



I & II THESSALONIANS

PREPARING FOR THE SECOND COMING

A Commentary Outline

Mike Taylor
TaylorNotes.Info

NOTE

Following is additional commentary to the CBS Study Guide "Engaging God's Word, 1 & 2 Thessalonians" used by the Monday Night Bible Study Group. May, 2020.

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I. LETTERS TO CHRISTIANS IN CRISIS (INTRODUCTION)

A. Why Study 1 & 2 Thessalonians?

1. It reassures us of our glorious life after this one.
2. It helps us appreciate Christians who lived in the early church period.
3. It will get us excited about Jesus' return.
4. It helps us understand how to live the Christian life now.

B. The City of Thessalonica

1. Thessalonica was a busy harbor town of about 200,000, strategically located on the main highway (Egnatian Road) connecting Western and Eastern portions of the Roman Empire.
2. Strategically, if Christianity took root here, converts would spread the gospel all over the empire.
3. It was constructed by the Romans in the 2nd century BC.
4. It crossed the Roman provinces of Macedonia, and Thrace, running through territory that is now part of modern Albania, Greece, and Turkey
5. It was wealthy and prosperous.
6. The church was probably made up of Gentiles (1:9 "...turned to God from idols"). Jews abhorred idol worship--2nd Commandment.

C. Paul and Silas in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9)

1. Paul, Silas (Silvanus) and Timothy visited Thessalonica during his second missionary journey in A.D. 49-50.
2. Paul preached the gospel in synagogues for three weeks.
3. He showed from the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.
4. Some Jews and many Gentiles were persuaded.
5. But many Judaizers were jealous (probably because they viewed Christianity as a threat to their Judaistic ways), and formed a mob which caused an uproar in the city attacking the house of Jason (a converted local Christian) looking for Paul and Silas.

D. Why Judaizers Opposed Paul

1. Their relationship with Rome was marginal and they were afraid that reprisals against Christians might be expanded to include them.
2. Jewish leaders thought Jesus was a false prophet, and they didn't want his teachings to spread.
3. They were afraid that if many other Jews became Christians their political position would be weakened.
4. They were proud of their special status as God's chosen people and they resented

the fact that Gentiles could become the new chosen people.

E. The Situation After Being Driven Out of Thessalonica

1. Having been previously driven out of Thessalonica by certain Judaizers, Paul, Silas, and Timothy made their way to Berea. Later, they sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to strengthen and encourage them (1 Thess. 3:2).
2. The church in Thessalonica was only two or three years old when Paul wrote these letters.
3. When Timothy returned to Paul, who was now in Corinth (Acts 18:1-5), he was greatly relieved at the good report.
4. It does not appear that Paul ever returned to Thessalonica.

F. Thessalonian Church Issues

1. They worried about those who died before Jesus' return (4:13-14).
2. There was some idleness--possibly thinking Jesus' return was imminent (4:11-12; 5:14a).
3. There was some disrespect of their leaders (5:12-13).
4. There was some possible relapse into immorality (4:3-8).
5. Some were slandering Paul's motives (2:5-7).

G. Why Paul Wrote 1 & 2 Thessalonians

1. 1 Thessalonians: To strengthen the Thessalonian Christians in their faith and give them the assurance of their salvation.
2. 2 Thessalonians: To clear up the confusion about the second coming of Jesus Christ.

H. The Thessalonian Church's Amazing Response to the Gospel

1. They had a faith that worked (1:3a).
2. They had a love that labored (1:3b).
3. They had a hope that endured (1:3c).
4. They received the gospel in power and the Holy Spirit (1:5).
5. They had a genuine reflection of the Lord's character (1:6a).
6. They had joy even when they suffered for being Christians (1:6b).
7. They became a wonderful Christian example to many other believers (1:7).
8. They had a faith in Christ that became known everywhere (1:8-9a).
9. They rightfully turned away from idolatry (1:9b).
10. They are expectantly waiting for the return of Jesus Christ (1:10).

