



THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE  
**THESSALONIANS**

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## **INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY**

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**Biography:**

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Russell and his wife Dee are blessed with three children - Ross, John and Kati. Ross and John are both graduates of the Southwest School of Bible Studies and currently serve as ministers in the Lord's church. Kati is married to Tony Lopez who is also currently serving as a minister in the Lord's church.

These Course Notes were developed from the original WVBS Course Notes.



## BACKGROUND

### I. THESSALONICA - THE CITY

- A. Thessalonica was a well-known city in the Grecian world.
- B. This coastal city is located at the head of the Thermaic Gulf of the Aegean Sea. It was once called "Therma" because of the hot salt springs in the area.
- C. Thessalonica was founded in 316 B.C. and named for a sister of Alexander the Great. In the year 146 B.C. it became the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia.
- D. As a military and economic center, it was very important in the Roman Empire. The city was located on the Via Egnatia. This legendary Roman road spanned from the Adriatic Sea to the city of Byzantium (later named Constantinople, now Istanbul). It was constructed in the 2nd century B.C. covering a total distance of approximately 1,120 kilometers (696 miles). Like other major Roman roads, it was about six meters (19.6 feet) wide, and was paved with large stones or covered with a hard layer of sand. Having this great resource, the city served as a center for trade and commerce.

### II. PAUL'S VISIT

- A. When Paul visited the city, it was the largest in the region of Macedonia. Under Roman power Greece was divided into two main parts. Macedonia was the region to the north and Achaia was the region to the south.
- B. The city provided a great opportunity for evangelism. The city's commercial and seafaring population could quickly spread what they had been taught by Paul to other cities. This provided a way for great good to be done quickly for the cause of Christ.

### III. THE CONGREGATION ESTABLISHED - ACTS 17

Acts 17:1-3, "Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.'"

- A. In Acts 17:2 we find that Paul entered the city of Thessalonica and went into the synagogue.
- B. For three Sabbaths Paul "**reasoned** with them from the Scriptures, **explaining** and **demonstrating** that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ'" (Acts 17:2-3).
  - 1. "Reasoned" comes from the Greek word (DIALEGOMAI) meaning, "to think different things with oneself, to ponder, then to dispute with others" (Acts 17:17; 18:4, 19; 19:8-9; 24:25).
  - 2. "Explaining" is a translation of the Greek word (DIANOIGŌ) that means, "to open up completely" (Luke 24:32).
  - 3. "Demonstrating" comes from the Greek word (PARATITHĒMI) that literally means, "to place beside." The word is used to describe the process of setting information before someone in teaching or instructing.
  - 4. In a very practical sense, Paul was debating, using the Old Testament Scriptures to prove his point that Jesus is the Christ.

#### IV. THE RESULTS

Acts 17:4, "And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas."

- A. There were many conversions
  - 1. "Some of them" (Jews)
  - 2. "A great multitude of the devout Greeks"
  - 3. "A few of the leading women"
- B. There was a great uproar in the city (Acts 17:5-9).

Acts 17:5-9, "But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, 'These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus.' And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. So, when they had

taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go."

1. The Jews who were not persuaded caused problems.
2. They made a serious charge against the Christians. They claimed the Christians were teaching that, "there is another king—Jesus" (Acts 17:7).
3. An intense hatred of Christianity by the Jews soon developed.

#### V. GREAT AFFLICTION

- A. As the congregation was being established it faced opposition and persecution from two main groups.
- B. Mount Olympus was located approximately 100 kilometers (62 miles) southwest of Thessalonica. Mount Olympus was considered by the pagans to be the home of their gods. Therefore, the congregation was facing opposition from the Jews and persecution from the pagans.

1 Thessalonians 1:6, "And you became followers of us and of the Lord, **having received the word in much affliction**, with joy of the Holy Spirit."

1 Thessalonians 2:2, "But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God **in much conflict**."

## INTRODUCTION

### WRITER

We should make it clear that God is the author of this book, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21). The writer whom God used to reveal this epistle was the apostle Paul (2 Thessalonians 1:1; 3:17).

### LANGUAGE

This letter was originally written in Koiné Greek. The word "Koiné" means "common." This is a fitting name because it was the common language used by the people in that day. God's word is not reserved for the upper class.

### DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

This letter (epistle) appears to have been written a few months after First Thessalonians. This would place the writing of this letter during Paul's extended stay at Corinth on his second missionary journey (cf. Acts 18:1-11), sometime around A.D. 53.

### KEY VERSES

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9  
 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12  
 2 Thessalonians 2:14  
 2 Thessalonians 3:5-6  
 2 Thessalonians 3:10  
 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15

### KEY WORD

The key word "brethren," found 7 times in this epistle, reveals Paul's love and concern for the Christians at Thessalonica (2 Thessalonians 1:3; 2:1; 2:13; 2:15; 3:1; 3:6; 3:13).

### KEY PASSAGE

2 Thessalonians 3:5-6, "Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ. But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us."

### THE FOUR MAIN THEMES OF THIS EPISTLE

- A. Paul's thankfulness for their spiritual growth and faithfulness to Christ.
- B. Strengthening their resolve in the face of persecution.
- C. Correcting false views concerning the second coming of Jesus.
- D. Instructions concerning the necessity of diligent labor in their lives.

Paul had addressed some of these issues in his previous epistle, but additional instructions were needed.

**SECOND THESSALONIANS OUTLINE**

Salutation (Greeting) .....	1:1-2
I. Paul's Prayer.....	1:3-12
A. Thanksgiving.....	1:3-5
B. Day of the Lord - Divine Judgment.....	1:6-10
C. Content of Paul's Prayer .....	1:11-12
II. The Second Coming .....	2:1-17
A. Be Not Troubled .....	2:1-2
B. The Great Rebellion, Apostasy .....	2:3-12
C. Thanksgiving and Encouragement.....	2:13-17
III. Final Exhortations .....	3:1-15
A. Faithfulness.....	3:1-5
B. Discipline of the Disorderly.....	3:6-13
C. Discipline of the Disobedient.....	3:14-15
Conclusion .....	3:16-18

## SECOND THESSALONIANS EXPOSITION

### CHAPTER ONE

#### Salutation (Greeting)..... 1:1-2

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

[Paul, Silas and Timothy were three great servants of the Lord, who worked together to spread the good news of salvation.]

Paul - Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:1; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1). However, in the case of the Thessalonians, Paul does not emphasize this point. This may indicate the close relationship and respect these brethren had for Paul. Paul's main work sent him to the Gentiles, though not exclusively. He was chosen by the Lord to declare the name of Jesus to the "Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15; cf. Acts 22:21; 1 Corinthians 15:8-10; 2 Corinthians 12:11-12).

Silvanus (Silas) - We read of Silas joining Paul in Acts 15:40, as he begins his second evangelistic journey.

- A. Silas was imprisoned with Paul in Philippi (Acts 16:19-40).
- B. Silas was with Paul when he preached in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-4).
- C. He was in Berea with Paul and remained there after Paul departed for Athens (Acts 17:10-14).
- D. He again joined Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:5; 1 Corinthians 1:19).
- E. Peter referred to Silas as, "our faithful brother" (1 Peter 5:12).

Timothy (Timotheus) - After Paul and Silas had gone through Syria and Cilicia they came to Derbe and Lystra. Here they met Timothy. Timothy's mother (Eunice) was a Christian of Jewish background and his father was a Greek (Acts 16:2).

- A. Timothy was in Thessalonica and Berea with Paul, but remained in Berea with Silas as Paul went to Athens (Acts 17:14).
- B. Timothy's character.

1. Timothy was a "fellow worker" of Paul (Romans 16:21).
2. He was probably a convert of Paul (1 Corinthians 4:17).
3. Timothy was a man of "genuine faith" (2 Timothy 1:5). The Scriptures teach that his mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois) were instrumental in developing this characteristic in him.

2 Timothy 1:5, "When I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also."

2 Timothy 3:14-15, "But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

To the church of the Thessalonians - In the beginning, this congregation was made up of some Jews, a great number of devout Greeks and many chief women (Acts 17:4). The congregation was established in the midst of great conflict (Acts 17:1-9).

in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ - The word "in" is very significant. Notice the contrast found in Ephesians.

Ephesians 2:12, "That at that time you were **without** Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."

Many passages deal with the blessings that are only found "in" Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3). Truly there is "consolation in Christ" (Philippians 2:1).

1:2 *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Grace to you and peace - This is a combination of the usual Greek and Hebrew greetings.

- A. "Grace" is translated from the Greek word (CHARIS) meaning, "that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness" (Romans 6:23; 2 Corinthians 8:9). Grace is the unmerited favor we receive from God (Romans 5:8).

Grace literally means "unmerited favor." Grace is unearned but not unconditional. It means blessings from God that the sinner does not deserve or merit. Salvation is thus conceived as something given to man, not as a matter of debt, but as an undeserved gift. In short, man cannot achieve heaven by works of merit, but works of obedience are required (Ephesians 2:8-9; James 2:20-26; Titus 2:11-14). [For additional information please see the appendices - FAITH AND WORKS]

- B. "Peace" comes from the Greek word (EIRENE) meaning, "harmony, security, safety, prosperity."

This is the word that was used to translate the Hebrew word "SHALOM" when the Old Testament was translated into Greek. There is a greater significance to the meaning here of "peace" than just "the absence of war." SHALOM considered the "wholeness" or "soundness" of man. It is a term of prosperity, especially in the spiritual realm (Colossians 1:2). "Peace" with God, only comes when we are cleansed from our sins in the blood of Christ (Isaiah 59:1-2; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Romans 6:3-4).

from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ - The source of grace and peace is Deity.

- A. God the Father is described as, the "God of all grace" (1 Peter 5:10) and the "God of peace" (Hebrews 13:20).
- B. The Scriptures also teach that grace and truth come from Christ (John 1:17). He is our peace (Ephesians 2:13-14).

Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."

**I. Paul's Prayer ..... 1:3-12**

1:3 *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,*

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren - "Bound" comes from the Greek word (OPHEILEŌ), that stresses obligation. It means to be bound by duty or necessity,

to do something. This Greek word is also found in Romans 13:8 that says, "Owe (*OPHEILEŌ*) no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law." Paul saw it as his duty to thank God for these brethren.

- A. Their faithfulness would certainly bring joy to Paul.

2 John 1:4, "I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father."

3 John 1:4, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

1 Thessalonians 2:19, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?"

- B. These brethren were going that right direction, when Paul wrote the first epistle, and obviously were continuing to go in that right direction.

- C. This stands in contrast to what Paul found with the Galatians.

