

# 2 Thessalonians 1 - Reminder of God's Grace; Destiny of Persecutors; Prayer for Continued Progress

## I. Commendation for enduring persecution (2 Thess 1:1-12)

### (1) Salutation to the Thessalonians (1:1-2)

(A) Senders (1:1a)

(B) Recipients (1:1b)

(C) Greeting (1:2)

### (2) Encouragement in the midst of persecution (1:3-12)

(A) Thanksgiving for the persecuted (1:3-4)

(B) Reason for the persecution (1:5)

(C) Destiny of the persecutors (1:6-10)

(D) Prayer for continued progress (1:11-12)

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## I. Commendation for enduring persecution (2 Thess 1:1-12)

### (1) Salutation to the Thessalonians (1:1-2)

(A) Senders (1:1a)

(B) Recipients (1:1b)

**1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians** in God **our** Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

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**1** From: Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy. To: The church of the Thessalonians in union with God our Father and the Lord Jesus, the Messiah.

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

- "Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy" - Paul includes the greetings of Silas and Timothy. These three men had endured a great deal for the sake of the gospel:

— Paul and Silas were in the prison at Philippi

— Paul, Silas, and Timothy had gone to Thessalonica; later Paul had to leave them. He waited for them in Athens and, finally met them in Corinth.

- It was at that time Paul wrote his first epistle to the Thessalonians to answer some of their questions
- "...the church of the Thessalonians" - Paul is writing to the church (believers) in Thessalonica, not the city or residents in general
- "...our" - a significant pronoun, which gives further evidence that Paul is writing to believers
- God is Paul's Father, and God is also the Father of the Thessalonian believers
- Once we figure out that Paul is writing to believers, it tells us that 2 Thessalonians is not a book on how to become a Christian (justification), but rather how to grow as a Christian (sanctification)

### (C) Greeting (1:2)

- 2 **Grace** to you and **peace** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 May grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, be yours!
- 2 Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- "Grace" - the basis by which God deals with sinful man
- "...peace" - *eirēnē*, we have peace with God, the war and tension between me and God because of my sin, has been called off. The armaments have been set down, and I now have peace with God because His wrath against me for my sin was satisfied when He took it out on His Son.
- The order here is important: we can't have peace without grace. If we don't have God's grace, the basis by which He deals with us, then we could never have peace.
- There are two types of peace:
  1. Positional: once we put our faith in Christ, the war between me and God ceased. I am now at peace with God, rather than being His enemy (Rom 5:10).
  2. Practical/Experiential: God wants me to be at peace in every circumstance in my life (John 14:27; Phil 4:6-7).
- You cannot find positional or experiential peace anywhere else other than Jesus Christ

### (2) Encouragement in the midst of persecution (1:3-12)

#### (A) Thanksgiving for the persecuted (1:3-4)

- 3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers *and sisters*, as is *only* fitting, because **your faith is increasing abundantly**, and **the love of each and every one of you toward one another grows ever greater**.
- 3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is *only* fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows *ever* greater;

**3** Brothers, at all times we are obligated to thank God for you. It is right to do this because your faith is growing all the time and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.

**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;

- v3-10 are one long sentence in the Greek...

- After his greeting, Paul begins to express his thanksgiving for the Thessalonian's development in faith and love despite the persecution that they were under

  - The same unbelieving Jews who drove Paul out of town had turned and began

  - persecuting the Christians in Thessalonica, whom Paul was teaching and ministering to

  - These unbelieving Jews said all kinds of horrible false things about Paul (which Paul refutes in 1 Thess 1-3)

  - The persecution that these believers were under, along with the forged letter "as if from" Paul (Cf. 2:2), were the two reasons these Christians thought they were in the Tribulation (they thought the Day of the Lord had begun).

  - The Thessalonians were confused by their persecution, thinking they were in the Tribulation (capital T), but in reality they were just going through trials/tribulations (lowercase t)

  - However in spite of all these things, they continued to grow in faith and in love for one another. This is what Paul was thankful for.

- The trials/tribulations we go through in life can only do two things to us:

1. Make us bitter: we think, How dare this issue come into my life. I'm so sick and tired of everything always going wrong. Lord, throw me a bone here! You become resentful over the trial that the Lord is putting you through.

