to come when Christ returned to judge the ungodly. The Lord Jesus promised this twofold coming for rest and retribution (Matt. 13:40-43; 24:39-41; 25:31-33; Luke 21:27-28, 34-36; John 5:24-29).

“When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed”: This undoubtedly refers to Christ being unveiled in His coming as Judge. The first aspect of this revealing occurs at the end of the 7 year tribulation period (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43; 24:29-51; 25:31-46; Rev. 19:11-15).

The final and universal revelation of Christ as Judge occurs at the Great White Throne judgment following Christ’s millennial reign on the earth (Rev. 20:12-15). Angels always accompany Christ in His coming for judgment (Matt. 13:41, 49; 24:30-31; 25:31; Rev. 14:14-15).

“Rest” (Greek anesis, “release” or “relaxation”): It is appropriate since Paul is encouraging them to relax and wait for the Lord’s return, at which time He will judge all those who afflict His people.

“With us”: Paul again uses himself as an example. He too had suffered (1 Thess. 3:3-5). Their suffering only gives them something in common with the apostle.

“The Lord Jesus shall be revealed” (literally, “at the revelation of the Lord Jesus”): Second Thessalonians primarily concerns the revelation of Christ at His second coming (Matt. 24:29-31), as distinguished from the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18). The failure to recognize this distinction led to some of the problems at Thessalonica.

There is a rest for the believers. Look, with me, at what Jesus had to say about this very thing.

Matthew 11:28 "Come unto me, all [ye] that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

The rest for the Christian is in Jesus.

Hebrews 4:9 "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." There will be no sorrow in heaven. These mighty angels that are with Him are the ministering spirits to do His commands.

At one point, they are to put in the sickle and reap the earth at His command. The Christians, themselves, will be like the angels in heaven.

2 Thessalonians 1:8 "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:"

“In flaming fire”: The manifestation of the Son of Man employs this same apocalyptic imagery (Dan. 7:13; Rev. 1:13-14). Paul employs “know” in a sense similar to the Hebrew cognate. In this context, it signifies being intimately acquainted with and standing in close relation to God. Thus, it means more than just knowing someone. Fire is a symbol of judgment. God is a consuming fire.

Hebrews 12:29 "For our God [is] a consuming fire."

So many times in the Bible, God is associated with fire. John the Baptist said, that he baptized with water, but Jesus would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Holy God cannot look upon sin, He will burn it up. We all know that the wheat will be gathered into the heavenly barn, and the tares will be burned. Look what Jesus said about this very thing.

Matthew 13:30 "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

There are only two choices a person can make. Following Jesus brings life eternal, but to reject Jesus brings eternal damnation.

Revelation 20:15 "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

The question is, have you received Jesus Christ as your Savior and had your name written in the Lamb's book of life? If you have not (read Revelation 20:15), one more time.

“Taking vengeance”: Literally these words mean “to give full punishment” (Deut. 32:35; Isa. 59:17; 66:15; Ezek. 25:14; Rom. 12:19).

“Know not God” (1 Thess. 4:5). This speaks to the lack of a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ (John 17:3; Gal. 4:8; Eph. 2:12; 4:17-18; Titus 1:16).

Retribution is not dealt out because of persecuting Christians, but rather because they did not obey God’s command to believe (Acts 17:30-31; Rom. 1:5; 10:16; 15:18; 16:19). And call upon the name of the Lord to be saved from their sin (Rom. 10:9-13; 1 Cor. 16:22; Heb. 10:26-31).

Salvation is never obtained by works but always by placing one’s faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8-10).

2 Thessalonians 1:9 "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;"

“Everlasting destruction” is not annihilation. It is a conscious, continuous expulsion from the presence of God, that is, from the place of blessing (Isa. 2:11, 17; Rev. 9:6). Literally these words mean “to give full punishment”.

Paul explained the duration and extent of what is elsewhere in Scripture called “hell.” First, it is forever, thus it is not a reversible experience. Second, destruction means ruin and does not involve annihilation, but rather a new state of conscious being which is significantly worse than the first (Rev. 20:14-15).

This is described as the absence of God’s presence and glory (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; Luke 16:24-26).

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We see that the ones to be punished are all who do not accept Jesus as their Savior. This is the separation of the sheep and the goats in the book of Matthew. The followers of Christ, of course, are his sheep. The really sad thing is that even some who proclaim Christianity will not be acceptable as we read in the following verse.

