

2nd Thessalonians

1:1-5 Part 1

A follow-up letter only a few months
after the first letter.

Refreshing our memory of What Paul actually believed & taught the Thessalonians. (his theology!)

- Paul reasoned from the scriptures (Acts 17:2,17; 18:4; 19:8) (There, 3 weeks to the Jews)
- Explained & proved that it was necessary for the **Christ** to suffer and to rise from the dead - (Acts 17:3; 1 Co.15:3-4; Isa.53) What does that say about the Thessalonians & Us??
- Proclaimed that Jesus is the **Christ** (Messiah) (Acts. 9:22; 17:3; 18:28; Ga. 3:1; 1 Th. 1:5, 6)
- Paul taught that believers would experience tribulations (persecutions/suffering) (1 Th.3:4; Acts 14:22; Jn 16:33; Ro. 5:3-5; Jam. 1:2-4; 1 Ptr. 1:6; 4:12; 5:8-10; Ep. 6:13; 2 Pe. 2:9)
- **Results of that teaching:** (after a few months, Paul grew attached) (1 Th.2:8,9; Phil.4:16)
 - 'Some' Jews believed (Acts 17:4)
 - 'A great many' of the devout Greeks believed (Acts 17:4)
 - 'Not a few' of the leading women believed (Acts 17:4)
 - Those who did not believe -rebelled and began to persecute (Acts 17:5-10)

(Continued)

What Paul actually believed & taught the Thessalonians. (his theology!)

- From 1st Thessalonians we learned that Paul taught them about 'the Day of the Lord' (1 Th.5:1-10; Dan.7:25; Matthew 24:9-22; 2 Peter 3:1-13)
- Also that Jesus had gone to 'prepare a place for them and would return' to take them to where He is. -(1 Th. 4:16; John 14:1-3)
- 'the Day of the Lord' had not yet begun but was still imminent but no one knows when it will begin- '... like a thief' (1 Th. 5:2; Acts 1:7; Mk.13:32; 2 Ptr.3:10)
- When the Lord does return both those asleep in the Lord and those alive will be caught up with Christ forever. (1 Th. 4:15-18; 1 Cor.15:51-53)
- Their 'hope' was to be in the efficacy of the work of Christ - '... who delivers us from the wrath to come.'
(6 yrs after writing 2 Thess. Paul would further explain that efficacy in writing Ro. 3:21-26 from Corinth) (consider: Gen. 6; Matt. 24:15-22; Lk.21:25-28; 1 Th. 1:10; 5:9-10; Col.1:13; Rom. 2:9; 3:21-26; Rev. 20:11 - 21:8)

The Thessalonian's concerns about the 'Day of the Lord'

"Some there were very upset about believers who had died. They apparently viewed the return of Christ as imminent, and assumed that the Second Coming would take place in their own lifetimes. They were uncertain about what would happen to those who died before this event took place.

Paul did not correct their assumption that Christ's coming was imminent. Like them, Paul believed the Lord could return at any time. But Paul did not know *when* that "anytime" would be.

So in his first letter the apostle described the Rapture, in which believers are caught up in the air to be with the Lord. He did not fit this event into any prophetic scheme. He simply wanted the believers to realize that death had not cut their loved ones off from the hope of glory to come. Both those who live at Christ's return, and those who have died, will be caught up together!"

Lawrence O. Richards, [The Teacher's Commentary \(Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987\), 956.](#)

A 'wordy' way of viewing 2nd Thessalonians

~~Nine~~ Ten words describing the issues Paul's 2nd letter addresses!

Comfort, Teaching, Exhortation

Persecution, False Prophecy, Practice

Encouragement, Anxiety, Idleness

Some basic observations of 2nd Thessalonians

- Letter written a few months after 1st letter. (50-51 a.d.)
- Apparently, Paul felt the need to comfort, correct, and exhort them regarding concerns and confusion between:
 - Persecution - tribulation,
 - false prophecies - Day of the Lord
 - Idleness - doing good.
- Chapter 1 begins, as in the 1st letter, with comfort and encouragement concerning their continued persecution; nevertheless, Paul indicated their 'faith, love, and hope' was growing abundantly.
- Chapters 2&3- address 'teaching/correction' & 'exhortations/commands'

We can tell from the 2nd Thessalonians letter what prompted Paul to write it after only a few months?