2. Make us better: we think, Well, here we are Lord in this trial, but I'm going to trust you through it. And you'll find that when you do that, your spiritual growth rate will pick up exponentially during those times.

  - One of the options above are what we *choose* to do; it's our own choice which path we'll go down when we encounter a trial

  - Keep in mind that the Thessalonians were new believers, who lost their apostolic teacher to persecution, and they did not yet have a NT at this point. They had no understanding of the doctrine of suffering, yet as they go through these trials and persecutions, they are making a conscience choice to grow in faith and love.

- "...your faith is increasing abundantly" - *hyperauxanō*, only here in the NT; means that the faith of these new believers was growing at an exponential rate (faster than the normal rate) in the midst (because) of their suffering. They were moving rapidly from being "children" (spiritually immature) to be spiritually mature.

— In his earlier epistle, Paul prayed for them to grow in faith (1 Thess 4:10) and to increase in love (1 Thess 3:12). He now rejoiced that they were doing both of these things.

— Paul began each of his epistles (except Galatians) with thanksgiving for the spiritual progress of his readers

- "...the love of each and every one of you toward one another grows ever greater" - without a complete NT canon, under persecution, they continued to grow in their love for one another.

— It's possible that the Thessalonian church had the epistles to the Galatians; if so, they clearly had read, understood, and applied Gal 6:10: So then, while we have opportunity, let's do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

4 As a result, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.

4 therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.

4 As a result, we rejoice about you among God's churches—about your endurance and faith through all the persecutions and afflictions you are experiencing.

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 was so proud and thankful for the growing faith and love of the Thessalonians that he spoke of them fondly and proudly as he journeyed through other churches, most likely in Athens and in Corinth, the two locations he traveled to after leaving Thessalonica

— Paul noted how they were becoming "better" in their Christian walk rather than "bitter" through their trials, and Paul just couldn't help himself to talk about them as he traveled to other churches

The Bible teaches that one of the ways we can demonstrate our trust and confidence in God and His plan for history is to let Him take care of the wrongs that we have experienced throughout this life in the process of serving our Savior. Just as the death of Christ was wrong, there have been millions of similar injustices perpetrated on God's people ever since; yet, we are to wait for His Day when He will right the wrongs and take vengeance on the wicked.

This passage teaches that such persecution by unbelievers will be at least part of the basis for God's future judgment.

*The fact that they are enduring persecution and affliction for Christ's sake is a sure token of God's righteous judgment, which will be vindicated in them and in their persecutors at*

*the advent of Christ.* [F.F. Bruce]

*Withstanding present pressures demonstrates the rightness of God's future judgment.*

[Robert L. Thomas]

(B) Reason for the persecution (1:5)

5 *This is* a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the **kingdom of God**, for which you indeed are suffering.

5 *This is* a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.

5 This is evidence of God's righteous judgment and is intended to make you worthy of God's kingdom, for which you are suffering.

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:

- "...kingdom of God" - the fact that these Thessalonians were undergoing persecutions and afflictions indicates that kingdom conditions were not present on the earth, thus the kingdom had not yet materialized

— Paul is saying here that by the fact that you're going through these persecutions and afflictions, you are counted worthy as a citizen of the future kingdom

— In other words, what you're going through is what is normal because your citizenship is of this world, but it is of the future kingdom. And until that kingdom is inaugurated, it is normative to go through persecutions and afflictions.

— We must be careful to rightly interpret every mention of the "kingdom" (*basileia*) in the NT (see notes: **The Kingdom** and **OT Prophets' Description of the Kingdom** below).

- "...for which you indeed are suffering" - they were suffering because they were "sons and daughters" of the kingdom (Cf. Matt 13:38); Paul says if you're a "son" you're also an "heir" (Rom 8:17)

— This is why Paul says that if you look at your current situation along with what the Bible says about the kingdom, we should rejoice when we're suffering because our values are different than this world's values, which is evidence of who we belong to.

— We should look at life's problem as God's preparation for our future kingdom role, when we will wield authority. The degree of authority that we'll wield will be determined by our willingness to cooperate with God now in our trials, and see them as God preparing me for authority later, in His kingdom.

— When we get into the kingdom and begin wielding authority, I believe everything that happened to us in our life will begin to make sense. We'll be able to see clearly how God molded us and worked on us to prepare us for what authority He desired to give to us.

