

2 Thessalonians

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Chapter 1

Part 1: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-8

The End Times are very important to God because they represent a transition from this world into the Kingdom of God. Everyone who is Kingdom minded will be interested in what the Word of God has to say about these changes in the last days. This book emphasises the last days and gives us guidelines on how to be found faithful at that time.

Verse 1: *“Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Messiah Yeshua.”*

Paul: His name is listed first which indicates to us that he is the primary author of this book.
Silvanus: Some Bibles translate his name as ‘Silas’. He co-authored this book with Paul and Timothy.

Timothy: Paul saw Timothy as a type of spiritual son.

The church of the Thessalonians: These three men wrote this epistle to those in Thessaloniki because, as we will see, they were going through intense persecution and were suffering greatly. As a result of this persecution, they were confused about some things. Paul wanted to reaffirm that what he had taught them was indeed truth – truth inspired by the Holy Spirit and profitable for them. We know that in the last days things are not going to get better. Things are going to get very dark and difficult. God, however, will give us the power to behave faithfully, and to live righteously, amid those dark times. Light shines brightest in the midst of darkness. For believers, the last days is a great opportunity to demonstrate a powerful testimony and to bear evidence that we love God.

Church: Congregation. Those who are called out – called out of the world and its way of thinking and behaving.

God our Father: There is an emphasis on not just God but on God as our Father. The term ‘Father’ reminds us of authority. God is our authority. A ‘father’ is also a provider. Paul wants to convey to us that God wants to provide for us. He is going to teach us some Biblical principles so that we can receive God’s provision - those things that we need in order to fulfil the purposes of God, so that we can have a Godly testimony.

Lord Messiah Yeshua: Paul also speaks about the Lordship of Messiah. The way that we recognise God’s authority over our lives is by submitting to the Lordship of Messiah. Practically we do this by studying the teachings of Yeshua, and of His apostles, and then applying them to our lives.

Verse 2: *“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Messiah Yeshua.”*

Grace: Grace positions us in God’s will.

Peace: Peace is always the fulfilment of God’s will in our lives. We will never have peace if we are not led by grace. Grace not only saves us, but it also works in our lives in order to bring us into God’s will (Titus 2:11-13)

Verse 3: *“We ought to always give thanks to God concerning you, brethren, just as it is worthy, because your faith increases, and your love abounds each one of all of you.”*

We ought to: It is a requirement. They are doing something that Paul wants to recognise and give thanks to God for. Paul sees something in this congregation that makes thanking God for them a requirement (it is incumbent upon him) ...something that he is ‘bound’ to do.

Worthy: Appropriate. It is appropriate for Paul to praise God on behalf of these individuals.

Your faith increases and your love abounds: This is a Biblical principle. When we grow in faith (and faithfulness) it is going to express itself in abundant love. Paul is praising God because the Thessalonian’s faith in Messiah Yeshua is increasing, and they are exemplifying that through Torah obedience (loving others as they love themselves).

Each one: There were no exceptions. They were all growing in faith and in love.

Verse 4: *“So that we ourselves boast about you among the congregations of God on behalf of your perseverance and faith in all your persecutions and the tribulations which you bear.”*

Perseverance: They are suffering for their faith, but they are able to endure and persevere through their sufferings.

Note: This verse is foundational as it gives us an understanding of the context of Paul’s letter. One of the primary reasons why Paul was writing to those in Thessaloniki was because they were going through a very difficult time.

Persecutions: Written in the plural. They were having to endure more and more and more.

Tribulations: The use of the plural form of this word teaches us that they were going through tribulation in abundance (See Acts 14:22). In the last days, believers are going to go through some very difficult times. God is going to use these end day tribulations to grow, mature and purify the church.

Verse 5: *“Which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, for you have been counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which you also suffer.”*

Manifest evidence: Evidence that can be seen. This evidence (the persecutions and tribulations that they are going through) confirms the righteous judgment of God.

You have been counted worthy: Suffering for our faith demonstrates that we are worthy of being called a Kingdom people. Suffering demonstrates that we do not belong to this world (those who belong to this world hate the Kingdom of God – John 15:18-19).

