

# **FIRST & SECOND THESSALONIANS**

**Study Guide**

for use with the

*New International Version  
of the Bible*

**World Wide LIT  
(Leadership Instruction & Training)**

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to John Hepp, Jr. ([johnhepp@kingdominbible.com](mailto:johnhepp@kingdominbible.com)) for preparing this introductory study on 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

There are occasional references to the following **authors and books**:

Thomas L. Constable, “1 Thessalonians” and “2 Thessalonians,” *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty*, New Testament, eds. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: SP Publications, Inc., 1983)

D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, revised edition (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992)

Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959)

Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *First and Second Thessalonians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959)

Charles Swindoll, *Contagious Christianity, A Study of First Thessalonians* (Fullerton: Insight for Living, 1985)

John F. Walvoord, *Prophecy: 14 Essential Keys to Understanding the Final Drama* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993)

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Mary Lucinda DeBoer, Carolyne King, Joan Duke, and Mildred Carty read the course or studied it as reviewers and made many helpful suggestions. Billie Jean Hepp assisted at many stages.

Barry E. Gillis  
Director WW LIT

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1011 Mission Road, Madison, GA 30650-9399 USA

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Printed in the United States of America  
04/2003

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# GOALS

This course is designed for Christians who have had little previous Bible study. Its aim is for the student to become acquainted with the background and teachings of the epistles of the apostle Paul to the Thessalonians. When you finish this course, here are some of the things you should know:

- ◆ Some motives and procedures of Paul as a missionary to Thessalonica
- ◆ What Paul taught about the last things as revealed in these epistles
- ◆ A simple outline of each epistle
- ◆ By memory, selected passages from each epistle

## ABBREVIATIONS

A.D.	( <i>Anno Domini</i> ) of the Christian era
B.C.	Before Christ
cf.	compare
ch.(chs.)	chapter(s)
KJV	King James Version of the Bible
Mt.	Mount, Mountain
NASB	New American Standard Version of the Bible
NIV	New International Version of the Bible
p.(pp.)	page(s)
TEV	Today's English Version of the Bible
v.(vv.)	verse(s)
√	shows a question that is part of basis for examination

## ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIBLE BOOKS

1 Chron.	1 Chronicles	Heb.	Hebrews	Phil.	Philippians
2 Chron.	2 Chronicles	Hos.	Hosea	Philem.	Philemon
Col.	Colossians	Isa.	Isaiah	Prov.	Proverbs
1 Cor.	1 Corinthians	Jer.	Jeremiah	Ps.	Psalms
2 Cor.	2 Corinthians	Josh.	Joshua	Rev.	Revelation
Dan.	Daniel	Judg.	Judges	Rom.	Romans
Deut.	Deuteronomy	Lam.	Lamentations	1 Sam.	1 Samuel
Eccl.	Ecclesiastes	Lev.	Leviticus	2 Sam.	2 Samuel
Eph.	Ephesians	Mal.	Malachi	1 Thess.	1 Thessalonians
Exod.	Exodus	Matt.	Matthew	2 Thess.	2 Thessalonians
Ezek.	Ezekiel	Mic.	Micah	1 Tim.	1 Timothy
Gal.	Galatians	Nah.	Nahum	2 Tim.	2 Timothy
Gen.	Genesis	Neh.	Nehemiah	Zech.	Zechariah
Hab.	Habakkuk	Num.	Numbers	Zeph.	Zephaniah
Hag.	Haggai	Obad.	Obadiah		

# IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

Welcome to the World Wide LIT course on the epistles of 1 & 2 Thessalonians. In the marvelous story of the early church, these epistles are some of the earliest. They show the master missionary at work. This course is merely an introduction.

## ***Course Materials***

For this course you need only this study guide and your Bible, whatever version or language is most helpful to you. Most of your study will be from the New International Version of 1 & 2 Thessalonians, printed in this study guide. You will be led step by step in order to reach the goals listed earlier.

## ***Units and Lessons***

The whole course consists of three units, each unit containing four lessons plus a unit examination. Most lessons contain the following features:

1. Just below the title, lesson objectives given in question form
2. Bible study plus commentary: reading, writing, and questions
3. Answers to questions, for you to check your work

Primarily for more advanced students there are occasional footnotes, optional questions, and two appendixes. Notes in the text are for everyone.

## ***Reading These Epistles***

To understand any Bible book there is no substitute for reading it repeatedly. Since both of these epistles are short, you will be expected to read each of them several times, doing assigned writing.

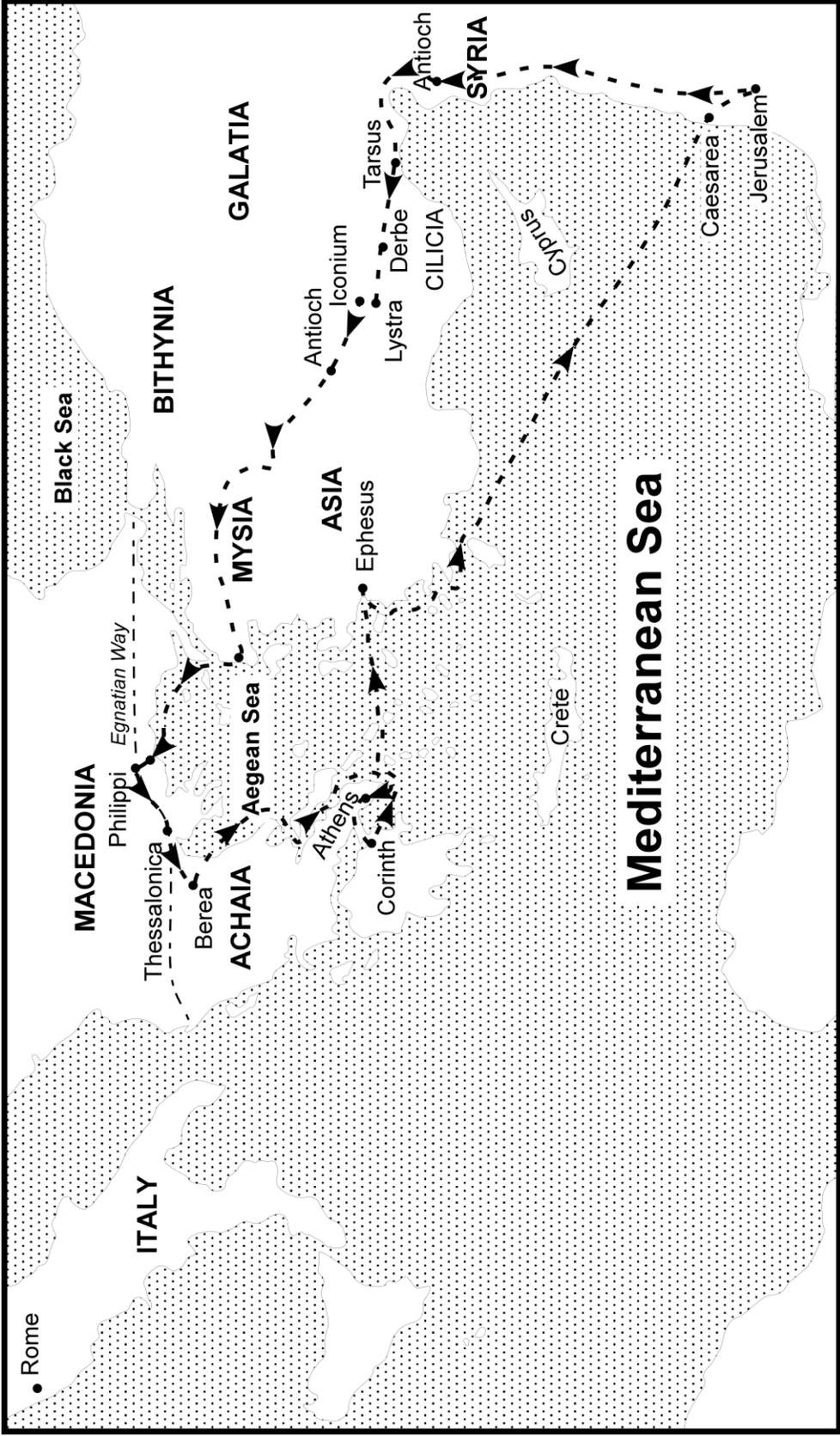
## ***Lesson Questions***

The questions in the lessons are designed to help you learn—not to test you. They are mostly based on your own Bible study. Some of them are checked (√) and will serve as basis for the unit examinations. Nearly all questions are answered in the back of this study guide. Unless you are instructed differently, write your answers to all parts (a, b, c) of a question before you look in Answers. Do not send your answers to your teacher but save them to study for your unit examinations.

## ***Unit Examinations***

You will be told when and how to prepare for unit examinations, which are based on the questions marked √. There is room on the examination pages for you to write all the answers. You must answer from memory.

Now begin lesson 1 with prayer!



Paul's Second Missionary Journey - - - - -  
 Egnatian Way - - - - -

# Unit One

## Lesson 1

### Introduction

**Have you read  
“Important Instructions”?**

*Can you provide eleven facts regarding the city of Thessalonica, the founding of the church (including Paul’s message) there, and the occasion for writing the first epistle to them?*

We call 1 and 2 Thessalonians “books,” “epistles,” and “letters.” Epistles are generally long, formal letters designed to instruct. Letters written by apostles are called “epistles” even if they are personal and informal, because God designed them to last.

The two letters from the apostle Paul to the Thessalonian Church are jewels of great beauty and value. These jewels are found in a unique setting, which you will examine in this lesson. The setting is the historical background in which they were written. It is described by God Himself, primarily in the Book of Acts.

Even before looking at the setting, you will begin to examine the first jewel, 1 Thessalonians. Your main study method will be the best one for understanding any Bible book: reading it repeatedly and actively (that is, looking for meanings). To receive credit for this course, you must do every reading according to instructions. For most readings you will not be graded on results.

By reading aloud at a normal rate without long pauses, you can read all of 1 Thessalonians in twelve to fifteen minutes. We have provided it in the New International Version (NIV) for you to read and mark during this course (see p. 63). Each time you mark something, use your own code (such as, “T” for Theme) in the margin.

1. Reading 1. Read 1 Thessalonians aloud without pausing, then list at least three of its main themes. (In other words, what does Paul talk about?)

In this study guide the “Thessalonians” are the “Thessalonian Christians,” unless otherwise indicated. It is evident that Paul wrote to these Thessalonians not long after he founded their church and was forced to leave them. Eager to know their condition, he sent his trusted young companion Timothy to check on them and help them. When Timothy returned to Paul, he brought a good report but told of some problems. Paul wrote this letter in response, talking about the themes you just observed. Both of these letters have outstanding teaching about the power of the gospel and the Lord’s Second Coming.

NOTE: It is obvious that an author’s themes reveal his purpose in writing. Even without a commentary, you can usually determine why each Bible book was written.

Thessalonica, now called Salonica or Thessaloniki, was and is an important city of Greece. Greece, a mountainous and rather dry country at the southeastern edge of Europe, was important itself. By Paul's time Greece had centuries of cultural greatness: famous dramatists, sculptors, builders, and thinkers. From all over the world people still visit Greek buildings and read ancient Greek philosophers. The idea of democracy, or government by the people, was born there. Long before Paul's day the Greek language and culture had spread to many parts of Europe and Asia—and were not displaced when Rome conquered its world. In fact, God chose the Greek language for the New Testament.

As you continue, look up everything on the map.

Then, as now, Thessalonica was a large port city at the north end of the Aegean Sea and capital of the province of Macedonia. In Greece it was and is second in population only to Athens, which lies about 300 kilometers (190 miles) to the south. It lay on the east-west Egnatian Way, Rome's most important link to the provinces in the eastern part of the empire. Important routes going north led to eastern Europe.

One of Alexander the Great's officers founded the city in 315 B.C. and named it after his own wife, Alexander's half-sister. Thessalonica was unique in its government, headed by "politarchs" (Acts 17:6, 8). Its women were some of the most emancipated (free from restrictions) in the empire. And like many other busy seaports, Thessalonica was both wealthy and wicked.

It was during his second missionary journey from Antioch in Syria that Paul and his company first carried the gospel message to Europe. Apparently they had intended to go instead to Ephesus, the most important city in the province of Asia. Ephesus was on the western edge of the Asian continent and across the Aegean Sea from Europe. Instead of letting them go to Ephesus, however, the Holy Spirit of God moved them farther north and even closer to Europe, to Troas.

2. Read Acts 15:36 to 16:40, the first part of Paul's second missionary journey, answering the subquestions that follow. Then check in Answers (p. 69).
  - a. Name Paul's two main companions on this journey. One was a young man (probably a teenager) from Lystra.  
NOTE: The Acts account changes from "they" in 16:8 to "we" in 16:10, indicating that the writer, Luke, joined the group for a while.
  - b. How did the Spirit guide them to Troas and then on to Europe?
  - c. What was the first European city in which they started a church?
  - d. What painful experience—just before Paul and Silas suddenly left Philippi—resulted in more believers there?

From Philippi Paul and Silas traveled nearly a hundred miles west on the Egnatian Way to Thessalonica. Acts 17:1-10 tells the story of what happened there. Timothy is not mentioned at this stage; apparently he was left behind temporarily to help the church at Philippi. Paul now spent some weeks, probably months, at Thessalonica. He began in the Jewish synagogue, as he did in every city where there was one. For three Sabbaths he reasoned with the worshipers there.

3. Read Acts 17:1-10, answering the following questions. Then, as always, check your answers.
  - a. The first believers, the beginning of the church there, responded to Paul's message in the synagogue. What were the two parts of his message? (Notice that the first part itself has two facts.)
  - b. As usual in Acts, some of the Jews believed the message but most did not. The unbelieving Jews got jealous when certain Gentiles believed and were fully accepted by Paul. Who were these Gentiles in Thessalonica?
  - c. Paul and Silas had to leave Thessalonica unexpectedly because of what the unbelieving Jews did and said—and the response of the officials (called "politarchs").
    1. What did those Jews do?
    2. What did they say? (their charge against Jason)
    3. What action did the officials take?
4. Read Acts 17:10-34, which tells of Paul's ministry in two more cities.
  - a. After Thessalonica, Paul and Silas went about forty miles southwest. To where? with what results?
  - b. Why did Paul have to leave Berea?
  - c. To what city did he go from Berea? (It was a city in the southern Greek province of Achaia.)
  - d. Timothy had apparently rejoined Paul and Silas at Berea. When Paul was forced to leave, what plans were made for Silas and Timothy? (17:14-15)
  - e. What message of Paul's in Athens made some think that he was advocating foreign gods?
  - f. In Athens *Areopagus* had two meanings: (1) the hill of Ares ("Mars Hill") or (2) the council that in earlier times met on that hill. It probably had the second meaning in Acts 17. Now meeting in the adjoining *agora* (marketplace), the Areopagus still had religious and moral authority. Give a title to Paul's sermon to the Areopagus (17:22-31).  
NOTE how he concluded his message: that God will judge (rule) the world by a man He has appointed, giving proof by that man's resurrection (v. 31).
5. From Athens Paul traveled west to Corinth, another major seaport and the last major stop in this missionary journey. Read Acts 18:1-22.
  - a. How did Paul support himself in Corinth until Timothy and Silas came from Macedonia to rejoin him?
  - b. Apparently they brought him financial support. With what result for Paul? (v. 5)

- c. What was Paul's message to the Jews (and apparently to all) in Corinth?
- d. There was a great spiritual struggle in Corinth. Who were Paul's human adversaries?
- e. How did God encourage Paul in a vision?
- f. How long did he minister in Corinth?
- g. Where did he go at the end of this missionary journey?

It was during this period of Paul's ministry in Corinth that he wrote the two Thessalonian Epistles. As you have seen, both Silas and Timothy returned to him from Macedonia. Immediately Paul (with them) wrote 1 Thessalonians, probably in A.D. 51. A few weeks or months later, after receiving another report, he (with them) wrote 2 Thessalonians.

In our New Testament Paul's epistles to churches come right after Acts. They begin with Romans and end with the Thessalonian Epistles. This is in the order of size, from longest to shortest. If his epistles were in the order of time, either those to the Thessalonians or Galatians would have been first.

It is a great privilege to read such epistles repeatedly. Notice that your reading assignments usually have two parts: You are (a) to mark something as you read, then (b) to list something after you finish reading.

6. Reading 2. You have been considering the background for the Thessalonian Epistles as found in Acts. First Thessalonians is full of such information. Read the book again, marking (use "B") background information you did not see in Acts. For example, what were the circumstances for the church and Paul when he wrote? After you read, list at least ten of the verses/passages you marked and tell what each one suggests. Then look in Answers.
7. Review some of the most important background facts.
  - a.√ In what other book is the most important background information for these two epistles?
  - b.√ In what important country was Thessalonica?
  - c.√ Capital of what province?
  - d. At what crossroad?
  - e.√ On which of Paul's missionary journeys was this church founded?
  - f. Who were his two main missionary companions on this journey?
  - g. Why did Paul and company go to Europe?
  - h.√ Why did Paul and Silas suddenly leave Philippi?
  - i.√ What were the two parts of Paul's message in the synagogue at Thessalonica?
  - j. Which Gentiles first believed at Thessalonica?
  - k.√ What did jealous Jews do and say that resulted in Paul and Silas leaving Thessalonica?
  - l.√ What were his next three places of ministry?

