

II Thessalonians 2:10–3:5

II Thessalonians 2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

WHEN men do not love truth or count it as their greatest joy,¹ they make themselves fertile for deception. Ultimately it is the engrafted Word that saves a man's soul² and the kept Word that keeps him from sinning against God.³ Thus, at the core of all apostasy is the reality that those who apostatized from the truth held no real affection for the truth. They did not love the inspired Word of God⁴ and therefore could not be saved. It is this absence of love for God and His Word that sets the table for human deception by evil forces.⁵

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 2:10) And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness—*There are two ideas here. The first is, that there would be deceit; and the other is, that it would be for the purpose of promoting unrighteousness or iniquity. The iniquitous system would be maintained by fraudulent methods.

Scripture reveals that the Antichrist will lead people toward unrighteousness through deceit. Iniquity is an odious thing, so much so that even those born in sin will not fully embrace it without a level of deception. For sin to fully grow, deception is needed in order to present good as evil and evil as good.⁶ The people most susceptible to the Antichrist's deceptive methods will be those who took pleasure in unrighteousness because of their affection for sin. Hence, when men lack a deep and affectionate love for the truth, all that is left for them is a love for the world and sin. What people love directly affects what they believe. Therefore, a man's appetites will eventually determine both his beliefs and his destiny. What the heart cherishes most, whether it is God or the world, greatly determines what the soul believes. This is why if a man embraces sin and not God, he cannot escape deception. Observe as well that love for the truth is directly linked to love for God. Therefore, men's abandonment of the Word of God sends a very clear and unambiguous message that they prefer

1 Jer. 15:16 *Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.*

2 Jas. 1:21 *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*

3 Ps. 119:11 *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

4 II Tim. 3:16 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

II Pet. 1:21 *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

Gal. 1:11–12 *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. ¹²For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

5 Eph. 6:12 *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

6 Isa. 5:20 *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*

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love of self,⁷ sin,⁸ and the world⁹ above love for the Creator.

II Thessalonians 2:11 *And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:*

To those who do not possess affection for the truth, God will send them *strong delusion, that they should believe a lie*. One of the great purposes of the truth is that God has designed it to keep men from sin.¹⁰ Thus, when men by deliberate choice reject both God and His will for their lives, then sin can do nothing but spread and ultimately completely delude them. There is always a point after sinners have been given sufficient warning by God concerning their sin when the Lord gives them up and over¹¹ to both Satan and the sin they so willingly cherished. It is at this point that God sends *them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie*.

(*Benson Commentary*, II Thess. 2:11) *For this cause God shall send them*—That is, shall judicially permit to come upon them; *strong delusion*—The strong working of error in their hearts. From this we learn that, as a punishment of their sins, God suffers wicked men to fall into greater sins; and as the sin of the persons described in this passage consisted

in their not loving the truth, what could be more just or proper than to punish them, by suffering them to fall into the belief of the greatest errors and lies? Thus the heathen, mentioned Romans 1:24,¹² were punished by God's giving them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts; that they should believe a lie—Or, as the words εἰς τὸ πιστεῦσαι αὐτοὺς τὴν ψεῦδει may be translated, *so that they will believe a lie*.

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, II Thess. 2:11) *And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion*: we had account in the former verse of such as are deceived by the man of sin, of their sin, and here of their punishment. They were first deluded, which was their sin; and God sends them strong delusion, and that is their punishment. They did not receive the truth in the love of it, which was their sin; and therefore are given up to believe a lie, which is their punishment. Had they received the truth aright, they might have been saved; but not receiving it, they are damned.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, II Thess. 2:11) God often places people in circumstances to develop their own nature, and it cannot be shown to be wrong that He should do so. If people have no love of the truth, and no desire to be saved, it is not improper that they should be allowed to manifest this.