Galatians 1:6-9, "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed."

as it is fitting - The word "fitting" means "proper." It is fitting and proper to thank God for the blessings He provides. One of which is faithful brethren.

because your faith grows exceedingly - The phrase "grows exceedingly" comes from the Greek word (*HUPERAUXANEI*) meaning, "to increase beyond measure, to grow wonderfully, to increase abundantly, super growth."

- A. How does our faith grow?

Romans 10:17, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

## B. How had they used their faith?

1 Thessalonians 1:3, "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father."

## C. Notice how far these brethren had come in a relatively short time.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, "For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come."

## D. Christians need to grow.

1. The church should be just as concerned with helping new converts to grow in their faith as they were in converting them to Christ in the first place.
2. The church should have the same desire today that Paul had concerning the growth of these brethren at Thessalonica.

and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other - What a joy it must have been to be a member of such a loving congregation.

1 Thessalonians 3:12, "And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you."

The word "abounds" comes from the Greek word (PLEONAXEI) meaning, "to do, make or be more, that is, increase; by extension to super abound."

## A. In verse 3, Paul uses very expressive Greek words concerning their faith and love.

1. Their faith "grows exceedingly" - (HUPERAUAXANEI).
2. Their love "abounds" - (PLEONAXEI)

## B. Notice what the scholar J.B. Lightfoot said concerning this word usage:

1. "The words HUPERAUAXANEI and PLEONAXEI are carefully chosen; the former implying an internal, organic growth as of a

tree; the other a diffusive, or expansive character, as of a flood irrigating the land" (*Notes on the Epistles of Paul*, p. 98).

1:4 *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,*

so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God - Paul was pleased to tell other congregations of the Lord's church about the growth of the Christians at Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 1:8-9). The phrase "church of God" is simply another way of describing, the church of Christ, the body of Christ, the family of God; that for which Jesus shed His blood.

- A. Please note the following descriptions for the church:
1. The church of God (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 10:32; 11:16, 22; 15:9; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 1 Timothy 3:5)
  2. The church of Christ (Romans 16:16)
  3. The house of God (1 Timothy 3:15; 1 Peter 4:17)
  4. The church of the living God (1 Timothy 3:15)
  5. The church of the firstborn (Hebrews 12:23)
- B. The devil has deceived many people into believe that there is nothing in a name. If this is true, why did God change Abram's name to Abraham (Genesis 17:5), Sarai's name to Sarah (Genesis 17:15) and Jacob's name to Israel (Genesis 35:10)? The name someone or something wears is important.
- C. When Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome he said, "The churches of Christ greet you" (Romans 16:16). The congregations who were sending their greetings to their fellow Christians in Rome were called "churches of Christ." Therefore, one congregation would be called a church of Christ. **This should not be thought of as an official name, but a description. It is the church belonging to Christ.**
- D. The church you read about in the New Testament did not wear any man-made name or names of men. The names in the Bible for the Lord's church are not denominational names. They do not refer to different churches, only to God's one true church. In each name we can see God

and His Son being glorified. **However, it should be understood that having the right name does not guarantee that a congregation is a true New Testament church.**

for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure - "Persecutions" describes assaults made against them because of their Christian convictions. "Tribulations" is a general term which stands for any trials or troubles they might meet. The Thessalonians had endured and continued to endure these afflictions and were growing. They did not lose their faith as did those who are described as the "stony ground" in the parable of the sower (parable of the soils):

Mark 4:14-20, "The sower sows the word. And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. These likewise are the ones sown on **stony ground** who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, **when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble**. Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

1:5 *which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer;*

which is a manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God - The "manifest evidence" refers back to verse 4. But what in verse 4 does it refer to? Is it the "persecutions and tribulations" or is it their "patience and faith?" It seems likely that he speaks of the patience and faith of the Thessalonians. Notice that "manifest evidence" is singular, just as "patience and faith" are singular whereas "persecutions and tribulations" are plural. It is part of God's righteous judgment to use tribulations to bring His own people to perfection.

Hebrews 12:5-10, "And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: 'My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.' If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be

in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness."

that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God - There are many verses in the Bible that call on Christians to be worthy:

Colossians 1:10, "That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."

1 Thessalonians 2:12, "That you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory."

for which you also suffer - Their suffering was for the kingdom (church, Matthew 16:18-19).

2 Timothy 3:12, "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."

Philippians 1:29, "For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake."

1:6 *since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,*

since it is a righteous thing with God - It is right for God to punish those who trouble (agitate, disturb and disrupt) faithful brethren.

- A. The order and structure of the universe is of such a nature that affliction comes upon those that go against it. For instance, the law of gravity will punish those who choose to ignore it. In a similar way the spiritual laws are guided by order and structure.
- B. There are many today who have such a warped view of God and justice that they think it is unjust for God to punish the wicked and disobedient. Their sense of right and wrong is completely twisted. Godly justice cannot treat the wicked as though they were righteous.

to repay with tribulation those who trouble you - Notice these troublemakers are repaid for the evil work they have done. They deserve such tribulation. They have earned it by their actions.

Paul is assuring the Thessalonians that even though they have been troubled by these wicked men the day is coming when the scales of justice will be brought

into balance. **God does not balance all the issues of this life during this life.** Much of the balancing will take place on that day of final judgment. Such issues will be settled once and for all, according to the righteousness of God, on the day of judgment.

1:7 *and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,*

and to give you who are troubled rest with us - Here we see a contrast being made. The troublers receive tribulation, and those who are troubled receive rest. What is this "rest" that comes to those faithful servants who are troubled?

Revelation 14:13, "Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, 'Write: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." ' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.'"

when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven - The Lord's return was often addressed in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-5:2, 5:23). This topic is also addressed in other passages of Scripture (Acts 1:11; Philippians 3:20; Revelation 22:20). The word "revealed" comes from the Greek word (APOKALUPSIS) meaning, "disclosure, appearing, coming, manifestation, revelation." It is the revelation of a person who, at the present, is concealed. The word "revealed" (or "revelation") is used of the second coming in other verses as well (1 Corinthians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:7, 13, 4:13). Also notice that both the "tribulation" and "rest" will be given at this time.

John 5:28-29, "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."

with His mighty angels - Several passages teach that when Christ returns He will not be alone (Matthew 16:27; 24:31; 25:31; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; 1 Thessalonians 4:16). The word "mighty" comes from the Greek word (DUNAMIS) meaning, "powerful and strong." Angels, as messengers of God, are powerful and strong.

Psalms 103:20, "Bless the LORD, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word."

1:8 *in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

in flaming fire - The grammatical structure found here could tie this phrase to either the Lord's coming or to the vengeance that will be extended on the wicked by the Lord.

- A. In some passages the presence of the Lord is associated with fire and smoke (Exodus 3:2; 19:18; Numbers 9:15; Isaiah 10:16-17; Nahum 1:5-6; Hebrews 12:29).

Isaiah 66:15, "For behold, the LORD will come with fire And with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire."

- B. In other passages fire is associated with the everlasting fire of punishment for the wicked (Isaiah 33:14; 66:24; Matthew 3:3:12; 13:42; 18:8; Mark 9:44; Revelation 14:10; 20:10, 15; 21:8).

Matthew 25:41, "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

- C. Therefore, in this verse the "fire" could refer to Christ being clothed in fire when He returns or His vengeance on the wicked.

taking vengeance - Remember verse 6 tells us that it is a "righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you." Vengeance belongs to God, not man (Deuteronomy 32:35).

Romans 12:19-21, "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine. I will repay,' says the Lord. Therefore 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

on those who do not know God - Those "who do not know God" are without excuse (Romans 1:18-23). Knowing God involves knowing His law!

Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children."

and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ - Jesus, "became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:8-9). Those who do His commandments are blessed (Revelation 22:14).

- A. There are many verses in the Bible that stress the importance of obedience:

Matthew 7:21-23, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Luke 6:46, "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"

John 14:15, "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

John 15:14, "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you."

- B. God has always stressed obedience.

Ecclesiastes 12:13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all."

## The Gospel

The "gospel" literally means, "good tidings" or "good news." It is the good news that salvation is now possible because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). The gospel is the power of God to salvation (Romans 1:16). It is God's plan for man's salvation from his sins.

- A. In the Scriptures we find that God's plan for salvation has several requirements.
1. The first requirement is to **hear** the saving message of salvation (Romans 10:17). In other words, we must learn the truth before we can obey it.
  2. The second requirement is to have **faith** (belief) that Jesus is indeed the Christ the Son of God (John 8:24; Mark 16:15-16).

However, **this is not the only requirement**. Faith alone will not save (James 2:14, 17, 24).

3. The third requirement of God's plan is **repentance**. The sinner is required to repent, which is composed of sorrow for sin and a change of will that results in a changed life (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 2 Corinthians 7:10).
  4. The fourth requirement is **confession**. The sinner is required to confess their faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (Acts 8:37; Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:10).
  5. The fifth requirement is **baptism** (Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-19; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Peter 3:21). We must be baptized for the remission (forgiveness) of our sins (Acts 2:38).
  6. Then the Christian must **remain faithful** (Matthew 10:22; Romans 8:12-13; Galatians 5:1-6; Revelation 2:10).
- B. A person's sins are washed away not by the water of baptism but by the blood of Christ when one submits to God's plan of salvation to hear, believe, repent, confess and to be baptized (Acts 8:38-39). Only then is the sinner saved from past sins and is added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:38, 41).
- C. We do not earn our salvation and there are no works of merit which will save us (Ephesians 2:9), but there are works of obedience which God requires (Ephesians 2:10; James 2:19-20).
- D. The Bible also teaches that once one hears, believes, repents, confesses and is baptized to become a child of God, he must then remain faithful to the Lord in order to have an eternal home with God in heaven. Those who fall away from the Lord and don't come back repenting of their sin and praying for forgiveness will lose their salvation (2 Peter 2:20-22; James 5:19-20; Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

1:9 *These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,*

These shall be punished - In the original Greek language the sense of the punishment being suitable or fitting is emphasized, as in paying a price or penalty. This is not God

being unreasonable or vindictive. It is righteous judgment that is both just and fair. Those who choose to disobey God will pay the penalty.

with everlasting destruction - Some have concluded from this verse that "everlasting destruction" is annihilation, a going out of existence, being burned into nothingness. However, this view is contrary to both the definition of the Greek word (OLETHROS) translated as "destruction" and to the Bible's teaching concerning the eternal punishment of the wicked.