- m. How did the arrival in Corinth of Timothy and Silas affect the time Paul spent in ministry?
- n.√ What was his message to the Jews (and to all?) in Corinth?
- o.√ How long did he minister in Corinth?
- p.√ From where and at what point did he write 1 Thessalonians?
- q.√ What were two outstanding themes in both these letters?

## OPTIONAL

- 8. Why do you think God gave us the story of the founding of the church in Thessalonica?
- 9. How was the charge against Paul in Thessalonica (Acts 17:7) related to the message he preached (Acts 17:3)? Compare Luke 23:2.
- 10. If Thessalonica and Corinth are examples, Paul evidently had a plan for evangelizing.
  - a. What kind of centers did he choose for evangelizing?
  - b. Once in them, where did he begin?
  - c. What did he emphasize in his preaching (Acts 17:3, 7; 18:5)?
  - d. How could this plan be adapted to your own country?

**Lesson 2**  
**1 Thessalonians 1:1-10**

*Who joined Paul in writing this epistle? What is saving faith? hope? the Christian hope? Can you write 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 from memory?*

You have already seen that 1 Thessalonians is one of the earliest documents of Christianity. It shows a most successful missionary at work, strengthening a key congregation in Macedonia even while he is founding another one in Achaia. In this lesson you will begin to analyze his letter and see how the gospel transformed the Thessalonians. Do your reading assignments in the NIV printout we have provided, without consulting any commentary. That will give you practice in studying a book for yourself.

In the next questions you will consider paragraphs in 1 Thessalonians. You will begin by dividing the book into paragraphs. A paragraph usually consists of several verses dealing with one aspect of a subject. However, the present verse and chapter divisions are not inspired. They did not exist when the book was written but were added centuries later. Sometimes those that were added can be improved. When you divide into paragraphs, base it on meanings rather than present divisions. If necessary, begin or end a paragraph in the middle of a present verse or continue into the next chapter.

You will also devise short titles for the paragraphs. This involves determining the subject of each paragraph in a book you have only begun to study. You may feel like a non-swimmer thrown into deep water! Finish these assignments in spite of confusion; the thinking process will prove valuable.

1. The first verse can be labeled “Greeting.” Then the rest of chapter 1 (vv. 2-10) can be considered a single long paragraph. Give verses 2-10 a short title—from one to six words—that describes their content in general. (Write “2-10” and your title in pencil beside verse 2.) Then look in Answers.
2. Reading 3. (Be sure to do this in the NIV printout in this study guide, which does not have paragraphs already marked.) Now read the entire book aloud, marking paragraphs in the rest of the book. Draw a short pencil line before each verse where you think a new paragraph begins (a change in subject). After reading and marking, give each paragraph a short title as you did 1:2-10. Then look in Answers.  
NOTE: The writer of this course, after making his own divisions and titles, checked them especially with Hiebert.
3. Now you will begin a more detailed study. Begin by rereading 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10, determining exactly why Paul was thankful for the Thessalonians.

Like other first century letters, this one began with the names of the writer(s) and reader(s) in a salutation (greeting, 1:1). Notice that Silas and Timothy joined Paul in writing; they had all ministered to the Thessalonians. Probably the first person plural pronouns (*we, us*) and adjectives (*our*) throughout the epistle usually refer to all three missionaries. Sometimes, however, they may mean only Paul. We will normally speak of him as author.

The readers were “the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 1). In saying this, Paul put the Lord Jesus on the same level as the Father.

In the salutation (v. 1) Paul used words similar to common greetings—but filled with Christian meaning. For example, “grace” (similar to the Greek greeting) here meant God’s undeserved favor. “Peace” (the Hebrew greeting) now had two meanings: (a) the harmony between man and God made possible through the death of Christ, (b) the resultant wholeness and prosperity of the soul.

Next he thanked God (1:2-3) that the Thessalonians demonstrated the three Christian virtues of faith, love, and hope. They had faith that worked, love that labored, and hope that made them endure. These were evidence that God had elected the Thessalonians, as Paul proved in detail in the rest of the chapter (1:4-10). We will consider each of these virtues—and election—later.

The thing that transformed the Thessalonians was receiving and obeying the gospel as brought by Paul (1:5-6). The gospel was powerful because the Spirit used it (1:5a); it was attractive

because of Paul's example (1:5b). By following Paul, they followed the Lord (1:6a). This included rejoicing in persecution (1:6b).

So transformed were the Thessalonians that their church became a pattern for other churches, not only near them but throughout the Greek provinces of Macedonia and Achaia (1:7). As they gave their witness, God's word went out from them like music from a giant sounding board. As a result, wherever Paul went people already knew what God had done for the Thessalonians (1:8). They all knew the story of Paul's visit there and their conversion (1:9-10).

4.
  - a.√ Who were the authors of 1 Thessalonians?
  - b. Paul thanked God for what three virtues that showed that God had elected the Thessalonians? (Qualify each virtue by telling what it did.)
  - c. What reasons do you think Paul had for commending the Thessalonians?
  - d. Is the power that transformed the Thessalonians available today?
  
5. A faith that works is the first Christian virtue, on which other virtues must be built (2 Peter 1:5; Gal. 5:6). In 1 Thessalonians look at the following uses of "faith" or its equivalents, and answer the questions.
  - a. In 1:3 what kind of faith did they have?
  - b. In 1:6 what other expression means that they responded with faith?
  - c. In 1:8 how did their faith become known?
  - d. In 1:9-10 list five phrases that show elements in their faith (what they did or believed).
  - e. In 3:4-5 what made Paul concerned about their faith?
  - f. In 3:6-8 what news did Timothy bring about their faith?
  - g. In 3:10 Paul prayed to see them and do what about their faith?
  - h. In 5:8 faith and love are compared to what article of armor?
  
- 6.√ As you just noticed, 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 shows several elements of saving faith. Make that your first memory passage, learning it from any Bible version you choose. Copy it carefully (with no mistakes) on a card you can carry wherever you go and review often. Be sure that you have the same faith it describes.
  
- 7.√ In questions 5 and 6 you have considered some passages that describe saving faith. Try to define such faith; then memorize the definition in Answers.

You have briefly considered the first Christian virtue: faith, which produces work. The main outcome and evidence of faith is the second virtue: love, which is willing to labor for those who are loved. We will return to the subject of love later. The third virtue is hope, which always has to do with the future (Romans 8:24-25). For a Christian, hope is that assurance about the future which enables us to endure.

8. Reading 4. Read the whole epistle again, marking every verse or passage that mentions hope or its equivalent. Include any clear teaching about the future for Christians. After

reading, list the references you marked and beside each reference tell what it teaches about hope. For example, the first reference is 1:3, which teaches that hope enables us to endure. (Verses 3-5 imply that such virtue is evidence that God chose us.) For 4:13-18 and 5:1-11 give only brief summaries.

Remember that to receive credit for this course, you must do every reading according to instructions. By now you should have read the entire epistle at least four times, marking it and/or making a list each time.

In the New Testament, basic teachings are given more than once. Hope, for example, is found often, as seen below. This excerpt is from Robert Young's *Analytical Concordance to the Bible* (Twenty-Second American Edition: Funk and Wagnalls Co., NY). It lists the New Testament occurrences of the main Greek noun (not the verb) that is translated "hope" in the King James Version.

<p>10. <i>Hope, elpis.</i>            Acts 2.26 moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope            16.19 saw that the hope of their gains was gone            23. 6 of the hope and resurrection of the dead            24.15 have hope toward God, which they themse            26. 6 the hope of the promise made of God unto            26. 7 For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am            27.20 all hope that we should be saved was then            28.20 For the hope of Israel I am bound with            Rom.4.18 Who against hope believed in hope, that            5. 2 and rejoice in hope of the glory of God            5. 4 patience, experience; and experience, hope            5. 5 hope maketh not ashamed; because the            8.20 him who hath subjected (the same) in h.            8.24 hope: but hope that is seen is not hope            12.12 rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation            15. 4 that we through patience.. might have h.            15.13 the God of hope fill.. ye may abound in h.            1 Co.9.10 he that ploweth should plow in hope; and            9.10 [in hope should be partaker of his hope]            13.13 abideth faith, hope, and charity, these th.            2 Co. 1. 7 our hope of you (is) stedfast, knowing, that            3.12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we            10.15 having hope, when your faith is increased            Gal. 5. 5 wait for the hope of righteousness by</p>	<p>Eph. 1.18 may know what is the hope of his calling            2.12 no hope, and without God in the world            4. 4 are called in one hope of your calling            Phil. 1.20 to my earnest expectation and (my) hope            Col. 1. 5 hope which is laid up for you in heaven            1.23 moved away from the hope of the gospel            1.27 which is Christ in you, the hope of glory            1 Th. 1. 3 patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ            2.19 for what (is) our hope, or joy, or crown of            4.13 even as others which have no hope            5. 8 and for an helmet the hope of salvation            2 Th. 2.16 consolation and good hope through grace            1 Ti. 1. 1 and Lord Jesus Christ (which is) our hope            Titus 1. 2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that            2.13 looking for that blessed hope, and the            3. 7 according to the hope of eternal life            Heb. 3. 6 rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end            6.11 the full assurance of hope unto the end            6.18 to lay hold upon the hope set before us            7.19 but the bringing in of a better hope (did)            1 Pe. 1. 3 hath begotten us again unto a lively hope            1.21 that your faith and hope might be in God            3.15 a reason of the hope that is in you with            1 Jo. 3. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him</p>
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9. Hope sometimes refers to our present assurance about the future—and sometimes refers to that future itself. Look up the following passages, some of those that use the noun *hope*, and tell what each one says about it. In each case read the context (verses before and after).

- |                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| a. Acts 24:15        | f. Titus 1:2     |
| b. Romans 5:2        | g. Titus 2:13    |
| c. Romans 8:20-21    | h. Hebrews 3:6   |
| d. Romans 8:23-24    | i. 1 Peter 1:3-5 |
| e. Ephesians 1:15-18 | j. 1 John 3:2-3  |

Let us summarize what these sample passages say about the Christian hope. It has to do with (1) Christ's glorious coming and (2) our sharing in God's glory (inheriting with Christ) through (3) the resurrection of our bodies, (4) our receiving eternal life (also called our salvation), and (5) our becoming like Christ.

10. Many other Scriptures speak of the Christian hope without necessarily using the word *hope*. For example, consider two passages in Matthew, a Gospel written for the church.
  - a. In Matthew 19:27 Peter reminded Jesus that the apostles had left everything to follow Him. When he asked what they would receive in return, what was Jesus' answer (19:28-29)? (Tell (1) when they would be recompensed and (2-4) in what three ways.)
  - b. As recorded in Matthew 24-25, Jesus spoke a great prophetic discourse to His disciples before His passion. To conclude it, He told some parables relating to His future kingdom (Matt. 25). The last of those parables is in Matthew 25:31-46. Read that parable and tell (1) when His disciples would get their inheritance and (2-3) how He described it.
  - c. These passages clarify what "glory" the Lord will have and we will share. Give that glory a name.
- 11.√ To summarize:
  - a. What is hope (as in believers now)?
  - b. What is the Christian hope (as a future reality)?

Consider again the verses you are memorizing: 1:9-10. Like all true believers, the Thessalonians had repented—turned to God from idols. He is "the living and true God." This seems to imply that the Thessalonian believers were Gentiles; most Jews already knew about the true God. After conversion these believers do two things: "serve" and "wait." "Serve" means more than help God; it means to be His slaves, as in Romans 6:15-18. They also "wait" for a Person identified as (1) God's "Son [= Heir] from heaven," (2) the One "raised from the dead," (3) "Jesus" (His human name), (4) the Deliverer, "who rescues us from the coming wrath" of God.

12. What would you say if a person claimed to be a Christian, yet continued to serve idols? What if he had no interest in Jesus' Second Coming?

#### OPTIONAL

13. How is waiting for God's Son related to the message Paul preached in Thessalonica? (Acts 17:3, 7)
14. How are Paul and the Thessalonians a proof for Christianity? How had their lives changed through Christ's power? See 1 Thessalonians 1 and Galatians 1:13-16, 23.

15. Much of God’s revelation was passed on to us not in theological treatises but in warm letters written to meet pressing needs. Can you name at least two advantages for this method God used?

### Lesson 3

#### 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16

*What is genuine love? What were five ways Paul showed love to the Thessalonians? To what kingdom does God call us?*

In unit 1 you are studying the first three chapters of 1 Thessalonians. Temporarily we will label these chapters “Personal and Historical” (Ryrie), meaning that they deal with (1) Paul and the Thessalonians, (2) the story of founding and strengthening their church. In the last two chapters (4-5) Paul exhorted them to perfect the “practice” of their faith. We will temporarily call them “Practical and Hortatory” (Ryrie). In this lesson you will look into Paul’s ministry with the Thessalonians. You will also begin to study about the coming kingdom to which God invites us.

Paul constantly thanked God for the Thessalonians’ “labor of love” (1:3, literal). The word for labor here means “fatiguing work,” work that wears you out, like Paul’s own labor at Thessalonica. Kind feelings will probably not make you labor, but love will. Genuine love is a desire to provide what someone needs, whatever the cost. It is the willingness to give oneself for another.

1. Reading 5. Read 1 Thessalonians, remembering that it was written by a missionary to a missionary church. As you read, mark (with “M”) passages that show what kind of ministry Paul had: include his motives and the ways he showed love. When you finish, list at least eight of the references you marked. For each passage you list, tell what it indicates.
2. Using the information from question 1, write two or three paragraphs under this title: “Paul’s Ministry in Thessalonica.” Each paragraph should deal with a separate aspect of his ministry, such as (1) his motives—what they were and were not—or (2) his activities. Write your name at the top right corner of this paper; you will turn it in with the unit examination.

First Thessalonians 2:1-16 tells what kind of ministry Paul had when with the Thessalonians (vv. 1-12) and how they had responded (vv. 13-16). His visit had not been a failure (2:1, literally “not empty”). But now, as we infer (conclude), he had to defend himself against attacks made during his absence. Trying to discredit him, enemies had charged that he had acted deceitfully with greed. “Why hasn’t he returned?” they had asked, and then answered, “Because he doesn’t really love the Thessalonians!”

If such attacks were made, that would explain why Paul talked so much about himself in this passage. Not because of his natural human desire to be well liked—but to exalt the divine

message he preached. His previous conduct with them made sense only if he was God's minister bearing God's message. He had arrived aching from the shameful beating in Philippi; yet he kept preaching the message that had led to the beating. Strong opposition had quickly flared anew (2:2); yet he had not stopped.

He explained his motives in relation to God (2:3-4) and in relation to them (2:5-12). With them he "could have been a burden" (2:6, 9; cf. 2 Thess. 3:8) but wasn't. This refers to his right to be paid for his work. Instead, he and his companions were "gentle . . . like a mother caring for her little children" (2:7).<sup>1</sup> Not only had he shared the gospel with them, but his life also—including the wages he earned. "Caring" also describes what Christ does for the church (Eph. 5:29). Paul had nurtured them like a mother; he had also challenged them like a father (2:11-12).

In all of this Paul had seen the great worth of the Thessalonians. God Himself was calling (inviting) them to take part in His future kingdom and share His glory (2:12). Paul wanted them to live up to this noble calling.

3. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12, then answer the following questions.
  - a. Why had Paul not spoken in ways that would please the Thessalonians and win their admiration and approval?
  - b. Though Paul wanted to influence people, he had never used flattery (2:5). Yet, he often said good things about people, as in this letter. Can you make a rule for saying good things about someone or not?
  - c. Neither was Paul greedy, for money or for self-promotion. Look up Ephesians 5:5 and tell what other sin a greedy man is guilty of.
  - d. Later to the Corinthians Paul wrote at length of his right to be supported and why he did not use that right. What reasons did he give in 1 Corinthians 9:12, 18-19 for his policy?
  - e. On purpose Paul had worked "night and day" to support himself. Besides this, he had received financial help from a church where he had worked previously. What church (Phil. 4:16)?
  - f. In verse 10 Paul used what three adjectives to describe his conduct in Thessalonica? (The first refers especially to his relation to God; the second, to them; the third, to himself.)
  - g. Paul wanted the Thessalonians to live lives "worthy of God" (2:12)—a good standard for every Christian. What do you think it means?
  - h. What three verbs (participles) in verse 12 show his fatherly activities for his converts? (Look at NIV; KJV has these verbs in v. 11.)
4. As you are seeing, 1 Thessalonians 2:12 summarizes how the missionary Paul dealt with his new spiritual children. A similar verse that gives instructions from mission-

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<sup>1</sup> At 2:7 some versions read "babes" instead of "gentle." In doing so, they follow many manuscripts with a different Greek reading that sounds the same.