Matthew 7:22-23 "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

You see, just professing Christianity does not make you a Christian. We are Christians when we become new creatures in Christ. I will say one more time, there are only two choices. It is up to us where we spend all of eternity. We can choose Jesus and spend eternity in heaven with Him. The other choice is to reject Jesus and spend eternity in hell, totally separated from God.

Hell is not only a fire, but a terrible darkness. One of the torments of hell is the fact that the lost will not be able to see the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 1:10 "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."

“When he shall come”: When the Day of the Lord arrives bringing retribution and ruin for unbelievers. As Christ’s great glory is displayed the result will be rest and relief for believers and the privilege of sharing His glory (Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2).

This is the glorious manifestation of believers of which Paul spoke (Rom. 8:18-19). At the time, all believers will adore and worship Him, including those in the Thessalonian church who believed Paul’s testimony of the gospel.

The punishment, spoken of in the previous verses, will happen when the things spoken (in verse 10 above), occur. Paul is saying, because his testimony was believed when he preached to them, they would grow in the Lord until He comes.

We know that the Lord is glorified in the saints, when they become so full of Him that the world looking on sees Jesus in them. This brings glory and honor to the Father and Jesus. We Christians in the day of the Lord, will be clothed in white linen washed in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We will have taken on His righteousness.

We have been made acceptable in the Father’s sight through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus. In my opinion, admired is not strong enough for the feeling we have. The feeling is great admiration and love for what Jesus did for us, but even more for who He is to us.

2 Thessalonians 1:11 "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of [this] calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of [his] goodness, and the work of faith with power:"

“We pray always”: Paul’s prayer life is exemplified 4 times in this letter (verse 12, 2:16-17; 3:1-5, 16).

Here he prayed as he did (in verse 5), that they might behave in ways consistent with their identity as Christians (1 Thess. 2:19; Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10). Living up to their calling to salvation (Romans 8:30; 11:29; Gal. 4:13-15; 1 Cor. 1:26; Col. 1:3-5; 1 Thess. 2:12), with lives marked by goodness and powerful works of faith.

For Christ to be glorified in us, we must grow in him to the extent that we will be a reflection of the Lord Jesus. Many are called, but few are chosen. Paul is not speaking just to the heads of the

churches here, but to all who have been called of God to be Christians. Every Christian is a minister for Christ.

Paul prays that they will live the salvation they have received. It appears that Paul is trying to convey to them the necessity to walk uprightly before the Lord. The very life we live is a sermon to the world around us. We either draw people closer to God with our walk, or we drive them further away.

This prayer of Paul's is speaking of their walk, more than just a one-time conversion. The constant faith we have in Him causes us to turn our will over to His will. The power to minister comes from the Holy Spirit within us. Jesus told the disciples that they would receive power after the Holy Ghost had come upon them.

Look with me, at the power He gave them, and what it was to be used for. This is in the Words of Jesus.

Acts 1:8 "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

2 Thessalonians 1:12 "That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

The worthy walk (of verse 11), allows God to be glorified in us, the light of all purposes (2:14; 1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Peter 4:11).

This is said best in Philippians 2):

Philippians 2:10 "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;"

This shows great reverence for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. By grace are you saved. Salvation is for whosoever will. God loved us while we were yet in sin. He sent Jesus as our Savior. He must be made Lord of our life for the things we have been talking about to be. It is Christ in me, the hope of glory.

The name of our Lord Jesus Christ is glorified when we are Christian in the true sense of the word. Christians are followers of and believers in the Lord Jesus. We become Christ-like, if we make Him Lord of our lives.

2 Thessalonians Chapter 1 Questions

1. Where was this letter probably written from?

2. Who was the penman of this letter?
3. What mistaken idea did these people in the church of Thessalonica have?
4. What is this letter all about?
5. What complimentary thing does Paul say to them in the first verse?
6. What two good things did Paul have to say about them in verse 3?
7. What possibly, could be wrong with what they are doing?
8. What church did Paul use as an example for the other churches?
9. Paul says they are counted worthy for _____ of _____.
10. What does "manifest" mean?
11. Who will God bring tribulation on?
12. Who does verse 7 say will be with Jesus at His return?
13. Who will be like the angels?
14. Who does He take vengeance on?
15. Who is cast into the fire?
16. Besides the torment of the fire, what terrible thing occurs?
17. Jesus will be glorified in whom?
18. What will the Christians be clothed in at that day?
19. We should admire Jesus for what He did for us, but we should admire Him more for what?
20. Paul prayed that God would count them worthy of their _____.
21. Every _____ is a minister for Christ.
22. What is Paul trying to convey to them?
23. Where does the power to minister come from?