- A. The Greek word (OLETHROS) is found in the following verses (1 Thessalonians 5:3, 1 Timothy 6:9; 1 Corinthians 5:5). In none of these passages can the word mean annihilation.
- B. The Scriptures also make it clear that the word "destruction" cannot mean annihilation.

Revelation 14:9-11, "Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment **ascends forever and ever**; and they have no rest **day or night**, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.'" (see also; Matthew 25:41, 46; Mark 9:43-48)

from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power - There are two things for us to notice from this phrase.

- A. Being in the "presence of the Lord" is significant. Jesus will say to the wicked, "depart from Me" (Matthew 25:41). In contrast, the righteous, "shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:17).
- B. The "glory" of the Lord's power is brightness and light. "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). God alone has "immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light" (1 Timothy 6:16). The wicked will be cast into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30).

1:10 *when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.*

when He comes, in that Day - The phrase "in that Day" refers to the day of His coming or return. The word "when" is indefinite. It indicates that the time of the Lord's return is not known. However, when He returns the distinguishing characteristic will be His glory.

to be glorified in His saints - Faithful brethren are often called "saints" in the Scriptures. The word "saints" is an English translation of the Greek word (HAGIOS) that means "holy, sacred, pure, blameless, consecrated." **All Christians are saints** (Acts 9:13; Romans 1:7; 16:16; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:2; Philemon 1:5).

- A. While the wicked will receive His vengeance, the saints (Christians) will reflect His glory. Those found faithful that Day will be like a mirror reflecting the greatness of their Lord.

1 John 3:2, "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

Philippians 3:20, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

Romans 8:18, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

and to be admired - The English word "admired" comes from the Greek word (THAUMAZŌ) that means, "to marvel at, to wonder." This word is used most frequently in the gospel accounts to express the amazement felt by the people when they saw the miracles Jesus performed.

among all those who believe - We must understand the word "believe" here in the context of the entire Bible. We must also follow the contrast that Paul is making. Those that know not God and those that obey not the gospel is contrasted with those that believe.

- A. "Those who believe" is not talking about those who believe **only** without obedience. That would make them equal to the demons (James 2:19).
- B. "Those who believe" are those who are obedient.
- C. Therefore, what kind of faith is under consideration in the expression "all those who believe"? Clearly, it is an active, obedient belief (faith).

1. Consider Abel's faith: "By faith Abel **offered** to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous" (Hebrews 11:4).
  2. Consider Noah's faith: "By faith Noah ... **prepared** an ark ... and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Hebrews 11:7).
  3. Consider Abraham's faith: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he **offered** his son on the altar ... and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness'" (James 2:21–23). Abraham demonstrated a faith that not only could believe anything God said, but would do anything God told him to do. This is the faith that results in righteousness—the righteousness which is of God.
- D. Faith alone has never been enough for righteousness. The demons have faith but they are not righteous (James 2:19). Righteousness requires faith and obedience working together.
- E. There is really no reason for the confusion in the religious world today concerning the issue of faith and works. One extreme says faith only and the other extreme says works only. The Bible is clear that neither extreme is correct. God's word teaches that we are counted as righteous when faith and works of obedience combine (Galatians 5:6; James 2:18, 22). Today, we need an active, obedient, working faith to be pleasing to God and to receive the eternal reward.

because our testimony among you was believed - Paul commented concerning their belief in his preaching to them and in his first letter.

1 Thessalonians 2:13-14, "For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans."

1:11 *Therefore, we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power,*

Therefore, we also pray always for you - Paul was a man of prayer.

that our God would count you worthy of this calling - This prayer has a very definite tie to the verses which have gone before.

A. Paul's concern was that they be found worthy.

Ephesians 4:1-3, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Philippians 1:27, "Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

B. What was this "calling"?

2 Thessalonians 2:14, "To which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power - Notice the word "work" in this verse. Paul's prayer had to do with the labor offered by these brethren.

1 Thessalonians 1:3, "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father."

### **God's Plan for Man's Salvation**

Those who preach that God has done it all and there is nothing man can do are leaving men unprepared for the day of Christ's return. God's plan for man's salvation has two parts: God's part and man's part. Man must do his part!

A. God's Part:

1. Having great love for man (John 3:16)
2. Giving His Son, Jesus Christ, as the Savior (Luke 19:10)

3. Providing the gospel as "the power" unto salvation (Romans 1:16)
4. Offering atonement (forgiveness of sins) by the blood of Christ (Romans 5:9)

B. Man's Part:

1. Hearing the Gospel (Romans 10:17)
2. Believing the Gospel - the good news that Jesus is the promised Christ (John 8:24)
3. Repenting of past sins (Luke 13:3, Acts 17:30)
4. Confessing faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 10:10, Matthew 10:32)
5. Being Baptized (Galatians 3:27, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38)
6. Remaining faithful unto death (Galatians 5:1-6)

1:12 *that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you - Paul's prayer called upon the Thessalonians to glorify the Lord. Jesus said, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit" (John 15:8). They must not fall into the same trap as did the Gentiles mentioned in Romans chapter 1.

Romans 1:20-21, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened."

and you in Him - This refers to the closest of unions.

John 17:20-21, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me."

according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ - Paul began this chapter with a reference to grace. He now closes on the same note. Notice how the work of faith does not nullify the grace of God. 2 Corinthians 6:1 says, "We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain."

- A. "Grace" literally means, "unmerited favor." It means blessings that come from God that man does not deserve or merit. Salvation is thus something provided to man, not as a matter of debt, but as an undeserved gift. In short, man cannot achieve heaven by works of merit, but there are works of obedience required to gain salvation.

Titus 2:11-12, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age."

- B. This passage makes it clear that God's grace had already appeared (past tense). God's grace had already come.
1. Many people have a misunderstanding concerning this basic point.
  2. As this passage teaches, the grace of God had already come in the person of Jesus Christ. In other words, salvation and the freedom from sin which it provides are possible only in Christ.
  3. Man has the opportunity to accept God's grace by obeying His plan of salvation, or to reject God's grace by refusing to obey His plan of salvation. Almost 2,000 years ago God's grace was made available to all men.

## CHAPTER TWO

### II. **The Second Coming.....2:1-17**

2:1 *Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,*

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ - Beginning in chapter 2 Paul's theme is going to be the coming of the Lord. He had taught them in 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 that the Lord would come as a "thief in the night" and that "sudden

destruction" would come upon the wicked. It appears that some misunderstood this to mean that the day of the Lord's return would come in the near future. Paul wrote this letter to correct this false doctrine. He explained that several things would happen first before the Lord's return.

and our gathering together to Him, we ask you - What is our "gathering together to Him"?

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord."

When Jesus returns He will not step foot on this earth. There is no passage found in the Bible that teaches Jesus will come again to walk on this earth. Those passages that do refer to His return to the world, describe the earth as being "burned up" at His coming.

2 Peter 3:10, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up."

2:2 *not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.*

(we ask you) not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled - A casual reading of 1 and 2 Thessalonians tells us that these brethren were concerned about Christ's return. We also see that they misunderstood some of the details concerning this event. However, Paul did not want them to be ignorant concerning these things (1 Thessalonians 4:13). As is always the case, a clear understanding and application of the Scriptures can ease our minds and remove unjustified fear.

either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us - It seems that some were claiming to speak by the direction of the Holy Spirit. Others taught or preached words that were false. Still others wrote their false doctrines and then signed Paul's name to the letters trying to pass them off as being from Paul. Paul wanted the Thessalonians to know that he did not support the things they were teaching.

Galatians 1:8, "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed."

1 John 4:1, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

as though the day of Christ had come - These false teachers were saying that the day of the Lord had already come.

- A. We are not told the full extent of their teaching. Perhaps they were saying several incorrect things:
  - 1. They may have been teaching that the second coming of Jesus was silent, invisible, past and over with.
  - 2. They may have been saying that His return was currently happening.
  - 3. They may have been teaching that His coming was about to occur.
- B. Paul goes on to refute all of these false teachings by explaining that several things had to happen first before Jesus' return.

2:3 *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,*

Let no one deceive you by any means - Three different "means" were mentioned in verse 2.

- A. Some were claiming to speak by the direction of the Holy Spirit.
- B. Others taught or preached words that were false.
- C. Still others wrote their false doctrines and then signed Paul's name to the letters trying to pass them off as being from Paul.

for that Day will not come - That "Day" has reference to the Lord coming again.

- A. The coming of Jesus can be seen as the pivotal point of the ages.
  - 1. The message of the Old Testament - Christ is coming!
  - 2. The message of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John - Christ came!

3. The message of the rest of the New Testament - Christ is coming again!

unless the falling away comes first - The phrase "falling away" comes from the Greek word (APOSTASIA) meaning, "a falling away, defection, apostasy." In this verse Paul speaks not of **a** falling away, but **the** falling away. The apostasy Paul had in mind was a specific departure that had certain criteria to be met as he outlines in this chapter.

- A. An apostasy from Christ by His followers was going to arise within the church (Acts 20:30).

It is interesting to note that some religions today actually teach that apostasy is not possible among Christians. They say a Christian can never fall away (once saved always saved). If their doctrine is true, then Christ will never return. This verse clearly says that Christ will not come, "unless the falling away comes first." The Bible warns that it is possible for a Christian to return to a life of sin and lose their salvation (2 Peter 2:20-22).

- B. Yes, the Bible does teach the security of the believers in Christ (John 10:22-30; 1 John 5:11-13). However, this security of the believers is shown to be conditioned on being faithful to Christ (John 8:31-32; Hebrews 3:12-19).
  1. The Bible says that some will depart from the faith (1 Timothy 4:1-2). Paul charges Timothy to keep the faith because some would fall away into apostasy (1 Timothy 1:18-20).
  2. The Bible teaches one can be in a saved state and then be lost, based upon unfaithfulness to Christ (Jude 1:5-6).
  3. The Bible states that we have the choice to obey Jesus and have life or disobey Him and have death. The choice is ours (John 3:36; Joshua 24:15; Acts 2:38-47). Our free will is not taken away after our conversion.
- C. To enjoy the benefits of God we must be in Christ, because in Christ there is salvation (2 Timothy 2:10). It is only in Christ where all spiritual blessings are found (Ephesians 1:3). Outside of Christ we are lost, which is why Jesus told His disciples to abide in Him (John 15:1-6).

and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition - For now, concerning the "man of sin" let us simply note that he is linked to "the falling away." He is the man of sin – he

sins and causes others to sin. He is the son of perdition – he will be destroyed and he will cause others to be destroyed. "Perdition" comes from the Greek word (APOLEIA) meaning, "to destroy utterly - not extinction or annihilation, but ruin; loss (not of being, but of well-being)."