- aries (including Paul) to new believers is Acts 14:22. Both of these verses mention the Christian hope to which God calls us.
- a. Compare the two verses just mentioned and write down three similarities. (One is the first verb used in 2:12.)
  - b.√ Summarizing the verses you just compared, to what does God call believers?
5. There are many biblical descriptions of the coming kingdom, especially in the Old Testament prophecies. The Lord Jesus did not change the descriptions already given of that kingdom. Instead, as you saw in Matthew 19 and 25 (lesson 2), He confirmed them. Look up the following sample prophecies from only two books and answer the questions about the kingdom.
- a. Daniel 2:35, 44-45 Where will the kingdom be? Where will it come from?
  - b. Isaiah 2:1-4 Where will the nations go? Why? With what results?
  - c. Isaiah 9:6-7 Who will rule? From what throne? For how long?
  - d. Isaiah 25:6-9 What will the Lord prepare? What will He destroy?
  - e. Isaiah 35:5-6 What earthly problems will be solved?

This promised kingdom is the one John the Baptist and Jesus announced as having come near (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Luke 10:1, 9-11). In fact, in Jesus' own person that kingdom had "come upon" them (Matt. 12:28) and was "in the midst" of them (NASB, Luke 17:21). His many miracles were proof that He could bring such a kingdom. But when His people rejected Him (as clearly seen in Matthew 11-12), He revealed to His disciples in parables the "secrets of the kingdom" (Matt. 13). These pictured something no prophet had foreseen: a **new age** of preparation for the kingdom leading to a **Second Coming** for the King.

Most of His people did not believe that He was the expected King (known as *the Christ*). And even when His closest disciples confessed, "You are the Christ" (Matt. 16:16), He would not let them tell anyone else (16: 20). "From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer...be killed...and...be raised to life" (16: 21). This new message meant that instead of ruling at that time, He would die and be raised again. If so, what would happen to the kingdom that had drawn near during His ministry—the kingdom promised by the prophets? It would come later. As you saw in Matthew 19 and 25 (lesson 2), He repeatedly told His disciples that He would rule when He later returns to the earth in glory.

It is to that future kingdom and glory that God invited the Thessalonians—and all others—through the gospel. When the Lord told us to pray "Your kingdom come" (Luke 11:2), He wanted us to direct our attention to that glorious future.

- 6.√ In conclusion, to what kingdom did God call the Thessalonians—and us?

Not only had the Thessalonians heard God's word of invitation; they had also received it (2:13-16). And His word was showing its power to "work" (2:13) by transforming their lives. Their

conversion was the biggest proof of Paul's ministry. Conversion itself was proved not by an easier life but by persecution from the world.

In their case, persecution came primarily from other Gentiles; in Judea it had come from Jews (2:14). Remember the death of Stephen (Acts 7)? At this point in 1 Thessalonians, Paul described in severe language the continuing Jewish opposition to God and His program (2:15-16). Paul himself was a Jew (Gal. 1:13-14). He dearly loved his people (Rom. 9:1-3) and constantly preached the gospel to them first. Yet he was rarely free from Jewish persecution. He had suffered it often with Barnabas on his first missionary journey. On the second journey it had been fierce at Thessalonica and Berea—and now, even as he wrote, at Corinth.

Jewish opposition to the early church led to Christian anger against the Jews. Many early believers concluded that by rebellion natural Israel had lost all hope—and had been completely replaced by the church. This conclusion was wrong; God will restore Israel. But it is equally wrong to conclude that the Jews deserve no special blame. In their case—just as in other cases—recipients of unusual grace, if they oppose God, receive unusual judgment.

“The wrath of God has come upon them at last” (2:16) does not mean that they had already been punished. It probably refers to the **certainty** of the impending destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, as Jesus Himself had predicted (Matt. 22:7; 23:38; 24:2).

7. Read 2:13-16, then answer.
  - a. In 2:1 Paul had said that his ministry at Thessalonica was not a failure. How are verses 13-16 related to that claim?
  - b. Copy some words in which Paul accused his people of specific crimes.
  - c. In spite of severely criticizing his people, Paul loved them. How do we know?
- 8.√
  - a. What is genuine love?
  - b. Memorize at least five of the ways Paul showed love to the Thessalonians. (See Answers.)

Charles Swindoll summarizes the reasons for Paul's success:

[His] leadership was not in vain because he refused to rely on deception, he chose not to please men over God, he served without greed, and he refused to lead in an authoritarian manner. On the positive side, Paul's leadership was characterized by a sensitivity to needs, an affection for his followers, an authenticity of life, and an enthusiastic, affirming response to those he led. (p. 15)

9. Reading 6. Success from God always accompanies a life of prayer. Read all of 1 Thessalonians aloud, marking each passage in which Paul prays or recommends prayer. Then list the references, indicating what is prayed for.
- 10.√ Practice writing your memory verses (1:9-10) until you can write them without errors.

11. OPTIONAL Compare your Christian life with the effective life of Paul. List both negative and positive effects upon people through your daily Christian conduct.

### Lesson 4

#### 1 Thessalonians 2:17 to 3:13

*What future event made the Thessalonians especially dear to Paul?  
What should a Christian's basic attitudes be in trials? For the first  
main division (a) what are our title and chapters? (b) what prayer is  
at the end?*

To really get acquainted with a Bible book, there is no substitute for repeatedly reading it with attention. Many good students have discovered that it often takes twenty or more readings for a Bible book to become familiar. (We cannot require that many for this course.) Are you doing every reading according to instructions? You will be asked that on the unit examination.

It also helps to compare different versions (translations). Bible books were originally composed not in English but in Hebrew and Aramaic (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament). Although we no longer have the original writings, we have many hundreds of copies by hand (manuscripts) made through many years. By comparing these manuscripts, language experts have determined what most of the original text was. However, translators sometimes differ in the ways they understand and express the meaning of that text. Therefore, there is advantage and safety in comparing versions.

1. Before you practice comparing 1 Thessalonians in two versions, look at the sample below. We have printed the first five verses in Today's English Version (TEV) and the New International Version (NIV), with some of the differences underlined.
  - a. Read verse 1 in each version, noticing how the underlined words are different. For example, TEV explains "the church" as meaning "the people of the church" and explains "in God" as meaning "who belong to God."
  - b. One by one, compare all five verses. Then look in Answers.
2. Reading 7. For this assignment you will read 1 Thessalonians in a different version. Choose an English version of the Bible other than the NIV. (Though we used the TEV as an example, you do not need to use that particular version). As you read 1 Thessalonians in that version, compare it verse by verse to the New International Version. At the top of your NIV printout, write the name of the version to which you will compare it. As you read, mark only those differences that seem important or especially helpful to you. At each important difference (1) underline the NIV words that are different from the other version and (2) in the margin of your NIV printout write the words the other version uses to say the same thing.

Now you will finish your study of the “personal and historical” part of 1 Thessalonians, which is chapters 1-3. In lesson 3 you looked at Paul’s ministry to the Thessalonians in person (2:1-16). Now you will look at his ministry to them while separated from them (2:17 to 3:13). It would have been more logical for chapter 3 to have started right after 2:16.

#### New International Version

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

Grace and peace to you.

2 We always thank God for all of you,  
mentioning you in our prayers.

3 We continually remember before our God and  
Father your work produced by faith,  
your labor prompted by love,  
and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord  
Jesus Christ.

4 For we know, brothers loved by God,  
that he has chosen you,

5 because our gospel came to you  
not simply with words,  
but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and  
with deep conviction.

You know how we lived among you  
for your sake.

#### Today’s English Version

1 From Paul, Silas, and Timothy—  
To the people of the church in Thessalonica,  
who belong to God the Father and the Lord  
Jesus Christ:

May grace and peace be yours.

2 We always thank God for you all  
and always mention you in our prayers.

3 For we remember before our God and Father  
how you put your faith into practice,  
how your love made you work so hard,  
and \*how your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ is  
firm.

4 Our friends, we know that God loves you  
and has chosen you to be his own.

5 For we brought the Good News to you,  
not with words only,  
but also with power and the Holy Spirit, and  
with complete conviction of its truth.

You know how we lived when we were with  
you; it was for your own good.

In this lesson you will summarize each paragraph after you study it. Summarizing is a valuable exercise that forces one to decide what words mean and which ideas are most important.

In 2:17 “when we were torn away” represents one word in Greek, a word from whose root we get “orphan.” When suddenly separated from his Christian family in Thessalonica, Paul had felt like an orphan. He made every effort to go back and see them (2:17-18) because they were so dear (2:19-20). Notice that at this point he emphasized his own actions (“certainly I, Paul”) rather than those of the missionary group.

Unable to return, Paul had decided to send Timothy and do without his valuable help in Athens. (Titus was sent elsewhere, perhaps to Philippi.) Even though the Lord was with him, Paul could feel alone.

3. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17 to 3:5, then answer these questions.
  - a. Why did Paul not soon return to the Thessalonians?
  - b. In 2:19-20 Paul explained how dear the Thessalonians were to him. What four different terms did he use to describe them?

- c.√ They were not dear for just the usual reasons. Instead, it was for their connection with a future event previously mentioned at the end of chapter 1. What event?
  - d. You just saw that Paul’s friendships were related to the future. Can you state his attitude as a guiding principle for your own life?
  - e. What two purposes did Paul have in sending Timothy to Thessalonica? (3:2-3 and 3:5)
  - f. Paul had taught them well. They already knew “that such persecutions are part of God’s will for us” (3:3, TEV). Can you think of any reasons why God would want believers to be persecuted?
  - g. What did Paul fear the tempter might have accomplished at Thessalonica?
  - h. In chapter 2 we saw that persecution proves conversion. In chapter 3 persecution is God’s will. In your own life do you have such evidence and blessing?
4. Summarize 1 Thessalonians 2:17 to 3:5 in your own words. Try to say the most important things using only one word for every four or five. Since that passage in the NIV has 212 words, you should use about 42 to 53 words. When you finish, look in Answers.
- NOTE: Save all your paragraph summaries for later revision.

Returning from Thessalonica, Timothy brought a good report (3:6). He brought evidence that the Thessalonians still had confidence in Paul—and therefore in his message. This cheered the apostle in his own distress (3:7-8) and led him to again express his joy in them and concern for them (3:9-11). Notice that Paul showed no concern whether churches had suitable buildings to meet in. They usually met in private homes (leaving no record of special church buildings for centuries). His concern was spiritual growth.

5. Read 1 Thessalonians 3:6-11, then answer.
- a. What desire of the Thessalonians showed that they still had confidence in the apostle (and therefore in his message)?
  - b. Can you think of two reasons why the Thessalonians’ wellbeing cheered Paul?
  - c. Paul kept praying “most earnestly” to see the Thessalonians again and strengthen their faith (3:10). Yet, it was apparently years before he returned; God didn’t seem to answer his request. Was his prayer misguided?
  - d. Summarize 1 Thessalonians 3:6-11 in your own words. As usual, try to say the most important things with about a fourth or a fifth as many words. (Since the passage has 143 words, use about 28-36 words to summarize it.)

You now come to the end of this section and of the first main division of the book. We have called this division “Personal and Historical.” In it Paul has given thanks for the change in the Thessalonians and has reminded them of his ministry to them when he was there and after he left. He will conclude with a prayer for them to keep growing in love and holiness (3:12-13).

- 6.√ a. What chapters are included in the first main division of this book?

- b. Consider what Paul talked about in this division and make a title (instead of “Personal and Historical”) that covers all of it. Then memorize the title given in Answers.
- c. What does Paul pray for the Thessalonians at the close of this division?

Love (3:12) involves all other virtues (Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:14). Growing love results in holiness, as seen in verse 13: “so that He may strengthen your hearts to be faultless. . . .” (Williams). “Heart” represents the whole person. This goal of perfect holiness will be achieved at the Lord’s coming, mentioned for the third time in this epistle. He will come “with all his holy ones.” These are probably the “holy angels” the Lord associated with His coming as promised in Mark 8:38 and Luke 9:26 (2 Thess. 1:7 says “powerful angels”). It could include believers as well, as some interpret 1 Thessalonians 4:14 to say.

7. Read 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13, then answer.
  - a. This prayer refers to a desirable condition of God’s people when Jesus comes. Other passages say that this condition will be achieved. What is it?
  - b. Tell and explain who will come with Jesus, according to 3:13.
  - c. Summarize 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 in your own words. (As usual, count the number of words, then use a fourth or fifth as many words to summarize.)
- 8.√ Can you summarize four of Paul’s teachings about a Christian’s attitudes in suffering?
9. In lesson 3 you wrote a paper titled “Paul’s Ministry in Thessalonica.” Improve that paper now, then copy it to send in with your first unit examination. Be sure your name is on it.
10. OPTIONAL Can a church be strong without ministers? without prayer? without Bible study? What makes a church strong?

If you have finished all seven readings according to instructions, prepare for unit 1 examination. Do so by learning to answer all the checked questions in lessons 1-4. Test yourself by answering the objectives at the beginning of each lesson. Then try the sample questions that follow. Write your answers in the spaces provided. The first fifteen questions are multiple-choice; put the letter for the best answer on the line before the number.

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS

- \_\_\_ 1. In what other book is the most important background information for 1 and 2 Thessalonians? a) Mark b) Acts c) Romans d) Philippians
- \_\_\_ 2. Thessalonica was capital of what province? a) Greece b) Asia c) Macedonia d) Achaia

- \_\_ 3. Why did Paul and Silas suddenly leave Philippi? Because a) Paul had a vision b) the authorities asked them to leave c) no one believed the gospel d) the Jews started an uproar.
- \_\_ 4. One thing that led to Paul and Silas leaving Thessalonica was that the Jews a) dragged Paul before the authorities b) refused to study the Scriptures for themselves c) convinced Jason that Paul was a false teacher d) reported that Paul taught about another king.
- \_\_ 5. After Thessalonica, Paul next ministered in a) Athens, Corinth, Troas b) Corinth, Philippi, Troas c) Berea, Athens, Corinth d) Berea, Athens, Philippi.
- \_\_ 6. Paul's message in Corinth, at least to the Jews, was a) Jesus is Messiah b) Jesus is divine c) Believe that the Lord died for your sins d) The unknown God is the Creator.
- \_\_ 7. Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians a) just before he left Berea b) when Timothy returned to him at Athens c) when Timothy returned to him at Corinth d) just before he left Corinth.
- \_\_ 8. One of the outstanding themes in 1-2 Thessalonians was the Lord's a) preexistence b) miracles c) death d) Second Coming.
- \_\_ 9. Who joined Paul in writing this epistle? a) Silas & Timothy b) Timothy & Luke c) Barnabas & Mark d) Barnabas & Silas
- \_\_10. What is saving faith? a) accepting God's message, with the intention to obey b) assurance about the future that enables to endure c) accepting facts for which there is no evidence d) accepting facts for which there is evidence
- \_\_11. What is hope? a) eager desire b) confidence about the future c) assurance about the past d) plans to improve
- \_\_12. The Christian hope is primarily a) to be forgiven b) to take part in the Lord's kingdom c) to live forever in heaven d) to live together in peace.
- \_\_13. Genuine love always a) gives what the beloved wants b) insists that the beloved be near c) is willing to give itself for the beloved's best d) avoids putting pressure on the beloved.
- \_\_14. What event made the Thessalonians especially dear to Paul? a) their sending him a gift b) his next planned visit c) the coming persecution d) the Lord's coming
- \_\_15. What are the title and chapters for the first main division? a) Practical & Hortatory, 1-3 b) Personal & Historical, 1-2 c) Paul's Ministry to the Thessalonians, 1-2 d) Paul's Ministry to the Thessalonians, 1-3

16. The church at Thessalonica began when they believed in Paul's message in the synagogue at Thessalonica. Give the two parts of that message.
  - a.
  - b.
17. List five of the ways Paul showed love to the Thessalonians.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
18. What should three of a Christian's basic attitudes be in trials?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
19. What are four parts in defining the kingdom to which God calls us?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
20. Write 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 from memory.

If you have reviewed well and done well on the sample questions, take unit 1 examination according to instructions. Remember to turn in your paper about Paul's ministry. You should have finished all readings according to instructions.

# Unit Two

## Lesson 5

### 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

*What are our title and chapters for the second main division? What is the source of a Christian's standards? his main purpose in obeying God? his goal for sexual morality? his standard (three goals) for work and two results for work?*

Chapter 4 begins with the word “finally” (KJV, “furthermore then”). The Greek word does not indicate the end of the letter nor more about the same subject—but a new subject. Here begins the second main division of 1 Thessalonians: chapters 4-5. Previously we called this division “Practical & Hortatory”; now we will give it a more descriptive title. In it Paul deals with such matters as sexual morality, work, and attitudes in view of Christ’s Second Coming. As you study this section, you will discover meanings for yourself as you continue to perfect your own study skills. For example, you will summarize all the other paragraphs.

1. Reading 8. In unit 1 you considered what love is and how Paul showed love for the Thessalonians. Now notice what he says about love, particularly their love for one another. Read all of 1 Thessalonians, marking every passage that talks about love (without necessarily using the word “love”). Then list the marked passages and what they teach.

You previously summarized the paragraphs of 1 Thessalonians from 2:17 through 3:13. In this lesson you will continue practicing that skill. Save all your paragraph summaries. Later you will revise them and copy them to the chart that begins on page 99. That chart lists the paragraphs and in column 2 shows the limits for each summary. Keep each summary within those limits.

