

Session 13

*An Exposition of I & II Thessalonians*

*II Thessalonians 1:1–12*

Scriptures

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*II Thessalonians 1:1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:*

*Pulpit Commentary, II Thess. 1:1*

*Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus.* This Epistle, like the former, is written in their conjoint names, as all three were engaged in the planting of the Church in Thessalonica. *Unto the Church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

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

Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians begins much like the first one, reminding these early believers of the *grace* and *peace* sent to them by *God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*.

God calls sinners to Himself through the redemptive work of Christ so His grace and peace might be given to men where previously they deserved only wrath and judgment.

*Grace* is the disposition of God that desires good for the sinner, not evil. *Strong's Concordance* defines #5485 *charis* as "grace, kindness."

*HELPS Word-studies* reveals the word as "preeminently used of the Lord's favor – freely extended to give Himself away to people (because He is 'always leaning toward them')."

Because of God's grace—His kind disposition toward man—when men sin against Him they can be forgiven if they sincerely repent for their sins. This tells us that it is God's will that no man should die for the sinful nature he was born into. Divine grace is meant to prevent this.

God is willing and able to forgive the penitent, as seen in His sending His Son to die for their sin. It is also solely through the Lord's grace that any are saved. If there were no grace, there could be no true salvation.

The Greek word for *peace* is #1515 *eiréné*, meaning “one, peace, quietness, rest.”

*HELPS Word-studies* defines the word as “1515 *eirénē* (from *eirō*, ‘to join, tie together into a whole’) – properly, wholeness, i.e. when all essential parts are joined together; peace (God’s gift of wholeness).”

*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon* defines *eiréné* as “a state of national tranquility; exemption from the rage and havoc of war.” It is also defined as “peace between individuals, i.e. harmony, concord.”

For those who believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, and subsequently make Jesus Christ their Lord, there exists a state of harmony, tranquility, and peace with God.

Christ’s ministry to die for sin was purposed to establish peace between God and man, so when men surrender their lives to Christ and His Lordship, an armistice with God begins. Ultimately, by believing in and submitting to God’s Son, men display their willingness to come under God’s government. Therefore, peace becomes available to them.

***II Thessalonians 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;***

In Paul’s first letter he referenced the work of faith and labor of love of the Thessalonians. In his second epistle he writes about how the Thessalonians’ *faith* had grown and their *charity* towards each other abounded.

Faith and love sprouting in people’s lives proves true spiritual growth and genuine godly advancement. Possessing *faith* and *love* likewise exhibits that men are walking in God’s will for their lives.

There is also no such thing as true spiritual development without the increase of these two divine fruits of the Spirit.

Hence, whereas knowledge, even if it is biblical, is not an accurate measure of God’s salvation or spiritual growth, manifesting the fruits of the Holy Spirit given by Christ to the saved surely is.

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

The possession of the Spirit of God’s Son proves heavenly sonship.

Yet if a man has not the Spirit of Christ and the fruits of the Spirit associated with it, he should not think himself as saved.

***Romans 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.***

Understandably, those whom God makes His children will always manifest the divine qualities of their Father, and this is most visibly seen by them possessing *faith* and *love*.

***II Thessalonians 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:***

The Greek word for *patience* is #5281 *hupomoné*. *Strong's Concordance* defines it as “a remaining behind, a patient enduring.” Its usage is “endurance, steadfastness, patient waiting for.”

*HELPS Word-studies* states, “5281 *hupomoné* (from 5259 /*hypó*, ‘under’ and 3306 /*ménō*, ‘remain, endure’) – properly, remaining under, endurance; steadfastness, especially as God enables the believer to ‘remain (endure) under’ the challenges He allots in life.”

These definitions reveal that patience is needed to endure until the divine time arrives when deliverance comes.

Every trial has an end, and through sufficient faith and trust in the Lord, all trials for the Christian can be both endured and eventually overcome.