- A. To this point in our study of chapter 2, we have been introduced to two phrases that are going to be very important in our study as we continue: **"the falling away"** and **"the man of sin."** In verse six we will see another phrase that is going to be very important to our understanding: **"what is restraining"** or **"that which restraineth"** (verse 6, ASV).
- B. The word "revealed" comes from the Greek word (APOKALUPTO) meaning, "to uncover or unveil."

2:4 *who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

*(the man of sin)* who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped - "Opposes" comes from the Greek word (ANTIKEIMAI) meaning, "to be set over against, to oppose, withstand." The phrase "exalts himself" comes from the Greek word (HUPERAIRO) meaning, "to lift one's self up, be exalted, be haughty." The phrase "or that is worshiped" would include Deity, but it could also bring to mind the emperors or kings.

so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God - Notice the phrase "temple of God" in this verse. Paul often used the term "temple" to refer to the church.

1 Corinthians 3:17, "If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."

2 Corinthians 6:16, "And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.'"

Ephesians 2:19-22, "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."

2:5 *Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?*

Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? - The language is literally "kept telling you these things." Paul had also warned Timothy about the apostasy that was coming.

1 Timothy 4:1-3, "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will **depart from the faith**, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth."

2:6 *And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.*

And now you know what is restraining - "Restraining" comes from the Greek word (KATECHŌ) meaning, "to hold back, detain, hinder." It was God's will to hold back the apostasy of this "man of sin." The time was not right for him to be revealed. How God was restraining or who he was using to restrain the "man of sin" is not stated in the text.

that he may be revealed in his own time - It is true that God allows men to sin and even abound in sin, but He is still in charge. Nothing can happen to frustrate, hinder or obstruct His plan.

2:7 *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.*

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work - The ground work for this apostasy was already being prepared when Paul wrote this letter to the Thessalonians.

only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way - He who was restraining would be taken out of the way at the proper time.

### **Six Different Approaches to Interpret 2 Thessalonians 2:1-7**

1. Some simply disregard it.
  - a. "We have outgrown the theological ignorance and the medieval superstition that Paul and the Thessalonians possessed concerning the antichrist" (*New Interpreter's Bible Commentary*).

- b. However, since Paul's words are inspired, we cannot simply disregard this passage.
2. Some say this represents Catholicism, the papacy and the Roman government (we will deal with this interpretation in more detail later).
  3. Some teach the "man of sin" is a certain Roman Emperor and the "mystery of lawlessness" is the Roman Empire.
  4. Some believe the "mystery of lawlessness" is Judaism, the "man of sin" is some leader in Judaism and "what is restraining" is the Roman Empire.
    - a. Concerning numbers 3 and 4:
      - 1) The things mentioned in the text would be associated with a great prominent apostasy.
      - 2) In fact, the man of sin was the one who would lead in this apostasy. This does not seem to fit the interpretations of 3 and 4.
      - 3) They might propose it was Constantine.
        - a) However, he did not set himself forth as God (verse 4).
        - b) He is not to be revealed and slain at Christ's second coming (verse 8).
        - c) He did not produce signs and lying wonders (verse 9).
  5. Some say the "man of sin" is the same as, in their words, "the Antichrist." They claim this to be a future world dictator who will rule between what they call the rapture and the 1,000-year reign.

"Whatever interpretation is placed upon this passage, its use to refer to a future personage is doomed to failure since Paul explicitly stated that he was referring to a person who would be the product of the circumstances of **his own day**, i.e., 'already at work' (verse 7). How could Paul have had in mind a future dictator that still has not arisen, though 2,000 years have transpired? One needs to go no further to know that 2 Thessalonians 2 does not refer to a future Antichrist."

[Dave Miller, Ph.D., <https://apologeticspress.org/will-there-be-an-antichrist-1209/>]

6. Some teach the "man of sin" is Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini or some other person of this nature.

Concerning these last two interpretations we must remember 2 Thessalonians 2:7, "For the mystery of lawlessness is **already at work**; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way."

**So, which interpretation is correct?**

**A very strong case can be built that Paul is referring to Catholicism, the papacy and the Roman government.**

- The "falling away" would be the corruption of the apostles' teaching which resulted in the development of the Roman Catholic church.
  - Actually, they are still adding new doctrines to their creed.
  - The false doctrines that the Roman Catholic church have developed have also been adopted by many Protestant groups as well.
- The "man of sin" would be the papacy or "Pope," who is the visible, personal head of the "falling away."
- That which is "restraining" would be the Roman Government.
  - For several centuries the Roman government held in check the attempts of power-hungry Roman Catholic bishops to take control of both religious and political authority in the world.
- Now let us notice what the Bible says concerning these points.
  - The "mystery of lawlessness" was already at work in Paul's time.
    - Many passages which tell of false doctrines point to this.

1 Timothy 4:1-3, "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth."

- There are also passages that speak of individuals seeking unauthorized power.

3 John 1:9, "I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us."

Acts 20:29-30, "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves."

- Does it really seem far-fetched that the apostasy that led to Roman Catholicism would be referred to as "the falling away"? Notice the chronology of Roman Catholic apostasy:
  - Bishops take authority over elders (presbyters) in the second century.
  - Infant "baptism" instituted - first mentioned around 150 A.D.
  - Many heathen rituals (candles, incense, robes etc.) added to the worship - around 300 A.D.
  - First human creed (Council of Nicaea) was created - 325 A.D.
  - Celibacy for the priests was promoted - 405 A.D. (enforced 1123 A.D.)
  - Mary was given title: "Mother of God" - 431 A.D.
  - Confession of sins to a human priest introduced - around 457 A.D. (the confessional system was made a requirement in 1215 A.D.)
  - The Lord's supper became a mass (sacrifice) and masses for the dead became frequent in the sixth century.
  - The so-called "Pope" gained universal authority - around 606 A.D.
  - Bowing down to images was officially recognized - around 800 A.D.
  - Indulgences were added - 1164 A.D.
  - The false doctrine of transubstantiation was instituted - 1215 A.D.
  - Sprinkling in place of scriptural baptism was authorized - 1311 A.D.

- People were deprived of the cup in communion - around 1414 A.D.
- The false doctrine of purgatory originated in the tenth century and made official - 1438 A.D.
- Traditions were made equal to the Scriptures - about 1545 A.D.
- Apocryphal books were added to the Bible - 1546 A.D.
- The false doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception was promoted - 1854 A.D.
- The infallibility of the so-called "Pope" was established - 1870 A.D.
- Also, the papacy fulfills the descriptions of the "man of sin."
  - He sits in the temple of God.
  - He shows himself to be God.
  - The papacy consists of one official man.
  - He came into power as a result of the falling away from the truth taught in the New Testament.
- There is one main objection to this view.
  - The text says the "man of sin" and the "son of perdition," not the "men of sin" or "sons of perdition" as if it is a group. It seems to speak of an individual.
  - Answering this objection.
    - In the Bible we find that sometimes a series or group of men are identified using a singular term.
      - 1 Peter 2:17 says, "Honor the king."
        - Is this one particular King?
        - Or, is it the whole succession of kings?
      - Matthew 5:25 states, "Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the

judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison."

- Who is the adversary, the judge, the officer?
- Is this only one or is it a whole succession of individuals?
- We would also note that this view fits the context here.
  - "For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work" (2 Thessalonians 2:7).
  - "And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

Please consider the following historical information that comes from:

*Thinking Through Thessalonians*, Wilbur Fields, pp. 202-203.

"During the first three hundred years of the history of Christianity it was a persecuted illegal religion. This fact hindered any power-hungry 'Christian' bishops from assuming a lot of authority.

In the years that followed the adoption of Christianity as the state religion (325 A.D.), emperors like Constantine and Theodosius considered themselves not only the head of the state, but head of the church as well. For example, Constantine called the Council of Nicaea to settle the dispute about the nature of Christ.

In the fourth century as the barbarians began to invade the Roman empire, it became weaker and weaker and its emperors became less and less strong. In those times many of the bishops of Rome were strong willed, capable men. Gradually the Roman bishops came to have more power and the emperors less. The Roman bishops were further strengthened when the capital of the Roman empire was transferred to Constantinople in the East.

Leo the Great, bishop of Rome (440-461 A.D.), greatly strengthened the authority of his office. On two occasions he saved Rome from being sacked, first by Atilla the Hun and secondly by Genseric the Vandal. In return for such service the Roman emperor gave Leo authority over the bishops and churches in every province.

The Western Roman Empire fell in 486 A.D. This gave the Roman bishops almost a free hand in Europe. Bishop Gelasius (492-496 A.D.) contended that although the king rules over men in the world, yet he is duty bound in spiritual things to submit to his religious prelates.

Later Roman bishops, such as Gregory the Great (590-604 A.D.) formed alliances with civil rulers in the West, as well as emperors in the East.

While some strong emperors occasionally resisted the popes for many centuries, the popes became so strong that kings (such as Charlemagne) received their crowns from the hands of popes, and the popes sometimes commanded people in various countries to disobey their kings when the kings would not submit to the authority of the Roman church."

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### **"Nine Ways the Papacy Fulfills This Context"**

1. It has one official man as its head and the arrogance of its claims are centered in him.
  2. That man came with, and out of, an apostasy, the very kind of an apostasy such as Paul describes elsewhere (Acts 20:30; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:1-9).
  3. The spiritual pride, lawlessness and desire for power which worked in Paul's day was curbed by the Roman civil government which dominated and persecuted.
  4. When the bishop of Rome began to assert his power, he was in conflict with the civil government.
  5. When the Roman empire collapsed the Roman Catholic Church became all-powerful.
  6. The same apostasy has continued to this day and has been preserved carefully. The line of popes has been preserved and will apparently continue until Christ returns.
  7. The papacy exalts itself against God and Christ, taking unto itself titles which God alone has the right to wear.
  8. The popes sit in the temple of God.
  9. The papacy promotes its authority using fake miracles, signs, wonders and cures affected by relics and shrines (2 Thessalonians 2:9).
- 

2:8 *And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.*

And then the lawless one will be revealed - The "then" has reference to when the one who "is restraining" is taken out of the way. There are other passages that point to this apostasy in addition to our passage which is under consideration (Acts 20:30; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:1-9).

whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming - The "lawless one" will continue until Christ comes again. At which time he will be destroyed.

2:9 *The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,*

The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders - The "lawless one" is compared to Satan in that his works will consist of fake signs and lying wonders.

