

Journeys With God

2 Thessalonians

Chapter 1

The Road Upward:

Revisiting the Future

2Thessalonians

Chapter 1 Summary

2 Thessalonians 1:1 - Jesus' Church

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

Truth to Learn

All Christians are members of the church of Jesus Christ.

Behind the Words

“Church” is translated from the Greek word *ekklēsia*, which is made up of *ek*, meaning “out” and a form of the verb *kaleō*, meaning “to call.” It literally refers to “the called out ones.” Originally, this word referred to an assembly of citizens who were called out by civil authorities. It is used throughout the New Testament, however, to refer to the church, either a local assembly or the world-wide church.

The word “Thessalonians” is transliterated (not translated, but moved directly from Greek into English) from the Greek word *Thessalonikeus*. The city of Thessalonica, located on the coast of Macedonia (northern Greece), was built beside a large natural harbor on the Aegean Sea. At the time of this letter, it was the capital of Macedonia, located on the Via Egnatia (the main east-west highway of the Roman Empire), with a population of about 200,000 people.

Meaning Explained

Paul starts off this letter with a very short introduction, shorter than many of his letters. He indicates that it comes not just from him, but from Silvanus and Timothy as well.

Silvanus, also called Silas, was Paul’s chosen companion for his second missionary journey (**Acts 15:40**). Also, in the fifteenth chapter of Acts, we find that Silas is referred to as a prophet (**Acts 15:32**). It is believed by some that he is also the Silvanus mentioned as the writer of Peter’s first general epistle (**1 Peter 5:12**), but this has not been historically verified. We first encountered Silvanus (Silas) in **Acts 15:22** where he was chosen by the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem to accompany Paul and Barnabas in carrying an important letter to the church at Antioch. This same Silvanus was the one imprisoned with Paul in Philippi where they prayed and sang hymns together, resulting in the conversion of their jailer (**Acts 16:15-34**).

Timothy was also a constant companion to the Apostle Paul. His name is mentioned in all of Paul’s letters with the exception of those to the Galatians and the Ephesians. Although a younger man, the son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother, he had a good reputation among those who knew him (**Acts 16:1, 2**). After their short stay in Thessalonica, while Paul was ministering in Corinth, Timothy was the one whom he chose to return to Thessalonica to establish and comfort the church members there.

Since Paul's initial converts were Jewish, he made it unmistakably clear that the church was not a Jewish assembly. He declared that Christians gathered in the name of Jesus, the Son of God, who is both Lord God and Messiah. This emphasis on the equality between God and the Lord Jesus is a part of the introduction in all of Paul's epistles.

Application

If you are a Christian, then you may be a member of a local church that meets each week for worship and edification. You are also a member of “the church of Jesus Christ” which is made up of all Christians throughout the world. Because of this fact, this letter was written for you.

2 Thessalonians 1:2 - Grace and Peace

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Truth to Learn

People who know God's grace can experience peace with Him.

Behind the Words

"Grace" is translated from the Greek noun *charis*, which is from the verb *chairō*, meaning "to rejoice." *Charis* means "that which causes joy, pleasure, gratification, or acceptance as a result of a kindness granted." It is often translated as grace, thanks, or gratitude.

The word translated "peace" is *eirēnē*. It can refer to an absence of war and dissension, that is, harmony among individuals. However, it can also refer to peace of mind and mental tranquility. It is a state in which there is no perceived threat or cause for worry present.

"God" is translated from *theos*, which was originally used by the heathen to refer to their gods (idols). It is based on the noun *theteres*, meaning "placers." The heathen Greeks thought their gods were the makers and disposers (placers) of all things. For instance, the god of money was referred to as mammon, which Jesus referred to in **Matthew 6:24** and **Luke 16:13**. In the New Testament, when you see word "god" it refers to a false god (see **1Corinthians 1:20**) but when spelled "God" it refers to the one true God.

The word translated "father" is *patēr*, which is a primary word meaning "father." It is the word from which we get our English word patriarch (father-ruler).

Meaning Explained

If you compare the opening two verses of this chapter with the opening verse of 1 Thessalonians 1, you will notice that they appear nearly identical. And, in the best manuscripts the words "from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" do not appear in **1 Thessalonians 1:1**. They do appear to be genuine in this verse, however.