2. Now partly to review, summarize each of the paragraphs from 1:1 through 2:16. Then look in Answers.
- 3.√
  - a. What are the chapters of the second main division?
  - b. Give this division a title that describes its subject matter. Then memorize the title given in Answers. Suggestion: In your title include two words found together in 4:3 and again at 5:18.
4. Now, read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12 as three paragraphs: 1-2, 3-8, and 9-12. Then summarize each of these paragraphs in your own words. As usual, check the limits on page 99. NOTE: A “quiet life” (v. 11) means one in which the mind is calm and peaceful, with Christ in complete control.
- 5.√ Although this is “the age of grace,” there are hundreds of commands for Christians to obey. What purpose for obedience is given in the introduction to the second main division?

All true believers are “saints” (Rom. 1:7; 8:27), that is, God’s “holy (pure, separated) ones.” By God’s grace we were sanctified at our conversion. That same grace obligates us to live holy lives (1 Thess. 4:1, 3, 7, 8)—that is, to be sanctified in all aspects. In other words, we are holy and we become holy. Becoming holy is a process; it is not accomplished all at once, and it requires our cooperation. In part it depends on our listening to apostolic “asking” and “urging” (4:1)—and responding to one another’s ministry (4:18; 5:11). It also depends on our resisting the world, the flesh, and the devil.

When Paul wrote, there was sexual laxity in the general culture, affecting all levels of society. In fact, even heathen religious worship often included sexual immorality. The Thessalonians had grown up in this culture and were affected by it. However, “Christianity does not take its standards from the society in which it is planted; it receives them from God Himself” (Ryrie). To please God, there is no substitute for seeking and doing His will in every respect.

6.
  - a. Why are believers in Christ often called “saints”?
  - b. State in your own words the two main meanings of sanctification.
  - c.√ Where do a Christian’s standards come from?
  - d. God’s will concerns much more than where we live and work or whom we marry. What does it concern in verses 3-8?

In 4:4 there is a phrase translated in two basically different ways since the early centuries:

- (1) “to control his own body” (NIV)
- (2) “to acquire his own wife” (cf. Weymouth)

Some of the evidence to support each of these translations is given below. But since the first translation (control one’s body) is applicable to both sexes and all ages, it better fits the context.

One argument in favor of the second translation is that the Greek verb in this phrase normally means “to get, to acquire,” as in Acts 1:18; 8:20; 22:28. The meaning “to control,” though possible, is unusual. An argument in favor of the first translation is the Greek noun in this phrase, which literally means “vessel” (KJV, NASB). This noun never refers exclusively to a wife. (She is called the “weaker vessel” in 1 Peter 3:7, meaning that both husband and wife are vessels.) The Hebrew word for “vessel” was sometimes used to refer to a wife, but the Greek word was not. However, it was often used to refer to the body.

7. Answer from the preceding commentary and from 4:3-8.
  - a. In verse 4 what is another possible translation instead of “to control his own body”?
  - b. God’s will is not based upon what our society thinks and feels. What ruled most of the Thessalonians’ neighbors? Is your culture better?
  - c. Verse 6 says that sexual sin wrongs a brother. How do you think it wrongs him?
  - d.√ Near the end of this paragraph (4:3-8) is an ultimate goal for a Christian—the same goal as at the end of chapter 3. What goal?

NOTE: This does not at all mean that every Christian should abstain from sexual relations. Such relations are perfectly good, right, and pure in marriage—as God designed from the beginning of creation (Gen. 1:28; 2:24). But they are wrong outside of marriage.

- e. What two reasons are given in verses 6-8 for staying pure?
- f. Victory in this aspect is quite possible for every believer. What gift from God made it possible?

God is not primarily interested in our abstaining (what we don't do)—but in our showing genuine love and abounding in it. Love includes all other commands and fulfills the law (Gal. 5:14). It will produce a certain life-style (way of living). Such love is the main concern in 4:9-12.

8. Reread 4:9-12, then answer.
  - a. You already learned a definition for love. What is it?
  - b. Verse 9 says that God Himself teaches us to love each other. Romans 5:5 agrees: “God has poured out his love into our hearts.” What means does He use to do this?
  - c. Do you think God excuses believers for a lack of love if they are busy in His service? (See 1 John 3:14-18; 4:7-11, 20-21.)
9. As just stated, love will produce a certain life-style, which includes a standard in regard to our work. Verses 11-12 give three goals for such work and two intended results.
  - a.√ What are the three goals for believers (their “ambition”) in regard to work?
  - b. Restate each of these three goals in your own words.
  - c. How do you suppose you can achieve the first goal?
  - d.√ What are the two intended results?
10. Which statements are true? Believers should
  - a) never be concerned about what unbelievers think of them
  - b) try to have a good reputation
  - c) expect the Christian community to support them
  - d) avoid the appearance of having to do manual labor
  - e) seek constant excitement
- 11.√ To review. For a Christian, in regards to sex and work,
  - a. Where do his standards come from?
  - b. What is his main purpose in obeying God?
  - c. What is his ultimate goal in regards to sexual morality?
  - d. What are his standard (three goals) and two results—in regard to his work?
12. Reading 9. Read 1 Thessalonians, completing your paragraph summaries. Read the epistle a paragraph at a time. After each paragraph, reread the summary you already made of it. From 4:13 to the end of chapter 5, write your first draft of summaries. Remember to stay within the limits given in the chart on page 99.

## OPTIONAL

13. Name some practices in your own society which could pervert Christian morals.
14. What are some proper Christian motives for marriage?
15. In what way do Christians you know show their love? Why do Christians fall short of the love that “God has poured out . . . into [their] hearts”?
16. What expression of love is mentioned in passages such as Romans 12:13; 1 Timothy 3:2; and Hebrews 13:1-2?

**Lesson 6**  
**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

*Can you write 1 Thessalonians 4:13 from memory? What is the comforting teaching in 4:13-18? Why must Christians be raised bodily from the dead? What is the Rapture?*

Countless believers have been blessed from Paul’s teaching in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Many have memorized the passage. Do so if you can. However, you will be required to write only the introductory verse.

- 1.√ Memorize 1 Thessalonians 4:13 without errors. Practice writing it. Remember to write your memory verses on a card or paper that you can carry with you and review often.
2. Your paragraph summaries will not be graded but must be done correctly and sent in for this unit to be complete. Begin to put them in their final form. Do that now for 1:1 and 1:2-10. Remember to stay within the limits given for each summary in column 2 of the chart on page 99.

**Outline Structure.** A serious writing is logical. It usually has a main theme with parts that define or develop that theme. With an outline we can picture those logical relationships. We can show which parts are primary (more important) and which are secondary (less important), which are parallel to each other and which are subordinate. The writer may not have constructed an outline, but it may help us to do so.

Look at the typical outline structure below. As usual, it begins with an introduction and ends with a conclusion. Between the introduction and conclusion it has two divisions (I and II) and could have more (III, IV, etc.) to develop the main theme. These divisions, lined up to the left, are the first level of importance. Under each of these divisions and indented one step to the right, there are two subdivisions (A, B) and could be more (C, D, etc.). Subdivisions are the second level of importance. Each of them consists of a paragraph or set(s) of paragraphs showing an

aspect of its division. An outline often has additional levels of importance, indented even further to the right. If—as in this case—the first level is I, II and the second level is A, B, the third level would be 1, 2 and the fourth level a, b.

We use an outline structure like this to display the logical relationships in a writing. Instead of “First division” we put a title for the first part of the writing. Under it we put titles for each subdivision and other divisions. Thus, with a few words we can picture the whole writing’s general structure and argument.

### **Introduction**

#### **I. First division**

**A. First subdivision** (*paragraph[s] showing an aspect of the first division*)

**B. Second subdivision** (*paragraph[s] showing another aspect of the first division*)  
(Possibly other subdivisions for the first division)

#### **II. Second division**

**A. First subdivision** (*paragraph[s] showing an aspect of the second division*)

**B. Second subdivision** (*paragraph[s] showing another aspect of the second division*)  
(Possibly other subdivisions for the second division)

(Possibly other divisions and subdivisions)

### **Conclusion**

## First Thessalonians

Introduction, 1:1

I. Paul’s Ministry to the Thessalonians, chs. 1-3 (1:2 to 3:13)

A. 1:2-10

B. 2:1-16

1. 2:1-12

2. 2:13-16

C. 2:17 to 3:13

1. 2:17 to 3:5

2. 3:6-11

3. 3:12-13

II. God’s Will for the Thessalonians, chs. 4-5 (4:1 to 5:24)

A. 4:1-8

B. 4:9-12

C. 4:13-18

D. 5:1-11

E. 5:12-22

Conclusion, 5:23-28

In the case of 1 Thessalonians you have learned the two divisions (I and II) in the outline of the book. You have also made provisional titles for paragraphs, which you will improve and use to complete the outline.

3. Reading 10. Read all of 1 Thessalonians. As you read, see if you can improve the paragraph titles you made in lesson 2; then write them in the outline above. Also, notice that subdivision B under I is composed of a set of two paragraphs: 2:1-12 and 2:13-16. You already have a title for each of those paragraphs, but now you need to make a title for B that includes both paragraphs. Similarly, make a title for C that includes its three paragraphs.
- 4.√ Now reread 4:13-18 and determine exactly what its comforting teaching is.

Eschatology is teaching about final things. It is obvious that Paul considered eschatology important. One main eschatological feature is Christ's Second Coming, which Christ usually related to starting His kingdom (for example, Matt. 16:27, 28; 24:30, 42, 44; 25:31; 26:64). Although Paul's ministry to the Thessalonians had been brief, he had taught them much about that coming. Referring to it in nearly every chapter of these epistles, he implied that they already knew what he meant. Sometimes he said so (1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:5). In both epistles, however, he had to supplement that teaching and correct misunderstandings.

5. In 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 13 says that the rest of men grieve because they "have no hope." You will remember that in lesson 2 you looked up a number of verses dealing with the Christian hope. You defined our hope and saw some of its contents. Reread those notes, questions, and answers (everything in lesson 2 after question 7) before you continue.

As you saw, the Christian hope can be summarized as taking part in the future, eternal "kingdom of God." Though spiritual in essence, that kingdom will include material and political elements as well. God will "restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets" (Acts 3:21). Perhaps you remember some of the prophecies you looked up in lesson 3. That kingdom is the church's goal (Matt. 25:34; Acts 14:22; Gal. 5:21; 2 Tim. 4:18; James 2:5). Christ will rule, and we will rule with Him (Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:12). To take our full part in such a kingdom forever, we must have glorified bodies (1 Cor. 15:50). In other words, our bodily resurrection is essential. That is the key to Paul's emphasis in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

- 6.√ Why is our bodily resurrection essential?

Apparently some of the Thessalonian believers had died since Paul's visit. It was common to say that dead believers had "fallen asleep" (see also Acts 7:60; 1 Cor. 15:6, 18, 20). This is because the dead body looks asleep—and some day will wake up. It says nothing about the soul, which has departed to be with Christ, a much better condition than the present one (Phil. 1:23). In some ways a dead believer is better off than a living believer.

In 1 Thessalonians 4, however, Paul does not comfort the living by saying that their dead loved ones are better off. Neither here nor anywhere else does he suggest that death is the goal for believers. Instead, he emphasizes their resurrection at the Rapture. If God raised Jesus from death, He will also bring (from death) those who have died in Jesus (v. 14). In fact, at Jesus' coming dead believers will rise first (vv. 15-16). Then we living saints, Paul says, "will be caught up" (Greek *harpagesometha*) with them to meet the Lord in the air (v. 17). "Caught up" in Latin uses the verb *rapturo*, from which comes the technical term *Rapture*. We usually apply *Rapture* to what will happen to the living, but it seems to refer to the dead also. Both groups will be caught up and—in that instant, as 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 tells us—will be given imperishable bodies.

7.√ What is the Rapture?

Does 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 teach that God will bring dead believers from heaven to earth with Jesus when He comes? It says that "**God will bring with Jesus** those who have fallen asleep in him" (v. 14b, emphasis added). This could mean that dead believers will come down with the Lord. However, nothing else in the passage looks at them as coming with Him. Instead, they are seen as still dead when He comes (v. 15) and rising first (v. 16), ahead of the living, to meet Him in the air (v. 17).

NOTE: The verb translated "bring" (Greek *ago*) in 4:14 does not itself imply that the dead come toward earth. This common verb refers to **accompanying** an agent, **not the direction** of movement, which must be supplied from the context. Therefore, in Luke 4:1 it is properly translated "Jesus... **was led** [not **brought**] by the Spirit in the desert." Similarly, Luke 23:32 properly has "Two other men... were also **led out** [not **brought out**] with him to be executed." See also John 10:16; 18:13, 28; Acts 5:21, 26, 27; 11:26; 18:12.

Therefore, 1 Thessalonians 4:14 could begin "God will **take** with Jesus." This permits a meaning for the verse that better fits the context.

The more likely meaning for "God will bring/take them with Jesus" is that God *will take them from death to life* just as He did Jesus. Indeed, that is the point of verse 14. Since "we believe that Jesus died and rose again," we should also believe that those joined to Him in death will be joined to Him in resurrection. This will happen, as the Lord Jesus Himself promised, "when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live" (John 5:25).<sup>2</sup>

8. After question 6 we affirmed that *in his soul* (though not in his body) a believer who dies goes to be with Christ. This passage (4:13-18), however, looks at dead believers as still dead, not as living and coming with Jesus.

<sup>2</sup> Jesus said that "a time is coming **and has now come**" for this to happen. Do the bolded words limit this verse to spiritual renewal? Probably not, since the next verses include physical resurrection in the promise. The story of Jesus raising Lazarus illustrates that physical aspect.

- a. Reread the passage, finding indications that it pictures dead believers as still dead at the Lord's coming. Write them down. HINT: Note what the passage says and what it does not say about dead believers.
- b. The point of verse 14 (and the whole passage), as we see it, is stated also in 2 Corinthians 4:14. Read that passage and copy the words stating that point.
- c. In what verse in the Gospels did the Lord Jesus promise to call the dead to life?

Starting at the Rapture, "we will be with the Lord forever" (v. 17). Observe two facts about this wonderful promise: (a) It was not the main consolation in this paragraph. In fact, all believers expected to be joined to the Lord when He returns (John 14:3). (b) It does not imply that believers will always live in heaven. Sooner or later we will live on earth, as you have seen. The Lord Himself said that He will come to earth in glory (Matt. 25:31), judge the nations (25:32), and award the kingdom as inheritance to His "sheep" (25:34). In this way He equated "eternal life" for "the righteous" (25:46) with participating in His eternal kingdom on the new earth (cf. Matt. 19:28-29; Rom. 8:18-25; James 2:5). God will give to Jesus "the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever" (Luke 1:32-33). When He reigns, we will be on earth with Him. Our heavenly home (John 14:1-3) will descend to the new earth (Rev. 21:2, 10), where we will have our inheritance.

Before the Lord comes to reign, however, there will be "great distress" (Matt. 24:21), translated by the King James Version as "a great tribulation." Will the Rapture of 1 Thessalonians 4 take place before or after that Tribulation? Consider verse 16: "The Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command . . . and with the trumpet call." As we have just seen, many dead "will hear" that voice and "will live" (John 5:25). But will His loud voice also mean that the time has come for His promised kingdom to begin on earth? Will His raptured saints simply welcome Him to earth—or will He take them away to heaven? Paul really doesn't say. Conservative interpreters hold both views.

One view is that at the Rapture the Lord will continue on down to earth to rule. In that case, after raptured believers go "to meet the Lord" (v. 17), they immediately escort Him back to earth. This is the way the same Greek verb is used in Acts 28:15. When Paul and his company approached Rome, Roman believers went out several miles "to meet" the newcomers and escort them back to Rome. If that is what happens in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, the Great Tribulation will have already taken place before the Lord comes. The Rapture will be "post-tribulational." If this view is correct, believers cannot expect the Lord to come until the Great Tribulation is finished.

The other view is that the Rapture is "pre-tribulational." After meeting the Lord, raptured believers will accompany Him back to heaven—and stay there for seven years while the Tribulation takes place on earth. If this view is correct, we can look for the Lord at any time—and none of those raptured will go through the Great Tribulation.

9. We have briefly stated two principal conservative views about the time of the Rapture. We will return to these views in future lessons.

- a. Name and define each of these views.
- b. Make a simple diagram of each view.

Notice that Paul expected the Lord to return during his own lifetime (vv. 15, 17). Since God did not reveal “the times or dates” (Acts 1:7), Christians have rightfully kept the “blessed hope” of His return (Titus 2:13) burning brightly in every generation.

This Thessalonians passage says that the Lord will come “with a loud command, with the voice of the [literally, *an*] archangel and with the trumpet call of God” (v. 16). Does this mean that the Lord will command in a voice **that sounds like** an archangel? Or does it mean that an archangel will speak **in addition to** the Lord? It is not clear. In either case, “powerful angels” will come with Him (2 Thess. 1:7). Angels have different ranks and authority, archangels probably being the highest. Only Michael is specifically called an archangel in Scripture (Jude 9), but there are probably several others (cf. Eph. 6:12). Gabriel, for example (Dan. 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26), is called “one of the chief princes” (Dan. 10:13) and “the great prince who protects your people [Israel]” (Dan. 12:1).