Note: This congregation was going through such intense persecution and abundant tribulation that they were full of doubt and were confused. They were questioning if something was wrong with them. They wanted to know if the blessed hope (the rapture) had already taken place and if they had been left behind. These tribulations were causing them to be concerned that maybe their faith was inadequate. They were questioning if there was a problem with the gospel that they had received. What they were enduring was causing them to doubt the gospel that they have received. Paul clarified that there was nothing wrong with the gospel that they had received. They had received the truth of the gospel. Their tribulations and persecutions were evidence that they were on the right path.

Which you also suffer: When we accept the gospel into our lives we ought to acknowledge that it is a call of suffering (Matthew 16:24-25). Messiah suffered for the purposes of God. We, who belong to His Kingdom and who submit to Him, are called to be like Him.

Our lives need to demonstrate His life (Colossians 3:3). He was persecuted, so we can also expect to be persecuted. He was hated. We can expect to be hated.

Verse 6: *“Indeed it is righteous for God to pay back tribulation to those who are causing you tribulation.”*

It is righteous for God to pay back: God is behaving righteously when He pays out tribulation (pours out His wrath) on those who have persecuted us. Tribulation is the wage that they have earned. When God pays them their wage, He is setting things in order.

Verse 7: *“And to you, the ones who have been afflicted, you rest with us – in the revealing of the Lord Yeshua from heaven, with His angels, in His power.”*

You: Those who are in Thessaloniki.

Rest: Certain words, in the Bible, relate to the Kingdom. Whenever these words appear they should cause us to think of the Kingdom. ‘Rest’ is one of these words. The believers who were experiencing this tribulation, those who were being afflicted, could expect to experience rest. When we enter the Kingdom of God, we are going to have rest. Kingdom rest is not speaking about sleeping or leisurely relaxing. It is a word that speaks about being in the right location – being in the Presence of God, the place where there is no striving (Psalm 46:10).

Rest with us: This ‘resting’ is what all believers will have in common. We are going to begin to experience this rest when Messiah Yeshua is revealed.

Note: Many people do not know God. They do not know the authority or power of God. We have a foretaste of it in creation, but, in the last days, God is going to manifest His power to the world as He pours out His wrath on it (His wrath is only going to be poured out after the rapture has already taken place).

Verse 8: *“In flames of fire giving vengeance to those that do not know God, and on the ones who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Messiah Yeshua.”*

In flames of fire giving vengeance: This is an image of the wrath of God being poured out (as the prophets have prophesied) in the last days. The rapture/blessed hope precedes the wrath of God (1 Thessalonians 5:9). God’s wrath places things in this world back into God’s Kingdom order. This wrath is then concluded with the return of Messiah – His second coming to Earth.

The gospel: This is the good news about God's plan of redemption. Through the blood of Messiah, we have access to the Kingdom of God. In the last days this gospel is going to be proclaimed throughout the world (Matthew 24:14, Revelation 14:6). God’s desire is that all mankind be saved, but many people are going to reject God’s plan for salvation – Messiah Yeshua.

Do not obey the gospel of our Lord Messiah Yeshua: Those who have rejected the gospel are going to be recipients of God's eternal wrath.

Chapter 1

Part 2: 2 Thessalonians 1:9-12

Many people in the church do not want to hear much about the wrath of God. They do not want to believe that the New Testament God is the same as the Old Testament One. The reason why they do not want to know this is because they do not understand why God would judge. Prophecy reveals to us that God is holy and righteous. This is why He must judge wickedness and ungodliness. The purpose of God's judgment is to bring about His Kingdom order. A specified time is coming, a time at the end of this age, when God will pour out His wrath – judging not with water (like in the days of Noah), but with fire. When we see an increasing persecution of believers in this world then we know that the time of God's judgment is getting close (Matthew 24:9).

Paul, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit spoke to this Thessalonian congregation about the persecution that they were enduring. These Thessalonians (as well as Paul's letters and encouragements to them) are a testimony and an example to us. They teach us and prepare us to be faithful in the midst of what the church is called to go through in the last days.

Verse 9: *“These will pay a price with eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His power.”*

These will pay: Referring to these individuals who deny God and reject the gospel.