Paul's opening message to the Thessalonian church in both **1 Thessalonians 1:1** and in this verse is one of grace and peace. These two represent the source and the result of our salvation. For by grace we are saved (**Ephesians 2:5**), and this salvation results in a peace that is beyond our understanding (**Philippians 4:7**). His desire of peace for the Christians in Thessalonica is especially important given the persecution and confusion that existed in the church at that time. "Grace" is "God's riches at Christ's expense"; it is God's unmerited favor which He freely bestows on all who accept by faith Jesus Christ's substitutionary work on the cross. God gives man the opposite of what he deserves: blessing instead of judgment. "Peace" is the cessation of hostility which has resulted from Christ's death; God and mankind can be reconciled because the debt of human sin has been paid by Christ. Christians have peace *with* God through the death of Christ. They also experience the peace *of* God as a result of Christ's work. So we see that for a Christian, grace and peace are closely connected.

Application

If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then you have been the recipient of God's grace. Because of this, you are at peace with God. One of the challenges of Christian

living is recognizing and experiencing that peace, and living a life of obedience to God because of it.

2 Thessalonians 1:3 - Growing Difficulties

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,

Truth to Learn

Difficult times help our faith to grow.

Behind the Words

The words “**we are bound**” are translated from the Greek verb *opheilō*. This word means “to be indebted to someone” or “to owe a debt to someone.”

“**Always**” is from the Greek word *pantote*, which is made up of *pas*, meaning “all” and *tote*, meaning “at the time” or “the when.” Thus, *pantote* means “all the time.”

Axion is the word translated “**fitting**.” This Greek word is based on the verb *agō*, meaning “to lead” or “to bring.” *Axion* is a picture of a weight being placed on a set of scales, bringing it to a level position. Thus, *axion* is a reference to the value or worth of something.

The words “**grows exceedingly**” are from the verb *huperauxanō*, which is made up of *huper* (hyper), meaning “above” or “over” and *auxanō*, meaning “to grow” or “to increase.” Thus, *huperauxanō* means “to increase greatly.”

“**Abounds**” is translated from the verb *pleonadzō*, which means “to cause to have much, or more than enough.”

Meaning Explained

Why do you think the Apostle Paul felt compelled to thank God for the Thessalonian Christians? Could it be because God had answered his previous prayers? In **1 Thessalonians 3:12** he prayed:

And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love unto one another and unto all, just as we do unto you, (1 Thessalonians 3:12)

As evidenced by Paul’s comments in today’s verse, God had answered his prayer, specifically regarding their growth in love. Apparently, the person who had delivered Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians had returned and informed him, among other things, that the Christians there were growing in their love for one another. And, notice that it is not just a few of them; Paul says that “**the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other.**”

Notice that it was not just their love which made Paul thankful. He says that their faith was growing exceedingly. So, how does a Christian grow in faith? Faith doesn’t grow all by itself just because you’re a Christian. In fact, there are many Christians whose faith is not very strong at all. Our faith grows when we see God at work in our lives. That usually means that we have to go through times of trials and testing. These are the things that cause us to fall on our knees seeking God’s help.

The Thessalonian Christians were under attack from the Jews and from their fellow countrymen as we learned from **1 Thessalonians 2:14**. However, they didn’t just give up; instead, they stood up. They endured the difficult times, bowing before our Lord and seeking His face.

Application

Are you undergoing difficulties in your life right now? If so, you should be thankful to God for loving you enough to bring things into your life that will make your faith grow. Take some time to thank God for helping your faith to get stronger.

2 Thessalonians 1:4 - Faithful Endurance

so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,

Truth to Learn

Our growth comes from enduring difficult circumstances.

Behind the Words

Kauchomai is the Greek verb translated “boast.” This word may be derived from *auchen*, meaning “the neck,” which a boastful person holds up in a proud manner. The word *kauchomai* means “to boast” in either a good or bad sense.

“Patience” is from the word *hupomonē*, which is made up of *hupo*, meaning “under” or “beneath” and a form of the verb *menō*, meaning “to remain” or “to stay in place.” It is a picture of a beast of burden remaining under a heavy load instead of shaking it off. Therefore, it carries the meaning of being steadfast or patient, particularly in a difficult situation.

The word “persecutions” is translated from the Greek word *diōgmos*, which is derived from the verb *diokō*, meaning “to follow, pursue, or persecute.” *Diōgmos*, therefore, refers to “pursuing someone or something.” Regarding people, this word almost always refers to hostile persecution.