10. Review some by telling if each of the following statements is true or false. Change each false statement to a true one.
  - a. Despite the brevity of his visit in Thessalonica, Paul had taught the Thessalonians much about Christ’s return.
  - b. Our commentary teaches that 1 Thessalonians 4:14 refers to God’s bringing dead believers from heaven to earth with Christ.
  - c. The center of the Christian hope is that we go to heaven when we die.
  - d. Each Christian receives his full reward and inheritance immediately after death.
  - e. We must be raised bodily in order to go to heaven.
- 11.√ Same instructions as for 10.
  - a. The Rapture is the catching up and glorifying of both dead and living believers.
  - b. Besides being caught up in the air, believers will have their bodies changed.
  - c. The introduction to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 refers to ignorance “about those who fall asleep.”
  - d. In this passage Paul’s main consolation to bereaved believers is that their dead shall rise when the Lord comes.
12. OPTIONAL Ask at least two Bible teachers whether they believe the Rapture is pretribulational or post-tribulational. Get reasons for their opinions.

## Lesson 7

### 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

*What is the Day of the Lord? the Christian concern in relation to it?  
Can you write from memory—with some references—the first and  
second levels of our outline of 1 Thessalonians?*

- 1.√ Possibly the most valuable thing you can do is memorize Scripture with the resolve to obey it. Are you constantly reviewing your first memory verse for this unit (4:13)? Add to it this brief passage, which gives three great rules of godliness: 5:16-18.
2. Put into their final form your summaries for paragraphs 2:1-12; 2:13-16; 2:17 to 3:5; 3:6-10; and 3:11-13. Remember the limits on page 99.
3. Reading 11. In this lesson find the final form of an outline for 1 Thessalonians. Later you will memorize most of this outline. Now read the title for the first paragraph (Greeting, 1:1), then read that paragraph in the book. Next read the title for the second paragraph (1:2-10) and read that paragraph. Continue in the same way through the entire book.

<b>First Thessalonians</b>	
Greeting, 1:1	
I. Paul's Ministry to the Thessalonians, 1:2—3:13	(Chs. 1-3)
A. Thanksgiving that God has transformed them, 1:2-10	(Ch. 1)
B. Paul's ministry to them in person, 2:1-16	(Ch. 2)
1. His ministry, 2:1-12	
2. Their response, 2:13-16	
C. Paul's ministry to them while separated, 2:17—3:13	(Chs. 2-3)
1. His continued love for them, 2:17—3:5	
2. Timothy's good report about them, 3:6-11	
3. Paul's prayer for them, 3:12-13	
II. God's Will for the Thessalonians, 4:1—5:22	(Chs. 4-5)
A. Sexual purity, 4:1-8	(Ch. 4)
B. Mutual love and quiet work, 4:9-12	(Ch. 4)
C. Comfort about dead Christians, 4:13-18	(Ch. 4)
D. Vigilance toward the Lord's coming, 5:1-11	(Ch. 5)
E. Holy attitudes, 5:12-22	(Ch. 5)
Conclusion, 5:23-28	

- 4.√ Now memorize the following parts of the outline and practice writing them from memory. (With the greeting and conclusion also learn verse references. For other parts, learn only the chapter references—as given at the right margin.)
  - a. On the first level memorize greeting, two divisions, and conclusion.

- b. On the second level memorize all main subdivisions for each division.

Near the end of this epistle Paul deals with another eschatological matter: being ready for the Day of the Lord. He had already taught them about this, from the Old Testament and the Lord Jesus' words.

5. Reread 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, deciding the following as you read:
- what the Thessalonians already knew about the Day of the Lord
  - what a Christian's main concern should be in relation to that day.

The Day of the Lord is often described—often by name—in the Old Testament. Though the term sometimes refers to events that happened in a prophet's time, it usually refers to final things. It is usually “a period of unrevealed and indefinite length” embracing the future “establishment of the Mediatorial Kingdom on earth.” So says Alva J. McClain in *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (p. 178). He continues to describe that “Day”:

The prophets must have had in mind a form somewhat parallel to the ordinary day in the Jewish calendar . . . a solar day which began at sunset and extended to the next sunset . . . a period of darkness followed by a period of light. Similarly, the great Day of the Lord is pictured as a period composed of both darkness and light; and the sequence is the same: first, the night, and then the light of the rising sun. . . . In the prophets that Day always begins with the darkness of divine wrath . . . and then moves on to the light of divine blessing.

Furthermore, to this twofold division of the Day of the Lord, the prophets add a third category, namely, those events which take place “before” that great Day. . . . Finally, there are a few important events which seem to belong to the *dawning* period between the darkness and the light. Following this outline we get a fourfold division of events associated with the establishment of the Mediatorial Kingdom on earth: first, events which take place *before* the Day; second, events during the *darkness* of the Day; third, events at the *dawn* of the Day; and fourth, events during the *light* of the Day. (McClain, p. 178)

No doubt you observed these two aspects of the Day of the Lord:

- It will begin with worldwide judgments (darkness) but
- it will continue with the Lord's worldwide reign (light).

Some interpreters see the same two aspects early in 1 Thessalonians:

- We are waiting for “Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath” (1:10).
- God calls us “into his kingdom and glory” (2:12).

6. Here are some of the Old Testament passages Paul had explained to the Thessalonians about the Day of the Lord. Read each passage and state its general teaching.
- Malachi 4:5-6
  - Joel 2:30-31
  - Zephaniah 1:14-18
  - Isaiah 2:12-19
  - Zechariah 14:1-5
  - Zechariah 14:8-9, 16

- 7.√ Now see if you can define the Day of the Lord. After writing your own definition, learn the one given in Answers.

Thus, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 is clearly tied to the Old Testament. No doubt Paul had also taught the Thessalonians from the Lord Jesus' words, now recorded in the Gospels and Acts. Although the term *Day of the Lord* is used only once in those books (Acts 2:20 quoting Joel), that future "Day" is certainly described. In fact, there are passages both in the Gospels and Acts that are parallel to 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11. You will look at two examples. All of these passages refer to the Lord's coming back to rule.

8. Read each of the following passages and answer the questions.
- Matthew 24-25 is the Lord's longest discourse about His future coming to rule. Read 24:36-44 and tell at least two similarities to 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11. NOTE: Luke 21:7-36 has a shorter form of the same prophetic discourse. Verse 34 is very much like 1 Thessalonians 5:3, including the Greek word translated "unexpectedly" or "suddenly," used only in these two verses.
  - Read Acts 1:3-8. In verse 7 the Lord speaks of the same "times and dates" as 1 Thessalonians 5:1. How do we know from Acts that these have to do with the coming of His kingdom?
9. Earlier in this lesson you learned the Christian's main concern (two exhortations) in view of the unexpected coming of the Day of the Lord.
- √ To review: What is that concern?
  - For each correct attitude give the opposite attitude.

While we wait, we are soldiers in a spiritual war. Our protection is here pictured as two pieces of armor, involving faith, love, and hope.

- Faith and love give the basis and assurance of who we are. They are probably the outside and inside of what piece of armor?
  - The helmet refers not to the salvation already received but to future salvation. How can you tell it is future?

Instead of future wrath, future salvation. "God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive [obtain] salvation" (v. 9). In the Bible "salvation" usually means more than "deliverance." It is not simply negative—avoiding something—but positive—gaining something. For example, in Hebrews 1:14 and 1 Peter 1:4-5, 9 it refers to all that believers will inherit. But assuming that in 1 Thessalonians 5 it includes the negative aspect, what does that aspect refer to? In other words, what is the wrath we will be saved from? Here are two different opinions, held by pretribulationists and post-tribulationists:

- Most if not all pretribulationists think the wrath we will be saved from is the Great Tribulation, which brings this present evil age to a close. Specifically, they say, it means the special divine judgments during that terrible period (Rev. 6:16-17; 15:1). Since everyone left on

earth will suffer that wrath, they continue, true members of the church must be removed from earth before the Tribulation begins. This view appeals to Revelation 3:10, where the Lord promises the Philadelphia church to “keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world.” It also fits one interpretation of 1 Thessalonians 1:10 (“rescues us from the coming wrath”) and of 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8.

- At least some post-tribulationists think that the wrath in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 (and 1:10) is final condemnation. True believers will not be condemned even if they must go through the Tribulation. This view of 1 Thessalonians 5:9 agrees with the following facts: (a) In the epistles God’s “wrath” usually refers to final judgment, not just the Tribulation (see Romans 2:5-11; 5:9-10). (b) There will be many true believers on earth during the Tribulation (Rev. 7:9-17). Will they not be saved from God’s wrath?

For each of these views there are many more arguments, which have filled entire books. But interesting as this issue is, another is more important: to be sure that you have Christian faith, love, and hope.

11. True or False? Some of the following statements are based on the comments above, some on your own observations. Correct the false statements.
  - a. In 1 Thessalonians 5 Paul deals with both the judgments and the blessings of the Day of the Lord.
  - b. The Day of the Lord is said to come as a thief because of what people will lose.
  - c. In 5:9 pretribulation Rapture and post-tribulation Rapture views understand “wrath” in the same way.
  - d. This early apostolic epistle shows that it is relatively unimportant to teach future things.
- 12.√ Practice writing the parts of the outline.
  - a. Greeting, with chapter and verse reference
  - b. the two main divisions, with chapter references
  - c. the main subdivisions for division I, with chapter references
  - d. the main subdivisions for division II, with chapter references
  - e. Conclusion, with chapter and verse reference
13. OPTIONAL Read these two sets of passages referring to the Day of the Lord. For each set tell what key word you can find.
  - a. Isaiah 2:19, 21 and Isaiah 13:13
  - b. Joel 2:2; Amos 5:18, 20; and Zephaniah 1:15.

## Lesson 8

### 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28; Review

*Can you write 5:16-18 from memory? What are seven practical rules of conduct for believers from 5:12-22?*

- 1.√ In lesson 7 you were told to memorize 5:16-18. You will be expected to write that passage and 4:13 from memory **without errors**. Practice writing them now—and review them regularly.

First Thessalonians 5:12-28 gives many practical commands and directions. First you will consider the ones in verses 12-22. These deal with relations to church leaders (vv. 12-13), to weak and unruly believers (vv. 14-15), to God (vv. 16-18), and to the exercise of certain spiritual gifts (vv. 19-22).

**Relations to church leaders** (5:12-13). No doubt these leaders were the “elders” of the church, as in Acts 14:23 and 20:17, 28. They had probably been converted at the same time as the other Thessalonians—but had been appointed “over” the rest. Notice in verses 12-13 the three commands to those under this authority. Also notice the elders’ responsibilities (v. 12), which amounted to being “shepherds of God’s flock” (1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28). Compare verses 12-13 to Hebrews 13:17 (“Obey your leaders...submit...They keep watch....”).

**Relations to weak and unruly believers** (5:14-15). The early Greek Fathers of the church believed that these two verses were especially addressed to the leaders. Even if the Greek Fathers were correct, all believers share in this responsibility. The word translated “idle” in verse 14 “is a military term signifying the soldier who does not keep in proper rank” (Ryrie). In 4:11-12 Paul had already instructed such people to “work with your hands.” The “timid” were literally the “little-souled,” who needed encouragement. Though mentioned separately, they could probably have been included in the following category, the spiritually “weak.” Verse 15 states the principle of non-retaliation, given by the Lord Jesus and often repeated in the New Testament (e.g., Rom. 12:17). This principle applies to personal insults and does not prohibit all self-defense. Only one who has the same love Christ showed will seek the best for his enemy rather than stand up for his own rights. Such love shows that a person knows Christ and God.

**Relations to God** (5:16-18). Verse 16 is the shortest Greek verse in the New Testament. Though persecuted, the Thessalonians could choose to “be joyful always” (v. 16) because joy is found in eternal things (Phil. 3:1; Acts 13:48; 3 John 4). They could also “pray continually” (v. 17) even when otherwise occupied, by constantly looking to God. “Continually” is elsewhere used of a hacking cough (one that never stops for long). The exhortation to “give thanks in all circumstances” (v. 18) may be the most important of all spiritual rules, found in nearly all the epistles. Only the thankful can get God’s good out of every circumstance.

**Relations to the exercise of certain spiritual gifts** (5:19-22). Dr. Ryrie says that verses 19-21 “have to do with the work of the Holy Spirit in the individual and in the assembly.” Verse 22 probably does, too. The verb in “Do not **put out** the Spirit’s fire” (v. 19) is the same one used in Mark 9:48 and Hebrews 11:34. Apparently some Thessalonians wanted to prohibit strange or non-scheduled activities in their worship services. They were right to seek orderliness in worship (1 Cor. 14:40)—but not to control all that took place. For example, they treated “with contempt” (as of no value) any supposed direct “prophecies” from God (v. 20). Indeed, there were spurious (counterfeit) prophecies (2 Thess. 2:2). But there were also genuine prophecies, given by the Spirit—at least until the Scriptures were completed. Their purpose was to build up the church (1 Cor. 14:3-4). Instead of putting out that “fire,” the Thessalonians should “test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil” (vv. 21-22). These three commands in verses 21-22 tell how to deal with such gifts; they can also be applied to many other matters.

NOTE: The word translated “kind” in verse 22 can also mean “appearance,” as in Luke 9:29. The KJV so translates here. At least some early Fathers thought the verse prohibited doing things that even **look** bad. But there are two objections to that interpretation: (1) When the Greek word refers to appearance, it suggests no unreality; the thing **is** the way it **looks**. (2) It doesn’t seem likely that God would give a rule to avoid bad appearance. Such a rule would make it easy to “shun some unpleasant duty” (Hiebert, 266). Jesus Himself “came eating and drinking” and was accused—because of bad appearance—of being “a glutton and a drunkard” (Matt. 11:19).

2. a. The first command in 5:12-22 could be made personal like this: “I should show respect to my church leaders.” In a similarly personal way list every command in this passage. (Give references.)
- b.√ Choose and memorize seven of the commands you have just listed, resolving to obey them.

The conclusion (5:23-28) once more looks ahead to the Lord’s coming. It begins with a request for complete sanctification (v. 23) and the assurance that God will produce it (v. 24). Paul then requests prayer for himself (v. 25), instructs them to show affection to each other (vv. 26-27), and pronounces a benediction (v. 28).

NOTE: “Spirit, soul and body” (v. 23) may imply that man has three parts. Sometimes *spirit* and *soul* are equated (see Luke 1:46-47), but other times they are distinguished (see Heb. 4:12; 1 Cor. 2:14-15; 15:44). Apparently, “*spirit*...is the life principle imparted to man by God who is Spirit, enabling him to know and communicate with God”; whereas “*soul* may be viewed as the self-conscious life of man, the seat of personality” (Hiebert, p. 270).

NOTE: The holy kiss (v. 26) was originally given on the cheek by men to men and by women to women, as in many cultures today.

3. The teacher usually learns more than the student. Pretend you are teaching the conclusion of 1 Thessalonians (5:23-28) to a teenager. Help him to see what is said by asking him at least three questions on content. Compose those questions now. Be sure they are (a) **questions with answers** you provide; (b) **questions about content**—what is said, not about what it means unless that is part of what it says.

4. Reading 12. Read the entire epistle. As you read, compose a question with answer for every paragraph. Follow the same instructions as in the previous exercise, making questions on content you could use to help a teenager see what Paul said.

5. Practice writing the outline. Fill in the blanks from memory.

Greeting (ref. \_\_\_\_\_)

I. Paul's \_\_\_\_\_ (chs. \_\_\_\_\_)

A. \_\_\_\_\_ (ch. \_\_\_\_\_)

B. \_\_\_\_\_ (ch. \_\_\_\_\_)

C. \_\_\_\_\_ (ch. \_\_\_\_\_)

II. God's \_\_\_\_\_ (chs. \_\_\_\_\_)

A. \_\_\_\_\_ (ch. \_\_\_\_\_)

B. \_\_\_\_\_ (ch. \_\_\_\_\_)

C. \_\_\_\_\_ (ch. \_\_\_\_\_)

D. Vigilance \_\_\_\_\_ (ch. \_\_\_\_\_)

E. \_\_\_\_\_ (ch. \_\_\_\_\_)

Conclusion (ref. \_\_\_\_\_)

6. Improve your paragraph summaries for 1 Thessalonians 4-5. Then copy your summaries for the whole book to the chart that begins on page 99. For each summary count the words you used and enter the total in the last column. Each total should be within the limits in column 2. You will send in this completed chart for credit. The summaries will not be graded but must all be done correctly.

OPTIONAL

7. Look through the following paragraphs in the Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 5:21-22; 27-30; 33-37; 38-42. Which one states the principle of non-retaliation?

8. Give some reasons for thinking highly of people the Lord has put over you.

9. Summarize the meaning of 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 in a way that applies to your own situation.