Price: This can be understood as a fine or a penalty.

Eternal destruction: This is a very high or expensive price to pay. They are going to experience destruction and torment that has no end (it is eternal) – ie hell (Revelation 20:10, 15).

Face: Presence

From the face of the Lord: God is aware of this eternal destruction, and He is the One who is overseeing it. God's holiness and righteous character demands that He punishes sin. The wage or payment for sin is death – eternal (never-ending) death (Romans 6:23).

The glory of His power: When God pours out His wrath, those who rejected Him will see His glory manifested, but they will not experience His glory and saving power in their lives. When God judges sin it is a glorious thing, because it speaks to His righteousness – His character. God is going to eternally destroy sin once He has judged it.

Verse 10: *“Whenever He should come in glory with His Holy saints, and those who believe will be amazed because our testimony unto you was believed concerning that Day.”*

Holy: God's judgment is going to manifest His holiness (His purposes) to the world.

God must judge sin in order that His purposes and will are manifested. When things begin to reflect God's order, then His glory is able to be manifested.

Saints: Those who have been transformed through redemption. Through redemption we are declared 'holy'. Although we have been called holy/righteous (because of what Messiah has done) our call is to grow, mature and behave in a way that manifests God's holiness in our lives.

Will be amazed: Those who believe are going to be amazed at what God is going to do as He establishes His Kingdom on Earth.

That Day: This is referring to Judgment Day. This Judgment Day for a saint (for a believer) is going to be a glorious day. We are going to see the righteousness of God, that was promised to us, being revealed, as Yeshua establishes His Kingdom here on Earth.

Verse 11: *“For which also we pray always concerning you in order that you should be worthy of the call of our God, the fulfilment of every good thinking of goodness with works of faith in power.”*

We pray always concerning you: Paul knew that they were suffering. He prayed that they would be a testimony to others as they endured the suffering that they had to go through.

You should be worthy: Paul’s prayer was that having a proper and appropriate testimony would be the reality in their lives. As saints, as children of God, we need to behave righteously. We need to behave in a way worthy of the calling that we have received (Ephesians 4:1-2)

The fulfilment of every good thinking of goodness: Two different words in the Greek language are used here for ‘good’. We want that which is good. ‘Good’ is the fulfilment of God’s will. What we think becomes an action. When we have good thinking (when we think according to God’s will) it produces actions of goodness in our lives – such that others can see the goodness and the character of God reflected through us.

Works of faith: Putting truth into action. There is an inherent relationship between faith and truth.

In power: When we walk in faith (i.e. when we live our lives according to the truth/Word of God) we can be assured that God is going to supply power to us. When we believe and are saved, we no longer want to walk in sin (‘evil’ – those things which are outside of the will of God). When we have made the decision to turn away from sin we receive power, through the Holy Spirit, which helps us to turn away from ungodliness and live lives that are pleasing to God (Titus 2:11-14).

Verse 12: *“Thus that the name of our Lord Messiah Yeshua should be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and Lord Messiah Yeshua.”*

Name: A name is synonymous with character.

The name ... should be glorified: We need to be concerned with the name of Messiah Yeshua being glorified. We should not be concerned about ourselves – what people think of us, what we have or what we do not have. Our concern should be that our lives are used in order to glorify the name of the Lord.

Lord: The divinity of Messiah is proclaimed here. If we want to manifest God’s glory, then we need to acknowledge (and behave in a way to demonstrate) that Yeshua is the Lord or the Master of our lives.

You in Him: This speaks about intimacy. Through Messiah we are able to experience the Presence of God. As we act, behave and work out His purposes in our lives we are drawn closer to Him.

According to the grace: The first aspect of grace is that it saves us and gives us eternal assurance. However, the second purpose of grace is that it moves in our lives to fulfil the will of God (Titus 2:11-14). God’s grace gives us a new perspective and causes our spirits to

be renewed within us. The way that we think and the way that we live is transformed, through the power of the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God. This transformation moves us closer and closer to the will of God and to obeying the purposes of God, which in turn allows us to manifest more and more of the glory of God, giving us a God-pleasing testimony.