One of the greatest things you can learn about Bible interpretation is that it is a book of progressive revelation. However, it's important to understand that subsequent Scripture never changes the meaning of prior revelation on any topic, it simply adds meaning, nuance, clarity, or details, but it never changes what was originally stated.

### **The Kingdom**

For example, in Gen 3:15 we have the earliest disclosure of the gospel: the one who would come from the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head, but the serpent would bruise this one's heel. And you discover that as you move through the Bible, subsequent Scripture never changes Gen 3:15, it just adds clarity, specific details, and nuance to it. Such as in Micah 5:2, we learn that this "one" would be born in Bethlehem. In Isaiah 7:14 we learn this "one" would be born from a virgin. In Ps 22:16-18, we learn His hands and feet will be pierced. Subsequent Scripture never changes or negates or invalidates Gen 3:15, it simply adds clarity and detail/specifics to that original promise.

The reason why subsequent Scripture can never re-write or change something is because of God's character. If God said it originally, then He changed or negated it in later revelation, God would be a liar, and God cannot lie. Islam has the idea of "abrogation" which are a set of verses (which are very nice and loving) that they follow when they are in the minority within a population. However, when they become the majority within a population, they go from a house of peace to a house of war and their whole character changes. They begin to get violent, belligerent, hostile to outside forces or dissenting viewpoints. You ask them, What happened to all the nice, loving verses you used to follow? They'll respond, those verses have been "abrogated" (set aside or preempted). The loving texts are "abrogated" (set aside) once they have achieved a certain level of population. Christianity and the Bible knows of no such idea. Latter Scripture cannot undo what is stated in prior Scripture.

So with this in mind, when you come to the word "kingdom" in the NT, it is never defined. Thus, you have to go back into the OT (prior revelation) in order to properly identify the word. The Holy Spirit never inspired the NT authors to redefine the word "kingdom" (*basileia*), He expected us to know and understand the OT notion of the kingdom, then apply that same understanding to NT uses of the word "kingdom."

### **OT Prophets' Description of the Kingdom**

1. Established by God, not through any human work or agency (Dan 2:44)
2. Eternal (Dan 7:27)
3. Christ's direct rule (Zech 9:9-10)
4. Earthly (Zech 14:9)
5. Land promises realized (Gen 15:18-21)

6. Israel's preeminence (Is 49:22-23)
7. Millennial Temple (Ezek 40-46)
8. Millennial David (Jer 30:9)
9. Righteousness (Is 9:6-7)
10. Curse curtailed (Is 65:20,22)
11. Peace (Is 2:4)
12. Economic prosperity (Amos 9:13-14; Is 65:22)
13. Topographical changes, including the Dead Sea coming back to life (Ezek 47:1-12)
14. Immediate answers to prayer (Is 65:24)

Not only is the "what" question (above) laid out in specifics in the OT, but the "when" question is also disclosed. In Dan 2, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that Daniel interpreted as the various empires that would rule the world until the time the kingdom would come. The Church Age, unknown in the OT, falls between the legs and the feet of the statue...this is where the world has been the past 2000 years.

What is currently being built on the earth is the kingdom of the Antichrist, composed of a 10 nation/region confederacy that covers the entire world. We know this kingdom of the Antichrist will last for 3-1/2 years, from the midpoint to the end of the Tribulation. It is at that point that the stone cut without human hands will come out of heaven and strike the feet, and the entire statue (all worldly kingdoms) will come crashing down. Once that happens, the wind blows away the pieces of the crushed statue, and the stone grows and grows until it fills the earth.

The chronology laid out in Dan 2 is very very simple...Satan gets his kingdom first, via the Antichrist, then God's kingdom crushes Satan's kingdom. So before we look for God's kingdom to come, we first be watching for Satan's kingdom to come. So, if you're trying to build the kingdom on the earth right now, you're building the wrong kingdom, and you don't understand the symbolism of Daniel 2.

The same thing is taught in Daniel 7, except for this time Daniel saw a vision of four ferocious beasts. This is the same set of empires that will rule the world until the Second Coming, but from a Jewish perspective (Nebuchadnezzar's beautiful statue gave us the Gentile perspective).