He who endures unto the end shall be saved, and he who trusts God fully with his life shall not be disappointed. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation.

*Faith* is the Greek word #4102 *pistis*, which *Strong's Concordance* defines as “faith, belief, trust, confidence; fidelity, ...”

The gift of faith strengthens men not to lose confidence in the Lord regardless of the tribulations they are experiencing.

No doubt, life is hard even without religious persecution, yet a firm and unyielding trust in the Lord makes something bearable that, without God's personal presence in the heart, would prove unbearable.

***Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.***

Ultimately, at the base of any true walk with God is a sincere and honest trust in Him.

Hence, if a man does not trust the Lord when suffering trials, we know that very little true faith in God exists in him.

Practically, faith can do so much more for the human heart than a room full of biblical knowledge ever could. Since it is not merely head knowledge that allows men to endure religious persecution and worldly trial, but rather only a sincere trust in God's sovereignty over all things.

***II Thessalonians 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:***

That the righteous will be persecuted in this world is spiritual proof of their worthiness to enter the kingdom of God's Son.

The servant is not above his Master; therefore, elements of what Christ suffered must also be experienced by His people. Yet though tribulation will come and must be endured, this same tribulation proves true Christians worthy of inheriting the kingdom of God prepared for them.

***II Thessalonians 1:6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;***

Whenever God's people are troubled, the Lord finds it a just judgment to recompense tribulation to those troubling them.

Hence, God counts it as a *righteous thing* to recompense tribulation to those who seek to emotionally or physically harm His children.

All fathers maintain a right to defend their own, and our heavenly Father is no different. It is therefore right and proper in heaven's eye to recompense tribulation to those who persecute God's saints.

What men sow, they shall also reap; therefore, those who incite trouble and bring consternation to the saved will have tribulation recompensed to them by God.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 1:6*

*Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you*

- The sense is: "There will be a future judgment, because it is proper that God should punish those who now persecute you. It is not right that they should go unpunished, and triumph forever. It is not an arbitrary thing, a thing which is indifferent, a thing which may or may not be done; it is a just and proper thing that the wicked should be punished."

It is a common misbelief of most sinners that God has no right to punish the wicked. Yet is not divine law higher than human law? And cannot heaven do what the earth regularly engages in, by punishing criminals? Should then the Lord not be afforded the right to execute heavenly justice, just as civil authorities routinely punish those who commit earthly crimes?

It is thus unreasonable to believe that God should not be allowed the same right as men in order to maintain a civil society where sin and crime must be punished, lest evil completely overtakes good.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 1:6*

people themselves believe that it is just that the wicked should be punished. They are constantly making laws, and affixing penalties to them, and executing them, under the belief that it is right. Can they regard it as wrong in God to do the same thing? Can that be wrong in him which is right in themselves?

Who would consider anyone truly loving who turned a blind eye to sin or did not bring justice to the victim? Is not justice a part of love?

Yet despite the opinion of sinners and their foolish thoughts concerning proper justice, God maintains His right and will never relinquish it because of the opinions of man.

***Proverbs 11:21 Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.***

All sin is against God and shall not be tolerated by heaven, though many who now regularly engage in sin vainly hope it will be.

***Isaiah 13:11 And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.***

Ultimately, it also makes no difference if the sinner is a priest, prophet, or a pastor; all breaking of divine law will receive the same punishment.

**Hosea 4:9** *And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings.*

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Hos. 4:9

The bad priest copies the sins which he should reprove, and excuses himself by the frailty of our common nature. The people, acutely enough, detect the worldliness or self-indulgence of the priest, and shelter themselves under his example. Their defense stands good before people; but what before God? Alike in sin, priest and people should be alike in punishment.

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

*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, II Thess. 1:7

*Rest with us.* Us, the apostles and ministers of Christ, we and you shall rest together; as we have partaken of troubles together, so we shall of rest. And you shall enjoy the same felicity with the apostles themselves, in the same state of rest. And though now place doth separate us, yet we and you shall rest together, which will the more sweeten this rest to you and us.

