

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Suffering is not the Great Tribulation
2 Thessalonians 1

Last time...exhortations for a daily walk with Jesus Christ at the end of Paul's letter to the church at Thessalonica (1 Thes 5:12-28)

1. Be at peace among yourselves
2. Warn the unruly, comfort the faint, support the weak, be patient with all
3. Never return evil for evil, but good
4. Rejoice evermore
5. Pray without ceasing
6. In everything give thanks
7. Quench not the Holy Spirit
8. Despise not the speaking/teaching of the Word of God
9. Prove all things
10. Abstain from all appearance of evil

Then the letter was sent to Thessalonica by a messenger/"letter carrier"
Paul, the 12th Apostle, continued his ministry in Corinth

Acts 18:11 he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Mark 16:20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following.

We are still in the white space between Acts 18:11 and Acts 18:12 in the ministry of the Holy Spirit Who is busy

- about the Father's business (seeking and saving the lost) via the "speakers" of the Voice/Word of God, the Body of Christ
- testifying of the Lord Jesus Christ
- making disciples
- gathering a Bride for the Father's Son (Gen 24)

Then...the letter carrier returned to Corinth

1 Thes 5:27 was done...but 1 Thes 4:18 and 1 Thes 5:11 did not happen

What did happen:

- Misunderstanding
- Confusion
- Questions
- A false teaching to discourage/deny/confuse Paul's letter (2 Thes 2:2-3)

The Church is fearful/agitated with an "understanding" that the persecution they are experiencing is The Great Tribulation, therefore they have missed The Rapture (1 Thes 4:13-18)

The letter carrier returns to Corinth with this report from Thessalonica
Therefore, Paul writes to them again...God-breathed words known as 2 Thessalonians

This time...we begin the Spirit-inspired response of Paul to set the record straight regarding

- the Day of the Lord
- suffering as it relates to the Day of the Lord

The Theme of this letter: The Day of the Lord, the 2nd Coming,
the return of Jesus Christ as King and Judge

v1-2 unto...in God...Lord:

From: Paul, Silas, and Timothy

To: the congregation/assembly of the children of God in Thessalonica

Where is this congregation?

Temporarily: Thessalonica

Eternally, incl the present: **in** God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

John 17:21-23a

“in Christ”...the position of the believer relative to God

Greeting: Grace and peace

“mainstays” of the Epistles

The sequence is significant – there is no peace (with God) without grace
(forgiveness of sin and being made righteous)

Grace and peace come from...God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you:
not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not
your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid

Q: Is the Holy Spirit being “slighted” or “disrespected” because He is not
mentioned in either v1 or v2?

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send
unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth,
which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of
me

John 16:13-15 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he
will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak
of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall
he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He
shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and
shall shew *it* unto you. All things that the Father
hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of
mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

v3-4 thank God...faith...charity:

Paul jumps right into the business at hand

1st order of business: Thank God (1 Thes 5:18)

Always express gratitude for what God is doing,
whether we understand it or not

Ingratitude is one of the ugliest manifestations of human nature

Why do PST thank God for the congregation in Thessalonica?

1. It is proper and suitable and deserving due to their

- Faith: in growing greatly
Spiritual growth is seen!
- Charity/love of God: for each other is also growing greatly
1 Thes 3:12-13
The Love of God for each other is seen!

2. God is the Source of faith and Love, the Giver of those good gifts
They are because He is

Such is their growing faith and love for each other that the Apostle Paul,
planter of churches, boasts of them to the other churches/congregations
(1 Thes 1:7-8)

Also, Paul boasts to the other churches of the church at Thessalonica because how
they are enduring/handling/putting up with persecution (1 Thes 2:14-15)
and tribulations/troubles/trials – with

- patience...cheerful endurance
taught by the example of PST (1 Thes 3:1-4)
- faith...trusting the Lord
spiritual growth is fueled by persecution and
tribulations/trials...
the heat that nurtures the seed (Matt 13:20-21)

v5 manifest token:

The persecutions and tribulations they are enduring are the clear indication of the
righteous judgment of God...

1. evidence of their “kingdom-worthiness”

Acts 14:22b we must through much tribulation enter into the
kingdom of God

2. evidence of their “Christ-likeness”

Matt 10:22a *And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake*

1 Tim 4:10a For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach,
because we trust in the living God

Persecution and tribulations are

NOT The Great Tribulation judgment of God of the whole world

Rev 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience,
I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation,
which shall come upon all the world, to try them
that dwell upon the earth.

BUT a “fact of Life” that the righteous suffer at the hands of the wicked

In the hands of God (Rom 8:28), suffering persecution and tribulations for
righteousness’ sake makes strong disciples of Jesus Christ,
strong citizens of the kingdom of God

Suffering for the sake of the King of the Kingdom of God is not an “evil”,
it evidence of our worthiness of the King and His kingdom

Phil 1:29

2 Tim 3:12

Matt 10:34-39

v6-8 recompence tribulation...rest with us when:

God is just, always does what is right and fair

The righteous/justified are those who believe what He has said;
the children of God

The unrighteous/wicked are those who do not believe;
the children of disobedience, the children of wrath (Eph 2:1-3)

The righteous are troubled by the wicked...an inescapable “fact of Life”
But God...the righteous God

1. recompenses/pays back/troubles the wicked...with Great Tribulation...
those who trouble His children...with tribulation
2. gives rest to the righteous...who are troubled by the wicked...
during the Great Tribulation

The righteous are NOT troubled by God

- The Great Tribulation
- The Day of the Lord (1 Thes 5:1-3, Rev 6-18)
- When the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed from heaven
(Rev 1:7, Rev 19:11-16) to exact the vengeance of God upon
 - unbelievers: know not (no relationship with) God
 - His enemies: reject the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - forgiveness of sins
 - reconciliation with God
 - changed...made new, made righteous
 - given a new and acceptable standing before God

The just God does not destroy the righteous with the wicked

Gen 18:23-26, Gen 19:22-25

The church at Thessalonica (believers) is experiencing the wrath of the world, the devil, and the children of the devil...but they are NOT experiencing the flaming fire of vengeance of God's wrath (on unbelievers)

The persecution and tribulations in the world are NOT the Great Tribulation!