The word “tribulation” is from *thlipsis*, which is derived from the verb *thilbō*, meaning “to press, crush, or squeeze.” Thus, *thlipsis* refers to “pressure or affliction.”

“Endure” is translated from the verb *anechomai*, made up of *ana*, meaning “up” and *echo*, meaning “to have or to hold.” So *anechomai* means “to hold oneself up” or “to endure.”

Meaning Explained

Anytime a verse starts out with a connective like “therefore” or “so that” we need to back-up and see what it is that is being referenced. If we look at the previous verse, we see that Paul had just thanked God for the growth in faith and love within the church at Thessalonica. Paul says that the growth of these attributes of the church there resulted in his boasting about the Thessalonians wherever he went.

He tells us that they were continuing to experience persecution and tribulation. But, they were not just experiencing these things, they were “hanging in there.” All Christians will experience both persecution and tribulation, but the maturing Christians will endure such things. Such endurance will produce both patience and love. It doesn’t come as a result of hanging your head or hiding in a corner. It comes from looking up to our commander-in-chief, seeking His guidance and assistance.

Let us not forget where this persecution was coming from. It was coming from their fellow countrymen. It was from their neighbors and co-workers. It was from people at the local market and government officials. It was as if the deck was stacked against them everywhere they turned. But, like a heavily laden beast of burden, the Christians in Thessalonica didn’t just give up, nor did they give in; they remained faithful in their Christian walk and in their witness to everyone around them.

Application

In the midst of life's problems and persecution, let us stand boldly before our foes and proclaim the message of love and forgiveness. Hang-in there, my friend, and let your faith grow. This world needs to see faith in action, not faith in retreat.

2 Thessalonians 1:5 - A Kingdom Viewpoint

which is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment, for you to be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you indeed suffer;

Truth to Learn

Christians know God's merciful judgment and can keep God's kingdom in view when we suffer persecution and tribulation.

Behind the Words

The words "plain indication" are translated from the Greek noun *endeigma*, which is composed of *en*, meaning "in" or "to" and a form of *deiknumi*, meaning "to show." *Endeigma* means "the state of something being shown for what it really is."

"Judgment" is from the Greek word *krisis*. This is based on the verb *krinō*, meaning "to judge." *Krisis* refers to a judgment or a decision. In this case it refers to God's judgment.

The words "you to be counted worthy" are translated from the verb *kataxiō*, which is made up of *kata*, used as an intensifier and *axiō*, meaning "to think of someone or something as worthy or deserving." Therefore, we could translate this as "you may be considered entirely deserving."

Basileia is the Greek word translated "kingdom." It is based on the noun *basileus*, meaning "a king." Thus, *basileia* refers to "the dominion or realm of a king."

Meaning Explained

The first word of this verse is another connecting word, so we need to see what it is referring to. In this case, it is referring back to "your patience and faith" in the previous verse. So, Paul is saying that the patience and faith of the Thessalonian Christians is evidence that God's judgment is just. You will recall that the Thessalonians were being persecuted and were suffering as a result of that persecution. But as evidence of their genuine faith, they were "hanging in there" and not giving up in the face of it.

What Paul says here is that their patience and faith were visible evidence that God's judgment is righteous. There are really two aspects of this judgment that Paul is referring to. The first is that God is righteous in the coming judgment against all those who reject Jesus Christ as Savior. The other aspect of His righteous judgment is in regards to the Thessalonian believers (and by extension, all believers). God's decision (judgment) to be merciful to all who believe is righteous (it is the right thing for Him to do). And, as a result of that merciful judgment, we who believe are seen as fully deserving of His kingdom.

Keep in mind that there are three distinct aspects of "the kingdom of God." The first is the spiritual kingdom that exists right now. All believers are part of the realm in which God is currently reigning as King. The second aspect of the kingdom of God is the kingdom that will be in place during the millennial reign of Christ. The third aspect of His kingdom is the eternal kingdom in which believers will fully experience God's blessing in the presence of the King of Kings.

Application

As Christians, we should recognize our total unworthiness because of our sins. At the same time we should recognize that through our faith, God considers us as worthy as Jesus Christ. Therefore, the thought that we will spend eternity in His kingdom should humble us and give us strength to endure even in times of persecution and tribulation. Praise be to God!

2 Thessalonians 1:6 - Righteous Judgment

since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,

Truth to Learn

God will “pay back” those who cause Christians to suffer.