7 II Tim. 3:1–4 *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;*

8 John 3:19 *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

II Thess. 2:12 *That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

9 I John 2:15 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

10 Ps. 19:11 *Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.*

11 Rom. 1:24 *Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:*

Rom. 1:26 *For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:*

Rom. 1:28 *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;*

12 Rom. 1:24 *Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:*

What men sow they will reap.¹³ The English idiom “The chickens have come home to roost” informs us that even in an ungodly world, men are aware that their past actions will result in future consequences. However, Geoffrey Chaucer’s idea in “The Parson’s Tale”¹⁴ cannot even remotely compare to what God’s Word reveals on this important subject—that if men reject the truth, God will ensure that they believe a lie, teaching us that even in unbelief and rebellion, the Lord maintains control over all things and will yield to every man exactly as he has sown.

Though Satan and the man of sin may begin the process of deception in those who willingly reject the truth, it is the Lord Who finishes it.

(Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers, II Thess. 2:11) A terrible combination when God and Satan are agreed to deceive a man! Yet what an encouragement to see God using Satan for His own purposes.

II Thessalonians 2:12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The emphasis here is that *all* who loved sin and followed the *man of sin* will be *damned*. *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon* defines *damned*, the Greek *krinó* #2919, “to separate, put asunder; to pick out, select, choose.” What this reveals is that those who will be damned and judged by God will be selected and separated out for their sin. That *all might be damned who believed not the truth* reveals that *all*, without exception, who chose sin over God will be damned and ultimately punished by God.¹⁵

II Thessalonians 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

In comforting contrast to those who will be damned because of their affection for sin, the apostle now turns to what God has purposed for the Thessalonian believers who had exhibited a belief in and love for the gospel. They are referred to as *beloved of the Lord*. The apostle identifies two powerful forces that led to the Thessalonians’ sanctification: first, sanctification by God’s Spirit,¹⁶ and second, sanc-

¹³ Gal. 6:7 *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

¹⁴ “And ofte tyme swich cursynge wrongfully retorneth agayn to hym that curseth, as a bryd that retorneth agayn to his owene nest.” [And often times such cursing wrongfully returns again to him that curses, as a bird that returns again to his own nest.]

¹⁵ Gen. 6:13; 7:18, 21 *And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. . . .*¹⁸ *And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. . . .*²¹ *And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man:*

Gen. 19:24–25 *Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;*²⁵ *And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.*

Num. 25:1–3, 9 *And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. ²And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. ³And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel. . . .*⁹ *And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.*

I Sam. 6:19 *And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter.*

¹⁶ I Pet. 1:2 *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.*

tification that comes from a belief of the truth.¹⁷ Because also God is God, He can just as easily sanctify a soul for heaven and cleanse it of sin as He can send sinners to hell because of their love for sin. The Lord's power to cleanse, therefore, should never be thought less than His power to damn. Thus, those who love God's Word will be as thoroughly cleansed from their sin as sinners will be damned for theirs. Both salvation and damnation reside in God's power, and how men live while upon the earth will determine whether they are either forgiven or damned.

Believers can know and be personally comforted that God has chosen them for salvation because of their possession of the Holy Spirit. For none can truly possess the Lord's Holy Spirit without being baptized by God's Son and becoming a child of God through Him.¹⁸ This is why being given the Holy Spirit¹⁹ certifies heavenly sonship²⁰ and confirms that a person has been made by divine power a son of God.²¹

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 2:13) No one can have evidence that he is chosen to salvation except as he has evidence that he is sanctified by the Spirit; ... No one who is not a believer in the truth can have evidence that God has chosen him.

I Cor. 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Rom. 15:16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

17 John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

18 John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

19 Acts 5:32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

Rom. 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

I John 3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

1 John 4:13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

20 Gal 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

21 I John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

II Thessalonians 2:14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As dark and dreary as will be the apostasy through the man of sin's rise to power, equally as brilliant will be the heavenly glory Jesus confers upon those who have believed upon Him. In truth, there is no gray area between light and darkness, no middle ground upon which any man will be allowed to stand. Either saints will be glorified because of their connection to the Son of God, or sinners will be condemned because of their rejection of His authority.

Obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whenever we think of heaven and life beyond this earthly abode, we should think of it as God describes it and not as we might be misled to believe it will be. It is not simply that a man will enter a land of heavenly bliss, smoke expensive cigars, and live a life of ease but rather that those called by Jesus Christ will obtain and share in the *glory* of Jesus Christ.

One of the great reasons that most do not truly believe in heaven is that the heaven they attempt to believe in is one formed thoroughly through human imagination. And like all things fictional and made up,

it will prove impossible to deeply believe in that which does not exist. This is why there will never be any lasting comfort if men try to believe in heaven without sincere and genuine faith in the Son of God. All heavenly glory for the saint resides in Jesus Christ, and there exists no true glory or hope of heaven apart from Him. The contrast to a make-believe heaven is the possession of genuine faith in God's Son and being given the hope of being glorified with Him. This is the true hope of the gospel, and it will provide great spiritual encouragement when believed. *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory* (Col. 1:27).

Earthly children share the characteristics of their fathers, and the children of God will be no different. Because of their faith,²² God's new sons will share in the glory of the only-begotten Son. And though this coming glorification will not be equal to Christ's, it will be of the same constitution and worth as Christ's. This will include sharing in the same heavenly body as the Savior.²³ One record in Scripture that reveals a glimpse of Christ's glory is found in Matthew's gospel regarding Christ's transfiguration before Peter, James, and John. *And after six days Jesus*

taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light (Matt. 17:1–2). It was not by accident that Jesus led His trusted followers to the top of a mountain to reveal to them His future glory—simply because it would prove necessary and essential for Christ to ascend and enter into heaven, which is high above the earth, to receive His full glory from God.²⁴

The word for *transfigured* is the Greek #3339 *metamorphoō*. HELPS Word-studies defines it as “(from 3326 /*metá*, ‘change after being with’ and 3445 /*morphoō*, ‘changing form in keeping with inner reality’)—properly, transformed after being with; transfigured.” From this word we get the English terms *metamorphosis* and *metamorphize*. No doubt, the sight of the Lord Jesus in heavenly glory did much to encourage the disciples that their faith in Christ was warranted as they became *eyewitnesses of his majesty*.²⁵ What Peter, James, and John saw when Jesus' face shone as the sun was similar to, yet greater than, what was observed of Moses when he came down from the mount.²⁶ It was also the brilliant and spectacular celestial light that radiated from Jesus' being that

22 John 3:36 *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

John 6:40 *And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

John 11:25 *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:*

John 20:31 *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

23 I Cor. 15:49 *And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.* Phil. 3:21 *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

24 Luke 24:26 *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?*

25 II Peter 1:16 *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

26 Exod. 34:29–30 *And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.* ³⁰*And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.*

bore witness to His being the Son of God. Jesus' transformation also was a visible witness of His heavenly deity. Whereas Moses' face shone because of his having been in the presence of God, the entirety of Christ's body emitted the light and glory of the holy Father. It is a form of this celestial glory observed on the Mount of Transfiguration that the apostle John reveals believers will be partakers of. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is* (I John 3:2). The time of the believer's glorification is directly linked to his sight of the Savior, inferring that there will be such an effect on the saved when they come in direct and personal contact with the Lord Jesus that their own beings, their mortal bodies, will be changed in the process. It is also this heavenly transformation that will allow the children of God to fully view the celestial glory and deity that is Christ's.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 3:2) see him— ... Our spiritual bodies will appreciate and recognize spiritual beings hereafter, as our natural bodies now do natural objects.

II Thessalonians 2:15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

It is one thing to be taught the truth, and it is quite another to fully obey it. This is why the apostle exhorts the Thessalonians to hold fast to all that had been communicated to them, whether by word or epistle.

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves (Jas. 1:22).