I. When These Letters Were Written

1. AD 49-51.
2. They are some of the earliest books in NT.

II. A MAN OF INTEGRITY (1 THESS. 1:1—2:16)

A. The Definition of a Believer (1:1-10)

"Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you. ² We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. ³ We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. ⁶ You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. ⁷ And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁸ The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia-- your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, ⁹ for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead-- Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath." (1 Thess. 1:1-10 NIV)

1. (1:1-2a) He is thankful for all of them.
2. (1:2b) He prays for them continually--and tells them.
3. (1:3) He compliments their strengths--their work, labor, and endurance.
4. (1:4) He reminds them that they are loved by God and chosen by Him.
5. (1:5) The gospel came to them
 - a) With power.
 - b) With the Holy Spirit
 - c) With deep conviction
6. They responded (1:6-8)
 - a) They imitated Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Silas.
 - b) They welcomed this message with joy given by the Holy Spirit even when they faced severe suffering.
 - c) They became great models (examples) to other Christians in Macedonia and Achaia.
7. Their resulting reputation (1:9-10)
 - a) Other Christians heard how they turned to God from idols (they found in God was far richer than what they found in idols).
 - b) Other Christians heard how they were serving God.
 - c) Other Christians heard how they were eagerly looking forward to Jesus' return.

B. A Model of Maturity (2:1-6)

"You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. ² We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. ³ For the appeal we

make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. ⁴ On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. ⁵ You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed-- God is our witness. ⁶ We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. (1 Thess. 2:1-6 NIV)

1. (2:3-6) We (Paul, Silas, and Timothy) spoke to you with pure motives and our speaking had God's approval:
 - a) We didn't use flattery or put on a mask to cover up greed.
 - b) We weren't looking for praise from men, or you, or anyone else.

C. A Style of Ministry (2:7-9)

"Instead, we were like young children among you. Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, ⁸ so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. ⁹ Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you." (1 Thess. 2:7-9 NIV)

1. (2:7) We were like young children among you
2. (2:8) We showed motherly-like care to you
3. (2:9) We worked hard in order not to be a burden to you

D. Characteristics of a Christian Witness (2:10-12)

"You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. ¹¹ For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, ¹² encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory." (1 Thess. 2:10-12 NIV)

1. (2:10) We were holy, righteous and blameless
2. (2:11) We dealt with you like a father
3. (2:12) We encouraged, comforted and urged you to live lives worthy of God

E. Paul Thanks God (2:13-16)

"And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe. ¹⁴ For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own people the same things those churches suffered from the Jews ¹⁵ who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to everyone ¹⁶ in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last." (1 Thess. 2:13-16 NIV)

1. (2:13) We are thankful that you received the gospel knowing it was from God.
2. (2:14) As a result, you became just like the spiritually-strong churches in Judea.
3. (2:15-16) Those Judaizers who killed the Lord, and were hostile to us, will be under God's wrath Jesus.

III. A PASTOR'S CONCERN (1 THESS. 2:17—4:12)

A. Paul Longs to See Them (2:17-3:3)

"But, brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. ¹⁸ For we wanted to come to you-- certainly I, Paul, did, again and again-- but Satan blocked our way. ¹⁹ For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? ²⁰ Indeed, you are our glory and joy. ^{NIV} **1 Thessalonians 3:1** So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. ² We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, ³ so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. For you know quite well that we are destined for them. (1 Thess. 2:17-3:3 NIV)

1. (2:17-18) His desire to see them again expressed:
 - a) Was intense
 - b) But impeded by Satan
2. (2:19-20) His desire to see them again explained:
 - a) They are Paul's hope and joy
 - b) They will be Paul's reward when Jesus returns
3. (3:1-3) We sent Timothy to encourage you:
 - a) He was sent to strengthen you
 - b) He was sent to keep you from being shaken by the troubles you face
 - c) Because trouble is coming

B. Paul's Concern for Them (3:4-10)

"In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know. ⁵ For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter had tempted you and that our labors might have been in vain. ⁶ But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you. ⁷ Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. ⁸ For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. ⁹ How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? ¹⁰ Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith." (1 Thess. 3:4-10 NIV)

1. (3:4-5) Because we were concerned about the tempter getting the best of you
2. (3:6-10) We were encouraged because of:
 - a) Your faith and love remain strong
 - b) You are standing firm in the Lord

C. Paul's Prayer for Them (3:11-13)

"Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. ¹² May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. ¹³ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones." (1 Thess. 3:11-13 NIV)

1. (3:11) That God would enable him to return to Thessalonica
2. (3:12) That God would make your love for one another even stronger
3. (3:13) That God would make your hearts strong, keep you blameless and holy

D. Living to Please God (4:1-8)

"As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. ² For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. ³ It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, ⁵ not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; ⁶ and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. ⁷ For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. ⁸ Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit" (1 Thess. 4:1-8 NIV)

1. (4:1-2) Remember what we taught you:
 - a) Live to please God
 - b) Keep living this way
2. (4:3-8) Abstain from sexual immorality:
 - a) Stay away from sexual sin
 - b) Never harm a Christian brother by violating his wife
 - c) Keep living holy lives