Behind the Words

The word “since” is translated from *eiper*. This Greek word is made up of *ei*, which is a conditional particle usually translated as “if” and *per*, meaning “concerning” or “with respect to.” *Eiper* assumes that the condition is true and therefore is most often translated as “if indeed” or “since.”

Dikaios is the Greek adjective translated as “righteous.” It is based on the noun *dikē*, which means “that which is right or just.” *Dikaios* means that whatever word it describes is the right thing, proper thing, or just thing to do.

“Repay” is from *antapodidōmi*. This is a double compound word made up of *anti*, meaning “against” or “opposing,” *apo*, meaning “from” or “away from,” and *didōmi*, meaning “to give.” When we put these all together we see that the idea of *antapodidōmi* is “to give back in return.” It is often used to mean “to repay a debt that is owed to someone.”

The word “with” is from *para*, meaning “to the side of” or “by.” Here it has the meaning “with respect to God” or “from God’s viewpoint.”

Both of the words “tribulation” and “trouble” are based on the word *thlibō*, which means “to press together, to squeeze, or to cause affliction.”

Meaning Explained

After opening with a typical Pauline greeting in this letter to the Christians in Thessalonica, Paul offered up thanks to God for their growth in faith and in love. On the surface, this spiritual growth may seem unusual because the Thessalonians were suffering under the persecution from those around them. However, we see that spiritual growth, like muscular growth, only comes from repeated difficult activities. Christians for whom life is easy do not grow in their faith because they have no need for God. But Christians who are suffering from persecution have to depend on God, and they grow as a result.

Paul then told them that this persecution and their subsequent growth was evidence of God’s righteous judgment because it indicated that they were being considered worthy of God’s eternal blessing. In other words, God’s decision to provide future blessing to His chosen children is the right and proper thing for Him to do.

Now Paul looks at the other side of the coin. Not only is it right to promise future blessing to those who believe God, but it’s just as right to bring judgment against those who reject God. The non-believers in Thessalonica were causing trouble for the Christians, so Paul says that it is just and proper for God to “pay them back” for the trouble that they caused His children. Not only is this a proper action for a righteous God, it is proper for a loving father to protect and defend His children.

Application

If you believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay for your sins, then God loves you as one of His children. Not only has He promised you eternal blessing, but He has promised to “pay back” suffering to those who cause you suffering.

2 Thessalonians 1:7 - Eternal Rest

and to you who are troubled, rest with us in the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with His mighty angels,

Truth to Learn

Christians may be suffering now, but we will have eternal rest.

Behind the Words

Some translations start this verse off with, “and to *give you* ...” The word “*give*” is not in the Greek text, but has been added by the translators. The grammatical construction of the Greek, however, indicates that the verb here is the same as the previous verse (*repay*). So the beginning of this verse could be translated as, “and to *repay you*...”

Anesis is the word translated “rest.” It is based on the verb *aniēmi*, a compound word made up of *ana*, meaning “up” or “back” and *hiēmi*, meaning “to send.” Thus, *aniēmi* means “to send back” or “to loosen” and *anesis* refers to “relief or rest.”

“Revelation” is from the Greek word *apokalupsis*, which is made up of *apo*, meaning “from” or “away from” and a form of the verb *kaluptō*, meaning “to cover.” Hence, *apokalupsis* refers to something being “uncovered” or “revealed.”

The word “heaven” is translated from *ouranos*, which is probably based on *oros*, meaning “a high place” or “a mountain.” *Ouranos* refers to the area above us. It can refer to the sky (the atmosphere around the earth), space (where stars and planets are located), or God’s dwelling place (sometimes called the third heaven).

The Greek word translated “mighty” is *dunamis* (from which we get our English word “dynamite”). This word refers to “power in action.” The Greek word *ischus* is similar, although it refers to the ability, whereas *dunamis* refers to the action.

Meaning Explained

Paul has prayed for the growth in faith and love of the Thessalonians and stated that this growth in the face of persecution and tribulation is an indication of God’s righteous judgment. In yesterday’s verse Paul told us that God’s judgment is righteous in the way He judges evil doers. He told them (and us) that he will repay those who persecute us with their own tribulation. We will see in tomorrow’s verse the kind of repayment they will receive.