- A. We often read in the Scriptures about phony miracles and signs. Such as the deceptive magicians in Egypt (Exodus 7:11-12; 2 Timothy 3:8). In the New Testament Christians are warned to be on their guard against such deceivers.

Matthew 7:21-23, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Matthew 24:23-24, "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."

Revelation 18:23, "The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived."

Revelation 19:20, "Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who

worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone."

2:10 *and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*

and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish - The coming of the "lawless one" will be in all power, signs and lying wonders and with all unrighteous deception. This is in stark contrast to Christ. Please consider the following chart:

<b>JESUS</b>	<b>THE MAN OF SIN</b>
1. Has a "coming" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)	1. Has a "coming" (2 Thessalonians 2:9)
2. Did actual miracles (Acts 2:22)	2. Does fake miracles (2 Thessalonians 2:9)
3. Is God (Hebrews 1:8)	3. Sets himself forth as God (2 Thessalonians 2:4)
4. Is over the house or temple (Hebrews 3:6)	4. Sits unlawfully in the temple (2 Thessalonians 2:4)
5. Shall be glorified (2 Thessalonians 1:10)	5. Shall be destroyed (2 Thessalonians 2:8)

because they did not receive the love of the truth - Jesus is, "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). The devil is, "a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it"(John 8:44). Those who continue to believe his deceit and follow his lies will perish.

- A. This also shows us the importance of having the right attitude. We must love the truth (Psalm 19:7-14). To love the truth is to embrace what the Bible teaches (John 17:17). One cannot be saved, unless one embraces the truth found in God's word (Romans 10:17). Loving the truth involves loving goodness, righteousness, honesty and kindness. It means a complete rejection of any and all wickedness. Loving the truth is the only way that we can truly be saved.

that they might be saved - In the Scriptures the word "saved" has some synonymous terms having the same or nearly the same meaning.

- A. Redeemed - 1 Peter 1:18-19, "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

- B. Cleansed - 2 Peter 1:9, "For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins."
- C. Reconciled - Colossians 1:21-23, "And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight— if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister."
- D. Pardoned - Psalms 25:11, "For Your name's sake, O LORD, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great."
- E. Sanctified - 1 Corinthians 6:11, "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."
- F. Justified - Galatians 3:24, "Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith."
- G. Delivered - Colossians 1:13-14, "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."

2:11 *And for this reason, God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,*

And for this reason, God will send them strong delusion - In the Bible, God is often said to do, what He permits or allows to be done. He always recognizes and respects man's freedom of choice. Those who do not love the truth will be deluded and God will allow that to happen (Romans 1:18-32; Hebrews 5:12-14). When someone eliminates the truth, as one of their options, all that is left to choose is a lie.

Consider the scientist who refuses to accept the possibility of creation for our existence. The choices left to them for man's existence are all lies. Sadly, they choose to believe the lie instead of the truth.

that they should believe the lie - The opposite of the truth is a lie. The truth sets us free, while the lie will bind us. The truth saves, while the lie condemns.

2:12 *that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth - Paul has been making a contrast throughout this letter. He is drawing a very distinct line between right and wrong, good and evil, heaven and hell.

Matthew 7:13-14, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."

but had pleasure in unrighteousness - "Love rejoices in righteousness" (1 Corinthians 13:6). However, these individuals did not believe the truth, instead they found pleasure in doing things that are displeasing to God. They did not have the faith that works by love and obeys God's commands. He condemned them because they chose to disbelieve the truth and seek pleasure in unrighteousness.

2:13 *But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,*

But - Notice the contrasts continue.

we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord - These were those who were in Christ Jesus, and for this Paul was thankful. Christians are special.

1 Peter 2:9-10, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy."

Titus 2:13-14, Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works."

2 Corinthians 6:14, "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?"

because God from the beginning chose you for salvation - Who are the "you" in this verse? These are the ones who had heard the word proclaimed, believed and obeyed that word to the sanctification of their souls. Specific individuals were not chosen, but a type of individual.

A. Those who love the truth.

1. God did not choose those who love unrighteousness to save, but rather those that love righteousness.

Troy Cummings said the following, "God foreknew and foreordained the plan of salvation for man; He planned before, the conditions or terms and goals and purposes of His whole plan of redemption. But, each person is left free to choose, to make his own decision, as to whether he will accept or reject God's plan. God desires the salvation of every soul. But the final decision is left with each person; God holds him responsible for that decision."

2. God has chosen a type of people, whose hearts are fertile for God's word (Luke 8), to save. They will receive that word, believe that word, obey that word and thus be predestined to the adoption of children (Ephesians 1:5). God predetermined from the beginning of time that He would save a certain class of people - the obedient ones. [For additional information please see the appendices - PREDESTINATION]

through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth - "Sanctification" means being set apart for a holy purpose. It is our obedience to the truth that sanctifies us and makes us free (John 17:17; 8:32). We are made alive and born again by our obedience to the truth (Ephesians 2:1; John 3:1-7; 1 Peter 1:23). The "sanctification" is said to be "by the Spirit" because the inspired truth that sanctified them was given by the Spirit.

2:14 *to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

to which He called you by our gospel - Men are called to this sanctification and they must respond to this call. How are men "called." They are "called" by the gospel. The word "gospel" comes from the Greek word (EUAGGELION) that literally means, "good tidings" or "good news." It is the good news that salvation is now possible because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). The gospel is the power of God to salvation (Romans 1:16). The gospel is God's plan for man's salvation from his sins.

- A. The "good news" is an invitation to have fellowship with God. Sin separates man from God.

Isaiah 59:1-2, "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."

- B. The preaching of the gospel has gone out into the world telling of the good news that there is a solution to man's problem of sin. Fellowship with God is possible again because of the sacrificial blood of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ. God has provided to all mankind a way of salvation.
- C. God calls people to Himself through the message of the Gospel. 1 Corinthians 1:21 says, "For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe." The calling goes out to all people equally. Whether they heed that call or reject it depends on their attitude toward the message.
- D. "Called" is another way to say "invited" or "encouraged to come."

"You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory" (1 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

- E. 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12 tells us that it is "God who calls" us. It also tells us what we are called into - "His own kingdom and glory." But it doesn't directly state how that calling takes place. Unfortunately, people have a habit of filling in missing information with imaginative answers. But we don't have to guess. We merely have need to look to our text for the answer.

"But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. It was for this **He called you through our gospel**, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).

- F. It is through the teachings in the Bible that we are "called" to God. There is also nothing in the Bible that says preachers and elders (pastors) require a special "calling." [For additional information please see the appendices - ARE WE CALLED?]

for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ - In other words, the salvation through Christ is the most glorious thing a man can obtain. Obedience to the gospel will provide glory (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

2:15 *Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.*

Therefore, brethren - The term "therefore" points back to, and draws to a conclusion, the things Paul has been saying on this issue. Also, notice the term "brethren" emphasizing his love for them.

stand fast - The term "stand fast" comes from the Greek word (STĒKŌ) meaning, "to stand firm, to persevere, to persist, to keep one's standing." Christians are often told to be steadfast or to stand fast (1 Corinthians 15:58; 16:13).

Galatians 6:9, "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

Matthew 10:22, "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved."

and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle - The word "traditions" can be used in more than one way. What does the Bible say about traditions?

- A. Traditions are a bad thing when they are the traditions of men that stand in opposition to the word of God. We are to avoid the traditions of men: preachers, teachers, elders, or even our own traditions which make God's word null and void.

Matthew 15:3, "He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?"

Colossians 2:8, "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ."

1 Peter 1:18, "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers."

- B. However, the word "traditions" can refer to the teachings that were given by inspired men. We are told to keep these traditions (Matthew 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13).

2 Thessalonians 2:15, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle."

2 Thessalonians 3:6, "But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us."

2:16 *Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace,*

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father - God the Father and God the Son are again named in a way that proves they are two separate Persons in one essence. There is only one essence of God (Deity), but there are three Persons within that essence. The Godhead means three distinct Persons - Father, Son and Spirit in one distinct God. [For additional information please see the appendices - THE GODHEAD]

- A. The word "Lord" is a title that means ruler. Jesus, has been given the rule over the church (Matthew 28:18).
- B. The word "Jesus" means Savior. This term is given to Him because He is the Savior of the world (Matthew 1:21).
- C. The word "Christ" means anointed. This title belongs to Jesus because He was anointed (Acts 10:38) as Prophet (Matthew 21:11; Luke 7:16; John 4:19; Mark 6:4), Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:17; 10:19-23) and King (Luke 1:32-33; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Revelation 19:16).

who has loved us - God loved mankind enough to send His only begotten Son to die as a sacrifice to redeem mankind from their sins.

1 John 4:10, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Ephesians 2:5-6, "Even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

1 John 3:16, "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace - The word "consolation" comes from the Greek word (PARAKLĒSIS) meaning, "persuasive discourse, calling to one's side, for admonition, encouragement, or comfort." The word "hope" comes from the Greek word (ELPIS) meaning, "joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation." Therefore, through God's "grace" (in the gift of His Son), He has given us the way of "everlasting consolation" and a "good hope" of final salvation.

2:17 *comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.*

comforts your hearts - Paul's desire is for Jesus and God the Father to bring "comfort" to the "hearts" of the Thessalonians.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

and establish you in every good word and work - "Establish" comes from the Greek word (STĒRIZŌ) meaning, "to strengthen, to make stable, place firmly, set fast, make firm." All of this is accomplished by the word of God.

1 Thessalonians 3:2, "And sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith."

### CHAPTER THREE

#### III. **Final Exhortations** ..... **3:1-15**

3:1 *Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you,*

Finally, brethren, pray for us - The Greek word translated as "pray" in this verse is a present tense that signifies continuous action. It was Paul's desire that the

Thessalonians would continue to pray for his efforts. He told them several times in his two letters that he was also praying for them (1 Thessalonians 1:2-4; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12).

that the word of the Lord - The "word of the Lord" provides to man instructions concerning salvation.

- A. The "word of the Lord" is powerful (Romans 1:16).
- B. It is the "sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17).
- C. It is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).
- D. It is "able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).
- E. It "lives and abides forever" (1 Peter 1:22-23).

We can also look to Psalm 19 to see the power of God's word.

- A. It converts the soul (Psalm 19:7).
- B. It makes wise the simple (Psalm 19:7).
- C. It rejoices the heart (Psalm 19:8).
- D. It enlightens the eyes (Psalm 19:8).

may run swiftly - The "word of the Lord" could "run swiftly" (spread quickly) throughout the world if the obstacles created by evil men were removed. Paul was exhorting the brethren to pray that the many obstacles like hatred and prejudice would be taken away.

and be glorified - The "word of the Lord" is glorified when it is heard, received and obeyed (1 Thessalonians 2:13). To glorify the word of God means a certain reverence, respect and honor should be given to the inspired word of God.