They did NOT miss the Rapture!

Rather, the persecutions and tribulations at the hands of man are clear indications that they are counted worthy of the Rapture!

The Rapture...the return of the Lord Jesus Christ

1. as the Bridegroom and Redeemer
2. to the clouds
3. for His Bride
4. to keep His promise to His disciples

is still future (when Paul recorded these words, and even to this day),

as is the Day of the Lord...the 2nd Coming of Jesus Christ

1. as the Conquering King and Judge
2. to the earth
3. with His Bride
4. to destroy His enemies and to set up His kingdom (1000 year reign)

v9-10 punished...from the presence...come to be glorified:

The Day of the Lord is

- about...that day
 - the glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ, with and in His saints/believers (Jude 14-15)
 - eternal punishment of God's enemies...all that do not believe
 - wailing and gnashing of teeth of those cast out of His presence
 - eternal torment of fire (Luke 16:24)
 - eternal darkness
 - utter, inescapable, and perpetually unchanging destruction/ruin
 - forever separation from
 - the presence of the Lord for the workers of iniquity
 - the strength of His help (John 1:4, John 11:25-26)
 - justice, no grace or mercy
- not about...today
 - the Father is seeking and saving the lost
 - the Father's chastisement of His children (Heb 12:5-12)
 - as a part of the good work in them that He will finish (Phil 1:6, Rom 8:29)
 - during which time He will never leave them nor forsake them (Heb 13:5b)

v11-12 Wherefore:

Therefore...because all of v3-10 is absolutely true,
words breathed by the God that cannot lie and cannot fail

pray...count...fulfill...that the name:

PST and praying without ceasing to a faithful God (1 Thes 5:23-24) on behalf of
the congregation at Thessalonica that God would

- count them worthy of this calling/invitation of
peace and comfort

Col 1:12-14

Luke 21:36

Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye
may be accounted worthy to escape all these
things that shall come to pass, and to stand
before the Son of man

- fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness
 - to give us the kingdom (Luke 12:32)
 - to adopt us as His children to His glory (Eph 1:5-6)
 - to make known to us the mystery of His will (Eph 1:9)
 - to do His work in our lives (Phil 2:13)...using
persecution, tribulations/trials that increase faith
(e.g. silver is refined when...)

- fulfill the work of faith with power

1 Peter 1:9 Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the
salvation of *your* souls

Acts 1:8

for the Divine purpose that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

- the only name given under heaven among men whereby we
may be saved from the wrath of God
- the name that is above every name at which every knee will
bow and every tongue will confess, to the glory of God the
Father

may be glorified/magnified/lifted up in you...and you in Him!

I pray the same thing for this congregation

I agonize over this church, as Paul agonized over the churches he planted

Application/Lessons

1. Believer

Suffering persecution and tribulations/trials in the world is NOT the Great Tribulation

It is part and parcel with walking with Jesus Christ

Fact of Life: the righteous suffer at the hands of the wicked

Fact of Death: the wicked suffer at the hands of God Almighty

Heb 10:30-31

The righteous are not destroyed with the wicked

The wicked are destroyed...but not until the righteous are safe and secure

The temporary suffering of the righteous cannot be compared to the eternal suffering of the wicked:

1. the Great Tribulation that is unlike anything the world has ever known
2. hell
3. Lake of Fire

John 16:33

Do we, like they, know tribulation/trials/suffering?

Yes...perhaps increasingly so

Will we, like they, experience the Great Tribulation?

No

1 Thes 1:10

1 Thes 5:9

The Great Tribulation is the punishment of the wicked by an enraged God when His mercy and longsuffering come to an end

The Day of the Lord is NOT the persecution of believers by this world and the god of this world

The Day of the Lord is pouring out of God's wrath on unbelievers

v5

Don't go looking for trouble...that requires engaging the world with contention and strife, which are not Christ-like

But being Christ-like (Light in darkness), do not be surprised if trouble finds you

When it finds you, do not run from it...follow Jesus thru it

The Lord has given us help for such times

1 Peter 1:3-9

1 Peter 2:19-25

1 Peter 3:17-18

1 Peter 4:12-19

2 Peter 2:9

2. Unbeliever

- outright rejection of Jesus Christ, His love and grace
- know about Jesus but do not know Him (lip service vs personal relationship)
- approaching God on your terms and not His (1 Cor 2:2, Luke 6:46)

There are only 2 outcomes of life on earth, both eternal and unchanging

1. Residence in the kingdom of God...Light and Life
2. Residence in hell, then the Lake of Fire...Darkness and death

The God Who made you and so loves you that He sent His only Begotten Son to be made your sin and to bear His holy and just wrath for your sin, has a great desire: that you choose Life and not death

But, the choice is yours, not His

I beg you to

- believe what God has said and done on your behalf
- surrender your will to God's will
- humble yourself before God, confess your sin and repent
(a 180 degree course correction)
- cry out to the Living God, cry out to the Lord Jesus Christ to
 - save you from the wrath of God and eternal death
 - come take residence in your heart
 - make you new...a child of God instead of a child of the devil
 - count you worthy to escape the wrath to come and to stand before Him, worthy of His kingdom