We are now told how God’s judgment is righteous toward those of us who believe in God and who believe in His son Jesus Christ. Please note here that there is a difference between fairness and righteous judgment. If God were fair, we would receive from Him what we rightly deserve. We would receive His wrath because of our sinfulness. But, because God is righteous and has chosen to demonstrate His grace toward us, we will not experience God’s wrath. Instead, we are told here, He will give us relief from the tribulation that we suffer in this life. Keep in mind what Jesus told His disciples:

These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

Being a Christian does not mean that our life on earth will be easy. On the contrary, we will (and do) have tribulation. But, when this life is over we will have rest. Those who persecute us, however, will have tribulation beyond measure, eternally!

Application

Be of good cheer, my Christian friends; though your life may be difficult now, we will have eternal peace and rest!

2 Thessalonians 1:8 - Righteous Blazing Fire

in blazing fire giving vengeance to those who do not know God, and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Truth to Learn

God will judge unbelievers, so we don't need to.

Behind the Words

“Blazing” is translated from the Greek word *phlox*, which refers to “a flame or a blazing fire.” It is sometimes translated as “flaming.”

The word “fire” is from *pur*, which refers to something that is burning. When combined with *phlox*, as it is in today's verse, it refers to a hot, blazing fire.

Didomi is the Greek word translated “giving.” Some translations have this as “taking” but actually, the primary meaning of *didomi* is “to give” rather than “to take.”

“Vengeance” is translated from *ekdikēsis*. This word is made up of *ek*, meaning “out” and a form of *dikē*, meaning justice. Thus, *ekdikēsis* refers to handing out a just sentence. It is sometimes translated as retaliation or punishment.

The verb “know” is from *eidō*, meaning “to see” or “to perceive.” Since knowing something is like “seeing with the mind,” it is often translated as “to know.” It is expressed here in the perfect tense, indicating past completed action with an ongoing effect, where the emphasis is on the effect.

“Obey” is from the Greek verb *hupakouō*, which is made up of *hupo*, meaning “under” or “beneath” and *akouō*, meaning “to hear.” It is a picture of a disciple listening attentively to his or her master and obeying the instruction given.

Meaning Explained

In verse six Paul told us that it is a righteous, or proper, thing for God to repay with tribulation those people who have been persecuting the Christians in Thessalonica. Now in this verse and the next, Paul tells how God will repay them. He says here that God will give a just sentence to them. That just sentence, according to Paul, is blazing fire. This is a clear description of hellfire. Observe that it is God who hands out this judgment. In his letter to the Roman Christians Paul said:

Beloved, do not take revenge yourselves, but leave room for wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," says the Lord. (Romans 12:19)

The words translated “revenge” and “vengeance” are from the verb form and noun form of *ekdikēsis*, the same as in the current verse. So, Paul is telling the Romans that it is not up to them (or us) to be judge, jury, and executioner. We may be suffering from persecution and injustice from non-believers, but we can rest in the fact that not only has God prepared a glorious future for us, He will also repay our persecutors with a just sentence.

Now, let's take a look at the two main characteristics of those who are persecuting us and causing us tribulation. Paul says that they “do not know God” and they “do not obey the gospel.” As we discussed in *Behind the Words*, this word “know” indicates a perception or awareness of

God. They either refuse to believe that there is a God, or the god they choose to worship is not the true God. As a result, they don't believe the truth that He has communicated to all mankind, that we are all sinners and that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has paid the price for our sins.

Application

When you suffer for being a Christian or for proclaiming the Gospel message, don't be discouraged. Know that God will bless you and will judge those who are persecuting you.

2 Thessalonians 1:9 - Eternal Torment

These shall pay the penalty, eternal distress from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

Truth to Learn

Those who reject Jesus Christ will suffer terribly, for eternity!

Behind the Words

The words “pay the penalty” is translated from the words *dikēn tisousin*. The word *dikēn* refers to “a judgment, a penalty, or a punishment” and *tisousin* is a form of the verb *tinō*, which means “to pay the value of something.” When these two words are used together they mean “to pay a penalty.”

“Eternal” is from the Greek adjective *aiōnios*, which is derived from the noun *aiōn*, meaning “an age of time.” *Aiōnios* means “constant, perpetual, or eternal.”

Olethros is the word translated “distress.” It is based on the verb *ollumi*, meaning “to destroy” or “to kill.” The fundamental thought behind *olethros* is not annihilation (ceasing to exist), but unavoidable and never ending distress and torment.