#### (C) Destiny of the persecutors (1:6-10)

- 6 For after all it is *only* right for God to repay with **affliction** those who afflict you,
- 6 For after all it is *only* just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you,
- 6 Certainly it is right for God to pay back those who afflict you with affliction,
- 6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

- Paul now moves from talk of the kingdom to temporal repayment, by God, of their persecutors
- Paul is answering the Thessalonian's persecution and afflictions by promising them that God Himself will repay them for the affliction that they are doing to the Thessalonians
- God was not unaware of their plight, and He will repay these unbelieving Jews with violent retribution
- This is a reference to the Second Coming (Cf. Ps 2:1-9; Matt 25:31), when Christ will appear "in flaming fire" and punish unbelievers, "dealing out retribution" to "those who do not know God" (Cf. Rom 1:18-32; Jer 10:25; Ps 79:6; Is 66:15), and to "those who do not obey the gospel" (Cf. John 3:36)
- "...affliction" - *thlipsin*, tribulation; this is a reference to the Great Tribulation
- It is the present lot of Christians to undergo tribulation (v4; John 15:18-20; 16:33; Acts 5:41; Acts 14:22; Phil 1:29; 1 Thess 3:4; 2 Tim 3:12; 1 Peter 4:13)
- For the rest of the world, Tribulation is future and far greater in intensity (Matt 24:21; Cf. Rev 3:10)
- This "time" was described as "God's wrath" in 1 Thess 1:10; 2:16; 5:9
- See [Tribulation & Persecution: Current vs Future](#) for differences between God's wrath during the Great Tribulation and persecution/suffering of believers today.
- The principle of just requital [revenge, vengeance, retributive justice] lies at the basis of our belief in a moral universe. Not good but evil creates a moral problem for us. Present injustices require a future retribution. A world in which justice was not done at last would not be God's world at all.
- Vengeance is mine; I will repay (Rom 12:19). Retribution is pictured as overtaking men in the world to come; but there are passages which indicate that it may also operate here and now (Rom 1:24,26). All that live godly in Christ will suffer persecution (2 Tim 3:12); if you suffer with Him, you shall also reign with Him (2 Tim 2:12).

7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted, *along* with us, when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels

7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,

7 and to give us who are afflicted relief when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels

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

- Many people try to make this a Rapture passage, but if you read v7-9 together, it's clearly a Second Coming passage. What is described here clearly fits with other Second Coming



passages (see right column on chart below), and doesn't fit at all with Rapture passages (left column on chart below).

— Paul is telling them to be comforted, because they were on the winning side of history. They should draw comfort from the fact that God will deal with their persecutors, and He'll do so when He returns at the Second Coming.

- This is the favorite verse in all of the Bible for those who argue for a post-Tribulational Rapture because Paul specifically says that the Thessalonians would not be relieved from suffering until the manifestation of Christ at the Second Coming.

*The revelation of Christ will in itself inflict the severest punishment on the wicked, by opening their eyes to what they have lost. [Lightfoot]*

RAPTURE DISTINCT FROM SECOND COMING	
<b>RAPTURE</b> (1 Thess 4:13-17; 1 Cor 15:51-57)	<b>SECOND COMING</b> (Rev 19:11-16)
Christ comes in the air (1 Thess 4:16)	Christ comes to the earth (Zech 14:4)
For His saints (1 Thess 4:15-17)	With His saints (Rev 19:14)
Blessing (1 Thess 4:18)	Judgment (Rev 19:15)
Effects only believers (1 Thess 4:16)	Effects both believers and unbelievers (Rev 19:15)
Invisible (1 Thess 4:16)	Visible to all (Rev 1:7)
Announced only by an archangel (1 Thess 4:16)	Involves myriads of angels (Jude 14)
Resurrection (1 Cor 15: 51)	No resurrection
Rescue of the church (1 Thess 1:10)	Rescue of Israel (Matt 23:37-39)

## Douglas Moo

Douglas Moo, "The Case for the Posttribulation Rapture Position" in *The Rapture: Pre-, Mid-, or Post- Tribulational?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984): 187

"In 2 Thess 1:5-7 Paul appears to provide strong support for the view that believers will not be raptured until the Parousia of Christ at the end of the Tribulation. For there can be no doubt that in v7-8 Paul depicts this coming in glory, which he characterizes as 'the revelation of the Lord Jesus from Heaven in blazing fire with His powerful angels.' Yet it is at...this time that the believers who are suffering tribulation are given 'rest.' In other words, it is only at the post-Tribulational Advent that believers experience deliverance from the sufferings of this age."

