

The Return of the King: Lesson 3 2 Thessalonians 1:1-2:4

Author: This letter was claimed to be written by the Apostle Paul. All of the early church fathers believed the Apostle Paul wrote this letter.

The letter was written from **Corinth** during Paul's eighteen months of ministry there in 50-51 AD (Acts 18:1-18).

Paul's main purpose in writing this letter was to correct a **false teaching** that the day of the Lord had already started.

Verses 1-2

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.

We see several things in the first two verses:

1) Paul's companions

- a) **Silvanus**- (also known as Silas) was a longtime **companion** of Paul. He was with Paul on his second missionary journey. When Paul came to Thessalonica and started the church Silas came with him (Acts 17:1-9). The church at Thessalonica knew Silas.
- b) **Timothy**- was also a **trusted** companion and associate of Paul and traveled with Paul on many of Paul's missionary journeys.

2) Church at Thessalonica

- a) The Apostle Paul founded the church in Thessalonica on his **second** missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9). Paul only stayed a short time because he was forced out of the town by enemies of the gospel.
- b) Although it was **hard**, the church was still very active and alive even though they were going through persecution.

3) In God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

- a) Paul says many times in his writings that "we are in Christ". But only here and the first verse of 1 Thessalonians does he describe them as **being** in the Father. This was very important for this church who was going through persecution to know that God the Father **cares** for this church going through rough times.
- b) Christians are in a personal, spiritual, and eternal union with God. This is very unique to Christianity, **no other** religions speak of being in their god.

4) Grace to you and peace

- a) This was a common greeting back in those days. But to believers it reminded them of what God had done for them- grace- God's unmerited **favor** to the sinner, and peace with God is the result of that grace.

5) And the Lord Jesus Christ

- a) Paul put Christ's equality with God in this verse. This was big. Paul had been a Pharisee and to do this was **blasphemy** of the highest level according to the Pharisees. But it is **true** and Paul knew it and he wanted everyone to know it.

Increasing Faith

Verses 3-4

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. 4Therefore 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.

Ought- This refers to a **deep** obligation Paul had to give thanks to God for the Thessalonians. What was Paul grateful for? Maybe it was the size of the congregation, budget, buildings? No. What made Paul so grateful was they were **growing** in the Lord despite the persecution they were going through. The truth about persecution is it destroys **false** faith and drives true believers toward God.

Paul also tells us that other churches were **encouraged** by the Thessalonians' spiritual commitment, patience, and love for each other even though they were going through persecution.

Verse 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—

We must realize as believers that **persecution** and **suffering** in this life will happen. The word *judgment* in this context means "God's righteous decision to allow suffering in this world to make people grow." In other words, God has chosen to build his people's character through **difficulties** they experience in their lifetime (John 15:20-21; Acts 14:22; Romans 8:17).

We see God's plan is working because the Thessalonians' faith, hope, and love were **growing**. Those believers who were willing to suffer for their faith will be declared worthy and these suffering believers could know that they were being **prepared for** future glory.

Verse 6

since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you,

God will **balance** the scales one day. It might be in this world or at Christ's second coming.

Verses 7-8

and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

These verses tell us a few things:

- 1) One day God will bring **relief** for believers.
- 2) One day God will pay back **trouble** to those who trouble his people.
- 3) This will happen when Christ **returns**.

Verses 9-10

They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, 10when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

At Christ's return, there will only be **two** groups of people; those who **belong** to Jesus and those who do not. Those who belong to Jesus- rest and will enter His Kingdom. Those who do not belong to Christ- everlasting destruction (Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 20:11-15).

Verse 11

To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power,

Paul and his fellow missionaries kept on praying for the believers in Thessalonica. We know our salvation is **secure** but still we are in a spiritual battle and we need other believers to **pray for** us to strengthen us.

Worthy of his calling- means living a life that **honors** Christ (Ephesians 4:1).

Verse 12

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.

The **goal** for believers should be to glorify Christ by the way we live, by our words, and motives. When we do that, Christ is glorified in us.

The only way we can do this is through God's **grace** that empowers us.

2 Thessalonians (Chapter 2): Verse 1

Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers,

In this verse, Paul talks about one event with two parts, which he had already written about in his first letter 1) the rapture 2) **day of the** Lord (tribulation through the millennium).

Verse 2

not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

To be shaken- This word was used to describe a **ship** in a terrible storm and describes the confusion and distress the believers were in.

We do not know how it was done but **false** teaching had entered the church. The false teaching taught that they had missed the **rapture** and the bema seat of Christ and now they were in the Tribulation.

Verse 3

Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

Paul tells them not to be deceived by some supposedly reliable source, instead, **hang on** to what you have been taught (2:5, 15).

Paul also tells them three things which must happen to be considered to be in the day of the Lord:

- 1) Rebellion- (apostasy) or **falling away**. This Greek word means "rebellion" or "departure"- all down through the ages we have seen people depart from the faith as we see it today. But Paul uses a definite article to describe this apostasy. It is **not** a general slide but a **definite** act. Paul goes on and describes this apostasy.
- 2) Man of lawlessness- This man, the antichrist, will be lawless which means "without law". In the end time lawlessness will be greatly increased (Matthew 24:12). But this man who will be **energized** by Satan will be the most wicked man who ever lived and his wicked rule will be worldwide.
 - a) Is revealed- The tense of this word points to a definite time when he will appear. It implies that he was known but this act of apostasy will show who he really is.

- b) Son of destruction- This word means “doomed one” there are two people in all human history that have this name, the antichrist and Judas who betrayed Jesus (John 17:12).

Verse 4 (What this man does)

who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.

It would appear that at first the antichrist gets along with false religion. He then will reveal his true nature and declares himself god and demands that all should worship him (Daniel 9:27, 11:36-37, 12:11; Matthew 24:15, 21).

And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”

Daniel 9:27

The antichrist will do this in the temple, which was in existence when this was written but was destroyed in 70 AD by the Romans. It would seem that the temple will be rebuilt prior to this time.