Chapter 2

Part 1: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3

This chapter teaches us how to be found faithful in the last days. We need to realise that there is a difference between the rapture (our 'blessed hope') and the second coming of Messiah. These are two completely different events.

- The rapture happens before the outpouring of God's wrath (as believers we have been promised that we will not be subject to the wrath of God – 1 Thessalonians 5:9). At the time of the rapture, Yeshua meets the faithful church (saints) in the clouds. He removes us from this earth, for a short period of time (while the wrath of God is falling) and gathers us to Himself (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). No one knows the day or the hour of when the rapture will take place, but there will be signs to warn us that it is nearing (eg: one of the signs will be the abomination of desolation – Daniel 12:11, Matthew 24:15, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, other signs can be found in Joel 2:30-32 and Revelation 6:12-17- this happens just before the wrath of God is announced). 1 Corinthians 15:52 tells us that this is an event, a snatching away, that will happen very quickly – in the twinkling of an eye. The rapture is for believers. It is not going to be a sign to the world of the time that it is living in. Most in the world will not even know that a rapture has taken place.
- The second coming of Messiah happens after the wrath of God has been poured out. The saints that had been raptured (ie the faithful church) are going to come back to earth with Messiah at His second coming (Revelation 19:14, 1 Thessalonians 3:13). The sign that marks the second coming is that the sun and the moon will be darkened (Matthew 24:29-31). The world will see the light of the world – Messiah-when He returns.

Verse 1: *“But, we beseech you brethren, on behalf of the coming of our Lord Messiah Yeshua and our gathering unto unto Him, we ask you,”*

But: In 2 Thessalonians 1 Paul emphasised the second coming of Messiah. It is at the time of the second coming that God is going to bring the glory of His Kingdom and establish it on Earth. This is only going to happen after God's wrath has been poured out. In 2 Thessalonians 2, however, Paul is not speaking about Messiah's second coming (also called 'the Day of the Lord'). This word 'but' inserts a contrast into the text. It means that Paul is writing about something different to what he has just been writing about.

Brethren: This is an inclusive term meaning 'brothers and sisters' ie fellow **believers** (Jew or Gentile, male and female).

Unto: 'Unto' is repeated twice in this phrase. This is a unique, redundant grammatical construction used for the purpose of emphasis.

Unto Him: The phrase emphasises that we are going TO Him and is not referring to Him coming to us. This is a hermeneutical clue that Paul is now talking about the rapture and not about the second coming of Messiah - when He will come unto them (those who are still alive on the earth after the wrath of God).

Verse 2: *“For you not to be quickly shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by an epistle, as if from us, as though the Day of Messiah has come.”*

Not...shaken: Paul did not want them to be shaken from this right perspective or proper vantage point. The desire of the enemy is to move us away from the truth and purposes of God – the things that Paul had written about to the Thessalonians (in both epistles). Paul wrote truth to them, and nothing has changed.

Mind: Perspective

Spirit: Paul is encouraging them not to be swayed by a spiritual/supernatural manifestation, or a so-called sign or wonder.

Word: He is imploring them to not be troubled by the words that some people are saying.

Epistle, as if from us: A letter written to this church by someone else, who falsely claims that it had been written by Paul or his helpers. Paul warned them that if any letters came to them that did not agree with or taught something different from Paul’s two letters written to them then they were to treat those letters as false.

The Day of Messiah: The Day of Messiah and the Day of the Lord are two completely different events. ‘The Day of Messiah’ is a term that appears six times in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 1:8, 2 Corinthians 1:14, Philippians 1:6 and 10, Philippians 2:16 and 2 Thessalonians 2:2). The term ‘the Day of the Lord’ is used even less frequently in the New Testament – 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 2 Peter 3:10. The ‘Day of the Lord’, although emphasised in the Old Testament (particularly in the prophetic writings), is not emphasised in the New Testament. The emphasis in the New Testament is on the Day of Messiah. This is because the believers will participate in the Day of Messiah, but they will not be on earth for the ‘Day of the Lord’ – a day of wrath and judgment. The Day of the Lord happens in conjunction with the time of Jacob's tribulation or trouble (Jeremiah 30:7). This is a time of great persecution for the Jewish people at the hands of the antichrist. The antichrist will persecute the Jewish people because they do not accept him as their Messiah, they reject him. This is going to be a time for the Jewish people like they have never experienced before – Daniel 12:1 (Even worse than the Holocaust). The antichrist (satan incarnate) knows the importance of Israel in God's future plans - His plans to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. The antichrist knows that Israel has to get right spiritually with God before His Kingdom comes (Matthew 23:37-39).