The word translated “presence” is *prosōpon*, which is made up of *pros*, meaning “toward” and *ops*, meaning “the eyes.” Thus, *prosōpon* literally means “toward the eyes.” It is most often translated as “face,” but it can also be translated as “presence.”

Meaning Explained

Paul has been talking about the righteous judgments of God: His righteous decision to show grace to sinners who believe in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, and His righteous decision to sentence all non-believers to eternal punishment. Yesterday we looked at one aspect of this punishment of unbelievers. Paul identified it as hot, blazing fire. In Luke’s gospel account the following description of this torment is described in the story of the rich man and Lazarus, where the rich man was in torment in hades:

And he cried out and said, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.” (Luke 16:24)

But even this pales in comparison to the final torment that unbelievers will suffer. According to **Revelation 20:15**, “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.”

As painful and torturous as this may be, I believe that this is not the worst part of the sentence that will be passed on those who reject the gospel message. Listen to the words of Jesus:

And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 8:11-12)

In this verse, the expression “sons of the kingdom” is a reference to the Jews, sons of Abraham, who rejected their Messiah. The total absence of the presence of God and His glory will produce

such darkness that it will cause those experiencing it to wail and to gnash their teeth. This is the future that is promised to all who reject Jesus Christ.

Application

It is not our job to punish evil doers. That is God's prerogative and His punishment will be worse than anything we could do.

2 Thessalonians 1:10 - Return In Glory

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 among you was believed.

Truth to Learn

Christ is coming in glory to judge and to rule.

Behind the Words

“To be glorified” is translated from the verb *endoxadzō*, which is made up of *en*, meaning “in” and the verb form of *doxa*, which means “glory.” Thus, *endoxadzō* means “to be enveloped in glory” or “to appear glorious.”

Hagios is the word translated “saints.” It is based on *hagos*, meaning “that which inspires awe.” The basic meaning of *hagios* is “that which is set apart from common use to be used in the service of God.” Therefore, *hagios* is sometimes translated “holy” or “sanctified.” All Christians have been set-apart from the world and set-apart to God, which is precisely the meaning of the word “saint.” In the Bible this term does not refer to someone who has been declared to be a saint by the church, but someone who has been declared righteous by God.

“To be marveled at” is from the Greek verb *thaumadzō*, which is based on the noun *thauma*, meaning “a wonder.” *Thaumadzō* means “to be filled with admiration or astonishment.”

The word “testimony” is translated from *marturion*, which refers to “a declaration of witness” or “a testimony.”

Meaning Explained

Paul has been talking about God’s righteous judgment of grace toward believers and eternal suffering for unbelievers. In the previous verse he talked about the penalty that unbelievers will pay in eternal blazing fire and the complete absence of the presence of God. Now Paul tells us when these events will be brought about.

We can all look around us and see non-believers who reject God and everything He represents, but they seem to be successful and prospering in this world. At the same time we see faithful Christians who are undergoing persecution and suffering. We need to keep in mind, however, that this world system is controlled by Satan, whom Paul calls “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who is now working in the sons of disobedience” in **Ephesians 2:2**.

One day soon Jesus Christ is going to return to judge Satan and the world he controls. This is the day that Paul refers to as the Day of the Lord. It actually will not be just a single twenty-four hour period; it will be a period of time that includes the Great Tribulation, the return of Christ, His millennial reign, and the final judgment. Throughout scripture it is portrayed as a day of judgment, but it will also be a day of blessing and a day in which Christ will be glorified because He will be seen for who He really is.

This is what Paul is describing in today’s verse. When Jesus Christ returns at the end of the Great Tribulation to set-up His kingdom on earth, we who have believed the gospel message (along with all the Jews who truly believe in the returning Messiah) will admire His glorious appearance.

Application

The testimony of believers, both in word and in deeds, proclaims the truth of God and the promise of His return. That message gives hope to believers and gives warning to unbelievers. Proclaim your faithful testimony 'till He comes!

2 Thessalonians 1:11 - Don't Complain, Give Thanks!

To this end we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfill all the good intent of *His* goodness and the work of faith with power,

Truth to Learn

Trials are good for Christians. Don't complain – thank God.

Behind the Words

“To this end” is translated from the Greek words *eis ho*. *Eis* means “to, into, or unto” and *ho* is a relative pronoun meaning “who or which.” So, we see that these two words literally mean “to which.”