Acts 13:48-49, "Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region."

just as it is with you - The Thessalonians had "received the word" and "welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God" (1 Thessalonians 2:13). The

word had been planted in the hearts of these brethren and they were producing fruit (Luke 8:15).

3:2 *and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.*

and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men - Paul continues to be specific concerning his prayer request. The "unreasonable and wicked men" were those who opposed the truth.

- A. There will always be those who will stand in opposition to the truth.
- B. Opposition can come from without and within.
  - 1. From without there was the persecution these brethren faced following their conversion (1 Thessalonians 1:6).
  - 2. From within there was opposition from some in the church (2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Corinthians 11:26).
- C. Notice that opposition to truth is both unreasonable and wicked.

for not all have faith - "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). A rejection of the truth will result in an absence of faith. If it is unreasonable and wicked to oppose the truth and have no faith, then it is reasonable and righteous to support the truth and possess faith.

3:3 *But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.*

But the Lord is faithful - The promises made by God are promises that will always be kept. He will deliver the righteous and punish the wicked.

Deuteronomy 7:9, "Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments."

who will establish you - This has been an ongoing theme in Paul's two letters to the Thessalonians. He wants them to be strong and to realize that strength comes from the Lord.

and guard you from the evil one - How does God "guard" faithful Christians from the evil one (the devil)?

1 Corinthians 10:13, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

God is doing His part, but we must also do our part to stand against the devil.

Ephesians 6:11, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

3:4 *And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.*

And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you - This is a wonderful statement concerning Paul's faith in these brethren. The Thessalonians had the proper attitude. Having determination and the proper attitude (with the Lord's help) will always result in that which is right.

both that you do and will do the things we command you - There are several things to notice from this phrase.

- A. First, notice that they were required to do those things commanded.
  - 1. Those who are wicked find the truth repulsive.
  - 2. However, those with good and honest hearts love the truth and find it to be joy (John 14:15; 1 John 2:3-4; 5:2-3).
- B. Second, notice that they were required to not only do the things commanded, but to continue in their obedience. It required an ongoing effort.

Galatians 6:9, "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

2 Thessalonians 3:13, "But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good."

Matthew 10:22, "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved."

- C. Third, notice some passages concerning obedience (Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46; John 14:15; 15:14; Hebrews 5:8-9; James 1:21-22; Revelation 22:14).

3:5 *Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.*

Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God - How will the Lord "direct" their hearts into the love of God? We should not assume that God works directly on human hearts to get them to obey Him and live faithfully. If He did, the sinner could blame God for his own wickedness. He could say that it is God's fault that he is a sinner because God did not direct his heart to obey. The Lord directs the hearts of men through the Scriptures. [For additional information please see the appendices - THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS THROUGH THE WORD]

Romans 10:17, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

2 Thessalonians 2:14, "To which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

and into the patience of Christ - Paul wanted the Thessalonians to love, as God loved man and to be patient, as Christ was patient under all persecutions.

3:6 *But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.*

But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ - Paul wants them to understand that what he is about to tell them is a command by the authority of Christ (Matthew 28:18; Colossians 3:17). This should impress in their minds the seriousness and magnitude of what he is about to say. It is a command, not simply a suggestion.

that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly - Fellowship is based on conduct. The word "withdraw" comes from the Greek word (STELLŌ) meaning, "to remove one's self, withdraw one's self, to depart, to abstain from familiar intercourse with one." This command requires that the guilty party, who refuses to repent, be excluded from the congregation. [For additional information please see the appendices - PURPOSE OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE.]

Romans 16:17-18, "Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For

those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple."

The word "disorderly" comes from a Greek word (ATAKTŌS) that is a military term meaning, "to be out of step or out of rank (as of soldiers marching out of place), deviating from the prescribed order or rule." In this context the word is used to describe any kind of misconduct. This would be any continuous action ("walks disorderly") that is not in harmony with New Testament doctrine.

and not according to the tradition which he received from us - The word "tradition" here is not talking about the "tradition of men" (Colossians 2:8), but the commands of God. Please see comments on 2 Thessalonians 2:15 for additional information concerning traditions.

3:7 *For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you;*

For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us - The example that Paul and the others had left for these brethren was one that could be followed to please God. This shows to us the power of a proper example.

Acts 1:1, "The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach."

1 Corinthians 11:1, "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."

1 Timothy 4:16, "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you."

for we were not disorderly among you - Paul is saying that he and his companions did not walk "out of rank" among you. Their walk was according to God's commands.

Philippians 1:27, "Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

Ephesians 4:1, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called."

3:8 *nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you,*

nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge - Paul reminds them that while he was among them, he supported himself by working.

1 Thessalonians 2:9, "For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God."

but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you - Paul worked as a tentmaker in order to not burden the Thessalonians with his financial needs (Acts 18:1-3). He did this so that none could accuse him of preaching for financial gain. Paul did not want anything to hinder his preaching of the gospel.

3:9 *not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.*

not because we do not have authority - Paul was an apostle and a preacher of the gospel. Therefore, it would have been proper for him to receive financial support (1 Corinthians 9:1-15). He had the right to receive financial support from those among whom he labored. He wanted it to be clear that he had this right.

- A. It had been falsely charged by some that Paul knew he was not a true apostle because he would not accept support for his labors, but worked with his own hands to support himself and others (cf. Matthew 10:10-11; Luke 10:7; 1 Timothy 5:18).
- B. The enemies said his conscience would not allow him to ask for money, because he knew he was not really an apostle.
- C. The enemies could not be satisfied. If Paul took support they would say he was preaching for the money. If he did not take support they would say that he was not a true apostle.

but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us - Paul would lay aside his rights to receive support so that the brethren would learn a valuable lesson from his example.

3:10 *For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.*

For even when we were with you - Paul had taught them many things while he was with them.

we commanded you this - As an inspired apostle, Paul had the authority to issue God's commands to the people. These were not commandments that he created, but commandments given by God.

1 Corinthians 14:37, "If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, **let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.**"

If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat - God's word has never condoned laziness. The brethren were prohibited from giving food to those who refused to work. This obviously does not apply to those who are unable to work (Matthew 25:44-45; Romans 12:20; James 2:15-16). From the very beginning man was commanded to labor for his livelihood (means of living).

Genesis 2:15, "Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it."

Genesis 3:19, "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return."

Ephesians 4:28, "Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need."

3:11 *For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.*

For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner - The word "disorderly" comes from a Greek word (ATAKTŌS) that is a military term meaning, "out of rank (as of soldiers marching out of place), deviating from the prescribed order or rule." In this context the word is used to describe any kind of misconduct. This would be any continuous action ("walks disorderly") that is not in harmony with New Testament doctrine.

- A. Paul dealt with this in the first epistle and also while he was there. There must have been some who still did not understand.
- B. There seemed to have been a misunderstanding among them concerning the second coming of Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:11).
- C. Some of them may have been thinking that His coming would happen in the next few days, weeks or months, so they thought they should quit

their jobs now to prepare. Passages in 2 Thessalonians strongly imply that such an idea was believed by some of the brethren.

D. Here Paul puts emphasis on the responsibility to keep on working.

not working at all, but are busybodies - It could be that with their spare time and lack of funds, they had become busybodies in the lives of others and a burden needing financial support. Instead of spending their time as idle busybodies, Paul commands them to labor diligently and conduct themselves honestly so as to earn their own living.

- A. If they were idle, they would quickly become dependent on others for support.
- B. Those in the world might claim that Christianity made men lazy and worthless.
- C. Therefore, Paul commands them to work diligently to be independent, self-respecting and respected.
- D. Paul is making an interesting play on words here, which we do not see in the English language.
  - 1. The word "working" comes from the Greek word (ERGAZOMAI), while the word "busybodies" comes from a compound of the same word (PERIERGAZOMAI) that means, "working around."
  - 2. In a way he is saying that they are **busy working at not working**. They are bustling about uselessly or being busy with useless matters. They are meddling (intruding) in the affairs of others.

1 Timothy 5:13, "And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not."

3:12 *Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.*

Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ - These lazy individuals are given both a command, that makes their labor an obligation, and an exhortation, that should appeal to their conscience persuading them to do their duty. Also note that Paul makes it clear that this command and exhortation did not come from him, but from the Lord Jesus Christ.

that they work in quietness and eat their own bread - "Quietness" comes from the Greek word (HĒSUCHIA) that is a, "description of the life of one who stays at home doing his own work, and does not officiously meddle with the affairs of others." Once again this is something they had been told before (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12). The idea here is to be satisfied with working. Notice also that Paul said they are to eat their "own bread," not the bread of others. They should not be begging others for what they can supply themselves.

3:13 *But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.*

But as for you, brethren - Paul uses the term "brethren" to once again emphasize his love and compassion for these faithful Christians at Thessalonica.

do not grow weary in doing good - The word "weary" refers more to the mind than the body. Obviously, it is not wrong for a Christian to become "weary" physically while "doing good" service for the Lord. However, with the proper attitude his mind will remain refreshed and energetic in his service.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18, "Therefore we do not lose heart. **Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.** For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

3:14 *And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.*

And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle - In this we see the necessity of obedience. How could anyone who claims to be a Christian not understand the importance of obedience? In Romans 2:6-9 Paul states that God, "will render to each one according to his deeds: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish."

John 14:15, "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

Romans 6:16, "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?"

Hebrews 5:9, "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him."

note that person and do not keep company with him - They are told to "note" that person. The word "note" comes from the Greek word (SĒMEIOŌ) meaning, "to distinguish, that is, mark (for avoidance)." This is not referring to a physical mark. The marking is done so that this individual can be avoided. There is a danger of this person's evil influence spreading (1 Corinthians 5:6-9).

Romans 16:17-18, "Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple."

that he may be ashamed - The faithful brethren are to withdraw their fellowship from this individual to make him feel shame for his sin. This action is done to bring about his repentance. 2 Corinthians 7:10 explains that "godly sorrow produces repentance."

- A. From this we conclude:
1. That the assembled church has the authority to exclude the unrepentant sinner from its fellowship.
  2. To exclude from fellowship of the church is to exclude from the fellowship of Christ (1 John 1:3).
  3. To exclude one from the fellowship of Christ and His church is to deliver one to Satan (1 Corinthians 5:5).
- B. Why would the congregation be told to exclude this unrepentant sinner from its fellowship? This teaches:
1. The purpose of discipline is salvation.
  2. The instrument of discipline is the church.
  3. The authority for discipline is the inspired Scriptures.
  4. The subject of discipline is the unrepentant sinner.
  5. The necessity for discipline is the corrupting influence of sin (1 Corinthians 5:6-9).