Moo, a rabid post-Tribulationist, at least gets it right that this is a Second Coming passage, not a Rapture passage. He also gets right the fact that at the Second Coming, the time of afflictions on believers will be over.

## William Bell

William E. Bell, Jr., *A Critical Evaluation of the Pretribulation Rapture Doctrine in Christian Eschatology* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1967), 275.

"This passage would seem to be fatal to any view of a pre-Tribulational Rapture. Paul explicitly states that the hope of the Thessalonian believers is the glorious Second Advent of Christ, at which time they will receive rest from their afflictions. If the Rapture, as a separate event, is indeed the 'blessed hope' (Titus 2:13) of the Christian, rather than the Second Advent, this passage becomes inexplicable."

Bell wrote his doctrinal dissertation on refuting the pre-Tribulational Rapture.

## Robert Gundry

Robert H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 113.

**“The resultant difficulty for pre-Tribulationalism is that Paul places the release of Christians from persecution at the post-Tribulational return of Christ to judge unbelievers, whereas according to pre-Tribulationalism this release will occur seven years earlier.”**

2 Thess 1:7 is Gundry's favorite passage as well. He wrote an entire book against the pre-Tribulational Rapture.

So how do you answer this question if you hold a pre-Tribulational Rapture view?

The Rapture relieves me from persecution and affliction, but it doesn't change the fact that Satan will continue to run the world system, and persecution and affliction will continue and actually intensify as time goes on, until the Second Coming.

The cry for the Church Age believer at the Rapture will be for God to return to the earth, in His glory, and establish His kingdom and depose Satan and the Antichrist forever. This is when the "times of refreshing" will commence (Acts 3:19-21). The "times of refreshing" and the "period of restoration of all things" do not refer to the Rapture, but rather to the inauguration of the kingdom.

When the 5th Seal is opened (Rev 6:9-11), it unleashes massive martyrdom throughout the earth. Their souls are portrayed as being under the altar in heaven, and they are in the presence of the Lord and no longer have to worry about persecution and affliction. But what will be on their minds? They certainly don't believe that just because they are now in heaven with the Lord, all their problems are solved. They pray ("cried out with a loud voice"), How long, O Lord, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?

It's clear from this passage that the yearning and desire of these believers, who were persecuted, afflicted, and eventually martyred for their faith, are not yet satisfied that evil remains on the earth. They are crying out to God in a loud voice, urging Him to execute justice and vengeance against the earth dwellers who were guilty for their persecution and martyrdom. God told them to be patient for a little while longer, then He will execute His judgment on them at the Second Coming.

Unbeknownst to many of those who believe in a post-Tribulational Rapture, the question of 2 Thess 1:7 was dealt with and answered a long time ago...



## Charles Ryrie

Charles Ryrie, *What You Should Know About the Rapture* (Chicago: Moody, 1981). 55-56.

“If death or the Rapture brings release from personal persecution, why should believers be concerned with this future vindication? Because the case against persecutors cannot be closed until Christ is vindicated and righteousness prevails. Persecution may cease when death occurs, but the case against the persecutors is not closed until they are judged. And believers are concerned not only about relief but about vindication. Notice a biblical example of that principle. Hear the Tribulation martyrs in heaven, before the end of the Tribulation, crying out to God for vindication (Rev 6:9-11)...”



## Charles Ryrie

Charles Ryrie, *What You Should Know About the Rapture* (Chicago: Moody, 1981). 55-56.

‘...When will You settle the score against those who killed us?’ they ask. Of course, they have already obtained release through physical death and are in heaven; yet they are concerned about vindication. And the Lord replies that they will have to wait a little longer for that vindication until others are also martyred on earth.”

8 in flaming fire, **dealing out retribution** to those who do not know God, and to **those who do not obey the gospel** of our Lord Jesus.

8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

8 in blazing fire. He will take revenge on those who do not know God and on those who refuse to obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

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

- "...dealing out retribution" - Paul now describes what God will do to these persecutors if they do not get saved (remember, Paul was one of these people before he came to Christ) (Cf. John 3:36)

— These persecutors, unbelieving Jews, thought they were doing the work of God by persecuting the church, just like Paul used to do. They believed that they were preserving the OT tradition of Judaism (John 16:2-3).

- "...those who do not obey the gospel" - this is a go-to verse for those who believe that works must accompany salvation

— But in v10 Paul explains what obeying the gospel means: "believe." What Paul is saying in this context is not that you must obey a list of works in order to be saved, he's saying that you must obey God's sole condition for entering into a relationship with Him, which is to believe.

— In John 3:36, belief is correlated with obey. Those who "believe" have eternal life, but those who do not "obey" will see God's wrath.

9 These people will pay the penalty of **eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord** and from the glory of His power,

9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

9 Such people will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction by being separated from the Lord's presence and from his glorious power

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

- "...eternal" - *aiōnios*, everlasting, never ending. This word, when studying its usage in the NT, destroys the idea of annihilation. Just as God is eternal, both heaven and hell are eternal because the same Greek word is used to describe all three.

— This same Greek word is used to describe God Himself (Rom 16:26)

- "...destruction" - *olethros*, cannot refer to annihilation, which cannot be "everlasting" (Cf. Matt 18:8; 25:41)

— The word in both LXX and NT usages never has this meaning; rather it turns on the thought of separation from God and loss of everything worthwhile in life

— Their fate is eternal separation from the person of Christ and the manifestation of His glory (Cf. Is 2:10,19,21)

— This is Paul's most explicit reference to the eternal duration of the judgment of unbelievers

- "...away from the presence of the Lord" - besides the destruction and torture of eternal hell, a lesser-thought-of judgment in hell is that they are separated from anything that is good

— Not only will unbelievers experience the wrath of God during the Tribulation, they will also pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord

— It's ironic that those who reject God receive as punishment God's rejection; they get what they (thought they) wanted all along

— The so-called freedom from God's influence that the rebellious desire is not freedom at all, but condemnation. It is a hellish banishment from the true and only source of goodness and blessing.

— All good things come from the Lord. If someone is separated from the presence of the Lord, nothing good resides in that place. Hell is eternity under God's wrath and separated from any shred of goodness or hope.

10 when **He comes to be glorified among His saints on that day**, and to be **marveled at among all who have believed**—because our testimony to you was believed.

10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.

10 when he comes to be glorified by his saints and to be regarded with wonder on that day by all who have believed—including you, because you believed our testimony.

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.

- "...He comes to be glorified among His saints" - when Jesus returns at the Second Coming to impose judgment on unbelievers, He will be in a state of glorification, and we (Church Age saints) who come with Him will also be in a state of glorification (1 Thess 3:13; Jude 14; Rev 19:14)

— This glorification is different than Jesus' glorified body after His resurrection. Instead, it is the glorified Christ that John saw while marooned on the island of Patmos, when he saw a vision of Christ. When John saw this version of the glorified Christ, he fell down as if he was dead.

- Jesus' Second Coming will be very different than His first coming...

— Is 53:3, describing Jesus' first coming, says He was despised and forsaken by men. The only crown that Jesus ever received was a mocking crown of thorns.

— Dan 9:26 predicts that the Messiah will be "cut off" (crucified) "and have (inherit) nothing." He was supposed to inherit the kingdom, but the covenanted people/nation rejected Him.

— Even from His birth, He had to be born outside, in the winter, because there was no room for Him in the inn (Luke 2:7)

— Later in His life, Jesus was on the verge of homelessness. The animals had better accommodations than He did (Matt 8:20).

- "...on that day" - the day of Jesus' Second Coming, at the end of the seven-year Tribulation period, when national Israel will cry out to God to save them and recognize Jesus as their Messiah and King (see note on v5)

- "...marveled at among all who have believed" - at His Second Coming, there is no more crown of thorns, there will be no more mockery. In fact, on that day those who put their faith in Christ will "marvel at" Jesus Christ.

— Notice "believed" is used 2x in this verse. Belief is the obedience that Paul was referring to in v8. To obey God is to believe/trust/rely upon His Son Jesus Christ for the salvation of your soul.

At first reading, it may appear that v5-10 offers hope that God would judge the Thessalonians' persecutors very soon, and that the Thessalonian Christians would find "relief" (v7) in the Rapture. However, the return of Christ in "fire" (v7), dealing out punishment (v8-9) when He comes "with His saints" (v10), must refer to the Second Coming. Thus it appears in this section as though the Second Coming follows the Rapture immediately. This is what post-Tribulationists believe. It is also what Amillennialists and post-Millennialists believe.

Paul proceeded to explain that the Thessalonians were *not in the Tribulation* (2:1-12). Only if they were already in the Tribulation could the hope of relief by a post-Tribulational Rapture have been a comfort to them. Consequently, it seems that in v5-10, Paul was seeking to comfort his readers by assuring them that *ultimately* they (in actuality, the Tribulation saints) would experience relief by entering rest in the Millennium—following Christ's Second Coming. *Ultimately* God would punish their persecutors at the Great White Throne judgment, at the end of the Millennium (Rev 20:11-15).

#### (D) Prayer for continued progress (1:11-12)

11 To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will consider you worthy of **your calling**, and **fulfill every desire** for goodness and the **work of faith** with power,

11 To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power,

11 With this in mind, we always pray for you, asking that our God might make you worthy of his calling and that through his power he might help you accomplish every good desire and faithful action.

**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 ends this chapter with a prayer for them that they would continue in their spiritual maturity progress (Cf. v3-4)
- "...your calling" - what is our calling? To be salt and light while living on Satan's territory. To be ambassadors for Christ in a fallen world, meaning to represent kingdom values on foreign soil, a territory that is totally hostile to the values of Christ.
- The world's value system is described in 1 John 2:15-17: as a believer, you can't love the world and love God at the same time because their value systems are polar opposites. We aren't to fall in love with this world because it's in an unstoppable state of decay and will soon pass away.
- "...fulfill every desire" - God isn't obligated to give us everything we want, but He sure knows how to change the heart/desire of the "wanter." He knows how to change the desires of a person's heart so that when we're praying for things that we desire, they are actually God's desires that He has placed inside of us.
- We should be glad that God has not given us everything we have asked Him for. Most of the things that we've asked for in the past would've probably destroyed us, but God protected us from those things. But as we walk with the Lord and delight ourselves in the things of God, the things I once desired have passed away and He has filled me with new, better desires.
- So when I pray to the Lord to fulfill those desires, He seems to answer much quicker and more fully, because those desires are His desires that He has placed inside of me (Ps 37:4)
- In the context here, the desires that Paul is talking about are "for goodness" and for the "work of faith with power." How do I have a desire for "goodness" and for the "work of faith with power"? Because I'm delighting myself in the Lord and He is putting those desires inside of me.
- "...work of faith" - every good desire and faithful action (Cf. 1 Thess 1:3)
- Paul is not referring here to works that must accompany our faith in order for us to be saved, as according to Calvinism/Reformed Theology.
- He is referring to their active faith; their faith that demonstrated itself in good works in the 2nd tense of their salvation (sanctification)

12 so that the **name** of our Lord Jesus **will be glorified** in you, and you in Him, in accordance with the **grace** of our God and *the* Lord Jesus Christ.

12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and *the* Lord Jesus Christ.

12 That way the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified by you, and you by him, according to the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus, the Messiah.

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.



- "name" - *onoma*, a very high emphasis and value is place on the "name" of Jesus Christ throughout the Bible (Cf. Acts 4:12; Phil 2:9)

- "...glorified" - *endoxazomai*, our doxological purpose is to glorify the name of Jesus Christ in everything we do, say and think (Eph 1:6,12,14)

- "...grace" - *charis*, the concept by which we're justified before God, and it's also the concept by which we live for God

— Many Christians come to understand the concept of being justified by grace alone, but then they try to go out and live the Christian life under their own power

*God's ultimate purpose for the ages is to glorify Himself. Scripture is not human-centered, as though salvation were the principle point, but God-centered, because His glory is at the center.*

*The glory of God is the primary principle that unifies all dispensations, the program of salvation being just one of the means by which God glorifies Himself. Each successive revelation of God's plan for the ages, as well as His dealing with the elect, non-elect, angels, and nations all manifest His glory. [Ryrie]*