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Jas. 1:22) Deceiving your own selves—*It is implied here, that by merely hearing the word but not doing it, they would deceive their own souls. The nature of this deception was this, that they would imagine that that was all which was required, whereas the main thing was that they should be obedient. If a man supposes that by a mere punctual attendance on preaching, or a respectful attention to it, he has done all that is required of him, he is laboring under a most gross self-deception. And yet there are multitudes who seem to imagine that they have done all that is demanded of them when they have heard attentively the word preached. Of its influence on their lives, and its claims to obedience, they are utterly regardless.

It makes no difference how we are exposed to the Word of truth, either by *word* or *epistle*. Regardless of whether God speaks to us through His Spirit²⁷ or through His Word, both should be obeyed accordingly. For if the Word of God is not held to, you can be sure it will never be believed. It is certain, then, that he who is soon to forget the truth will never live his life according to it.

II Thessalonians 2:16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

Through love of the Father and the Son, saints are given *everlasting consolation and good hope through grace*. This everlasting comfort has been imparted to

²⁷ John 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

John 16:13 *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

Acts 8:29 *Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.*

Acts 21:4 *And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.*

them by divine means, and it will not be taken away as it is said to be *everlasting*. To therefore sincerely and genuinely believe upon God will ensure receiving divine comfort from Him—a spiritual comfort also, which is permanent and gives good hope of a blessed future. Because God Himself is eternal, the comfort He provides to the saved cannot be anything less than eternal.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 2:16) And hath given us everlasting consolation.—Not temporary comfort, but that which will endure forever. The joys of religion are not like other joys. They soon fade away—they always terminate at death—they cease when trouble comes, when sickness invades the frame, when wealth or friends depart, when disappointment lowers, when the senses by age refuse to minister as they once did to our pleasures. The comforts of religion depend upon no such contingencies. They live through all these changes—attend us in sickness, poverty, bereavement, losses, and age; they are with us in death, and they are perpetual and unchanging beyond the grave.

II Thessalonians 2:17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

The Lord not only loves His children, gives them hope, and comforts their hearts,²⁸ but He also establishes them in every good word and work. Whenever then saints are grounded in the faith and established in every good word and work, it is because of God's mighty power and influence in their lives. It is not enough to say we believe the gospel if it does not affect our lives and the pursuit of doing good. Faith without works is dead,²⁹ and

28 II Cor. 1:3–4 *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; ³Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*

29 Jas. 2:17 *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*

30 Eph. 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

as such, sincerely believing upon Jesus Christ must result in pursuing doing good in His name. And though it is not good works that save a man, every true Christian will set about doing good after he has been saved. It is for this purpose that Christians have been created in Christ Jesus,³⁰ and they will begin fulfilling this purpose once they begin responding to God's call in Christ.

II Thessalonians 3:1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:

This verse reveals that it is never enough for the gospel to spread and accomplish its purposes in only one geographical area of the world but that God desires that His Word may be both received and glorified by all men.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 3:1) Finally, brethren, pray for us... That the word of the Lord may have free course—That is, the gospel. The margin is “run.” So also the Greek. The idea is, that it might meet with no obstruction, but that it might be carried abroad with the rapidity of a racer out of whose way every hindrance was removed. The gospel would spread rapidly in the earth if all the obstructions which men have put in its way were removed; and that they may be removed should be one of the constant subjects of prayer.

Whatever a man believes is his greatest strength is what he will lean on when setting out to do a work. Thus, if men believe that it is through their own power and ability that the gospel is advanced, then they will turn to themselves for the strength and wisdom to do it. Saving souls

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is the Lord's work,³¹ and this is why men can never be successful in reaching the lost without God's supernatural power assisting them. It is the Lord Who first prepares the sinner's heart before any can believe His Word.³²

Every true Christian's desire is that when others hear the truth, the Lord will be glorified by it. It is this glorification of God, His Son, and the Word of God that proves true belief in the gospel. For no one can truly glory in the Lord without first being saved by Him. It is sinners who mock God's messengers, reject His Word, and scoff at His prophets.³³ It is the righteous who believe God's ministers, rejoice and glory in His Word, and praise the Lord's holy name. By these simple realities it is easy to discern who are of the Lord and who are not.

II Thessalonians 3:2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

It is common that Christians who are early in the faith will consider all men exact-

ly like themselves, hence naïvely believing that if others had the same chance to believe, then they would. But sadly, this is not the case, simply because *all men have not faith*.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, II Thess. 3:2) have not faith—or as Greek, “the faith” of the Christian: the only antidote to what is “unreasonable and wicked.” The Thessalonians, from their ready acceptance of the Gospel (1 Th 1:5, 6),³⁴ might think “all” would similarly receive it; but the Jews were far from having such a readiness to believe the truth.

II Thessalonians 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.

As much as God is love³⁵ and light,³⁶ so also is He faithful.³⁷ We see this in the Lord's faithfulness to uphold His promises,³⁸ provide forgiveness for sin,³⁹ and receive those called to heaven through His Son.⁴⁰ The Lord is faithful, and this will be repeatedly proven when He establishes His saints and keeps them from evil.

31 Ps. 3:8 *Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.*

Ps. 62:1 *Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.*

Jnh. 2:9 *But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.*

32 Acts 16:14 *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.*

33 II Chrn. 36:16 *But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.*

34 I Thess. 1:5–6 *For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. ⁶And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.*

35 I John 4:8 *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

I John 4:16 *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

36 I John 1:5 *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

37 I Cor. 10:13 *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

38 Heb. 11:11 *Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.*

39 I John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

40 I Cor. 1:9 *God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

There is great truth concerning God's faithfulness; it is that if men deny God, His faithfulness demands that He will deny them. Thus, just as equally and certainly that God will preserve saints from evil, so will He with the same faithfulness and certainty send the ungodly and unbelieving to hell. Hence, just as the Lord will faithfully save the believer, so too will He faithfully judge and punish the unbeliever. *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself* (II Tim. 2:12–13).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, II Tim. 2:13) *Yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.*—Those who have understood these words as containing soothing, comforting voices for the sinner, for the faithless Christian who has left his first love, are gravely mistaken. The passage is one of distinct severity—may even be termed one of the sternest in the Book of Life; for it tells how it is impossible even for the pitiful Redeemer to forgive in the future life. “He cannot deny Himself”—cannot treat the faithless as though he were faithful—cannot act as though faithfulness and faithlessness were one and the same thing. The Christian teacher, such as Timothy, and the members of his flock likewise, must remember that, sure and certain as are the promises of glory and happiness to those who love the Lord and try to live His life, so surely will fall the chastisement on all who are faithless and untrue.

II Thessalonians 3:4 *And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye*

41 Phil. 1:6 *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*
 Phil. 4:7 *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*
 II Tim. 1:12 *For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*
 Jude 1:24 *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,*
 Rev. 3:10 *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*
 Prov. 28:26 *He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.*
 42 Phil. 2:13 *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

both do and will do the things which we command you.

At the base of all Christian ministry should be held great confidence that the Lord will do exactly as He has promised. It was his confidence in the Lord, and not necessarily the Thessalonians, that assured the apostle that the Thessalonians would obey what was commanded to them.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, II Thess. 3:4) *And we have confidence in the Lord*—Not primarily in you, for you have hearts like others, but in the Lord. It is remarkable that when Paul expresses the utmost confidence in Christians that they will live and act as becomes their profession, his reliance is not on anything in themselves, but wholly on the faithfulness of God. He must be a stranger to the human heart who puts much confidence in it even in its best state; see Philippians 1:6; Philippians 4:7; 2 Timothy 1:12; compare Jude 1:24; Revelation 3:10; Proverbs 28:26.⁴¹

Paul's confidence that the Thessalonians would do all that the Lord had commanded originated in the fact that he knew that God's Spirit now lived in them and that He would work in them both to will and to do His own good pleasure.⁴² Whereas sin had been the dominant power in the Thessalonians before conversion, now the Lord and His holiness held this position. And though sin could still tempt these new children of God, it could no longer control them. By imparting to them the Holy Spirit, God had provided for His

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people both the desire and that ability to keep His Word. *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them* (Ezek. 36:26–27).