The words “would count ... worthy” are from the verb *axioō*, which is based on the noun *axios*, meaning “value or worth.” Therefore, *axioō* means “to determine the value or worth of something.” It is expressed here in the subjunctive mood indicating possibility or probability.

Klēsis is the Greek word translated “calling.” It is based on the verb *kaleō*, meaning “a call or invitation to people, inviting them to come or to go somewhere.”

The word “fulfill” is from *plēroō*, meaning “to fill-up or to make completely full.”

“Good intent” is translated from *eudokia*, which is made up of *eu*, meaning “good or well” and *dokeō*, meaning “to think.” Thus *eudokia*, means “good thoughts” or “good intent.”

Meaning Explained

The apostle Paul would probably not get good grades in a Greek writing class because his sentences are often long and run-on. A good example is shown here in 2 Thessalonians. The sentence immediately preceding the current verse began back in verse three and doesn't end until verse 10. As a result, it takes deep inspection to determine what he means by “to this end” at the beginning of today's verse.

The crux of what Paul has been talking about is “we thank God because your patience and faith are growing as a result of your persecution and suffering. And, this growth is evidence of God's righteous good judgment toward you and His severe judgment against unbelievers.” Basically, he prayed that God would show them His goodness at His return and in the future kingdom.

Now, Paul expresses another prayer. Instead of future blessing, however, he prays for their present blessing. He first prays that we might be found to be worthy of our calling to be a Christian. Trials do not make a person; they simply reveal what a person is really made of. A faithful, committed Christian will demonstrate his or her worth in the middle of trials. Weak or wishy-washy Christians in the midst of trials will only moan and complain, showing how little value their faith has. God knows our hearts even before we encounter trials, but we only recognize how strong our faith is when we are in the heat of battle.

Right now, God wants you to know how much He desires to bless you. That's one of the reasons He allows persecution and suffering of His children. Trials are not a bad thing for Christians, they are good for us!

Application

When you encounter trials in your Christian walk or when you suffer for being a Christian, don't complain to God; instead, thank Him for showing His love to you.

2 Thessalonians 1:12 - His Glory!

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

Truth to Learn

Jesus Christ will one day receive all the glory and all the praise that is due to Him alone.

Behind the Words

Onoma is the Greek word translated “name.” It can be used to refer to a name, a title, or the person. Throughout the Old Testament, the name of God reveals and represents the character of God. It is likely that Paul used the word here in the same way, referring to the person Jesus Christ.

“May be glorified” is from the verb *endoxadzō*, which in verse ten we saw means “to be enveloped in glory” or “to appear glorious.” The root of this word is *doxa*, which primarily means “thought” or “opinion,” especially a favorable opinion. In a secondary sense it means “reputation, praise, honor, splendor, or light.”

The words “according to” are translated from the preposition *kata*. This word primarily means “down” or “down upon,” but it is often used metaphorically to express a relation in which one thing stands toward another and is usually translated as “according to.”

The word “grace” is from the Greek noun *charis*. This word is based on the verb *chairō*, meaning “to rejoice.” *Charis* means “that which causes joy, pleasure, gratification, or acceptance as a result of a kindness granted.” It is often translated as grace, thanks, or favor.

Meaning Explained

The main purpose of this second letter to the Christians in Thessalonica is to give more information concerning the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The entire second chapter of the letter will focus on this event exclusively. This first chapter serves as a prelude to the circumstances of His return.

Notice how Paul comes back again to the “glory of Jesus Christ.” The Christian era, from the cross to the rapture, is a demonstration of God’s grace toward sinners who deserve His wrath, but who will be blessed instead. The seven year period we refer to as the Tribulation will demonstrate God’s judgment against those who reject Him. His return is not to give attention to those of us who believe, nor is it to focus all of creation on His judgment against unbelievers. The central focus of Christ’s return is to highlight the glory of God in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In fact, if you read through the Bible carefully, you will see that the reason for all of creation is to focus attention on God. Many Christians are quick to point out that unbelievers are focused on themselves and reject God because it takes the focus off themselves and their lives. But, we Christians have the same tendency. We think that salvation is all about us and living for God means doing what we have to in order to get the most blessing possible from God. The peak of the crescendo of all creation will be the return of Jesus Christ when **He will receive all the glory and all the praise.**

Application

Let's practice giving God all the glory and all the praise. It's what He deserves and what He will receive when He comes.