The *rest* that Paul speaks of that both he and the other apostles possessed is that *rest* produced when one remains confident in Jesus Christ's return to bring both salvation and justice to the earth.

This patience of faith and confidence in God's justice provides rest to the soul, whereas without it the heart will only be troubled and filled with anxiety.

Believing that God is ultimately in control and Jesus will soon be revealed from heaven is what produces rest in His people.

One of the divine ways that believers can gain and maintain spiritual rest while under trial is through the labor of faith.

**Hebrews 4:9–11** *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*

<sup>10</sup> *For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.*

<sup>11</sup> *Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*

No man can remain deeply troubled in this life if his real hope is Christ's return to the earth.

*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, II Thess. 1:7

And as Christ himself is already entered into his rest, Hebrews 4:10, so he will come again to take his people into the same rest with him.

*When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.*

Accompanying Jesus's return in glory will be the angels of might, or *mighty angels*. This accompaniment reveals Jesus' heavenly authority over the earth.

The presence of these *mighty angels* is not needed to raise the dead but to assist the Son of God in rendering punishment on those who have rejected God and disobeyed the gospel of His Son.

At this time Christ shall repay every man for his deeds, whether religious or evil.

***Matthew 16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Matt. 16:27*

He will come in glory the glory of his Father the majesty with which God is accustomed to appear, and which befits God. He will be attended by angels. He will judge all people.

The brilliant display of Christ's authority, made visible by His coming in the *glory of his Father*, with flashes of lightning and heaven's host accompanying Him, is an exhibition of how God has made Jesus fit and worthy to judge all things.

There is a certain glory, brilliance, and radiance that God alone has, and this glory, brilliance, and radiance will be made astonishingly visible when it accompanies the Son of God at His return.

It shall therefore be as God that the Son of God shall judge the world. By openly displaying His glory to earth's inhabitants, Christ shall communicate to all men His divinely appointed authority to represent the Father and execute His judgment in the world.

No doubt, this celestial display of heavenly might shall cause all those who have rejected Christ's rule to tremble.

***Psalms 2:12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ps. 2:12*

*Kiss the Son* - Him whom God hath declared to be his Son Psalm 2:7, and whom, as such, he has resolved to set as King on his holy hill Psalm 2:6. The word "kiss" here is used in accordance with Oriental usages, for it was in this way that respect was indicated for one of superior rank. This was the ancient mode of doing homage or allegiance to a king, 1 Samuel 10:1. It was also the mode of rendering homage to an idol, 1 Kings 19:18; Hosea 13:2; Job 31:27. The mode of rendering homage to a king by a kiss was sometimes to kiss his hand, or his dress, or his feet, as among the Persians. DeWette. The practice of kissing the hand of a monarch is not uncommon in European courts as a token of allegiance. The meaning here is that they should express their allegiance to the Son of God, or recognize him as the authorized King, with suitable expressions of submission and allegiance; that they should receive him as King, and submit to his reign. Applied to others, it means that they should embrace him as their Saviour.

*Lest he be angry* - If you do not acknowledge his claims, and receive him as the Messiah.

*And ye perish from the way* - The word *from* in this place is supplied by the translators. It is literally, "And ye perish the way." See the notes at Psalm 1:6. The meaning here seems to be either "lest ye are lost in respect to the way," that is, the way to happiness and salvation; or "lest ye fail to find the way" to life; or "lest ye perish by the way," to wit, before you reach your destination, and accomplish the object you have in view. The design seems to be to represent them as pursuing a certain journey or path - as life is often represented (compare Psalm 1:1) - and as being cut down before they reached the end of their journey.

*When his wrath is kindled* - When his wrath burns. Applying to anger or wrath a term which is common now, as when we speak of one whose anger is heated, or who is hot with wrath.