If you have finished all the readings according to instructions, prepare for unit 2 examination. Do so by learning to answer all the checked questions in lessons 5-8. Test yourself by answering the objectives at the beginning of each lesson. After you have reviewed well, take unit 2 examination according to instructions. Remember to cut out and send in the chart containing your paragraph summaries.

# Unit Three

## Lesson 9

### 2 Thessalonians Introduction, the Kingdom

*Can you give five background facts and three themes for 2 Thessalonians? What is the kingdom for which believers suffer? How did Jesus prove that He could bring it as promised? What general fact did He reveal about it in the “secrets”?*

This lesson begins with a brief introduction to 2 Thessalonians. The rest of it deals with a subject basic to all New Testament books: the coming kingdom of Christ.

Some time after writing 1 Thessalonians, Paul wrote another epistle to the same church. In this unit you will have the privilege of studying 2 Thessalonians. By using the same techniques as before, you will discover much of the epistle’s meaning for yourself. You can probably read it aloud in seven or eight minutes. Remember to do each reading—unless otherwise instructed—in the NIV printout we have provided.

- 1.√ Reading 1. Read 2 Thessalonians aloud, trying to determine its background for yourself. As you read, put a “B” in the margin next to any background item, such as, Paul’s circumstances or the Thessalonians’ circumstances. You should notice eight to ten such items. After reading, list each reference you have marked and summarize its background information. Then look in Answers, memorizing the facts we so mark.

It seems that this letter was written a few weeks or months after the first letter. Silas and Timothy were still with Paul, helping him spread the gospel (1:1; 3:1-2); the Thessalonians were still being persecuted and enduring (1:3, 4-7); some of them were still wrongfully idle (3:6); apparently they had received a letter falsely claiming to be from Paul (2:2; 3:17). These conditions point to a later stage of Paul’s first period of ministry in Corinth. Silas and Timothy had joined him there from Macedonia just before he wrote 1 Thessalonians (Acts 18:5) and had continued with him in ministry (1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:19). Somehow he had obtained more information about Thessalonica that prompted him to write again. We can guess what that information was from what Paul said. For example, he had been concerned about their faith (1 Thess. 3:2, 5, 10) and their love (1 Thess. 3:12; 4:9-10). Both of these had increased (2 Thess. 1:3).

NOTE: In verse 3 Paul said that their faith “is growing more and more,” translating a Greek verb that describes faith as a healthy plant. Saying that their love “is increasing” was like comparing it to a river irrigating much land.

- 2.√ Look through 2 Thessalonians again and list its main themes (the main things Paul wrote about). There is one for each chapter. Memorize them as marked in Answers. NOTE: Although the Day of the Lord is referred to, do not count that Day as a theme. Rather, the themes are **related** to it.

You probably noticed that eschatology is prominent in this epistle, as it was in the first epistle. Chapter 1 explains that the present suffering of Christians is related to the future—and will be recompensed at the Lord’s coming. Chapter 2 deals with the necessary prelude to the Day of the Lord. Chapter 3 deals with the problem of some unruly Christians, who were idle possibly because they expected the Lord to come immediately.

As in the first epistle, Paul continues thanking God for the Thessalonians’ faith, love, and hope (1:3-4; cf. 1 Thess. 1:3). Here he mentions their faith and love by name. Though he doesn’t name hope, he refers to their “perseverance” in persecutions and trials (v. 4). This is the “endurance” (same Greek word) that 1 Thessalonians 1:3 says hope produces. This persecution and endurance is the basis for Paul’s first theme, in 1:5-10.

Believers suffer and endure for the coming “kingdom of God” (1:5). This is the Christian goal referred to in 1 Thessalonians 2:12: “God calls you into his kingdom and glory.” Paul consistently warned his converts that this goal lies at the end of a path with “many hardships” (Acts 14:22). Before proceeding in 2 Thessalonians, we will take a longer look at that kingdom.

**The Past Mediatorial Kingdom of God.** Alva McClain wrote a masterful book about this subject: *The Greatness of the Kingdom*. On page 41 he explains that the Bible tells of two kingdoms of God, one of which McClain calls “universal” and the other “mediatorial.” The Universal Kingdom already—and always—includes everything and everybody. From God’s “throne in heaven...his kingdom rules over all” (Ps. 103:19). In a sense, the Universal Kingdom has no history. Since it is everywhere, it cannot “come.” Since everyone is already in it, it cannot be anyone’s goal.

In contrast, the “Mediatorial Kingdom” is the rule of God on earth **through a divinely chosen man** who speaks and acts for God—and represents the people before God. Unlike God’s Universal Kingdom, which has always existed everywhere, the Mediatorial Kingdom has a history.

- It began at Mount Sinai.
- It was suspended when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the first temple.
- It will be reestablished at the Second Coming of Christ.

The beginning of the Mediatorial Kingdom is told in the book of Exodus. Its suspension is the subject of many passages, such as Ezekiel 9-10. So is its reestablishment—except that the prophets did not know that its King (Messiah/Christ) would come twice. This reestablished kingdom is the Christian goal.

3. Look up the following passages and summarize what each one teaches about the past history of the Mediatorial Kingdom.
  - a. Exodus 19:4-6
  - b. Psalm 114:1-2
  - c. Exodus 25:22

- d. Exodus 40:33-35
- e. Ezekiel 10:4, 18-19

**The Future Mediatorial Kingdom of God.** As you have just seen, the kingdom that began at Mt. Sinai was being suspended in the days of Ezekiel. Many prophets predicted that Israel's rebellion would bring about that suspension. Yet, they also predicted that the kingdom would be restored greater than ever. In lesson 3 you read the following sample prophecies:

- Daniel 2:35, 44-45, The kingdom will come from the God of heaven, fill the whole earth, and continue forever.
- Isaiah 2:1-4, The nations will go to Jerusalem to learn the Lord's ways, resulting in a righteous world and peace.
- Isaiah 9:6-7, The Ruler will be called Wonderful Counselor... and will rule forever from David's throne.
- Isaiah 25:6-9, God will prepare a rich feast and destroy death.
- Isaiah 35:5-6, There will be no more afflictions (curse).

Another sample prophecy is Isaiah 11, which begins by describing the future Ruler from David's line. He will be **anointed** with the fullness of the Lord's Spirit, which is the meaning of His title *Christ* (or its equivalent *Messiah*). He will spread the knowledge of the Lord even to the animals (vv. 1-10). God's people Israel will be restored and exalted (vv. 11-16).

**The Kingdom of God "Drawn Near."** This promised kingdom is the one John the Baptist and Jesus constantly announced as having "drawn near" (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Luke 10:1, 9-11). John and Jesus did not define it, clearly expecting the Jews to know what kingdom they meant. The fact that it had come near implied that it had been distant. Thus, it was not God's universal kingdom nor His spiritual rule, both of which are always present. The fact that it continued to be "near" throughout Jesus' ministry implied that it had not fully arrived. So did the many references to it as future, such as, Matthew 5:20; 7:21; 8:11; 13:39b-43; 16:27-28; 25:31-32.

And yet, in one sense that kingdom had "come upon" Israel (Matt. 12:28) and was "in the midst" of them (NASB, Luke 17:21): in the Person of the King. Jesus' many **miracles** were proof that He could bring the very kingdom described by the prophets. (Using the same Greek word, Hebrews 6:5 calls them "**miracles** of the age to come.") This fact became a comfort to Jesus' Spirit-filled herald, John the Baptist. John, with accurate but incomplete knowledge, had predicted that Jesus will do away with wicked men (Matt. 3:10-12). Yet, when wicked men imprisoned John, Jesus did nothing about it. Was Jesus really "the one who was to come" (Matt. 11:2-3)? Jesus' main response for John was to do more of these miracles (Matt. 11:4-6).

**The Kingdom of God Still Future.** In spite of Jesus' kingly credentials, however, it soon became apparent that His people would reject Him (Matt. 11-12). At that time He began to teach through parables (Matt. 13) in order to reveal things to His disciples while hiding them from others (13:10-17). What He revealed was a new and (to them, not to God) unexpected age in preparation for the kingdom. These "secrets [KJV, "mysteries"] of the kingdom" did not

describe a change in the promised kingdom but a “delay” in its establishment. For the first time it was revealed that the King would come twice. As Peter later tells us (1 Peter 1:10-12), this fact was unknown to the prophets who had spoken about the future Messiah (*Christ*). Through them the Spirit of Messiah had predicted two stages: (1) “the sufferings of Messiah” and (2) “the glories that would follow.” The Spirit had not clarified “the time and circumstances,” which Jesus now clarified in part.

After beginning to reveal the secrets, Jesus repeatedly related His glories to His Second Coming. For example, He promised to come back to earth “in his glory...and sit on his throne in heavenly glory” (Matt. 25:31; “on his glorious throne,” 19:28). In that day He will rule over “all the nations” (Matt. 25:32) in a world where all things will be renewed (Matt. 19:28; cf. Acts 3:21). That rule will last forever (Matt. 25:46), as the angel had told Mary (Luke 1:32-33).

The day came when Jesus asked His apostles who they thought He was. Simon, as spokesman, confessed that Jesus is *the Christ* (Matt. 16:15-16). In other words, He is *Messiah*, the promised King. In response, Jesus changed Simon’s name to Peter and predicted, “On this rock I will build my church [*ekklesia*]” (16:17-18). This term *ekklesia* was common in the Greek version of the Jewish Scriptures. It was first used to designate Israel as God’s *assembly* at Mt. Sinai, when they first became God’s kingdom (Deut. 4:10; 9:10; 18:16; etc.). Stephen used it in this same sense (Acts 7:38). It also referred to Israel assembled as God’s kingdom people on other occasions (Deut. 23:1-3; 31:30; 2 Chron. 7:8; 20:5, 14; etc.). When Jesus used the term in Matthew 16, He apparently referred to the *assembly* of His future kingdom. (Hebrews 2:12 uses the term in the same sense, quoting Psalm 22:22.)

**The Kingdom the Church’s Goal.** Furthermore, to Peter as representative of believers Jesus promised authority (“the keys”) in that same kingdom (Matt. 16:19-20). He did not imply that the church is the kingdom but that the kingdom is the church’s goal. The apostles implied the same thing in their preaching and writing. Consider some sample verses:

- Matthew 19:28-29, “At the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you...will also sit on twelve thrones....”
  - Matthew 25:34, “Come...take your inheritance, the kingdom....”
  - Acts 14:22, “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom....”
  - Galatians 5:21, “Those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom....”
  - 2 Timothy 4:18, “The Lord...will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom.”
- NOTE: This does not mean that the kingdom is heaven but that it is heavenly in origin and quality. In fact, it will be heaven on earth, as plainly seen in Revelation 21-22: John “saw the Holy City...coming down out of heaven” to earth (Rev. 21:2, 10). This is also the meaning of John 18:36, “My kingdom is not of [from] this world.”
- James 2:5, “Has not God chosen those who are poor...to inherit the kingdom he promised...?”
  - 2 Peter 1:11, “You will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom....”
  - Revelation 22:3-5, “His servants will serve him....And they will reign for ever and ever.”

In fact, the main reason why we must have glorified bodies is to take our full part in His kingdom forever (1 Cor. 15:50).

4. Tell the following about the past history of God's Mediatorial Kingdom:
  - a. when and where it began in its original form
  - b. when and why it was suspended
5. Tell the following about the predicted restoration of that kingdom:
  - a. where it would exist—and for how long
  - b. whether earthly nations would be included
  - c. the name of the Ruler's forefather and throne
  - d. the meaning of the Ruler's title—*Christ* in Greek
  - e. what would happen to the curse on creation
6. Tell the following about the kingdom as “near” during Jesus' ministry:
  - a.√ how Jesus proved that He could bring it as promised
  - b. one sense in which it was present
  - c.√ what general fact He revealed about it in the “secrets”
  - d. the meaning of the apostles' confession through Simon
  - e. the background in the Greek Old Testament of the term *ekklesia* (church)
7. Quote from two verses that clearly show the kingdom to be the church's goal.
- 8.√ From the comments and studies above, see if you can define the kingdom for which Christians suffer. Then learn the definition given in Answers.
9. The first appendix asks “Did Jesus establish a kingdom?” It contains additional information as well as restatements of some information that you have studied. Read and study Appendix A (page 86) now.
- 10.√ Earlier you memorized five background facts for 2 Thessalonians. See if you can remember those facts now.

## Lesson 10

### 2 Thessalonians 1

*Why does God let wicked people persecute His saints? What relief will He give those saints? Can you write 2 Thessalonians 2:13 from memory?*

1. Reading 2. (Do this only in the NIV printout in this study guide.) Read 2 Thessalonians aloud, marking each chapter into three or four paragraphs. Draw a short pencil line before each verse where you think a new paragraph begins (a change in subject).

After reading and marking, give each paragraph a short title (not over six words). Then look in Answers. Use our paragraph divisions from here on.

2. Try to determine the main divisions of this epistle. These would include everything after the greeting and before the final prayer and conclusion. For each subject Paul treats, you must decide where it begins and ends.

By bolding certain words in this paragraph, we point out some of the repetition in these two epistles. Second Thessalonians 1 says that the Thessalonians are enduring “persecutions and trials” (v. 4). Their suffering is for the coming **kingdom** of God and will prove them to be **worthy** of it (v. 5). When the Lord comes, there will be **glory** both for Him and them (vv. 10, 12). You saw these same three elements in 1 Thessalonians 2:12: “urging you to live lives **worthy** of God, who calls you into his **kingdom** and **glory**.”

Our Lord also predicted persecution for the heirs of the kingdom: “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven... Rejoice and be glad” (Matt. 5:10-12). It may seem strange and unkind of God to permit wicked people to persecute His saints. On the contrary, persecution brings great benefit. For example, it can help a believer to grow much in faith because he comes to know the Lord better and sees the Lord at work in himself. Paul now gives another reason.

3. Reread 2 Thessalonians 1:3-10, answering the following questions. Notice that in verse 5 “God’s judgment” is spoken of in the present tense (“**is** right”), although it refers to the future. (Similarly, Romans 2:2 says that “God’s judgment...**is** based on truth” although verse 5 there says that it “will be revealed” in a future day.)
  - a. What do persecution and endurance prove about God’s judgment?
  - b. What do they prove about those who trouble believers and those who endure?
  - c. When will God give trouble to the troublemakers and relief to the troubled believers?
  - d. How do verses 8-9 describe His punishment of those who do not know Him?
  - e. What is the purpose of His coming, according to verse 10?
  - f.√ Make your own conclusion; then learn the one in Answers. Why does God let wicked people persecute His saints?

Notice again just when believers will get the “relief” mentioned in verse 7. It will be when Jesus comes (“is revealed from heaven”) in glory: “in blazing fire” (like a robe He wears) and accompanied by “angels of His power” (literal translation). Since He has not yet come in glory, no believer dead or alive has yet received **this** relief.

The noun translated “relief” in verse 7 can describe the condition of a bowstring no longer stretched. In 2 Corinthians 2:13; 7:5; 8:13 it describes a present relief: peace of mind during trials. In Revelation 14:13 another word with a similar meaning describes rest from labors in death. In 2 Thessalonians 1, however, relief means to participate in the future kingdom, for which we suffer now. It is what Jesus referred to in Luke 12:32: “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.”

Similarly, Hebrews chapters 3 and 4 describe entering that kingdom as entering God's "Sabbath-rest." Through Moses in the desert God had offered that rest to the nation of Israel. They could have entered the Promised Land under such conditions that it would have been that rest. But they refused (Heb. 3:16-19). Therefore, the invitation was withdrawn until a much later date—"Today" (Heb. 4:1-8). "There remains [is reserved], then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God....Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest" (Heb. 4:9-11).

Notice again how Paul in 2 Thessalonians 1:9-10 continues to emphasize the Lord's glory. Believers will remain in the presence of "the majesty of his power" and will actually mirror His glory. "The righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43). Even "creation itself will be liberated...and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21). The Lord will be glorified **in** them, not just before them, seeing that it was His grace that transformed them. This will answer His prayer in John 17, which not only requested glory for Himself (17:1, 5, 24) but promised it for believers (v. 22). It will delight God to answer that prayer (cf. Isa. 62:4-5).

At the same coming of Christ, God will give trouble to the troublers (v. 6). "They will be punished with **everlasting destruction**"; the bolded words are used together only here in the New Testament. This word for destruction can mean death (1 Cor. 5:5) or ruin in general (1 Tim. 6:9). Here in 2 Thessalonians 1:9-10 it includes being banned from the Lord's presence, majesty, and power. Such judgment at the Lord's return is one of several parallels between this passage and Matthew 25:31-46. Both passages foresee the day "when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him" (25:31a). Both passages expect Him to "sit on his throne in heavenly glory...and...separate the people one from another" (25:31b-32).

In another context the Lord commands us, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt. 5:44). Since God Himself plans to take vengeance on the wicked, how can He expect us to love them? Because He loves them (John 3:16) in spite of having to punish them. In fact, it was "when we were God's enemies [that] we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son" (Rom. 5:10). Once reconciled, we are no longer His enemies. Having now received His Spirit of love, we can also love those who are both His enemies and ours. Love them even if they kill us and we pray for God's vengeance. Even if, along with other martyrs, we ask Him to "judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood" (Rev. 6:10).