There are 3 passages that indicate Paul's concerns about:

- 1) their continued persecution, (2 Thess. 1:4-5)
- 2) their confusion of prophecy due to false prophets or letters, (2 Thess. 2:1-3a)
- 3) and their work ethic in the Lord. (2 Thess. 3:6-12)

Let's read our passage today: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-5 (ESV)

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

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.

⁴ Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring.

⁵ This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—

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

Paul, Silas, and Timothy co-wrote the letter

First person, "I", i.e. Paul, in v. 2:5; but Paul signed it - v. 3:17

Third person, "We", i.e. Paul, Silas, and Timothy v. 1:3-4;11-12, etc.

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

“**Grace**” is “God’s riches at Christ’s expense”; it is God’s unmerited favor which He freely bestows on all who accept Jesus Christ’s substitutionary work for them on the cross by faith. God gives man the opposite of what he deserves: blessing instead of judgment. This is the grace of God.

“**Peace**” is the cessation of hostility which has resulted from Christ’s death; God and people can be reconciled because the debt of human sin has been paid by Christ.

Christians have peace with God through the death of Christ. They also experience the peace of God as a result of Christ’s work.”

(emphasis is mine)

Thomas L. Constable, “2 Thessalonians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 714.

³ We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.

Paul was 'rightly' encouraging them especially as they were 'growing abundantly' as he noticed in his 1st letter (1 Th. 1:7-8)

In addition, Paul made sure to encourage them as he noticed their 'Love increasing' toward one another.

What else do you notice about Paul in this passage?

2 Th.1:4 (NKJV)

4 so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,

Paul continues with even more encouragement in light of their 'patience' & 'faith' while enduring persecutions and afflictions.
(respectively: *diogmos* & *thlipsis*)

Note: '*diogmos*' is usually translated as 'persecution'

Note: '*thlipsis*' is understood as 'trials', 'pressures', 'troubles' & translated as 'tribulation' 21x and 'affliction' 17x

Kevin D. Zuber had this to say: "Paul acknowledged his appreciation for the Thessalonians' *faith*, which was greatly enlarged (. . . 1Th 3:3), for their mutual and growing love they had for one another (. . . 1Th 4:9-10), and for their unwavering perseverance and faith in the face of persecution (yet another theme that had occupied him in the first letter)." (emphasis mine)

"They were patiently enduring ... persecutions (*diōgmois*) from enemies of the gospel who were hostile toward them (cf. 1 Thes. 3:3-4).

The trials (*thlipsesin*, "pressures, troubles"; cf. 2 Thes. 1:6-7) they were undergoing were painful circumstances that came from both Jewish and Gentile acquaintances (cf. 1 Thes. 1:6; 2:14; Acts 17:5-9).

Their persecutions and trials were numerous. Yet, in spite of them all, the Thessalonians kept on standing strong and stable in their faith."

Any Questions or Observations?

Thomas L. Constable, "[2 Thessalonians](#)," in [The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures](#), ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 715.

⁵ This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—

What do you think is 'evidence of the righteous judgment of God...?'

Why do you think Paul said: "...you may be considered worthy...?"

"This is not salvation based upon works. Their "perseverance and faith" amidst their hardships due to persecution provided the evidence (plain indication) that, in God's defensible opinion (translated righteous judgment), they are counted worthy of the future kingdom. In other words, the maintenance of their faith amidst enormous challenges was proof that God destined them for the kingdom."

Questions or Comments?

Kevin D. Zuber, "2 Thessalonians," in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1892.

Applications

Growing in the Grace & Knowledge of Christ

2 Th.1:4 (NKJV)

⁴ so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,

Study about the 'patience' referred to in 2 Th.1:4 from these cross-referenced passages?