Verse 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.”*

Note: The things mentioned here have to happen prior to the rapture – prior to the Day of Messiah.

Let no one deceive you: There is going to be a time of great deception in the world, all types of spiritual manifestations – their source is not God, but is satanic (Revelation 13:11-15).

Falling away: The apostasy. Before the Day of Messiah (the rapture) there is going to be a great apostasy or falling away within the church. Although this is a word that means a

'departure' it is NOT in any way a reference to the rapture. This word, within its New Testament context, is found in Acts 21:21 and Matthew 5:31. In both these cases this word speaks of a departure or a leaving of that which is good (the law, or one's wife) for something inferior or bad (something displeasing to God). This can in no way be used as a description of the rapture. Prior to the rapture there is going to be a departure from that which is good, that which is truth (1 John 2:19). When things get difficult in the last days people within the local congregations are going to leave en masse, as difficulty and persecution will not be what they "signed up" for. Persecution is going to separate true believers from false believers. The purpose of this apostasy is so that the man of sin (the antichrist) can be revealed. The apostasy lays the foundation for his revelation or manifestation.

Note: There was confusion among the Thessalonians. They thought that they were not going to suffer but now that they were caused them to be concerned that they had missed out on something. Paul had never taught them that they would not suffer for Messiah. In fact, we **will** suffer for Him, as suffering documents, or is a testimony of, our faith. By being willing to suffer for the name of Messiah Yeshua, we express the glory of God (Romans 8:17-18). Paul is assuring the Thessalonians that they have not missed out on anything.

Son of perdition: The antichrist is marked for destruction.

Chapter 2

Part 2: 2 Thessalonians 2:4-9

The Word of God is very specific. God tells us exactly what we need to know so that when He returns, we can be found faithful.

Verse 4: *"He will oppose and exalt himself above all that is called Godly, all that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."*

Note: Daniel speaks of these above-mentioned things, things that the antichrist is going to do, in Daniel 9:27, Daniel 11:36-39 and Daniel 12:11.

Temple of God: Specifically, the Holy of holies. What we can expect with the abomination of desolation is that the antichrist will go into the Holy of holies and declare himself God (Isaiah 14:13-14). His desire is to be worshipped by the nations and worshipped by Israel. The antichrist will begin by doing seemingly good things for Israel – he will encourage them to build the temple, he will want peace, prosperity and security for Israel. However, the source for all of this will be deception. His desire is that Israel will love and worship him. Believers are going to recognise what the antichrist is doing, and they are going to stand in opposition to him. As a result, many will be hated, persecuted and martyred (Matthew 24:9-13). It is when the antichrist is revealed, at that abomination of desolation, that the Jews are going to reject him, and the time of Jacob's trouble will begin. This time will also be the end of the church age, the fullness of the Gentiles ends with the rapture of the church (Romans 11:25, Luke 21:24). It is at this time that God will turn His attention back to Israel.

Verse 5: *“Do you not remember that when I was still with you, I taught you these things?”*

Verse 6: *“And now the restrainer, for the revealing of him in his season, you know.”*

Note: The restrainer is mentioned twice – 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7. In this verse the restrainer is mentioned in a gender that is neutral (ie neither masculine or feminine). In verse 7 the restrainer is mentioned in the masculine gender. This means that it cannot be referring to the church as the restrainer, as ‘ecclesia’ is in the feminine gender. This restrainer also cannot be the Holy Spirit, as the Holy Spirit, who is God, is omnipresent and cannot be ‘removed’ (Psalm 139:7-10).

You know: We do not know who the restrainer is – the Bible does not tell us. What we do know though is what the purpose of the restrainer is – to reveal to us, at the proper time, who the antichrist (‘him’) is. The antichrist is not sovereign. He does not choose when he will be revealed. God chooses the time.