4. a.√ What is the relief promised in 2 Thessalonians 1:7 to persecuted believers?
- b. What does Hebrews 3-4 call the same future relief?
- c. Look through Matthew 25:31-46, which also tells of judgment when the Lord comes again. How does the Lord indicate, in that passage, that the wicked will never be converted?
- d. Our lives furnish more and more evidence of who we are. Not only will the Lord's judgment come; it will agree with the evidence. Will you be among the troublers, who get punished, or the troubled, who receive relief?

- e. Do you have any evidence that you love your enemies?
5. Based on his teaching in 1:3-10 (“With this in mind”), Paul prays for the Thessalonians. Read 1:11-12 and answer.
- What two requests does he make? (v. 11)  
NOTE: “Every act prompted by your faith” shows that faith is not merely an acceptance of facts. It produces good and obedient acts, as Jesus clearly said (Matt. 7:21, 23, 26-27).
  - To what “calling” do you think he refers? (v. 11; cf. v. 5, also 1 Thess. 2:12)
  - What is the purpose of these prayers? (v. 12)

God takes great pleasure in glorifying His name (Isa. 48:9-11; John 12:27-28), which means showing the world what He is like. This is what we mean by praying “Hallowed be Thy name.” Do you have reason to think that Christ’s name is being glorified through you?

6. Reading 3. Read all of 2 Thessalonians, making your own tentative written summary of each paragraph. As usual, each summary should have about a fourth or a fifth as many words as what it summarizes. You can find the limits in the chart on page 101, but don’t write in that chart yet. When you finish summarizing all the paragraphs, see Answers.
- 7.√ However difficult and dangerous the times may become, God’s people count on His love and power. In 2 Thessalonians 2:13 Paul reminded his readers that God loved them and chose them for salvation. Begin memorizing that verse for this unit. First, write it with these logical parts: (a) what Paul ought to do, (b) the reason to do it, (c) the two means God will use to accomplish His design. Then look in Answers.
8. OPTIONAL It is obvious that the Thessalonians were taught to look for the Lord to come from heaven and establish His kingdom. Is that the hope of most of the Christians you know?

## Lesson 11

### 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

*Can you tell (a) five facts about the Man of Sin? (b) how pretribulationists identify the Restrainer and His removal? (c) two events that must occur before the Day of the Lord?*

In this lesson you will consider some of the final conditions on earth before the Lord comes to rule. As the Lord promised, evil has continued to mature. It will finally result in widespread rebellion against God, led by a lawless man who is the epitome (greatest example) of godlessness and Satanic power. As the process continues, more and more people will be deceived—but not

those whom God loves and has chosen. You will give further consideration to the viewpoint that God will take His people away before the rebellion comes to its climax.

1. Reading 4. (You did this for 1 Thessalonians in lesson 4.) Read 2 Thessalonians in a different version, comparing it verse by verse to the New International Version. Write only on your NIV printout. First, write the name of the version you are comparing to it. As you read, mark only those differences that seem important or especially helpful to you. In each case, (1) underline the NIV words that are different from the other version; (2) copy the words the other version uses to say the same thing.

Now you will consider 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, important partly for sketching conditions just before the Lord Jesus comes to reign. It will be a time of “rebellion” (2:3), a word implying positive revolt against God (Acts 21:21; verb in Heb. 3:12). Jesus Himself had predicted that “many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other” (Matt. 24:10). In a later epistle Paul described apostates “in later times [who] will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits” (1 Tim. 4:1-3). In his last epistle he described “terrible times in the last days” (2 Tim. 3:1-6; 4:3-4; cf. 2 Peter 2). All of these descriptions included religious people who will turn away from the truth.

Second Thessalonians 2:1-12 includes a description of the world-ruler during that final period.<sup>3</sup> In verse 3 he is called “the man of sin” (KJV) or “the man of lawlessness” (NIV, following other Greek manuscripts). Since “sin” and “lawlessness” are nearly synonymous, we will refer to him by both names. “Sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4) because it refuses to submit to God’s guidance. Paul’s passage also makes a puzzling reference to a Restrainer who holds back the appearance of that wicked man.

Paul wrote these verses because a false message had apparently “unsettled” some of the Thessalonians, like a ship suddenly hit by a huge wave, and had left them “alarmed” (v. 2). They had been wrongly told “that the day of the Lord **has** already **come**”; in other words, it has begun. The Greek verb used here (*enistemi*) nearly always—or always—refers to things becoming present, not just near. Drawing near is a different verb (*engidzo*).<sup>4</sup>

2. Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, answering the following questions.
  - a. What two related events does Paul say he is concerned about? (v. 1)
  - b. By what means had an effort been made to deceive the Thessalonians?
  - c. What was the false teaching?
  - d.√ What two related events must take place before the Day of the Lord?

<sup>3</sup> Some interpreters sharply distinguish the rebellion from the Man of Sin. They see the rebellion as the predicted departure from Christian faith, which the Man of Sin will use only to gain power. He is the beast, and apostate Christendom is the harlot. At first he lets her ride on his back, then destroys her (Rev. 17:16-18).

<sup>4</sup> *Enistemi* is used in Rom. 8:38; 1 Cor. 3:22; 7:26; Gal. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2 Tim. 3:1, and Heb. 9:9. In all but 2 Thess. 2:2 the KJV translates it as “present” or an equivalent (in 2 Tim. 3:1 “shall come” means “shall be present”). In contrast, in 2 Thess. 2:2 it translates it “is at hand,” which usually means “has drawn near.” That is the meaning KJV always rightly recognizes for the different and quite common verb *engidzo*.

- e.√ To what extent will the Man of Sin go in his opposition to God?
  - f.√ What evidence will be used to deceive those who are perishing?
  - g. Since “the secret power of lawlessness is already at work” (v. 7), why hasn’t the lawless one been revealed yet?
  - h.√ How and when will the Man of Sin be dealt with?
  - i. God wants the rebellion to take place and the lawless one to come. Why (to accomplish what) will He send such “a powerful delusion” into the world?
3. This lawless ruler is described in various biblical passages. Read the following references and answer the questions. (Don’t worry about details you don’t understand.)
- a. Daniel 7:7-14. This was part of an awesome vision Daniel had about the last days. In this part he saw the final wicked world government and ruler (vv. 7-8), then God’s heavenly court in session (vv. 9-10). God decreed the destruction of the world government (vv. 11-12) and replaced it with the “everlasting dominion” of the “son of man” (vv. 13-14). How was the final evil ruler pictured in this vision?
  - b.√ Daniel 7:20-27. Daniel’s vision continued, again picturing the final wicked government and ruler and again ending with the “everlasting kingdom” (v. 27). How long will the evil ruler have power over the saints?
  - c. Daniel 9:24-27. This passage predicted seventy “sevens” (often called “Weeks”) of years for Daniel’s people Israel and his holy city Jerusalem (v. 24). All but one of those “sevens” would take place up to the time when “the Anointed One” (Messiah) would come (v. 25). Verse 26 makes two predictions beginning at Messiah’s coming: (a) Messiah “will be cut off and will have nothing” (v. 26a), and (b) “the people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary” (v. 26b). These two predictions in verse 26 were fulfilled when (a) Jesus presented Himself as the King and was crucified, then (b) Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed in A.D. 70. Apparently, verse 27 predicts what the wicked “ruler who will come” will do at the beginning and middle of the one remaining “seven” (the “Seventieth Week”). What will he do at those times?
  - d. Daniel 11:36. Apparently this verse begins another description of the final evil ruler. What does it say that 1 Thessalonians 2:4 echoes (seems to refer to)?
  - e. 1 John 2:18. What does this verse call the final evil ruler?
  - f. Revelation 13:1-10. Two evil beasts are described in this chapter. The first one, whom John sees “coming out of the sea” (v. 1) is in verses 1-10. This beast, with its ten horns and seven heads, represents the final evil government. The final ruler is identified sometimes as the same beast and sometimes as one of its heads, recovered from a fatal wound. The beast gets his/its authority from the dragon, the devil (Rev. 12:9). Find and write down at least three other facts in 13:1-10 that you have seen in Daniel 7 and 11.

By the most reasonable interpretation of such Scriptures, this evil ruler, the Man of Sin, has not yet come forward. When he does, he will seem to bring peace for the nation of Israel and much

of the world. He will make a seven-year covenant with Israel for the “Seventieth Week” predicted in Daniel. This covenant will apparently allow Israel to resume sacrificing animals to God. The only place where they would consider making such sacrifices is at the temple mount in Jerusalem, where both the first and second temples stood. Since the Romans destroyed the second temple in AD 70, it will have to be rebuilt. Many religious Israelis have been preparing for the new (third) temple and its service.

But their renewed priestly service will not last long. At the midpoint of the seven years (the “Seventieth Week”), the Man of Sin will put an end to their sacrifices and require everyone to worship him. Many will then “see standing in the holy place the abomination that causes desolation” (Matt. 24:15). This will apparently consist of an “image of the first beast” (the Man of Sin) placed in the new temple, an image which is made to speak (Rev. 13:14-15). This abomination will signal the beginning of “great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world” (Matt. 24:21)—in other words, the Great Tribulation. This tribulation will last only 3 ½ years, until the evil ruler is destroyed by the Lord Jesus as He comes to start His kingdom (2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 19:19-20).

**The Seventieth Week of Years for Israel**

←To begin the Week, the Man of Sin makes a 7-year covenant, allowing Israel to sacrifice.	At middle→ of the Week, the Man of Sin breaks the covenant, sets up “the abomination of desolation” in the temple.	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Great Tribulation, 3½ Years</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">At end → of the Week, Christ comes, destroys the Man of Sin, and starts His kingdom.</p>
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That lawless ruler cannot come forward yet, however, for something “is holding him back” (2 Thess. 2:6-7). This Restrainer, as he is often called, is referred to both as neuter (“what,” v. 6) and masculine (“who,” v. 7). Who or what is he? Paul had told the Thessalonians (v. 6), but he didn’t tell us. Among the proposed identifications: “a Roman emperor or emperors; the Roman Empire or human government generally; the Jewish state; the preaching of the gospel; Paul himself; Satan; Elijah; Michael; the providences of God; the Holy Spirit” (Hiebert, pp. 338-339).

“Most commentators identify the restrainer with the Roman Empire of Paul’s day, which held back evil by its advanced system of laws, many of which are still basic to legal systems in our day” (Ryrie, p. 109). This was the belief of the early Church Fathers, supported by Paul’s argument that God ordains governments to restrain evil (Rom. 13:1-7). Ryrie, however (p. 110), gives reasons against the Roman Empire view: (a) Governments do not always fulfill God’s purpose. (b) The Man of Sin did not appear at the end of the Roman Empire. (c) The Man of Sin will rule not when there is no government but when there is super-government.

It may be that “what is holding him back” (v. 6) simply refers to God’s purposes, and “the one who now holds it back” (v. 7b) is God. In that case—and in line with the Greek verb—“till he is taken out of the way” (v. 7c) would mean “till God steps aside.”<sup>5</sup>

Nowadays, some commentators have a view not mentioned by the early Church Fathers: “The restrainer is God, and the instrument of restraint is the God-indwelt church” (Ryrie, p. 112). In this view the removal of the Restrainer will be the Rapture of the church. Then “the Day of the Lord...begins immediately after the Rapture” (Constable, p. 705) and will include the Seventieth Week for Israel and its Great Tribulation. This view is called the Pretribulation Rapture (see the chart below). If this is what Paul had taught the Thessalonians, how could some of them think that the Day of the Lord had come? Only, it seems, by forgetting that the Rapture must take place first—or not knowing what to think.<sup>6</sup>

4. a.√ What event will signal the beginning of the Great Tribulation?
- b. What did the early Church Fathers believe the Restrainer was?
- c. What are Ryrie’s three arguments against this identification?
- d. If the Restrainer is simply God and His purposes, how could we understand “is taken out of the way”?
- e.√ What do pretribulationists identify as the Restrainer and His removal?

In the chart of the “Pretribulation Rapture View,” notice that it has two future comings for the Lord, distinguished as *the Rapture* and *the Second Coming*.

- The Rapture. Before the Seventieth Week, the Lord comes **for** the church and returns to heaven. (Example: 2 Thess. 2:1)
- The Second Coming. After the Seventieth Week, the Lord comes **with** the church, to stay and rule. (Example: 2 Thess. 2:8)

**Pretribulation Rapture View**  
**Relation of Lord’s Comings, 70<sup>th</sup> Week, Day of the Lord**

← Current Age →	<b>Lord’s ↓ ↑ Coming for church (Rapture) (2 Th. 2:1)</b>	<b>70<sup>th</sup> Week</b> Rebellion and Man of Sin   Great Tribu- lation	<b>↓ Lord’s Coming with church to rule (2<sup>nd</sup> Comi ng) (2 Th. 2:8)</b>	← Kingdom →
<b>Day of the Lord →</b>				

<sup>5</sup> The verb in “till he **is taken** out of the way” gives a wrong impression. The Greek is “*heos ek mesou **genetai***.” This bolded verb is the normal one for “become” or “come to be.” It does not state what is done to the restraining influence but what it does. In other words, it does not say that the restraining influence is **taken** out of the midst but that it **comes** out of the midst. Thus, its removal could simply mean that God steps aside to let wickedness find full expression.

<sup>6</sup> Some pretribulationists say the Thessalonians believed that the Lord had indeed come for the Rapture but failed to take them. This would imply that He missed Paul and his companions also!

In the following discussion of the pretribulation view, Walvoord is taken as its spokesman. He is one of the best-known recent writers on this subject. His *Prophecy: 14 Essential Keys to Understanding the Final Drama* was designed for the general Christian public. In it Walvoord “attempts to state succinctly the major elements that relate to the prophetic future” (p. 5).

You will remember that the Gospels often promise the Lord’s coming back in glory to reign (for example, Matt. 16:27, 28; 23:39; 24:3, 27, 30, 37, 39; 25:31; 26:64). When was the Rapture revealed as a separate coming? Walvoord does not claim that the Lord in person clearly revealed a separate Rapture. In fact, he finds no Rapture at all in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John 1-13. Jesus’ “first mention of the Rapture” (p. 109) was in John 14:1-3—on the night before His death. But even that mention was unclear, says Walvoord, because the disciples still did not understand that He would leave them and return. To the extent that they understood His departure, they believed that the Rapture “was a part of the promise to come to earth a second time.” In other words, they saw no distinction between the Rapture and the Second Coming. Walvoord cites no other passage in John or Acts in which such a distinction was made.

When, then, was the separate Rapture explained? “Much later Paul was converted, and God revealed the doctrine of the Rapture to him....Apparently he introduced the doctrine of the Rapture to the Thessalonians....to them, he explained the Rapture at length” (p. 110). Thus Walvoord believes that the first clear written explanations of the Rapture were in the two epistles you are studying. The Lord’s coming is mentioned in every chapter but the last. Pretribulationists believe that most of these no longer refer to the Second Coming, as in the Gospels and Acts, but to the separate and earlier Rapture. In other words, the Lord’s coming (Greek *parousia*) has now become two comings.

When a passage refers to the Lord’s coming, how do pretribulationists know if it means the Rapture or the Second Coming? Not by terms the passage uses but by what it says will happen. Consider some examples. Second Thessalonians 1:5-10 says that persecuted believers will get relief “when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels” (v. 7). That description—fire plus angels—and judgment must refer to the glorious Second Coming. Yet, a few verses later (2:1) the Lord’s “coming” seems to include “our being gathered to him”—which must mean the (supposedly earlier) Rapture. Seven verses later (2:8) it is again the Second Coming, for in it He destroys the man of sin. Study the following pretribulationist distinctions.

**Pretribulationist Distinctions of Two Future Comings for the Lord**

<b>The Rapture (as in 2 Thess. 2:1)</b>	<b>The Second Coming (as in 2 Thess. 2:8)</b>
Purpose—to take the church away	Purpose—to judge and begin the kingdom
Imminent—has no predicted event before it	Not imminent—follows other predicted events
The only expected event before the Day of the Lord	Comes after other signs of the Day of the Lord
Comes before the Seventieth Week for Israel	Comes after the Seventieth Week for Israel
Secret to the world in general	Glorious and public before the world

If these two comings are distinct, it seems strange that no Scripture shows their relationship: “No biblical passage states precisely when the Rapture will occur in relation to the tribulation or the Second Coming” (Walvoord, p. 112). Nevertheless, Walvoord refers to one passage where he sees both comings mentioned side by side. In the KJV Titus 2:13 speaks of “that **blessed hope**, and the **glorious appearing** of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Walvoord assumes without discussion that these two titles refer to two separate comings. Then he argues that the first title proves that the Rapture will be years before the Tribulation, because “a rapture climaxing a tribulation is hardly a blessed hope” (p. 114).

A better interpretation would recognize the fact that in the Greek of Titus 2:13 a single article ties together the nouns *hope* and *appearing*. The two nouns are closely related and probably refer to the same event. Therefore, the NIV translation is justified: “We wait for **the blessed hope—the glorious appearing** of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.” In other words, the “hope” and the “appearing” are one event rather than two. In this verse, as in many others, the Christian hope is not a separate Rapture but the Lord’s coming to reign.

