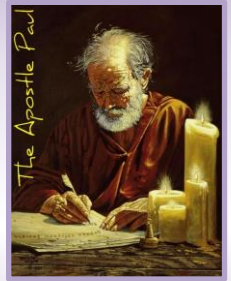


# THESSALONIANS

## There Is Hope!



### Lesson 10: Blessed Hope: Part I ... [2 THESSALONIANS 1:1-12]

#### PREVIEW

We are about to embark on a journey into a study of the second epistle to the Thessalonians and as we do we need to stop and ask the question: WHY SHOULD WE STUDY THIS EPISTLE? The answer is the same for all Scripture, and is addressed in 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for DOCTRINE, for REPROOF, for CORRECTION, for INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS,<sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

#### REASONS TO STUDY SCRIPTURE: IT IS PROFITABLE FOR ...

DOCTRINE	Know what is <b>right</b>
REPROOF	Know what is <b>wrong</b>
CORRECTION	Know how to <b>make it right</b>
INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS	Know how to <b>keep getting it right</b>

In chapter one, Paul praises the Thessalonians for their enduring faith in the midst of severe persecution. Their posture toward God is evidence that they are worthy of the coming kingdom of God. Their persecution should not be understood as evidence of God's disfavor. In addition, Paul tells the Thessalonians to take heart because Jesus is coming in power, to make all things right. There will be a role reversal at the Second Coming. The Thessalonians, who are now suffering, will be vindicated and elevated in status. The persecutors, who currently enjoy an upper hand, will be judged and destroyed by Christ. Finally, Paul prays that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ be glorified in them.

#### A WORD OF PRAISE: 2 THESSALONIANS 1:1-4

The 2<sup>nd</sup> epistle to the Thessalonians begins in much the same way as the 1<sup>st</sup> epistle (verses 1-2). The letter is **from** Paul, Silvanus and Timothy and **to** the church of the Thessalonians. In these two verses, Paul twice alludes to GOD OUR FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The close connection of the Father and the Lord Jesus implies the deity of Christ.

#### GRACE TO YOU AND PEACE

In verse 2 Paul uses the phrase "GRACE TO YOU AND PEACE". Grace and peace are the necessary ingredients for daily Christian sanctified living - both of which originate in, and emanate from God (1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Corinthians 12:9). Grace (GOD'S RICHES AT CHRIST'S EXPENSE) always precedes Peace.

In verse 3 Paul uses the word "BOUND" in the context of paying a debt. Paul owes it to Thessalonians to thank God always for them. This brings up a practical problem:

#### PRACTICAL PROBLEM: HOW SHOULD WE DEAL WITH CHRISTIANS WHO ARE DOING WELL IN THEIR DISCIPLESHIP?

- 1) TELL THEM "WELL DONE"?  
Borders on flattery, promotes pride and robs God of His glory.
- 2) ACKNOWLEDGE THEM PRIVATELY IN YOUR PRAYERS AND SAY NOTHING?  
Permits discouragement.
- 3) THANK GOD FOR THEM, AND TELL THEM WE ARE DOING SO.  
Affirms without flattery; encourages without puffing up.

Paul commends the Thessalonians for their faith growing exceedingly. This should cause us to reflect.

Are **we** growing in **faith** each day?

Do **you** trust the **Lord** in **ALL** things? [Proverbs 3:5-6]

**OR DO THE URGENT THINGS PREEMPT THE IMPORTANT?**

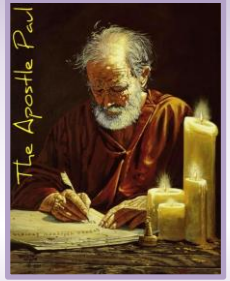
#### A WORD OF PROMISE: 2 THESSALONIANS 1:5-10

In verses 5-10 Paul addresses the righteous judgment of God. He makes the claim that God's righteous judgment was at work among the Thessalonians purifying them as followers of Jesus.

We usually think that God is absent when we suffer, and that our suffering calls God's righteous judgment into question. Paul took the exact opposite position and insisted that their suffering was evidence of the righteous judgment of God.

# THESSALONIANS

## *There Is Hope!*



### **Lesson 10: Blessed Hope: Part I ... [2 THESSALONIANS 1:1-12]**

Where suffering is coupled with righteous endurance, God's work is done. The fires of persecution and tribulation were like the purifying fires of a refiner, burning away the dross from the gold, bringing forth a pure, precious metal.

#### SINCE IT IS A RIGHTEOUS THING WITH GOD

Many people question the righteousness of God's judgment. They believe that God's love and His judgment contradict each other. But God's judgment is based on the great spiritual principle that it is a righteous thing with God to repay those who do evil.

Therefore since God is righteous, He will repay all evil, and it will all be judged and accounted for either at the cross (BELIEVER) or in hell (NON-BELIEVER).

The judgment of God means that there is nothing unimportant in my life. Everything is under the eye of a God I must answer to.

**"A world in which justice was not done at last would not be God's world at all." ... Hiebert**

#### TO REPAY WITH TRIBULATION THOSE WHO TROUBLE YOU

God was also shown as righteous when those who persecuted the Thessalonians were repaid with tribulation according to their evil works.

They probably believed they did God a favor when they persecuted the Christians, but the righteous God would repay them and not reward them.

The tribulation upon these persecutors of God's people is not like a purifying fire. It is like the fire of a pure and holy judgment.

#### AND TO GIVE YOU WHO ARE TROUBLED REST

The Thessalonian Christians were persecuted and had tribulation; and God used it for His glory. But the time of persecution would not last. A day of rest is promised for every believer.

#### IN FLAMING FIRE TAKING VENGEANCE

This is what the Day of Judgment will be like for those who persecuted the Thessalonians.

It isn't the fire that makes hell what it is. We see in the fiery furnace, the three Jewish young men were completely comfortable, as long as the Lord was with them in the fire (Daniel 3).

What truly characterizes hell is that there, people are from the presence of the Lord, in the sense of being apart from anything good or blessed in God's presence.

Nothing more needs to be said about hell's horrors, other than it will be completely devoid of God and every aspect of His character, except one: His unrelenting holy justice.

#### EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION

The blessing of Heaven is eternal, just as the penalty of Hell is eternal. Paul uses the word EVERLASTING - *aiōnios* (ī-ō'-nē-os) which means without end or never to cease.

For the persecutors, those who do not know God, and those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus, there will be everlasting destruction. In contrast, for the persecuted saints, those who believe, they will have God glorified in them on that Day, and they will see and admire Jesus more than ever. We as believers will admire what God has done in others and in us.

#### **A WORD OF PRAYER: 2 THESSALONIANS 1:11-12**

Since the Thessalonian Christians were in the midst of persecution and tribulation, they needed prayer. Here, Paul assured them that he and his team were always in prayer for them.

**Do you pray always for fellow believers?**

The great work of living worthy of His calling can only happen according to the grace of God. It happens by His power, favor, and acceptance in work in us, moving along our will and cooperation (Ephesians 1:7-9).