

**A PERSONAL
VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY**

2THESSALONIANS

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2Th. 1:1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

2Th. 1:2 Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This opening is almost word for word the same as the opening in the first letter. The same comments apply.

In this salutation we learn that this letter to the Thessalonians was a joint missive from Paul, Silvanus (whom we know more readily as Silas), and Timothy. In two places in this letter (2:5; 3:17) Paul identifies himself in such a way as to logically conclude that he was the primary author.

Paul identifies the church as positioned **in** God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is another statement of the unity of Father and Son. Using the phrase “God the Father” is a term that marks distinction between the Father and His Son within that unity. The phrase “Lord Jesus Christ” is a direct reference to Jesus as the Messiah (Christ = Christos = Messiah) and as the One to whom we, as believers, are to submit as Lord/Master.

Paul begins every letter he writes with a blessing of grace and peace to the recipients. (Hebrews would be the only exception if he is the author of that epistle.) *Grace* is a reference to “the divine influence upon the heart” and *peace* is a reference to “quietness, rest, set at one again.” Grace and peace go hand in hand. They are both the result of recognition of God’s provision for our sin through His Son Jesus and submitting to Him as Lord in our lives.

2Th. 1:3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

The similarity to the first letter continues in this verse as well.

Paul, Silas and Timothy were evidently prayer partners on a regular basis while they traveled together. They recognized the importance that Jesus had placed on prayer and knew, as did James, that “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16). Logic concludes that unity in prayer will only strengthen the effectiveness of that prayer. As they prayed, they were faithful to remember those to whom they had ministered. The Greek for *meet* indicates that they were able to give thanks for the Thessalonian believers because their testimony was deserving or worthy of such thanks.

In the first epistle they were expressing thanks for the works of this body of believers—especially the fact that these works were an outflow of their faith, love and hope. In this epistle Paul was happy to note that the believers weren’t resting on their laurels or lapsing into an attitude of contentment with their level of spiritual growth; they were growing—not just with baby steps, but with giant leaps.

2Th. 1:4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

Paul and his companions were proud to be able to brag about the testimony of the Thessalonians as they visited other churches. They continued to exhibit cheerful endurance (from the Greek for *patience*) and a firm, non-wavering commitment to the truth of God's word in spite of experiencing *persecution* and *tribulation* for that commitment. Those two words include a range of possibilities—from verbal harassment to actual bodily harm.

2Th. 1:5 Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

2Th. 1:6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

“recompense” = repay; Webster: to return an equivalent for, to give in turn

It seems that Paul is saying that the testimony of these believers would serve as a witness to the righteous judgment of God when He judges those who have persecuted these believers. Scripture makes it clear that vengeance and judgment belong to the Lord.

Psa. 94:1 O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.

John 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

I think this is a very important truth, because only God has the character to make righteous judgment, judgment that is based on the truth alone and has absolutely no selfish motives or partiality. I think the last half of verse six makes it clear that the persecutions and tribulations referenced in verse 4 are connected to their faith in Jesus Christ.

I think we have to take time to consider the phrase “counted worthy.” Nothing we can do can make us worthy of God's kingdom. The fact that one is willing to suffer for his/her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is evidence of their position as a child of God. As James emphasizes in his epistle, works are a proof of our faith.

James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Because they have accepted Jesus, His righteousness has been imparted to them and they can then be “counted worthy.”

2Cor. 5:21 For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

2Th. 1:7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

2Th. 1:8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

“you who are troubled” = the Thessalonian believers (as well as any other believers suffering persecution and/or tribulation)

“rest with us” = relax, be at ease, enjoy freedom from persecution with us (Paul and his companions as representative of other believers)

Only when we are with Jesus will be truly free from the troubles of this world and able to let down our spiritual guard.

When? When the Lord returns as King of kings with his mighty armies (plural). We know that not one being who accompanies the Lord at His return will have to participate in the fight because He will accomplish victory with the “sword of His mouth.” This time is described clearly in Revelation.