(*Benson Commentary*, Ezek. 36:26) *A new heart also will I give you*—A new disposition of mind, excellent in itself, and vastly different from what it was before; a frame of soul changed from sinful to holy, from carnal to spiritual; a heart in which the law of God is written, Jeremiah 31:33;⁴³ a sanctified spirit, in which the almighty grace of God is victorious, and turns it from the world to God, and from all sin to all holiness; a state of mind which is the supernatural gift of God, and not wrought in any man by his own power. *And I will take away the stony heart*—The hard, senseless, unfeeling, inflexible heart; the heart unapt and averse to receive any divine impressions, and to return any devout affections. *Out of your flesh*—That is, out of you. *And I will give you a heart of flesh*—A soft and tender heart, that has spiritual senses exercised, and is conscious to itself of spiritual pains and pleasures; a heart of quite another temper, hearkening to God's law, trembling at his threats, moulded into a compliance with his whole will; disposed to do, to be, or to suffer what God wills; receiving the divine impress as soft wax receives the impress of the seal. *I will put my Spirit within you*—My enlightening, regenerating, and sanctifying Spirit; that Holy Spirit which is given to and dwells in all true believers; *and cause you*—Sweetly and powerfully, yet without compulsion; *to walk in my statutes*—In all my

ordinances and commandments, and that from judgment, choice, and affection. For our spirits, when renewed by God's Spirit to a disposition conformed to his holiness, readily comply with his will in all things, concur with his designs, and become *workers together with him. And ye shall keep my judgments, and do them*—Ye shall be willing and able to perform all acceptable obedience, and to live a life of universal holiness and righteousness.

II Thessalonians 3:5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

These spiritual qualities, the *love of God* and the *patient waiting for Christ*, are two of the most transformative works of God in the believer's heart, both of which are also indications of true salvation.

It was the Lord's Spirit that inspired the Thessalonians to obey the gospel, and that same Holy Spirit Who now directed and encouraged them to continue growing in the *love of God* and *patient waiting for Christ*.

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, II Thess. 3:5) Till man's love is set upon God, the motions of the heart are crooked and irregular; as the ways of sin are called *crooked ways*, Psalm 125:5;⁴⁴ and John [the] Baptist's ministry was to make crooked things straight, Isaiah 40:4.⁴⁵ The turning [of] man's heart and ways towards God makes them straight. David prays, Psalm 119:36:⁴⁶ *Incline my heart unto thy testimonies; ybm-jh* or, bend my heart; as we bend a crooked stick to make it straight. Or as he prays God to unite his heart to his fear, Psalm 86:11;⁴⁷ so here Paul,

43 Jer. 31:33 *But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

44 Ps. 125:5 *As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.*

45 Isa. 40:4 *Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:*

46 Ps. 119:36 *Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.*

47 Ps. 86:11 *Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.*

to direct theirs to his love, by which some understand all religion. We learn hence, that to direct man's heart to the love of God is the work of God, and beyond our power. And the hearts of the best saints stand in need of a more perfect and constant direction unto the love of God.

When manifested in Christians, it is love for God and their fellow man that reveals true knowledge of the Lord and a connection to the higher spiritual realm. Those

who dwell in love dwell in God,⁴⁸ and by this we know that the Spirit of God dwells in them.⁴⁹ It is only those who patiently wait for Jesus Christ who have been saved by Him, simply because an unsaved man, an unregenerate man, has no desire for the Lord Jesus, and surely would never with great anticipation await His return. Thus, it is the possession of God's love and the patient waiting for God's Son that prove true religious piety.

⁴⁸ *I John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

⁴⁹ *Rom. 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

I John 3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