3:15 *Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.*

Yet do not count him as an enemy - We must always have the proper attitude of love and concern to administer righteous church discipline.

Galatians 6:1, "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted."

1 Peter 4:8, "And above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'Love will cover a multitude of sins.'"

James 5:19-20, "Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."

but admonish him as a brother -The purpose of discipline is to save (1 Corinthians 5:5). This wayward Christian is still a brother in Christ and should be treated as such. He is a member of the family of God.

Romans 8:16-17, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together."

2 Corinthians 6:17-18, "Therefore 'come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.'"

Galatians 4:4-7, "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' Therefore, you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

3:16 *Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all.*

Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way - The word "peace" comes from the Greek word (EIRĒNĒ) meaning, "The tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is."

- A. Jesus is called the "Lord of peace" because He brings peace between man and God through His sacrifice on the cross.

Ephesians 2:14-17, "For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near."

The Lord be with you all - Paul's desire for the Lord to be with the Thessalonians is seen in the descriptive name given to Jesus at His birth.

Matthew 1:23, "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel,' which is translated, '**God with us.**'"

Matthew 28:19-20, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, **I am with you always**, even to the end of the age. 'Amen.'"

Hebrews 13:5, "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, '**I will never leave you nor forsake you.**'"

- 3:17 *The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so, I write.*

The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so, I write - It appears that Paul dictated the letter to a scribe, but signed it with his own hand as he did in other letters (1 Corinthians 16:21). It seems that some impostors had forged Paul's name to their own letters to deceive the brethren (2 Thessalonians 2:2). As a safeguard against further deception, Paul signed his own name to this epistle as a sign of its genuineness.

- 3:18 *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all - Paul wishes "grace" to these good brethren.

Grace literally means "unmerited favor." The grace of God is unearned, but **not unconditional**. Grace means blessings from God that the sinner does not deserve or merit. Salvation is thus conceived as something given to man, not as a matter of debt, but as an undeserved gift. In short, man cannot achieve heaven by works of merit, but works of obedience are required (Ephesians 2:8-9; James 2:20-26; Titus 2:11-14). [For additional information please see the appendices - FAITH AND WORKS]

Amen - "Amen" literally means "so be it." The word "Amen" started as a Hebrew word (Numbers 5:22), that was transliterated into Greek and then eventually into English. The word comes from a Hebrew root word that means "to build up or support; to be firm or faithful, to trust or believe; to be true or certain." It is also used as an adverb at the beginning of a speech to mean "surely, of a truth, truly" (Matthew 5:18; Mark 3:28; John 3:3). At the conclusion of a sentence it is used to mean "so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled." When the word is used as an adjective it means "firm or true." Some dictionaries claim that when "Amen" is used at the end of a prayer it means approval of what is being said. However, our approval does not make it true. It is more correct to think of it as "this is true, or may it come to pass, or may it be fulfilled."

**FINIS**

**APPENDICES**.....

FAITH AND WORKS .....

PREDESTINATION.....

ARE WE CALLED? .....

THE GODHEAD .....

THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS THROUGH THE WORD.....

PURPOSE OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE .....

## FAITH AND WORKS

- I. Can we be saved by our own works?
  - A. Ephesians 2:8-9 - "For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast."
  - B. 2 Timothy 1:8-9 - "Saved...not according to our works but according to His own purpose."
  - C. Romans 11:6 - "And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace, otherwise work is no longer work."
  
- II. In Romans 4:1-25 Paul is correcting a false belief that man could be saved by his own "perfect works." If a man could do a "perfect work" (one's life being that work — completely void of sin), then there would be no need for God's grace.
 

Paul argues that God would then be indebted to that person due to their perfect life (4:4). Abraham's righteousness was "by faith," not his own "perfect work," or God would have owed Abraham a debt, and no grace would have been necessary.

But we see that grace AND faith were needed to justify him.
  
- III. We have seen that we are justified by faith as a result of God's grace (unmerited favor). BUT is it necessary to "obey God in order to receive this grace?"
  - A. 1 Samuel 15:22 - "Then Samuel said: Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams."
  - B. Ecclesiastes 12:13 - "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."
  - C. John 14:15 - "If you love Me, keep my commandments."
  - D. Romans 6:17-18 - "But God be thanked that though you were the servants of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, ye became slaves of righteousness."

It is, therefore, necessary to obey God in order to receive His grace, and to become servants of righteousness!

IV. Why are we God's servants; what is our purpose?

- A. Ephesians 2:10 - "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, [What kind of works? Our own? No!] which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."
- B. Notice that these are not our own works, but the works that God Himself prepared for us to do.
- C. Compare Ephesians 2:8-9; 2 Timothy 1:8-9; Romans 11:6; 4:4-5.

V. What are these works which these verses refer to?

- A. 1 Thessalonians 1:3 - "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love..."
- B. Hebrews 6:10 - "For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love."
  - 1. God desires all to do the same thing (v. 11).
  - 2. Be not slothful (v. 12).
- C. Galatians 5:6 - "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love."
- D. Romans 16:26 - "But now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith."

We can see by these passages that faith is supposed to do something.

VI. Can we receive the grace of God in vain?

- A. 2 Corinthians 6:1 - "We then as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain."
- B. In 1 Corinthians 15:10, Paul said he had not received the grace of God in vain — "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."
- C. It should be noted here that the grace of God caused Paul to labor (work), and if

he would not have worked, the grace would have been in vain!

- D. Through faith we are justified by works:
  - 1. Done in obedience to God's commandments,
  - 2. Which are a result of His grace.
  
- VII. Other examples of faith which led to works which led to perfect faith.
  - A. Noah was led by faith to build an ark (Hebrews 11:7).
    - 1. He and his family would not have been saved by faith alone.
    - 2. Without works they, as well as their faith, would have been dead.
  
  - B. The bronze serpent (Numbers 21:4-9).
    - 1. Israel's belief in what God said led them to obey and to look upon the serpent.
    - 2. They could have believed all day long, but without obeying and looking upon the serpent they were without hope.
  
  - C. The wall of Jericho (Joshua 6:1-21).
    - 1. God's promise was not put into action until some works were done.
    - 2. The people had to walk around the city for seven days until God would work His works.
    - 3. Until that last command was obeyed God would not cause the walls to fall.
  
  - D. Naaman the leper (2 Kings 5:1-19).
    - 1. A work of faith led Naaman to obey the prophet by doing something.
    - 2. He evidently believed he would be healed or he would not have sought the prophet in the first place — but that was not enough!
    - 3. He scoffed at a simple command to go and dip in the Jordan river BUT until that command was obeyed the man continued to be a leper!

4. It is amazing how people today scoff at a simple command like baptism in the same way.
5. Work is a result of God's commands through faith. Nothing more and nothing less is acceptable to God.

### CONCLUSION

We are not saved by works of our own, but we are saved by a working obedient faith that submits to God's commands to gain access to the blood of Christ.

- A. Faith by itself is dead.
  1. We must do the will of God, not just be hearers only (Matthew 7:21-23; 25:35-40).
  2. God has shown time and time again that He will not carry out a promise until conditions are met.
  3. That condition is obedience to His word which, when obeyed, are works which He has prepared for us to walk in.
- B. Let us not accept the grace of God in vain by NOT doing the works which He commanded.
  1. In Revelation 2:10 John writes, "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."
  2. This was not a dead faith but was one of action and works, and became their work of faith and labor of love.

Through faith we are justified by works done in obedience to God's commands, through which His grace is given!

## PREDESTINATION

### I. Two Greek Terms.

#### A. "PROORIDZO."

1. Used twice in Ephesians 1:1-14.
  - a. Translated "predestinated" or "foreordained."
  - b. It means to mark out before, decide before, predetermine.
  - c. Scripture references.
    - 1) God's wisdom in planning salvation for sinners was "foreordained before the worlds for our glory" (1 Cor 2:7).
    - 2) That wisdom demanded the death of Christ which God's "counsel foreordained to come to pass" (Acts 4:28).
    - 3) God "foreordained" that Christians (the called, the justified, the glorified) should conform themselves to the image of Jesus, their older brother (Rom 8:29-30).
    - 4) God "foreordained" that sinners (children of the devil, Jn 8:44) should be adopted as God's children (Eph 1:5).
    - 5) The inheritance of those adopted children is not an afterthought. It, too, was "foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will" (Eph 1:11).

#### B. Notice that none of the above citations of foreordination makes it independent of man's choice and obligation.

#### 1. "EKLEGO."

- a. Ephesians 1:4.
  - 1) Used to describe those whom God has chosen (His elect ones).

- 2) It means to pick out, to single out, to choose.
- 3) Scripture references.
  - a) Luke 14:7; 10:42; Acts 13:17; Romans 11:7; Matthew 22:14; Revelation 22:17; Romans 8:23-24.
  - b) John 10:16; Acts 18:9-10.
  - c) Matthew 16:24-25; Mark 8:34-35; Luke 9:23-24.
    - (1) Matthew 11:28-30; Revelation 3:20.
    - (2) Remember the parable of the sower Luke 8.
      - (a) How is this accomplished? Notice Ephesians 1:13.
      - (b) John 1:12; 8:32; Acts 20:32.

## II. IF CALVIN'S VIEW OF PREDESTINATION IS TRUE:

- A. The damnation of the non-elect is just as much the result of an omnibenevolent God's decree as is the salvation of the elect.
  1. 2 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9.
- B. Jesus did not know it.
  1. Matthew 11:28; Mark 16:15-16; Revelation 3:20.
- C. Why would we:
  1. Preach the gospel? (Rom 1:16).
  2. Preach repentance? (2 Pet 3:9; Acts 17:30; Lk 13:3).
  3. Teach that God's word saves? (Jas 1:21).
  4. Even need God's word? (2 Tim 3:16-17).
  5. If there is nothing I can do, why would I do anything at all? (Acts 9:6; Heb 5:8-9).

6. How could men have power to become children of God if they are powerless? (Jn 1:12).
- D. "Summary: God foreknew and foreordained the plan of salvation for man; He planned before, the conditions or terms and goals and purposes of his whole plan of redemption. But, each person is left free to choose, to make his own decision, as to whether he will accept or reject God's plan. God desires the salvation of every soul. But the final decision is left with each person; God holds him responsible for that decision" - Troy Cummings.
- E. God has chosen a type of people whose hearts are fertile for God's word (Lk 8). They will receive that word, believe that word, obey that word and thus be predestined to the adoption of children (Eph 1:5).

