

Paul's 2nd Letter to the Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Proof is in the Pudding

Understanding the Setting

- Most likely Paul wrote his letter from Corinth just as he also wrote *1 Thessalonians*.
Acts 18:5, 1 Thessalonians 3:1-6
- Though Paul opens up his letter as though it were from He, Silas and Timothy he quickly reverts to the singular as the author of the letter.

God is our Father

2 Thessalonians 1:1

Family of Believers

- The concept of the Trinity is a New Testament concept. In the Old Testament God did not reveal himself in this way.
- The New Covenant era, as the era of salvation, is the era where God reveals himself in the fullest fashion as a Trinity.
- The concept of God as a father reveals that believers are in the family of God. *John 1:12-13*
- In the Old Covenant era Israel was not a family of believers but a physical nation made up of mostly unbelievers. *Romans 9:30-10:4*

Role of the Father

Matthew 6:9-15

- God the Father has significance for the believer since the believer is in the family of God for all eternity.
- The local church is an expression of the family of God in as much as all the members are real believers.
- We are instructed regarding prayer to address the Father.
- We are able to address the Father since Jesus purchased our standing in the family of God.
Hebrews 5:14-16
- The Holy Spirit causes the believer to believe the gospel message and to live the Christian life. *1 Corinthians 2:14, 2 Corinthians 3:17-18*

Evidence that one is in the Family of God

2 Thessalonians 1:3-10

Growth is Guaranteed

There is no way that a true believer can keep from growing and becoming more Christ-like.

Philippians 1:6

Faith and Love and tied together

Love for God will always express itself in love for others. *1 John 4:19-21, Matthew 22:34-40*

Difficulties reveal Evidence

Trials for the believer will reveal that they belong in the kingdom of God.

Justice is Promised to the Believer

Wrongs will be righted but most must wait until the 2nd Coming for that to happen.

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2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

Prayer for Growth

2 Thessalonians 1:11a

Grasping the Paradox

- Growth is guaranteed because of the cross. *Romans 8:3-4*
- Growth is what we pray for in other believers.

Paul's Emphasis in Prayer

Ephesians 1:15-23, 3:14-19

- Understanding to know Him better
- Understanding to grasp all that is involved in the cross
- Understanding the power that is working on your behalf
- Growing in love

Our Calling in Christ

2 Thessalonians 1:11b

Different Uses of Call

- The audible call to ministry. *Romans 1:1*
- Becoming a believer. *Romans 1:7, Romans 8:30*
- The gospel invitation *Matthew 22:14*
- Your marital status *1 Corinthians 7:17*

False use of Call

- The call to be a pastor
- The call for missionary service

Understanding our Calling

- Being a believer is who we are.
- As a believer we have an occupation but our identity is in Jesus Christ.

What is something that is Biblically Good?

2 Thessalonians 1:11b

Moral Will

The Moral Will is everything that God wants us to believe about himself as well as how we are to live in his world. *2 Timothy 3:16-17, Acts 20:27*

Definition of Good

Good from a biblical point of view is something that is done that is in agreement with Scripture (Word of God) and done for the right reason. *2 Timothy 3:16-17, 1 Corinthians 10:31*

The Goal is to Glorify

Christ is Glorified

When we, as believers, bear fruit and persevere we are bringing honor to our Lord.

We are Glorified

When we, as believers, are glorified at the end by the saving work of Jesus Christ.

Paul's 2nd Letter to the Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Man of Lawlessness

Doctrinal Error that Paul is Addressing

- The false teaching that the return of Jesus has already taken place has infected to some degree the believers in the church in Thessalonica. *2 Timothy 2:16-18*
- Jehovah Witnesses teach that Jesus did return spiritually in 1914.

Day of the Lord

Identity of the Day of the Lord

- The prophets of the Old Testament described a time of God's judgment as the "day of the Lord."
- Judgment on Babylon. *Isaiah 13:6*
- Judgment on Egypt. *Jeremiah 46:10*

2nd Coming

- The ultimate "day of the Lord" is the 2nd Coming of Jesus Christ.
1 Thessalonians 5:1-2, 2 Peter 3:1, 10, Malachi 4:5
- Does the "Lord's Day" of *Revelation 1:10* refer to Sunday or to God's final judgment?

Imminent 2nd Coming?

Is the 2nd Coming Imminent?

2 Thessalonians 2:3

Paul states that Jesus cannot come back until two things happen, the final rebellion and the appearance of the Man of Lawlessness.