Verse 7: *“For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work in the world, only the one who restrains is restraining now until out of the middle he will be moved.”*

The mystery of lawlessness is already at work in the world: The antichrist spirit has been in operation for the past 2000 years.

Lawlessness: Against the Torah (he is against the law of God because he loves sin). The character of the Torah is love. The Torah also defines righteousness, and righteousness is tied to the glory of God. Satan hates God being glorified as he wants all of the glory for himself.

Restrains: Written in the masculine.

Until: The antichrist cannot be revealed too early. He will only be revealed when God the Father says the time is right for him to be revealed. At that time the restrainer will move from the midst and will allow the antichrist to move forward with his agenda. This will begin with the abomination of desolation (that which is offensive to God).

Verse 8: *“At that time the man of lawlessness is going to be revealed, whom the Lord will reduce with the Spirit of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.”*

Reduce: Yeshua is going to render the antichrist and his work null and void at the appearance of His coming. However, Satan is not completely destroyed at Yeshua’s second coming but is bound for 1000 years before he is again briefly released (Revelation 20:2-10).

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

Lying: False.

Working of Satan: In 2 Thessalonians 2:7 we read about the working of lawlessness. Now Paul draws our attention to the working of Satan. When the antichrist is made visible (ie when he is revealed) it is by the working of Satan.

Chapter 2

Part 3: 2 Thessalonians 2:10-17

Paul's letters to the Thessalonians is very clear. He wanted to give them exact and precise information so that they (and now us) could know the truth. Paul did not want them to be caught unaware. He did not want them to be people who moved away from right doctrine. He wanted them to be people who faithfully stood in the last days.

Verse 10: *“And in all deception of unrighteousness among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”*

All deception of unrighteousness: The antichrist is going to encourage people to behave unrighteously or lawlessly (against the commandments of God).

Deception...among those who perish: If we operate in the spirit of the antichrist and not in the Holy Spirit it will lead to our destruction.

They did not receive the love of the truth: People who are deceived are deceived because they love falsehood, they not love truth. If the people had loved truth they would have been saved.

Verse 11: *“On account of this God will send to them the working out of delusion, that they should believe the lie.”*

A working out of: ἐνέργειαν (energeian). This word is used three times in this chapter. In 2 Thessalonians 2:7 it speaks of the working of lawlessness. In 2 Thessalonians 2:9 it speaks of the working of satan, and in this verse it speaks of the working of delusion. All of these works produce or manifest something. A certain type of behaviour produces lawlessness. The antichrist uses the workings of satan to manifest himself, and delusion is also produced by a certain type of behaviour. These are spiritual principles that God abides by. He does not purposefully, in a vacuum, cause delusion (deception) in people. If we embrace delusion it is going to have an effect in our lives.

Verse 12: *“In order that all of them, those who did not believe the truth, would be judged because they did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”*

Note: When we reject the truth, we are embracing unrighteousness. Unrighteousness is what the wrath of God is going to destroy.

Verse 13: *“But we ought to always give thanks to God concerning you brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.”*

Brethren: The Thessalonian believers. This congregation was being persecuted and were going through intense tribulation. This was not the wrath of God or because they had missed out on the rapture (which they had not) but it was because of their faithfulness. This congregation is a paradigm. It is an example of what the church can, by and large, expect in the last days - persecution for faithfulness.

God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation: It is only once we are in Messiah that we are called 'chosen'. God has chosen, before even the foundation of the world, that every person who submits to the Lordship and authority of Messiah will receive salvation. God's selection does not cause us to choose or reject the gospel. God's selection is only applicable to those who are 'In Christ'.

Sanctification by the Spirit: It is only through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that we can mature, grow and have victory in this life. Sanctification or regeneration is a transforming process that only a believer can go through.

Belief: Faith

Verse 14: *"For the One who chose you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Messiah Yeshua."*

Chose: We can only be chosen through our acceptance of the gospel (Messiah Yeshua). We were not chosen to accept the gospel, but we were chosen because of our acceptance of the gospel.