Since all judgment has been committed to the Son, those without a relationship with Christ will quickly become aware of their fate at His coming.

Men are commanded to repent for their sins against God because on the Lord's appointed day, Jesus will execute justice on all who have rejected divine rule.

Jesus inherits this right from the Father because He is both the Son of man and the Son of God.

As the Son of man, Christ inherits the right to judge Adam's descendants, and as the Son of God, He possesses the divine and inherited right to rule all creation in God's stead.

Because Jesus died and was resurrected, all men, regardless of their current state, whether living or dead, shall be required to stand before Him.

***I Peter 4:5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.***

It is in accordance with God's will that the entirety of mankind must stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

No man will escape this future reality, simply because all shall receive what they have done in their body. Every man shall reap as he has sown, and the day of Christ's judgement will prove this.

***II Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Cor. 5:10*

Before we receive our eternal allotment it is proper that we should render our account of the manner in which we have lived, and of the manner in which we have improved our talents and privileges. In the nature of things, it is proper that we should undergo a trial before we receive our reward, or before we are punished; and God has made it necessary and certain, by his direct and positive appointment, that we should stand at the bar of the final judge; see Romans 14:10.

At the end of every human trial, men must stand before a judge and be pronounced guilty or innocent. Christ's final judgment of man will operate the same way.

Once all the evidence has been presented, though it is already known by the One Who searches and knows the hearts of all men, all that is left is for the gallery to hear is the Son of God's final verdict. The solemnity of this occasion should prompt every man to deeply ponder what and who they are living for.

Religious sincerity shall be tested, and religious hypocrisy will be revealed.

Nothing shall remain covered that is not revealed, nor anything hidden that shall not be made known.

***Luke 12:2 For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.***

It is this divine justice that the righteous crave. More than anything, the Lord's people desire justice in the earth, perhaps even equal to the possession of salvation itself.

Jesus's coming in the clouds in His Father's glory will reveal that this time of promised justice has arrived.

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

The object of Christ's vengeance will be those who have rejected His rule. It is not a small thing to set at naught the good news of the gospel, purposed to save the sinner, nor is it an insignificant act to choose to disobey He Whom God has purposed should rule the world.

Undoubtedly, most men do not consider it a great offense to reject the gospel, nor do they deem it as a spiritual crime to not obey Christ's words. Yet the Scripture is clear as to the consequence for any who set at naught Christ's sacrifice.

***Hebrews 10:29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?***

Ultimately, there will be greater consequences for refusing the grace brought through Jesus Christ than even when Israel rejected the law of Moses. This also teaches us that rejection of all divine rule, whether revealed by Moses, God's servant, or Christ, God's Son, will be met with what heaven deems as worthy punishment.

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Heb.10:29*

*Shall he be thought worthy.*—Better, shall he be accounted (or, judged) worthy, by God the Judge of all, when "the Day" shall come. In the act of apostasy the sinner trampled under foot the Son of God, treated with contempt and scorn Him to whom belongs this highest Name (Hebrews 1:1–4); and the principle of this act becomes the principle of the whole succeeding life. That "blood" by which the new covenant was established (Hebrews 9:15–17)—the blood in which he himself had received the sanctification which the law could not give—he has esteemed an unholy thing. There is no medium between highest reverence and utter contumely in such a case: to those who did not receive Jesus as Lord He was a deceiver (Matthew 27:63), and one who deserved to die.

That Christ is said to return to the earth *in flaming fire* reveals that through His power, purification of the earth will be accomplished. And just as fire purifies, so will the Son of God return purity to the world that He will eventually rule.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 1:8*

*In flaming fire* - This is a circumstance which is not noticed in the account of his appearing in the parallel place in 1 Thessalonians 4:16. The object of the apostle here seems to be to represent him as coming amidst vivid flashes of lightning. He is commonly described as coming in clouds, and to that common description there is here added the image of incessant lightnings, as if the whole heavens were illuminated with a continued blaze.