## ARE WE CALLED?

There are no biblical indications that preachers or elders (pastors) require a special "calling."

- A. The New Testament gives no indication that a preacher must be called by God in the same way that prophets and high priests were called in the Old Testament (Jeremiah 1:5; Hebrews 5:4). Moreover, the New Testament never applies the terminology of "calling" to preachers or pastors (bishops, elders), but only to the Christian life in general (2 Timothy 1:9; Hebrews 3:1). The Bible makes it clear that all mankind is called to obey by the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14).
  
- B. If the New Testament taught that preachers or elders must be specially called by God, it seems that there would be some sort of discussion of how that happens and how to discern whether one has really been called. Instead, Paul writes, "This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop (pastor, elder), he desires a good work (1 Timothy 3:1). Paul doesn't say, "If anyone wants to be an elder, he must have a special, supernatural, subjective call from God." He simply explains that if anyone wants to be an elder, he desires a good thing. He then goes on to give the qualifications. But having a supernatural calling from God is not given as part of the requirements.

Too often people hear a phrase and make assumptions without intending to do so. People talk about God calling and forget to ask: How does God call people?

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore, everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me" (John 6:44-45).

"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" So, then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:14-17).

"As you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. For this reason, we also thank God without ceasing, because

when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe" (1 Thessalonians 2:11-13).

God calls people to Himself through the message of the Gospel. "For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21). The calling goes out to all people equally. Whether they heed that call depends on their attitude toward that message, whether they believe it or reject it.

"Called" is another way to say "invited" or "encouraged to come."

"You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory" (1 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

This passage tells us who does the calling: God. It also tells us what we are called to: His kingdom and glory. But it doesn't directly state how that calling takes place.

Unfortunately, people have a habit of filling in missing information with imaginative answers. But we don't have to guess. We merely have to look in other places for the answer.

"But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. It was for this **He called you through our gospel**, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us" (2 Thessalonians 2:13-15).

It is through the teachings in the Bible that we are called by God.

## THE GODHEAD

I do not know your level of understanding concerning God, so I must simply point you to what God's Word teaches us concerning this topic. It is amazing the amount of Scripture that can be found on this matter. So, it will be impossible to give you all the references. You can open the New Testament at almost any page and find out something about God and the Godhead, where God is truly revealed as having three persons in one. Therefore, allow me to give you some of these verses and passages so that you will have a basic understanding of this topic. If you are not familiar with the verses I will be citing here, you will be rewarded if you will read them carefully, along with the many other passages that can be found in the Bible relating to this topic.

The Godhead is sometimes called the Trinity. Although the word "trinity" is used by some in describing God it is nowhere found in the Bible. It is a word used by man to mean: "the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit as three persons in one Godhead." However, if you use a Bible concordance you will not find the word "trinity" there. We do find the word "Godhead" which has a much deeper spiritual meaning. Godhead means three distinct Persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in one distinct God.

We must not view the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as "attributes" of God, for each of these three Persons in the Godhead "are called God." So, you see the three Personages in the Godhead are not attributes of God, but they each have all the attributes of God. The Bible tells us there is only one God, and yet there is distinctly God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit.

I know this can be confusing. It is hard to understand what we have never seen. We can understand one person in one body as we are, but we cannot understand three distinct Persons in one Godhead that is the one and only true God. We cannot fully understand the essence of God, we can only know what He reveals to us in His Word, the Bible.

In the Bible the word Godhead is used three times in the KJV and twice in the NKJV, see Acts 17:29, Romans 1:20, Colossians 2:9. The others, NIV, NASB, NRSV, NKJV (once), etc., substitute the words Deity, Divine, Divine Being, Nature or Divine Nature for Godhead in these verses. Nearly all versions including KJV use Divine Nature in 2 Peter 1:4.

The people living in the Patriarchal and Mosaic age did not understand about the Godhead. There are many places in the Old Testament where the prophets wrote about the Father, the Spirit, and the Son, but they thought this was just other names for the one true God. Prophets also wrote about the coming of the Messiah/Savior/Son, but the people did not understand this either. They had not seen the Son, nor did they recognize what the prophets were saying about His coming because they were looking for an earthly Messiah and King like David or Solomon. Even after Jesus began to teach and do miracles they still thought He was going to

be an earthly King, and it was not until after Christ's death and resurrection that some finally came to understand what the prophets of old had tried to tell them. The word Godhead is not found in the Old Testament.

Now I will give you some of the Scriptures to read and study:

- A. Scripture verses where we see there is one God, one Father, one Son, one Spirit: Romans 3:30, there is one God; Ephesians 4:4-6, there is one body and one Spirit; one Son (Lord), one faith, one baptism; and one God and Father of all; 1 Timothy 1:17, the only God, eternal, immortal, invisible; 1 Timothy 2:5, there is one God, one Mediator (the Son); Genesis 1:1/ John 1:1/ Hebrews 3:4, there is one Maker, the Word (the Son), God; and 1 John 5:20, He is the true God and eternal life.
- B. Scripture verses where the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all mentioned in one passage: Matthew 28:19, John 6:62-65, Philippians 2:5-11, 1 Peter 1:2. In others two but not all three are mentioned, such as in Acts 1:4-5,7-8, where we see the Father and Holy Spirit, in 1 Corinthians 12:3-11, where we see the Holy Spirit and God, and in 1 Timothy 2:3, where we see God our Savior. And there are many, many verses that mention only one Personage in the message, I have listed some of them below.
- C. Scripture verses where we are told about God the Father: Acts 1:7, Matthew 3:16-17, John 1:14, John 4:23, John 5:26, John 6:37,40,44-46,65, John 8:18-19,38,42,54, John 14:16,26, John 15:26, John 16:15,17, John 20:17,21-22, Acts 13:33/Psalm 2:7, Philippians 2:11, Hebrews 2:18, 1 Peter 1:2, Isaiah 63:16, 64:8.
- D. Scripture verses where we are told about God the Son, Jesus the Christ: Matthew 3:16-17, Matthew 4:1-4, Matthew 12:32, John 1:1-2,14, John 3:16-18, John 5:26-27, John 6:37,40,44,46,62, John 8:36,58, John 14:20, John 16:13,16, John 20:17,21-22,28,31, Acts 1:2,7-8, Acts 7:55-56, Acts 13:33/Psalm 2:7, Acts 17:24,31, 1 Corinthians 1:9, Philippians 2:11, 1 John 5:1-12,20.
- E. Scripture verses where we are told about God the Holy Spirit, the Comforter: Matthew 3:16-17, Matthew 4:1-4, Matthew 12:32, Matthew 22:43, John 3:5-8, John 4:24, John 6:63, John 14:16-17,26, John 15:26, John 16:7,13,15, John 20:21-22, Acts 1:2,8, Acts 2:38, Acts 7:55-56, Acts 10:38, Acts 20:28, 1 Corinthians 2:10-14, 2 Corinthians 13:14, Ephesians 2:18, Hebrews 4:14, Hebrews 9:8,14, 1 Peter 1:2, 1 John 4:2-3, 1 John 5:1-12.
- F. Scripture verses where we are told about the one and only true God: Matthew 4:1-4,7,10, Matthew 22:29,31-32, John 1:1-2,14, John 3:3,16-18, John 4:24,

John 6:45-46, John 7:17, John 8:40,42,54, John 20:17,30, John 14:1, Acts 1:3, Acts 2:39, Acts 7:55-56, Acts 10:38, Acts 13:32/Psalm 2:7, Acts 17:24,27,29, Romans 1:16,20,25, 1 Corinthians 1:9, 1 Corinthians 2:10-14, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 2 Corinthians 13:14, Philippians 2:9, Colossians 2:9, Hebrews 4:12, Hebrews 7:19, Hebrews 9:14, 1 John 4:2-3, 1 John 5:20.

What can we conclude from these verses? There is only one essence of God (Deity), but there are three Persons within that essence. The Godhead means three distinct Persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit in one distinct God.

### THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS THROUGH THE WORD

- A. The Holy Spirit does not enlighten the soul of man apart from the word of God; He does this only through the Word.
1. Psalms 19:8, "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."
  2. Psalms 119:130, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."
  3. Ephesians 5:17, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."
- B. The Holy Spirit does not convert the soul of man apart from the word of God; He does this only through the Word.
1. Psalms 19:7, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."
  2. Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
  3. 1 Corinthians 4:15, "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel"
- C. The Holy Spirit does not make us wise unto salvation apart from the word of God; He does this only through the Holy Scriptures.
1. 2 Timothy 3:15, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."
- D. The Holy Spirit does not cleanse us apart from the word of God; He does this only through the word.

1. John 15:3 -- "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."
- E. The Holy Spirit does not sanctify apart from the word of God; He does this only through the word.
1. John 17:17 -- "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
- F. The Holy Spirit does not save apart from the word of God; He does this only through the word.
1. James 1:21 -- "Wherefore lay part all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
  2. Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
- G. The Holy Spirit does not make men free from sin apart from the word of God; He makes them free from sin only through their obeying that "form of doctrine."
1. Romans 6:17-18 "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
- H. The Holy Spirit does not work apart from the word of God in order to bring about the new birth; He brings about the new birth only by the word.
1. 1 Peter 1:23 "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."
- I. The Holy Spirit does not produce faith in the hearts of men apart from the word of God; He does this only through the word.
1. Romans 10:17 -- "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
- J. The Holy Spirit does not produce fruit in the life of a Christian apart from the word of God; He does it only through the word.

1. Matthew 13:23 -- "But he that receiveth seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."
  2. Galatians 5:22-23 -- "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."
- K. The Holy Spirit does not make the Christian "perfect" and "furnished unto all good works" apart from the word of God; He does this only through the word.
1. 2 Timothy 3:16,17 -- "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."
- L. The Holy Spirit does not produce growth in Christians apart from the word of God; He does this through only the word.
1. 1 Peter 2:2 "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."
- M. The Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian -- not directly, apart from the word of God, but only through the medium of the word.
1. Galatians 3:2 "This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"
  2. Ephesians 3:17 -- "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love."

**PURPOSE OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

- A. Keep the church pure.
- B. Let the world know the church stands for something.
- C. Be an example and encouragement to weaker brethren.
- D. Because God said to.
  - 1. If there were no other reason.
  - 2. There is more in the Bible concerning church discipline than there is concerning baptism.
- E. Bring the erring one back.