The obtaining of the glory: Yeshua shares His glory with believers (Romans 8:17). When we are walking in righteousness, we reflect the glory of God. We do not have any of our own glory (unlike Yeshua, we are not the source of glory – Luke 9:32), but we can reflect God's glory. Yeshua, because He is God, emanates glory. As humans, however, through sanctification and walking in obedient righteousness we have the opportunity to reflect God's glory.

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

Therefore: As a result of all of this

Traditions: The apostle's doctrines.

Verse 16: *"Now may our Lord Messiah Yeshua Himself, and the God and Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace,"*

Eternal comfort: This is our Kingdom hope. No matter what suffering we go through in this world we have a promise that, once we enter into the Kingdom of God, we are going to be eternally comforted. Messiah suffered for a season, but His suffering came to an end. This is the promise that God has given to us. Our suffering may last for a season, but it too will come to an end. Another comfort that we can take from suffering is that it brings us into fellowship (intimacy) with Messiah (Philippians 3:8-11) – we become like Him.

Good hope by grace: Grace not only saves us, but it also moves us to do the will of God (Titus 2:11-14). Our hope is that God's will is fulfilled through our lives – that we do the things that God has called us to do. We are dependant on God's grace for this.

Verse 17: *"To comfort your hearts and to strengthen you in every good word and every good work."*

Good word: Referring to the revelation of God's will. It is through God's Word that we know His will. We want to know God's will so that we are able to accomplish it.

Good work: Those works that are done in order to accomplish God's will.

Chapter 3

The Apostle Paul had an effective ministry. God moved through him in the ones that he was ministering to. What is unique about Paul is that he constantly prayed for those that he was serving. Paul loved and prayed for this group of believers in Thessaloniki.

Verse 1: *"Finally, brethren, you pray concerning us, so that the word of the Lord should run and bring glory, just as it has with you."*

Finally: This word does not mean that Paul is getting tired or that he is coming to an end. It is a word that means that he has some remaining points he wants to remind them of.

You pray concerning us: Paul prays for them (2 Thessalonians 1:3, 11), but he is also requesting that they would pray for him.

Run: Paul desired that the Word of the Lord (the gospel, righteous doctrine) would be released into the world in a quick manner.

Just as it has with you: God did a mighty work in this congregation. Although they were persecuted, this persecution confirmed their identity as believers in Messiah.

Verse 2: *"Also in order that we should be delivered from perverse and evil men, for not all have faith."*

Delivered: Paul, because he was committed to the work of God, experienced a lot of opposition.

Perverse and evil men: Satan has his followers on earth, those who are under his authority (most of them do not even realize that they are under his authority).

Verse 3: *"But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen you and keep you from evil."*

Strengthen: He roots us and establishes us. God works mightily in the lives of those who believe and trust in Him. He ensures that we are firmly planted. It is only when we are firmly planted in His will that we have access to His power and to His perspective. When we are in God's will we can pray effectively.

Evil: A word that means that which is contrary to the will of God.

Verse 4: *"But being convinced in the Lord concerning you that the things that we have commanded you that you are doing and will do."*

Note: This is a word of encouragement. Paul had confidence that this church of believers were going to make right decisions. He was sure that they were going to choose the things that honoured God, and that they were going to be a blessing to others.

Convinced: Confident

Verse 5: *“He will straighten your heart in the love of God and for the perseverance of Messiah.”*

Note: This is a very important principle: in order to have that perseverance or endurance of Messiah (the same endurance that caused Him to conquer the cross) we need to have our hearts (thoughts and perceptions) straightened (brought into order) in the love of God.

Verse 6: *“And what we have commanded you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Messiah Yeshua, that you withdraw from every brother who walks idly and not according to the commandment which he received from us.”*

Name: Name is synonymous with character. Yeshua’s character needs to become our character. What He did we should be doing. Sometimes this means that we need to make difficult decisions.

Walks idly: This person is not working for their sustenance (provision) and nor are they doing good works in regard to the things of God. We have to be people who are able to balance our physical needs with our spiritual needs. We need to order our lives in such a way that we can meet our physical needs but serve God at the same time. Often these two areas in our lives are not in balance.