Rev. 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

Rev. 19:12 His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

Rev. 19:13 And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

Rev. 19:14 And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

Rev. 19:15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Rev. 19:16 And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Who is He coming to “judge and make war?” Those who “know not God” and have not accepted Jesus as Lord. To *know* the true God is to accept and obey His “only begotten” Son as Savior and Lord.

Rom. 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Although Paul singles out the angels of heaven as accompanying the Lord, I think that is because they are a unique unit in the armies of heaven. I would like to include an excerpt from my journal on Revelation 9:14 that I think applies here.

Jesus is not alone; He is followed by the armies of heaven. They are dressed in fine linen, white and clean. We know that everyone and everything in heaven is dressed appropriately. At this point, you cannot discount any of the servants of God in heaven as part of this army—angels or redeemed ones.

Zech. 14:5 And ye shall flee *to* the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, *and all the saints with thee*.

1Th. 3:13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ **with all his saints.**

Who are the saints? Verses 7-8 indicate that the church, the bride of Christ, are some of them.

Col. 3:4 When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

2Th. 1:9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

2Th. 1:10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

Who is going to be punished? Those who “know not God” and who have not accepted Jesus as Lord. How will they be punished? By being cast away from the presence of the Lord forever; they will never again experience any of the blessings associated with His power and glory. What is one of the reasons for the Lord’s physical return to planet earth? To receive His proper recognition from ALL people of faith as their Lord and Savior. The wording is clear that it won’t just be those who survive that time of God’s wrath as men and women of faith, but men and women of faith of all time. To finally see the multitude of men and women who have responded to God in faith in spite of the efforts of the enemy will be one part of His glory. To fulfill all the promises of His word before all people of faith will be another part of His glory. The word *admired* comes from a root that means “to look closely, to perceive.” I think this is saying that we will be amazed at person of our Lord and how He could possibly have desired our fellowship so much that He willingly suffered the cross and the rejection of His Father for even a moment to make a way for that fellowship to be restored.

Paul seemed to be taking special joy of the fact that the Thessalonians would be part of that multitude because of their ministry among them.

2Th. 1:11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the work of faith with power:

“Wherefore” – Based on the preceding truth....

As referenced in 1Thessalonians 3:5, I believe Paul was so motivated to pray for the Thessalonian believers because he was aware that only God can know the heart. Men can be fooled. People can pretend to be what they are not for many different reasons. Paul is quick to rejoice when he sees fruit that indicates true spiritual transformation in the lives of those who claim Jesus as Lord, but he stays ever alert and concerned for the spiritual well-being of each body of believers.

As noted earlier, the *worthiness* of the believer is dependent solely upon the work of Jesus in his/her life. The “and” indicates that the worthiness is prerequisite to fulfilling His goodness and the work of faith with power. This is another verse

that makes me wish I knew Greek. Several translations associate the fulfilling of goodness to God fulfilling our good intentions and desires. I guess it really doesn't matter since any good intentions or desires that we have are birthed from the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Scripture is clear that there is no good apart from God.

Psa. 53:1 The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God.* Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: ***there is none that doeth good.***

3John 11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. **He that doeth good is of God:** but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

Again, the "work of faith with power" is a reference to the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

2Tim. 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Again, the prerequisite to that power is our worthiness that is established by grace through faith.

Eph. 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

Eph. 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

2Th. 1:12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul seems to sum up the reason for his prayers in this verse:

1. That the name of Jesus be glorified in the believer.
2. That the believer be glorified in Jesus.

That God be glorified is always to be the priority. That the believer be glorified in the Savior is the most precious blessing of the child of God. The prerequisite to either of these things being possible is through the abundant grace of Father and Son. As I continued to look at this verse, I connected the grace of God the Father to Christ being glorified in the believer because it was His purpose to redeem us through the sacrifice of His Son. Each time a person responds in faith to that provision there is great joy in heaven and the glory of the Son is recognized anew.

Luke 15:10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

I connected the grace of Jesus to our being glorified in Him because it was through His willing obedience to His Father that we are redeemed. It is only through His provision that we have any position worthy of glory.

Is. 43:7 *Even every one that is called by my name:* for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

Heb. 2:10 For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

2Pet. 1:3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: