

Title: **2 THESSALONIANS**

“The Lord Jesus Shall be Revealed from Heaven”

Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:7

Introduction:

In 1 Thessalonians Paul gave a word of comfort to God’s saints regarding those who have died in faith, assuring us of their resurrection and ours when the Lord Jesus comes again. In this epistle he picks up that same theme, assuring us again that *“the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven”* (1:7).

Before he ascended back into heaven our blessed Savior promised that he would return. He also assured us that before his second coming there would be a time of *“great tribulation,”* widespread lawlessness, and apostasy. He described that time in horrific terms. One writer put it in these words: — “The seams of society would come apart, and disorders, violence and riot would be so widespread that men's hearts would literally fail them for fear of the things that were coming on the face of the earth.” Our Savior put it this way: — *“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be”* (Matt. 24:21).

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Readings: *Larry Criss and Rex Bartley*

The saints at Thessalonica were enduring such great persecutions and tribulations because of their faith in Christ that they appear to have been convinced that the day of the Lord was at hand in their day. Some had even quit their jobs, because they were convinced that the Lord Jesus was about to appear. In the three chapters of this epistle, Paul corrects very common errors that many people still have Christ's second coming.

OUR TRIALS AND CHRIST'S COMING

In the first chapter Paul assures us that the trials and persecutions we endure in this world shall be corrected when Christ comes again. In that great day, everything will be set in order and manifest in its proper light. Soon, the Lord God our Savior will avenge his elect.

The epistle begins with a gracious commendation of the saints at Thessalonica for their obvious growth in grace, for which Paul gave thanks to God. The grace of God was obviously working in them. That fact was reflected in their growing faith, love for one another, and patience in trials, persecutions, and tribulation (vv. 1-5).

(2 Thess. 1:3-5) “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; (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: (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.”

A DAY OF RECOMPENSE

Then he assures them of the glorious second advent of Christ (vv. 6-10).

(2 Thess. 1:6-10) “Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; (7) And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, (8) In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: (9) Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; (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.”

When Christ comes again, we shall be well recompensed for anything and everything we suffer in this world for Christ’s sake (Matt. 19:26-28; Rom. 8:17; 1 Pet. 1:3-9).

(Matthew 19:26-28) "But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. (27) Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed

thee; what shall we have therefore? (28) And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

(Romans 8:17-18) "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together. (18) For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

(1 Peter 1:3-9) "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, (5) Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (6) Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: (7) That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: (8) Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: (9) Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls."

Illustration: “*All this and heaven too!*”

Paul is reminding God’s troubled, afflicted, and persecuted saints that our God has not forgotten us. He is going to straighten things out in that great day. He tells us that those things we suffer here, in God’s providence, particularly those things that we suffer because of our faith in Christ, both demonstrate that God has made us “*worthy of the kingdom of God*” and that soon we shall inherit it with Christ. God has made us worthy of his kingdom. He has made us worthy to inherit heavenly glory (Col. 1:12).

- By Blood Atonement
- By Imputed Righteousness
- By the New Birth

That thought ought to comfort us and sustain us (2 Cor. 4:14-5:1).

(2 Corinthians 4:14-18) “Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you. (15) For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. (16) For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day. (17) For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; (18) While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things

which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.”

(2 Corinthians 5:1) “For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

Our Lord’s glorious second advent will also bring a day of recompense to unbelieving rebels. There is a day coming when God will set them straight, when those who oppose him, his gospel, and his people will stand before that Man who is our God and Savior, the Judge of all the earth who must do right.

- This is not to be a secret thing, no secret rapture, but the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior.
- Our Lord will be revealed “*in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel.*”
- They shall be punished “*with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.*” — What horrible terror awaits you who refuse to obey the gospel! Hell is everlasting destruction! Hell is everlasting banishment from the presence of the Lord.

For unbelievers Christ’s second coming will be a terrifying thing, terrifying beyond description. **But for believers** it shall be the consummation of all hope and indescribably glorious. When our Lord Jesus appears in

that day, “*he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe*” (1:10).

Paul does not say that Christ is going to be glorified “by” his saints. But as the world sees the wisdom, the power, and the righteousness of God’s great grace in the salvation of his elect, our great God and Savior shall be glorified in his saints. In that great day, our God will show all the universe “*the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus*” (Eph. 2:7).

In the last two verses of the first chapter, he assures them of his unceasing prayers on their behalf (vv. 11-12).

(2 Thess. 1:11-12) “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: (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.”

GREAT APOSTASY AND CHRIST’S COMING

In chapter 2 Paul tells the Thessalonians that there would be a time of great apostasy, “*a falling away*,” a departure from the gospel that shall engulf the professed church of Christ in darkness. Apparently, someone had written to the Church here, or visited it, and told them that Paul

said, “The Lord Jesus is coming real soon” (2 Thess. 1:1-2).

(Verses 1-2) “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him, (2) That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.”

In these first two verses of chapter 2 five things are obvious.

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ is coming again. He is on his way back at this very moment. “*Behold, he cometh!*”
2. There are no signs or prophecies yet to be fulfilled before the Lord’s return.
3. We are never told to look for signs, but always to look for Christ himself.
4. We should live every day upon the tiptoe of faith, looking for Christ at any moment, while laboring in his vineyard as responsible servants.
5. Our Lord may appear at any moment; but we must never allow anyone to dupe us into thinking he knows when. He may not return for another thousand years.

Throughout church history there have been some who predicted the second coming of Christ, setting dates, and trying to scare people into the Kingdom of God. Do not be fooled by such things. No one has an inside track on God’s purpose. No one knows when Christ shall appear. No one knows the day or the hour of our Lord’s glorious

second advent, or (for that matter) the month, or year, or century! Any man who makes such predictions does not speak by the authority of God. **Our Savior said to his disciples**, “*And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power*” (Acts 1:7).

THE APOSTASY

(Verse 3) “Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.”

While there are no visible signs or prophecies to be fulfilled before our Lord’s return, the Apostle does tell us that before Christ’s second advent, there will be a wholesale, universal apostasy and departure from the faith.

Paul is not talking here about liberals, open heretics, and vile ungodliness. He talks about those things in other places. Here he is talking about a departure of men and women from the faith who claim to be in the faith, a subtle, deceiving, damning departure from the faith by professed believers throughout the world. Look at this third verse. **Here the Holy Spirit tells us that...**

1. **Heresies must come. They had already begun in apostolic times; and they only get worse as time**

passes 1 Cor. 11:19; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-9; 1 John 4:1-3).

1 Corinthians 11:19 “For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.”

1 Timothy 4:1-3 “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; (2) Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; (3) Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”

2 Timothy 3:1-9 “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. (2) For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, (3) Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, (4) Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; (5) Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. (6) For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, (7) Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (8) Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate

concerning the faith. (9) **But they shall proceed no further**: for their folly shall be manifest unto all *men*, as theirs also was.”

1 John 4:1-3 “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. (2) Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: (3) And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”

2. **The man of sin, antichrist, will be revealed.**

Forget about what you see coming out of Hollywood. This man of sin will not be revealed to the world. He is not some hideous looking, green-eyed monster, in a red suit, with horns and a pitch fork. He is so smooth and slick that unless God himself enables you to recognize him, you cannot recognize him. **However, he shall be revealed to God’s elect.** Read on...

ANTICHRIST REVEALED

2 Thessalonians 2:4 “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

Here the Apostle identifies the antichrist, this man of sin. The antichrist is not one man. I have no problem at all in stating as many of our forefathers did, in great faithfulness, that the pope is antichrist and the church of Rome is antichrist. I do not mean that is the way it used to be. I mean that *his unholiness, the pope*, is antichrist. I mean that Roman Catholicism is antichrist. That cannot be stated too often, or too emphatically.

However, it is a serious mistake to limit antichrist to one man, or one religious sect. Antichrist was already at work in the Apostolic age.

- John said many antichrists had gone out into the world.
- Paul had to contend with antichrists at Galatia, Colosse, Corinth, and Jerusalem.

Notice how Paul describes this thing called “*the man of sin, the son of perdition.*” **He is one who...**

- Opposes God.
- Exalts himself above God.
- Sits himself up in the temple of God and is worshipped as God, showing that he is God.

Antichrist is any system of religion, any man, any preacher, any church, any denomination that makes salvation to be dependent upon or determined by the will, works, and worth of man rather than the will,

works, and worth of Christ. It does not matter whether that system of religion is conservative or liberal, a mainline Protestant Church or a wild cult, Baptist or Methodists, Pentecostal or Presbyterian. Any church, doctrine, preacher, or religious system that makes man the center-piece is antichrist. **Let me be understood...**

1. Those who teach that God's will can be altered, hindered, or thwarted by man's will, are, according to Colossians 2, will worshippers, not God worshippers. They are antichrists.
2. Those who teach that the merit and efficacy of Christ's atonement resides in man's will, man's decision, and man's faith are antichrists.
3. Those who teach that the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit may be successfully resisted by man are antichrists.
4. Those who teach that grace can be forfeited or taken away as the result of something a man does are antichrists.

Now, look at verses 5-7.

SATAN LOOSED

(Verses 5-7) "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? (6) And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. (7) For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way."

Paul told these saints at Thessalonica that the Holy Spirit now restrains, or withholds, the power and influence of antichrist. However, the time shall come, he wrote, when the Lord God will turn all hell loose to deceive the nations of the world again. At the end of the age, he said, Satan shall be loosed for a little season. I fear that we are living in that little season (Rev. 20:1-7).

Revelation 20:1-7 “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. (2) And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and **bound him a thousand years**, (3) And cast him into the bottomless pit, and **shut him up**, and set a seal upon him, **that he should deceive the nations no more**, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and **after that he must be loosed a little season**. (4) And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (5) But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. (6) Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (7) And when

the thousand years are expired, **Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.**”

SIGNS AND WONDERS

(Verses 8-10) “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: (9) *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, (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.”

Read the Apostle’s inspired words with care. Do not allow a single syllable to pass before your eyes without prayerful thought and consideration. *Here are five things revealed in these three verses...*

1. Antichrist arises, is revealed, consumed, and destroyed exactly according to the purpose of God.
2. Signs, wonders, and miracles are as certainly marks of antichrists in the last days as they were of Christ and his Apostles in the Apostolic Era.
3. The deception of antichrist is tremendous, so tremendous that were it possible, the very elect of God would be deceived.
4. The religion of antichrist, self-righteousness, is here called “*unrighteousness!*”

5. The reason for the delusion of men is their own, willful rejection of truth. It is not that they do not receive the truth, theoretically, but that “*they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*”

It is not merely giving mental assent to truth that is evidence of saving faith. Saul of Tarsus had that. Judas had that. The demons who confessed Christ had that. Saving faith not only embraces truth, it loves the truth. We love Christ, the embodiment of truth; and we love the truth of the gospel revealed in and by him. All believers do!

STRONG DELUSION

(Verses 11-12) “And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: (12) That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Do not imagine that things are out of control. We get a little fearful. We sometimes act as though the circumstances in which we are living are overwhelming! We must never entertain such thoughts. This day of religious deception and delusion is no more outside God’s plan, purpose, and power than the formation of the a rose. Things have come to pass as they are exactly according to God’s sovereign purpose.

1. God sends blindness in judgment, just as he sends light in grace.

2. God gives unbelievers the fruit of their own way and sends them to hell singing, “*blessed assurance, Jesus is mine*” (Pro. 1:31; 16:25).

Proverbs 1:31 “Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.”

Proverbs 16:25 “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.”

3. Again, the Apostle tells us that the religion of man, free will, works religion, that which men think is righteousness, is unrighteousness before God.

A CAUSE FOR THANKSGIVING

Now, can you imagine what shouts of “Hallelujah!” “Glory!” and “Bless God!” must have gone up from the hearts of these people when they read these next lines?

(Verses 13-14) “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: (14) Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Be sure you get the message contained in these two glorious verses of Scripture. Here the Holy Spirit is telling us that the only reason you and I are not lost and ruined, the only reason we are no longer under the spell

of antichrist, trusting our dead works of self-righteousness, the only reason we are not worshipping at the altar of our own free will, the only reason we are not reeling to and fro in drunkenness, intoxicated with the wine of Babylon's fornications is God's sovereign election. Every time we hear or read the words *election, electing love, electing grace*, we ought to lift our hearts to our great, gracious, and all-glorious God with thankful praise, and say, "**Thank God, for electing love!**" Let me talk to you for a minute or two about this great work of grace called "**Election.**"

1. **Election is God's sovereign work.** We give thanks to God for it because God did it.
2. **The cause of election is God's free, sovereign, everlasting love.** All who are "*beloved of the Lord*" were chosen to salvation in Christ. — "*Jacob have I loved!*"
3. **Election took place in eternity.** — "*God hath from the beginning chosen you*" (Eph. 1:3-6).

Ephesians 1:3-6 "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: (4) According as he hath chosen us in **him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (5) Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (6) To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."

4. **Election is unto salvation.** — “*God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation.*”

Those who were chosen to salvation must be saved. Else, the purpose of God is meaningless.

5. **God’s elect were chosen to be saved “through sanctification of the Spirit.”**

God will not save sinners apart from or without the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, by which all the chosen are made “*partakers of the divine nature.*”

6. **We were chosen to salvation by the instrumentality of specific means.** — “*Belief of the Truth!*”

Not only has God chosen and predestinated us to salvation, he has also ordained that every chosen sinner be saved by “*belief of the truth.*” God does not use religious lies to save sinners. He uses the truth. It is not the delusion of free will, works religion that sets sinners free, but the truth, not truth, but the truth! Christ is the Truth. We are saved as we are brought to know him who is the Truth through the preaching of the gospel (John 6:44-45; Eph. 1:12-14).

John 6:44-45 “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. (45) It is written in the prophets,

And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.”

Ephesians 1:12-14 “That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. (13) In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, (14) Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

7. Now, look at 1 Peter 1:2 for second and learn that **we were also chosen to salvation through the obedience and death of Christ as our Substitute.**

1 Peter 1:2 “Elect according to the foreknowledge (**Eternal Love and Sovereign Purpose**) 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.”

The obedience and sacrifice of Christ are put after the sanctification of the Spirit because we know nothing about Christ’s work for us until we have been regenerated and illuminated by God the Holy Spirit. Put this text with 2 Thessalonians, and you will see that we were chosen...

- To Salvation.

- Through the Merits of Christ’s Obedience and Death.
 - By the Regenerating Work of the Spirit.
 - And Belief of the Truth.
8. Go back to 2 Thessalonians 2:14 now, and you will see that God never by passes the use of means in accomplishing his purpose of grace. **The only way a person can ever come to belief the truth is by the effectual, irresistible call of the Holy Spirit, which comes to chosen, redeemed sinners through the preaching of the gospel.** — *“Whereunto he called you by our gospel.”*
9. I cannot leave verse fourteen without calling your attention to this fact also – **Every saved sinner has been chosen, redeemed and called “to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ!”**

Whatever that glory is which our Lord Jesus Christ now possesses as our Mediator, we shall obtain in all its fullness and blessedness, because of God’s sovereign election (John 17:5, 22). The glory of Christ has something to do with the perfection of holiness, the possession of power, and the totality of satisfaction. These things shall be ours forever in that blessedness that awaits us at the throne of our God!

THE TRADITIONS

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

In these days of wholesale apostasy, in these days of spiritual darkness, famine, and utter perversion, we who have been taught of God must stand fast in the traditions, not in the traditions of religious custom and superstition, but in **the traditions of Holy Scripture and gospel truth.** Let others say and do what they will, for those of us who have experienced grace, hesitation, shifting, shirking, shrinking, evading, and compromise would be treason to the Son of God! We must stand fast (2 Tim. 1:13; Jer:6:16).

2 Timothy 1:13 “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

(Jeremiah 6:16) “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk *therein.*”

- Total Depravity!
- Unconditional Election!
- Limited Atonement!
- Irresistible Grace!
- Perseverance of the Saints!

Now, look at **verses 16-17.** — This was Paul’s benediction, his inspired declaration of divine blessing upon God’s elect. This is my prayer for you and God’s

promise to every sinner who trusts Christ alone as Savior and Lord.

(Verses 16-17) “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, (17) Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.”

1. The Triune God “*hath loved us.*”
2. The Lord God has given us “*everlasting consolation*” through the everlasting gospel of his everlasting grace.

Isaiah 40:1-2 “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. (2) Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.”

3. God has given us a “*good hope through grace.*” – Christ is our Hope! “*The Lord is my portion, saith my soul. Therefore will I hope in him.*” **Our hope is...**
 - The Son of God!
 - The Grace of God!
 - The Word of God!
 - The Faithfulness of God!

May the God of all grace be pleased to “*Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work,*”

for Christ's sake. With those words of blessing and grace, Paul brings us to the very practical instructions of chapter 3.

WAITING FOR CHRIST

In the first chapter of 1 Thessalonians the apostle tells us that believers are to be constantly waiting for Christ's glorious return. He commended the Thessalonian saints for doing so (1 Thess. 1:10). But some at Thessalonica had fanatically obsessed with the thought of Christ's coming. They decided that, since we are to live in constant anticipation of Christ's return, they would quit their jobs and just pray, read their Bibles, and sing hymns until the Lord returned.

You may think, "Bro. Don, no sensible person would do that." You are mistaken. The error of these saints at Thessalonica has been repeated many times. I know several people who were duped by a preacher just a few years ago, who had persuaded multitudes across the country and around the world that the Lord Jesus would return on September 4, 1994. Many sold their homes, quit their jobs, and sent him their money. They were convinced that they were acting in faith, doing what devotion to Christ required. They were not heretics. They believed the gospel and still do. But they were duped by a man.

That is exactly what happened to some in Thessalonica. — *"For we hear that there are some*

which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies” (3:11).

Therefore, in this 3rd chapter, after requesting prayer for himself, Paul assures them of God’s faithfulness and of his confidence that the Lord would teach them to patiently wait for Christ, not in slothful, uselessness, but as faithful servants (3:1-5).

(2 Thessalonians 3:1-5) “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you: (2) And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all *men* have not faith. (3) But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep *you* from evil. (4) And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you. (5) And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.”

Let me try to illustrate this. — I am often away from home for several days at a time preaching the gospel. Usually my wife stays at home to take care of things in my absence. When the time nears for me to return, if you were in the house you would think she was behaving rather strangely, if you did not know what she was doing. She will finish up all her cleaning, get all dolled up, and go look out the front window. By this time she has already started preparing one of my favorite meals. She will set the table, and go look out the front window. Then she will stir everything that needs stirring, put on a

pot of coffee, and go look out the window. If you were to call her and ask, “Shelby, what are you doing?” I know exactly what her answer would be. She would say, “Oh, nothing. I’m just waiting for Don to get home.” Then, she would look out the front window again. This time, she would see me driving up the road. And if she were talking to the President of the United States, she would say, “Oh, he’s here. I’ve got to go,” and run outside to meet me.

That is what Paul teaches us in chapter 3. We are to wait for our Savior’s glorious second advent every moment, standing on the tiptoe of faith, while we go about our business as his stewards in this world serving him. “*Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing*” (Luke 12:43).

Illustration: *The Preacher and the Businessman*