The Rebellion

The final rebellion will take place right before the 2nd Coming. At the end of the book of Revelation describes a final battle before the 2nd Coming. This battle is described from 3 different perspectives.

- The fall of Babylon (*Revelation 16:12-19:10*)
- The fall of the 2 Beasts (*Revelation 19:11-21*)
- The fall of Satan (*Revelation 20:7-10*)

Man of Lawlessness

- This would appear to be the same person as the Antichrist of *1 John 2:18-19, 4:1-4*
- He will claim to be God.

- He will set himself up in God's temple. Paul uses of the temple would indicate that he is not referring to the temple in Jerusalem but the people of God.
1 Corinthians 3:16 (the church), *1 Corinthians 6:19* (individual believer), *1 Corinthians 8:10* (idol temple), *2 Corinthians 6:14* (temple of God and idols), *Ephesians 2:21* (church)
- Who holds back the Man of Lawlessness? Is it the Holy Spirit or Satan?
- My suggestion is Michael the Archangel. *Daniel 12:1*
- He will produce counterfeit miracles. This does not mean that he will do tricks that look like miracles but rather he will do supernatural things that can give a false impression.
Exodus 7:8-24
- God "causes" unbelievers to believe his lies and condemns them for it. *1 Corinthians 2:14*
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Paul's 2nd Letter to the Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

Stand Firm

Believers are Loved by God

Degrees of Love

Love for Unbelievers

- God loves unbelievers. *Matthew 5:43-48*
- God loves unbelievers in a limited way. *Acts 14:17, Romans 2:4*

Love for Believers

- God's love for the believer controls everything that he does in the life of the believer.
Romans 8:28
- God's love for the believer lasts for all eternity. *Romans 8:35-39*

Necessity of a Changed Life

The Work of the Spirit

The Result of the Cross

The work of the Spirit is tied to the cross. *Hebrews 10:14, Romans 8:3-4*

The Guarantee of a Changed Life

- The changed life is the proof that our sins are forgiven. *Romans 8:1-2*
- The work of the Spirit will not allow a believer not to have a changed life. *Romans 8:5-9*

When are Traditions not Authoritative?

The Importance of Context

When Tradition is Bad

Man-Made

Tradition can be teaching that is made up by men is not binding on the believer.

Mark 7:8, Matthew 15:3, Colossians 2:8

When Tradition is Good

Divine Revelation

Tradition can be biblical truth that has been handed down from the apostles.

2 Thessalonians 2:15, 3:6

Is Jesus God or is the Father God?

The Multiple Roles of the Son

Jesus is God

- Jesus is described as God. *John 1:1, 20:28, Hebrews 1:8*
- Jesus' enemies understood that he was claiming to be God. *John 5:18, 10:33*

Jesus is the Man who is the Redeemer

- As the redeemer Jesus is a man who redeemed men. *Hebrews 2:17*
- As the man who redeems God is his father. *2 Thessalonians 2:16*

Eternal Encouragement

Believers Thrive on Encouragement

- Biblical hope is a confidence that something will be ours even though we do not yet have it. *Romans 5:1*
- The promise of eternal life is to cause believers to push the envelope in living for their Lord.
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Paul's 2nd Letter to the Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 3:1-5

Pray for Us!

Pray

For the Gospel to go Forth

2 Thessalonians 3:1

- We are told to pray for what Scripture says will certainly take place. *Romans 8:30*
- The unfolding of the Sovereign Will DOES NOT eliminate the necessity of taking the gospel to the world. *Romans 9:16-21, Romans 10:14-15*

Pray

That Unbelievers would not Hinder our Evangelism

2 Thessalonians 3:2

- In the immediate context of Paul's letter to the Thessalonians the conflict that he experienced in bringing the gospel to the Thessalonians is clear evidence of the need to pray this prayer. *Acts 17:1-10*
- Paul was writing his 2nd letter to the Thessalonians from Corinth. It was at Corinth that Paul encountered more opposition to the gospel. *Acts 18:1-17*

What We Know to be True

Our God is Faithful

2 Thessalonians 3:3

Our Lives are under His Control

Romans 8:28

Our Father in Heaven always goes on ahead of us to prepare for us. Our Father also is in complete control of our present situation.