E. Faith's Evidence (4:9-12)

"Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. ¹⁰ And in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, ¹¹ and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, ¹² so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody." (1 Thess. 4:9-12 NIV)

1. (4:9-10) Keep loving each other and live quiet lives:
2. (4:11) Work with your hands so you don't depend on others
3. (4:12) Doing this will be a great testimony to unbelievers

IV. A LIVING HOPE (1 THESS. 4:13—5:11)

A. Concerns for Those Who “Sleep” (4:13-15)

" Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. ¹⁴ For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. ¹⁵ According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep." (1 Thess. 4:13-15 NIV)

1. (4:13) The Thessalonian Christians knew Jesus' return was an incredible coming event in God's plan of redemption.
 - a) They believed it was about to happen any minute¹ and didn't want to miss it. They were confused about what happens to Christians who die before He returns.
 - b) Some of this confusion came from being persecuted which they thought they would be delivered from by the Lord's return (cf. 3:3-4).
 - c) But didn't Jesus say he was coming soon (Rev. 22:12)? The word "soon" (Gk. *ταχύς*) means quickly, suddenly, unexpectedly, fast. The same word is used in Matthew 28:8, "The women ran quickly (*ταχύς*) from the tomb." (NLT).
2. (4:14-15) The euphemism, "fallen asleep" (NIV, ESV, NAU, NKJ) is simply describing the death of the body, not the soul.
 - a) The concept of "soul sleep" that when a person dies that his soul "sleeps" until the time of the future resurrection is held by Jehovah's Witnesses and the Seventh-day Adventists hold to this doctrine as do most annihilationists (those who say that the wicked are judged and don't exist anymore). Their view is based on a misinterpretation of Ecclesiastes 9:5, and 12:7.
 - b) Those who have died before the return of Jesus will be gathered and taken back to heaven with the Lord when the church is raptured.

B. Description of the Lord's Coming (4:16-18)

"For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words." (1 Thess. 4:16-18 NIV)

1. (4:16) In ancient times the coming of a victorious king was announced with trumpets.² This trumpet is not to be confused with the judgment trumpets of Revelation 8—11 but is illustrated by the trumpet of Exodus 19:16-19, which called the people out of the camp to meet God.

¹ Even Paul reflected this view when he wrote "we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up." (cf. 1 Thess. 4:16; Rom. 13:11; 1 Cor. 6:14; 10:11; 16:22; Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 Tim. 6:14; Titus 2:13)

² Wikipedia, "Roman Triumph," < https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_triumph >. Accessed April 27, 2020.

2. (4:17) The words "caught up" (Gk. ἀρπάζω) means to snatch away to seize, much like grabbing a small child quickly out of the way of an oncoming bus.
 - a) The word "rapture" is not found in English Bibles but is derived from the word *rapiēmur* used in the Latin Vulgate.
 - b) For the different views of when the Rapture takes place see, "What Does the Bible Say About the Future" (www.TaylorNotes.Info).
3. (4:18) Christians are to encourage each other about this glorious future event especially when the immediate circumstances may seem so bleak.

C. Concerns About the Day of the Lord (5:1-4)

"Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ² for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴ But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief." (1 Thess. 5:1-4 NIV)

1. (5:1) The word "Now" or "But" (Gk. δέ) indicates a change of topics within the same general subject of prophecy.³ The subject is changing from a discussion of the blessings of the Rapture of believers to the judgment of unbelievers.
2. (5:1) The word "Now" or "But" (Gk. δέ) indicates a change of topics within the same general subject of prophecy. The subject is changing from a discussion of the blessings of the Rapture of believers to the judgment of unbelievers.
3. (5:2-3) The future Day of the Lord, which unleashes God's wrath
 - a) "Like a thief in the night." (Throughout the NT, the thief simile suggests unexpectedness and unwelcomeness (Matt. 24:43-44; Luke 12:39-40; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15).⁴
 - b) Most likely the Tribulation Period (Rev. 6-19)

D. Living in Light (5:5-8)

"You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶ So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet." (1 Thess. 5:5-8 NIV)

1. (5:5) The phrase, "children of the light and of the day," is a Hebrew expression describing believers as children of God, their heavenly Father, who is light (1 John 1:5-7).
2. (5:6-7) Christians are not to be asleep metaphorically meaning they are not to be jolted out of a deep sleep by the Day of the Lord.
3. (5:8) Paul is referring metaphorically to the spiritual armor needed to protect one's self against temptations and attacks of the enemy (cf. Eph. 6:13-17).