Verse 7: *“For you yourselves know how it was necessary for you to mimic us, for we were not idle among you.”*

Mimic us: Imitate us. When Paul and his friends were among the Thessalonians, they behaved in a certain way so that the Thessalonians could learn from them how they ought to behave.

Verse 8: *“Nor without payment did we eat the bread from someone, but in labour and in difficulty, night and day, we worked not to be a burden to any of you.”*

Night and day: Sometimes working involves working at nighttime or late into the night, and sometimes it involves getting up early in the morning. Paul worked whenever he had to, in order that he could perform and do the will that God had called him to do.

We worked: As an apostle Paul had the right, as a worker of the gospel, to earn wages from the gospel. However, he chose not to use that right amongst the Thessalonians, as he wanted to be an example to them of how to balance the physical and spiritual. He also wanted to give them an example of how committed he was to them.

Verse 9: *“Not that we did not have the authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.”*

Authority: Meaning the authority of an apostle.

Make ourselves an example: This is why they did what they did.

Verse 10: *“For also when we were with you this we commanded you, that if someone does not work he shall not eat.”*

If someone does not work he shall not eat: We are expected to labour - to do what is necessary to provide for our needs (1 Timothy 5:8). Work is good. We are called to work, and we are called to serve. These two things need to be in balance in our lives.

Verse 11: *“For we have heard how there are those who walk among you who have a lifestyle of idleness but are busybodies.”*

A lifestyle of idleness: These people did not want to work.

Busybodies: They were always meddling in other people's business and lives. They were doing what God did not want them to do. We need to be busy with our own business, and not meddle in the affairs of others.

Verse 12: *“But to these that are such we order and exhort through our Lord Messiah Yeshua that with quietness they work and eat their own bread.”*

Eat their own bread: We should work in a quiet way, eating and enjoying what our own hands provide. This then becomes a testimony to others of how to live by faith.

Verse 13: *“But you brethren do not grow weary in doing good.”*

Good: Those things which are in accordance with the will of God. These are the things we need to do. These are the things which are pleasing to God.

Verse 14: *“But if a certain one does not obey our word through this epistle, mark this person and do not associate with him in order that he would be ashamed.”*

Note: There are times when we need to behave with tough love. There are times when someone is not behaving properly, and they need to be put out of the congregation or not associated with until they repent. This putting out or disassociating with them should not be done with animosity, but it needs to be done in love.

Verse 15: *“Do not as an enemy consider him but admonish him as a brother.”*

Verse 16: *“But the Lord of peace will give to you peace through all things in every way. The Lord be with you all.”*

Note: When Paul ends his letters, he ends with a word of encouragement. He tells the congregation of his love and of the purposes that God wants to bring about through this group.

The Lord of peace: This name for the Lord does not mean that He is there to give us quietness and ease. It is a name that speaks about the God who works according to His will. We experience peace when we do the will of God.

Peace through all things in every way: God moves in a variety of ways to bring us into His will. The God of peace is the God who moves His people to accomplish His purposes.

Verse 17: *“Greetings by my own hand, Paul, which is a sign in every epistle, that thus far I have written.”*

Greetings: Paul is concluding or closing off his letter.

By my own hand: Paul probably had a scribe or a secretary (another disciple or fellow believer) who wrote the bulk of his letter for him, but he would then finish off the letter with his own handwriting and signature.

Verse 18: *“The grace of our Lord Messiah Yeshua be with all of you. Amen.”*

Grace: It is no accident that Paul so frequently writes about grace throughout his epistles. Grace gives us liberty (freedom) – not liberty to do our own wills, but liberty to do God’s will. Grace has a purpose beyond saving us. Grace brings about a conformity in our lives to God's will. When we accept Messiah, grace works in our lives to change us to become more and more like Yeshua (He must become greater we must become less – John 3:30). When the Israelites left Egypt, they were set free, they had liberty. This freedom or redemption was not so that they could fulfil their own purposes, but they were set free to go and worship God (Exodus 7:16, Exodus 8:1 etc). In the wilderness God wanted to equip the children of Israel to faithfully and obediently carry out His instructions and commandments. Israel rejected this calling and purpose. They stood at a distance. May this never be said of us. May we, by His grace, serve Him humbly and obediently all the days of our lives.