Satan is on a Leash

No matter how powerful Satan may be he cannot do anything that is not in line with the plan of our Father in heaven. *Job 1:6-2:10*

Our Confidence in You

The Normal Christian Life

2 Thessalonians 3:4

- The work of the Holy Spirit will always result in a believer battling his sin. *Romans 8:12-14*
- The normal Christian life is described as a God-lover desiring to live for his Lord.
Philippians 2:11-12

The Incurable God-Lover

Love Him and Live for Him

2 Thessalonians 3:5

Love for God

Our 1st responsibility as a believer is to do those things that will encourage our love for our God to grow. *Matthew 22:34-40*

Perseverance

Our 2nd responsibility as a believer is to give all our effort to make our life count for our King.
Matthew 6:33

Paul's 2nd Letter to the Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

Warning Against Idleness

Definition of Idleness

2 Thessalonians 3:6-10

- As used in this portion of Scripture Paul is defining idleness as referring to a professed believer who is refusing to work and provide for himself so as not to be a burden on the other believers.
- Paul describes one of the results of the sin of idleness is that you can become someone who becomes involved in others lives in a way that is not healthy. The word that Paul uses is the word "busybody."

Apostolic Example

2 Thessalonians 3:7-9

- Paul is not saying that it is wrong to receive support from other believers so that you can do the work of ministry. *Philippians 4:15-19*
- Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, clearly states that it is right and proper for someone to be supported by those who he helps to come to the faith through the gospel.
1 Corinthians 9:1-18
- *In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel. (1 Corinthians 9:14 NIV)*
- Paul chose not to receive support from the Thessalonians in order not to be a burden to them.
- Paul and those with him were seeking to be models of how a believer is to responsibly live with fellow believers.

Responsibility

Carrying Your Own Load

- *If a man will not work, he shall not eat (2 Thessalonians 3:10 NIV)*
- Loving others means that we will not be a burden on them if we are able to take care of our own needs.

Caring for Others

2 Corinthians 8:1-7

When there is a genuine need by other believers Paul has no problem calling on believers to help support other believers.

Discipline

Shame

Discipline: Excommunication

1 Corinthians 5, Matthew 18:15-17

This discipline involves treating the professed believer as an unbeliever.

Discipline: Something Short of Excommunication

2 Thessalonians 3:14-15

This discipline involves treating the professed believer as a believer.

Discipline brings Shame

- *a painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior (New Oxford American Dictionary)*
- Discipline hopes to bring the believer to repentance and a right relationship with their Lord.
1 Corinthians 5:4-5

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2 Thessalonians 3:16-18

The Lord of Peace

2 Thessalonians 3:16

Peace with God

Romans 5:1

- The Day of Atonement presented a vivid picture of what was needed for us to be forgiven by the God of heaven and earth. *Leviticus 16:7-10*
- The suffering and death of Jesus on the cross satisfied all that a holy God has against. *Hebrews 10:1-10, John 19:30*
- Peace with God means that the believer will never for all eternity fear the punishment of the God of heaven and earth.

Peace with Others

Romans 12:18

- Peace with unbelievers is up to the unbeliever. Believers must be willing to live with conflict with unbelievers in this world.
- Peace with believers is a requirement under the law of Christ. *1 John 4:19-21*

- Church Discipline is the resolution to a professed believer who does not want to live in peace with a fellow believer. *Matthew 18:15-17*

Peace with Yourself

John 14:37

- We must confess all known sin to be free from guilt. *1 John 1:9*
- We must make use of prayer so that we will not be burdened by our concerns. *Philippians 4:6-7*
- We must believe that our Father in heaven has our best interests in mind when he choreographs our life the way he does. *Romans 8:28*
- Giving of thanks enables us to be at peace and not fight what the Lord is doing in our lives. *1 Thessalonians 5:18*

How Does Paul Write His Letters?

2 Thessalonians 3:17

- A common practice at that time was for someone to have a secretary, or an amanuensis, to write his letters.
- Paul used an amanuensis in the writing of his letters. *Romans 16:22*
- Paul wrote something at the end of the letter in his own handwriting in order to verify that this letter was from him.

His Grace is Sufficient

2 Thessalonians 3:18

- Grace refers both to the payment for sin on the cross as well as the work of the Spirit. *Hebrews 10:14*
- A believer has everything that he or she needs to live for the King. *Ephesians 1:3*

Commentary to Recommend

The Letters to the Thessalonians, by Gene L. Green, A Pillar New Testament Commentary, Eerdmans, 2002, 400 pages, clothbound