³ (MacArthur, The MacArthur Bible Commentary 1759)

⁴ (ESV Crossway Bibles 2310 Note (5:2-3))

E. Assurance of the Future (5:9-11)

"For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. 10 He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."
(1 Thess. 5:9-11 NIV)

1. (5:9) The wrath referred to in this verse, and in 1:10, is referring to God's eternal wrath, not his temporal wrath during the tribulation period (cf. Rom. 5:9).
2. (5:10) The words, "awake or asleep" refers back to 4:13-15 and refers to being physically alive or dead with the promise that, in either case, we will one day live together forever with our Savior who died as a substitution for our sins.
3. (5:11) Paul reinforces the need for interdependency between fellow Christians especially in light of these future events.

V. ENCOURAGEMENT AND WARNING (1 THESS. 5:12—2 THESS. 1:12)

A. Instructions (1 Thess. 5:12-22)

"Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. ¹³ Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. ¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. ¹⁵ Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else. ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not treat prophecies with contempt ²¹ but test them all; hold on to what is good, ²² reject every kind of evil." (1 Thess. 5:12-22 NIV)

1. Instructions for church practices (5:12-15):
 - a) Acknowledge your leaders.
 - b) Live in peace with each other.
 - c) Warn those who are idle and disruptive.
 - d) Encourage those who want to give up.
 - e) Practice patience...it's very important, and don't be vindictive.
2. Remember, a healthy church is (5:16-18):
 - a) A happy church.
 - b) A praying church.
 - c) A thankful church.
3. More instructions for church practices (5:19-22):
 - a) Don't quench (suppress or restrain) the Spirit.
 - b) Don't treat prophecies⁵ with contempt.
 - c) Reject every kind of evil (especially false teachings).

B. Prayers and Benediction (1 Thess. 5:23-28)

"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it. ²⁵ Brothers and sisters, pray for us. ²⁶ Greet all God's people with a holy kiss. ²⁷ I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters. ²⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." (1 Thess. 5:23-1:1 NIV)

1. It is God who sanctifies you so that you will be kept blameless⁶ when he returns

⁵ Prophecies (Gk. *propheteia*), a prophecy can be a prediction about the future, but in the majority of its uses it refers to authoritative speech that has its origin with God. Prophecy should be tested. That is, while prophecy carries some authority, it is ultimately subject to the authority of the apostles and their writings. The gift of prophecy should never contradict God's Word. (Mounce 542). Some believers were probably making exaggerated speculations about the second coming.

⁶ Blameless (Gk. *amemptous*) means free from all charges. Only the Lord Jesus Christ can make us blameless and holy before God. (Leadership Ministries Worldwide 208).

(5:23-24).

2. Final instructions (5:25-28):

- a) Pray for us.
- b) Greet each other with a holy kiss (a cultural hug and kiss greeting of the first century, like family members).⁷
- c) Read this letter to other Christians, Jesus' grace to you.

C. God's Righteous Judgment (2 Thess. 1:1-10)

Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and "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. ³ We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. 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.

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. 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 glory of his might 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." (2 Thess. 1:1-10 NIV)

1. Paul describes three more marks of a healthy church (1:1-5)

- a) A healthy church has strong faith.
- b) A healthy church has an increasing love for each other.
- c) A healthy church has endurance during difficult times.

2. God not only works to perfect believers; he will also punish the trouble makers (1:6-10)

- a) This will happen when Jesus returns (cf. Rev. 19:11-21).
- b) Their punishment will be an everlasting destruction, completely shut out from the Lord's presence.

D. Paul's Prayer (2 Thess. 1:11-12)

"With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by 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." (2 Thess. 1:11-12 NIV)

1. Paul's prayer for these Christians shows the need for sustained prayer (1:11).

2. It is Paul's desire that our Lord Jesus will be glorified in them, by his grace (1:12).

⁷ (MacArthur, The MacArthur Bible Commentary 1762)

VI. STAND FIRM IN THE TRUTH (2 THESS. 2 – 3)

A. The Man of Lawlessness (2 Thess. 2:1-8)

"Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, ² not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us-- whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter-- asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. 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? 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. 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." (2 Thess. 2:1-8 NIV)