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, II Thess. 1:8*

*In flaming fire*—Greek, "In flame of fire"; or, as other oldest manuscripts read, "in fire of flame." This flame of fire accompanied His manifestation in the bush (Ex 3:2); also His giving of the law at Sinai (Ex 19:18). Also it shall accompany His revelation at His advent (Da 7:9, 10), symbolizing His own bright glory and His consuming vengeance against His foes (Heb 10:27; 12:29; 2Pe 3:7, 10).

*taking*—literally, "giving" them, as their portion, "vengeance."

*know not God*—the Gentiles primarily (Ps 79:6; Ga 4:8; 1Th 4:5); not of course those involuntarily not knowing God, but those wilfully not knowing Him, as Pharaoh, who might have known God if he would, but who boasted "I know not the Lord" (Ex 5:2); and as

the heathen persecutors who might have known God by the preaching of those whom they persecuted. Secondly, all who “profess to know God but in works deny Him” (Tit 1:16).

*obey not the gospel*—primarily the unbelieving Jews (Ro 10:3, 16); secondarily, all who obey not the truth (Ro 2:8).

As these verses clearly reveal, no man shall be given impunity if he has, by willful decision, chosen to reject a knowledge of God, evidenced by disobedience to Christ’s words.

Since Jesus has been declared the Son of God, it is paramount that men respond to His authority as God.

***II Thessalonians 1:9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;***

The punishment exhibited on those who do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ is eternal removal from the glory of His presence. This is not simply destruction, but exclusion from all that is holy, glorious, and good.

Ultimately, only those who have received Jesus Christ and have been made sons of God through Him shall be allowed to remain in and enjoy the glorious future of His reign.

*Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary, II Thess. 1:9*

The Lord Jesus will in that day appear from heaven. He will come in the glory and power of the upper world. His light will be piercing, and his power consuming, to all who in that day shall be found as chaff. This appearance will be terrible to those that know not God, especially to those who rebel against revelation, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the great crime of multitudes, the gospel is revealed, and they will not believe it; or if they pretend to believe, they will not obey it. Believing the truths of the gospel, is in order to our obeying the precepts of the gospel. Though sinners may be long spared, they will be punished at last. They did sin’s work, and must receive sin’s wages.

***II Thessalonians 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.***

*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 1:10*

*When he shall come to be glorified in his saints* - That is, the redeemed in that day will be the means of promoting his glory, or the universe will see his glory manifested in their redemption. His chief glory as seen in that day will be connected with the fact that he has redeemed his people;

Ultimately, the complete salvation of the chosen will be counted as Christ’s greatest triumph. Through also their heavenly transformation, shall the world know the true glory of Christ.

*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 1:10*

The general idea is, that Christ in that day will be manifested in a glorious manner, and that the source of his highest triumphs will be what is seen in the saints.

***II Thessalonians 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:***

Paul’s prayer is that the Thessalonians’ faith would continue to grow so they might be found worthy of their heavenly calling, and through obedience to God’s Word receive all the good God had purposed for their lives.

In short, Paul prayed that what God had begun by exercising His power to produce faith in the Thessalonians might be finished, resulting in their being completely brought into all the good things God has purposed for them.

*II Thessalonians 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.*

In this verse we have what true faith in the Son of God will produce in those who genuinely make Him their Lord. It is that Christ's name will be glorified in and among His people. Whereas the whole world seeks to promote its own name, those saved by the Son of God are purposed to bring people's attention, gaze, and interest to Him who has, through His own sacrifice saved them.

Thus, for the saved it is Christ's name that will be most exalted in their lives, and not their own.

Nothing proves true Christian identity more than when Jesus's name is glorified in His people. It is this exaltation of Christ and His glory that also reveals those who have been begotten by Him.

*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, II Thess. 1:12*

This glorification will be mutual. It will be the honour of the Head to have such members, and of the members to have such a Head;