Describe how one would appropriate this patience?

1 Th. 1:3; 3:2-8.

2 Th. 3:5.

Ro. 2:7; 5:3-5; 8:25; 12:12, 14-21;

He. 6:15; 10:36; 12:1-3.

Ja. 1:3, 4; 5:7, 8.

2 Pe. 1:6.

Re. 14:12.

B. Blayney, Thomas Scott, and R.A. Torrey with John Canne, Browne, *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, vol. 2 (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, n.d.), 149.

Epilogue to Today's Lesson
A Personal Rhetorical Pause
(Hopefully a Noble Berean exercise -Acts 17:11)

In 2 Th. 1:4, Paul commended the Thessalonians for 'enduring persecutions and afflictions' ...

That has raised some questions I have been wrestling with for the last several months: for example,

What is the difference between the types of tribulations of the Thessalonians and those in 'the great tribulation'?

(or - the flood, Sodom & Gomorrah, story of Job, WWII Holocaust, 911, Hamas Terrorists Attacks, Lahaina Fire, Tsunami's, earthquakes, Lake of Fire, etc.)

And what does 'deliver from the wrath of God' mean?

Digging a little deeper into the 'rapture'

(1 Th. 4:13-18; 5:1-11; Jn.14:1-3)

Questions to Explore

What are the distinctions between historical & present suffering and suffering in the 'great tribulation'?

What/when/how/who is: Delivered from the wrath of God?

As Ron Scicluna has said in his Hebrews class, "Buy me a cup of coffee at Panera Bread, and I will be happy to discuss this with you!" 😊

For me, some clues to my short answer is in a few passages:

One from Luke's rendition of the Olivet Discourse: *Luke 21:25-28*

And some passages concerning 'waiting' & 'wrath of God':

(1 Th. 1:10; 4:16-17; 5:9; Ro.5:9; Job 19:25-27; Is.25:8; Mt.1:21; 1Pt.2:21; Ro.8:23-25)

Some words to the wise:

"Nonetheless, it is critical to remember that there are three great non-negotiables in Bible prophecy

—three events that all Christians believe will happen:

- 1) the literal, physical, visible return of Jesus Christ to the earth;
- 2) the bodily resurrection of the dead; and
- 3) the final judgment of all people.

These three truths are crystal clear in Scripture and have been consistently affirmed by God's people throughout history.

Although we may disagree and debate other details of the end times scenario, these are the three immovable pillars in our eschatology."

Hitchcock, Mark. **The End: A Complete Overview of Bible Prophecy and the End of Days** .
Tyndale House Publishers. Kindle Edition.

I have come to believe that the ultimate expression of God's wrath is described in Rev. 20:11-21:8 and believe that those who believe in Christ Jesus have been 'eternally saved' and rescued from that expression of God's wrath. Believers in Christ have been given eternal life with God and the rest will experience eternal death (i.e. separation) from God in the Lake of Fire.

**Certainly, God's wrath is His expression against sin, period.
Sin is not allowed in the eternal state - Rev. 21.27**

- What does '... who delivers us from the wrath to come.' (1 TH. 1:10) actually mean? What does that deliverance look like?
- How is the 'great tribulation' (Luke 21:25-28; Matt. 24:15-22) different from the afflictions or tribulations mankind has experienced so far?
i.e., Study the days of Noah & the Last days & any tribulations in between (Gen.6&7; Rev. 20:11 - 21:8)

Join me and begin to dig into these passages. Consider it a Noble Berean exercise

- **Tips, Helps , and Cautions:** Try using Blue Letter Bible website: <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
 1. Look up the passage in question in the Bible version of choice and pray the Lord to give you understanding.
 2. Click **Tools** and then click on **Cross-refs** tab to find other similar Bible passages -
 3. Good news is that it is a great 'whole counsel of scripture' tool when used following sound hermeneutical principles.
 4. Bad News - caution must be exercised for those similar passages' contexts & author's intent so as to avoid mis-interpretations.