1. The Thessalonians were taught erroneously (false teachers) that Jesus Christ had already come (2:1-2).
2. Paul is explaining that Jesus will not return until two things have taken place:
 - a) The rebellion (2:3).
 - b) The "man of lawlessness is revealed (2:3)
3. The rebellion is:
 - a) Possibly the rise of Christian or Jewish apostasy (cf. 2:9-12).
 - b) Most likely this is a rebellion of humanity as a whole against God.⁸
4. The "man of lawlessness" (2:3).
 - a) He will exalt himself over God (2 Thess. 2:4a).
 - b) He will set himself up to be worshipped in God's temple (2 Thess. 2:4b).
 - c) He will proclaim himself to be God (2 Thess. 2:4c).
 - d) He is called "the Antichrist" (1 John 4:2-3).
 - e) He is called "the beast" (Rev. 13:1).
 - f) At the end of the Tribulation Jesus Christ and His army will confront the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and all their combined armies in the Valley of Megiddo⁹ for the greatest battle ever (Revelation 16:12-16; 19:11-21).
5. Other scriptures concerning the Antichrist:
 - a) He opposes God (Dan. 8:25; 11:36-39; Rev. 13:6).
 - b) He oppresses people of God (Dan. 9:27; 11:41; Rev. 13:7).
 - c) He desecrates the Temple of God (Dan. 9:27; 2 Thess. 2:4).
 - d) He performs the Abomination of Desolation (Dan. 9:27, Matt. 24:15/Mark 13:14; Rev. 13:14-15).

⁸ (ESV Crossway Bibles 2317 (note 2:3))

⁹ Armageddon in Hebrew is "*Har-Magedon*" meaning "Mount Megiddo." Since there is no specific mountain by that name it is most likely a reference to country surrounding the Plain of Megiddo, some 60 miles north of Jerusalem (MacArthur, 255-256).

- e) He rises out of the old Roman Empire (Dan. 7:23; 9:27).
6. Typology figures of the Antichrist:
- Pharaoh.
 - Nebuchadnezzar.
 - Antiochus IV Epiphanes.
 - Titus (Roman General).¹⁰
7. This man of lawlessness is being held back (restrained) by the one who will eventually be taken out of the way (2 Thess. 2:6-7).
8. Paul does not say who or what is this restrainer¹¹ of the Antichrist. Possible answers include:
- Human government.
 - The preaching of the gospel.
 - The binding of Satan.
 - The providence of God.
 - The Jewish state.
 - The church.
 - The Holy Spirit. Some Bible scholars feel that only the Holy Spirit could do this kind of restraining.¹²
 - Michael the Archangel.

B. Loving the Truth (2 Thess. 2:9-17)

"The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, ¹⁰ and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 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. ¹³ But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. ¹⁴ He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵ So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. ¹⁶ May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, ¹⁷ encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word." (2 Thess. 2:9-17 NIV)

- The lawless one will do mighty works pointing to himself as being supernaturally empowered (2:9; see also Rev. 13:1-18).
- The influence of the lawless one will be limited to the unsaved (2:10).
- Powerful delusions sin and lies the unsaved will prefer (2:10-12).
- In contrast to these, God's people are chosen by him through the sanctifying work

¹⁰ (House and Price 42).

¹¹ (MacArthur, The MacArthur Bible Commentary 1768)

¹² (Pentecost 205)

of the Holy Spirit to be set apart for his glory (2:13-17).

C. Praying for Each Other (2 Thess. 3:1-5)

"As for other matters, brothers and sisters, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. ² And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil people, for not everyone has faith. ³ But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one. ⁴ We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command. ⁵ May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance." (2 Thess. 3:1-5 NIV)

1. Paul prays that the gospel will spread rapidly and be honored (3:1).
2. "Wicked and evil people" were Paul's enemies at Corinth where he ministered and wrote (3:2; cf. Acts 18:9-17).
3. God will protect Christians from the evil one, Satan (3:3-5).

D. Living in Community (2 Thess. 3:6-15)

"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. ⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, ⁸ nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. ⁹ We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate. ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat." ¹¹ We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies. ¹² Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat. ¹³ And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good. ¹⁴ Take special note of anyone who does not obey our instruction in this letter. Do not associate with them, in order that they may feel ashamed. ¹⁵ Yet do not regard them as an enemy, but warn them as you would a fellow believer." (2 Thess. 3:6-15 NIV)

1. Paul's directions were not mere suggestions; they carried the weight and authority of a judge's court order (3:6).
2. They were to follow Paul's example to not be a burden on anyone (3:7-9).
3. Those who are unwilling to work shall not eat but shall earn the food they eat (3:10-13).
4. Don't associate with the idle or associate with them but don't treat them as enemies (3:14-15).

E. A Blessing of Peace (2 Thess. 3:16-18)

"Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you. ¹⁷ I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write. ¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." (2 Thess. 3:16-18 NIV)

1. God's peace was what was needed in light of the intense spiritual battle that

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raged around the Thessalonian Christians (3:16).

2. Paul often used an amanuensis to write down what he was saying but at the end of this letter he adds an identifying signature so his readers could be sure he was truly the author (3:17-18).

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