Why does Walvoord see two events—and therefore a different hope—in this verse? Because in his theology the church has very little in common with Israel. It is so distinct that it must not be on earth during Israel’s 70<sup>th</sup> Week—just before “the glorious appearing.” This same reasoning affects many pretribulationist interpretations. For example, it sees much in the Synoptic Gospels as referring to Israel but not directly to the church. In fact, some cannot find the gospel in the Sermon on the Mount, if at all in the first three Gospels!

5. Practice distinguishing the two future comings of Christ proposed by the Pretribulation View. Label each description as R (Rapture) or SC (Second Coming).
- \_\_\_ a. Glorious and public before the world
  - \_\_\_ b. Not imminent—follows other events
  - \_\_\_ c. Comes after other signs of the Day of the Lord
  - \_\_\_ d. Purpose—to take the church away
  - \_\_\_ e. The only expected event before the Day of the Lord
  - \_\_\_ f. Purpose—to judge and begin the kingdom
  - \_\_\_ g. Comes after the Seventieth Week for Israel
  - \_\_\_ h. Imminent—has no predicted event before it
  - \_\_\_ i. Comes before the Seventieth Week for Israel

— j. Secret to the world in general

Now compare the Post-tribulation Rapture View, which has only one future coming of Christ.

**Post-tribulation Rapture View**  
**Relation of Lord’s Coming, 70<sup>th</sup> Week, Day of the Lord**

← Current Age →	70 <sup>th</sup> Week Rebellion and Man of Sin  Great Tribu- lation	↓ Lord’s Coming for church (Rapture) and to rule (2 Th. 2:1, 8)	← Kingdom →
<b>D a y o f t h e L o r d →</b>			

This Post-tribulation View is simpler because it keeps the same meaning for Christ’s coming as in the Gospels, Acts, and the Epistles. Simpler, however, does not mean better unless it better fits all the Scriptures and facts. For example, here are some questions pretribulationists ask post-tribulationists: (a) Who is the Restrainer if not God-in-the-church? (b) How can the Lord’s coming for believers be imminent if the Tribulation must come first? (c) Doesn’t Revelation 3:10 (“keep you from the hour of trial”) mean that the church will escape God’s wrath during that Tribulation?

Post-tribulationists also have questions to ask pretribulationists. For example: (a) Why did the early Church Fathers apparently not know your view? (b) Is it likely that the Lord’s coming would have two meanings that can often be distinguished only by theology? (c) Doesn’t 2 Thessalonians 2:3 mean that the rebellion and the man of sin will come before the Day of the Lord—contradicting your view?

There are many issues in the question of when the Rapture will occur. You have seen only samples. It is a question worthy of continued study (as seen in Appendix B). [See my writing on the church and the tribulation, especially its discussion of 1 Thess. 5.](#) But nothing should take the place of seeking “his kingdom and his righteousness” (Matt. 6:33). The Lord did not tell us to pray for the Rapture but for the kingdom to come (Matt. 6:10). That kingdom is our hope.

6. Answer the following about the Pretribulation Rapture View.
  - a. According to Walvoord, what passage first mentions the Rapture?
  - b. According to Walvoord, where is the Rapture doctrine first made clear?
  - c. What effect does this view have on the meaning of the Lord’s coming?
  - d. What problem does this view create in 2 Thessalonians 2:3?
  
7. To review, tell if each of these statements is true or false. Change the false ones to true. Notice that it is only in their true form that the checked statements achieve lesson objectives.

- a. Some of the Thessalonians probably believed that the Day of the Lord had started.
  - b. Those circulating the false reports that the Day of the Lord had begun claimed to get them from Paul.
  - c.√ Before the Day of the Lord can begin, the apostasy must come and the Man of Lawlessness be revealed.
  - d. According to 1 Timothy 4 and 2 Timothy 3 and 4, those who take part in the end-time apostasy will all be irreligious.
  - e. Pretribulationists believe that the Lord's coming in 2 Thessalonians 2:1 will be after the Tribulation.
  - f.√ Pretribulationists identify the Restrainer as the Roman government.
  - g.√ Pretribulationists identify the removal of the Restrainer as the Rapture.
  - h. During the rule of the Man of Sin, there will be little government on the earth.
  - i.√ The Man of Lawlessness will allow no worship except that of himself.
  - j.√ The Man of Sin will perform miraculous signs.
  - k. God Himself wants godless people to believe the devil's lie.
  - l. The abomination of desolation refers to the destruction of the temple.
  - m.√ The evil ruler will have power over the saints for seven years.
  - n.√ The Man of Sin will be destroyed by a mighty army.
  - o.√ He will be destroyed at the Lord's coming.
- 8.√ Test your memory. 1 and 2 Thessalonians have several important teachings about the Lord's Coming. Tell the book and chapter(s) for each of them. If you are at all uncertain about any passage, look it up.
- a. Dead Christians will rise first when He comes.
  - b. Believers serve God and wait for His Son to come and deliver them from wrath.
  - c. When He comes to be glorified, He will pay back persecutors and persecuted.
  - d. Before the Day of the Lord comes, God will let the man of sin come and deceive unbelievers.
  - e. The Day of the Lord will surprise others but should not surprise believers.
  - f. Paul's converts will be his joy and crown when the Lord comes.
  - g. Prayer for God/the Lord to make believers blameless for the Lord's coming.
- 9.√ Practice writing 2 Thessalonians 2:13 until you can do so without errors.
10. In this lesson you have studied about final conditions before the Lord returns to reign. How are your life and work for the Lord affected by knowing about such matters?
11. OPTIONAL For a difficulty in the most common form of pretribulationism, read Appendix B (page 94). It will restate much that you have read in this lesson.

## Lesson 12

### 2 Thessalonians 2:13 to 3:18

*Can you write a simple outline of 2 Thessalonians? What does it mean that God “chose” us? What should the church do about disorderly Christians, such as, those who will not work for a living? Can you give references for teachings in 1 and 2 Thessalonians about the Lord’s Coming?*

In this lesson you will conclude these introductory studies of the Thessalonian Epistles. Among other things, you will learn the main parts of an outline provided for 2 Thessalonians. You will also improve your own paragraph summaries.

1. Reading 5
  - a. Look below at our outline for 2 Thessalonians. Read the title for the first paragraph (Greeting, 1:1-2), then read that paragraph in the book. Next read the title for the second paragraph (1:3-10) and read that paragraph. Continue in the same way through the entire book.

### Second Thessalonians

Greeting, 1:1-2

- I. Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians, ch. 1 (1:3-12)
  - A. Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians’ Constancy, 1:3-10
  - B. Prayer for sanctification, 1:11-12
- II. Correction Concerning the Day of the Lord, ch. 2
  - A. Necessary precursor to the Day of the Lord, 2:1-12
    1. The man of lawlessness revealed, 2:1-5
    2. The time of his manifestation, 2:6-8
    3. The reason for his manifestation, 2:9-12
  - B. The contrasting future of the Thessalonians, 2:13-17
    1. Chosen and called, 2:13-14
    2. Sanctified, 2:15-17
- III. Exhortations to Holy Living, ch. 3
  - A. To prayer and progress, 3:1-5
  - B. To deal with idle brethren, 3:6-15

Conclusion, 3:16-18

- b. When you finish reading as instructed, improve your own summary for each paragraph. Remember to keep the length of each summary within the limits listed on the chart on page 101. You will later copy these summaries, to turn in for credit with your examination.
- 2.√ Memorize level A of the outline: Greeting, three principal divisions, and conclusion. Learn verse references for the Greeting and Conclusion, chapter references for the three divisions.

In 2:10-12 Paul had just described the godless people “who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness” (2:12). In contrast, he should always thank God for the Thessalonian believers, whom he now describes, exhorts, and prays for in 2:13-17. His exhortation, in verse 15, is to “hold to the teachings we passed on to you.” The Greek word for *teachings* is usually translated *traditions*, as in Matthew 15:2, 3, 6 and Mark 7:5, 8, 9, and 13. It refers to teaching which the teacher did not originate but handed on from a greater authority.

In verse 13 remember that our salvation is mostly future (1 Thess. 5:8-9; Rom. 13:11). Notice the means God uses to save us. They include the Spirit’s sanctifying us—probably the whole process—and our believing the truth. Thus, sanctification is an essential part of salvation, not a separate operation.

3. Read 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17, answering the following questions.
  - a. In their case, for what should Paul always thank God?
  - b. How did God call them? to what?
  - c. You saw a similar goal in 1:10 (“glorified in his holy people”). Find and copy words in 1 Thessalonians 2:12 about both the calling and the glory.
  - d. In verse 15 we can see a means by which, even today, we can learn the traditions Paul passed on. By what means?  
NOTE: We should not expect to find any important, divine “traditions” outside the Bible.
  - e. In verses 16-17 Paul prays for the Lord Jesus and God the Father to continue helping the Thessalonians. Say his two requests in your own words.

Paul was thankful that God “chose” the Thessalonians to be saved (2:13) and “called” them through the gospel (2:14). He chooses and calls every believer. These actions, “election” and “calling,” are referred to often in the Bible, using various terms. You will now get a brief introduction to them, both outside and inside the Thessalonian Epistles.

4. Look up the following passages, which refer to God’s electing (choosing) people and calling them. Answer the questions.
  - a. Nehemiah 9:7; Joshua 24:2-3. Whom did God choose? What was his religion when God chose him?
  - b. Genesis 18:17-19. What was God’s purpose in choosing Abraham?

NOTE: The word translated “know” by KJV in verse 19 here means “have chosen” (NIV), as it does in Jeremiah 1:5 and Amos 3:2.

- c. Deuteronomy 7:6; 14:2. For what purpose did the Lord choose Israel?
  - d. Isaiah 43:1; 44:1-2. These passages emphasize something else the Lord did besides choosing Israel (Jacob). What?
  - e. Romans 9:10-13. God refused to choose Ishmael as Abraham’s heir. Instead, He waited until Abraham and Sarah seemed to be too old, then gave them Isaac, the child of promise. How did He choose against custom in the next generation?
  - f. 1 Corinthians 1:23-24. How is the meaning of God’s *call* different here from that in Matthew 22:14 (“For many are called, but few are chosen”)?
  - g. 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. What kinds of people did God choose and not choose? for what reason—negative and positive—in terms of “boasting”?
  - h. Ephesians 1:4-6, 11-12, 14. For what purpose does God elect, predestinate, and secure certain people?
  - i. Romans 8:28-32. Here is “the efficacious call” you saw in 1 Corinthians 1:24. It definitely leads to full salvation. Who are called—and what happens to all of them?
  - j. James 2:5. What are God’s two goals in choosing the poor?
5. In the Thessalonian Epistles look up each of the following passages and tell something it says about election or calling.
- |                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. 1 Thessalonians 1:4  | e. 2 Thessalonians 1:11 |
| b. 1 Thessalonians 2:12 | f. 2 Thessalonians 2:13 |
| c. 1 Thessalonians 4:7  | g. 2 Thessalonians 2:14 |
| d. 1 Thessalonians 5:24 |                         |
- 6.√ Define in your own words what it means that God chose us. Then learn our definition.

Like 1 Thessalonians 4:1, 2 Thessalonians 3:1 begins with the word “finally.” This does not indicate the end of the letter nor more about the same subject—but a new subject. Notice some of the things Paul deals with in chapter 3:

- **He requests prayer for himself in his ministry in Corinth (vv. 1-2).** Acts 18:1-18 tells about fierce opposition by the Jews in Corinth, and how God answered prayers for Paul.
- **He expresses confidence in what the Lord is doing in the Thessalonians—and prays for them (vv. 3-5).** In verse 5 the Greek says “love of God.” This probably means “God’s love” for us, as in the NIV. However, it could also refer to our love for Him, or both. “Christ’s perseverance” probably refers to His endurance in the trials He had on earth—endurance we need now.
- **He commands them to discipline the lazy people (vv. 6-15),** a problem he had dealt with in the first epistle. (“Idle” in verses 6 and 11 uses an adverbial form of the military term used in 1 Thessalonians 5:14.) The command “do not associate with him” in verse 14 means “don’t mix yourselves up with him.” This would include not eating with such a person, as Paul commanded in 1 Corinthians 5:9-11. Notice that a person who does not work may still be a

“busybody” (v. 11). Notice also why Paul worked so hard with his own hands (vv. 7-9). There are always temptations to take the easy path instead of “doing what is right” (v. 13).

- **He wishes them well and draws attention to the evidence that the letter is from him (vv. 16-18).** Though he dictated the letter to a secretary, as usual, he wrote the final greeting himself (v. 17).
7. For chapter 3 make your own questions and answers about content (not about meaning). Follow the same instructions as you did for 1 Thessalonians in lesson 8. Make at least eight sets of questions with answers. Then look in Answers.
  8. a.√ To summarize, what should the church do about disorderly Christians, such as those who will not work for a living?  
b. Hospitality is extremely important. But when should Christians not help other Christians who are not working?
  9. On the chart that begins at page 101, copy your paragraph summaries for 2 Thessalonians. In the last column tell how many words each summary has. You will turn in this completed chart for credit with the examination.
  10. OPTIONAL Read both letters to the Thessalonians, making a list of all commands, both direct (like 1 Thess. 4:1) and indirect (like 1 Thess. 2:12). Be sure you obey every such command.

Be sure you have done all the readings as instructed. Then prepare for unit 3 examination in the usual way and try the following questions.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 11.√ Practice remembering the outline of 2 Thessalonians. Fill in each blank.  
Greeting (ref. \_\_\_\_)  
I. \_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_ (ch. \_\_)  
II. Correction Concerning \_\_\_\_\_ (ch. \_\_)  
III. \_\_\_\_\_ (ch. \_\_)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (ref. \_\_\_\_)
- 12.√ On the examination you will have a matching question like this. In the blank before each teaching, write the number for the book and chapter where it is found.
 

TEACHING	REFERENCE
__a. Before the Day of the Lord comes, God will let the man of sin come and deceive unbelievers.	1) 1 Thess. 1 2) 1 Thess. 3, 5
__b. Dead Christians will rise first when He comes.	3) 1 Thess. 4
__c. Prayer for God/the Lord to make believers blameless for the Lord’s coming.	4) 2 Thess. 1 5) 2 Thess. 2
__d. Believers serve God and wait for His Son to come and deliver them from wrath.	

13.√ Here are more such teachings.

## TEACHING

## REFERENCE

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| __a. When He comes to be glorified, He will pay back persecutors and persecuted. | 1) 1 Thess. 2<br>2) 1 Thess. 5 |
| __b. Paul's converts will be his joy and crown when the Lord comes.              | 3) 2 Thess. 1<br>4) 2 Thess. 2 |
| __c. The Day of the Lord will surprise others but should not surprise believers. |                                |

14-17√ What are four background facts for 2 Thessalonians? Tell any four of the following: (a) who were with Paul, (b) what was happening to the Thessalonians and how they were responding, (c) what error some had accepted, (d) what some were doing wrong, (e) what mark Paul gave them.

14.

16.

15.

17.

18-21√ What are four facts about the Man of Sin? Tell any four of the following:

- (a) how he will deceive the world, (b) over whom and for how long he will have power, (c) what he will not allow, (d) how and (e) when he will be destroyed.

18.

20.

19.

21.

22-24√ What are the three main themes in 2 Thessalonians?

22.

23.

24.

If you have reviewed well and done well on the sample questions, take unit 3 examination from memory. Remember to include the chart with copies of your paragraph summaries. Congratulations for finishing this introductory study of the Thessalonian epistles!

## FIRST THESSALONIANS NIV

### CHAPTER 1

1 Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you.

2 We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers.

3 We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

4 For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you,

5 because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.

6 You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

7 And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

8 The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it,

9 for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

### CHAPTER 2

1 You know, brothers, that our visit to you was not a failure.

2 We had previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition.

3 For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you.

4 On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts.

5 You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness.

6 We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you,

7 but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children.

8 We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.

9 Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.

10 You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed.

11 For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children,

12 encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

13 And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

14 For you, brothers, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews, 15 who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to all men

16 in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.

17 But, brothers, when we were torn away from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you.

18 For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan stopped us.

19 For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you?

20 Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

### CHAPTER 3

1 So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens.

2 We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith,

3 so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them.

4 In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know.

5 For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you and our efforts might have been useless.

6 But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you.

7 Therefore, brothers, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith.

8 For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord.

9 How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?

10 Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

11 Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you.

12 May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.

13 May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

**CHAPTER 4**

1 Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.

2 For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

3 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality;

4 that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable,

5 not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God;

6 and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you.

7 For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

8 Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

9 Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.

10 And in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more.

11 Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you,

12 so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

13 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.

14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.

**CHAPTER 5**

1 Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you,  
2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

3 While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

4 But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.

5 You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

- 6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.
- 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.
- 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.
- 9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 10 He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.
- 11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.
- 12 Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you.
- 13 Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.
- 14 And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.
- 15 Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.
- 16 Be joyful always;
- 17 pray continually;
- 18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
- 19 Do not put out the Spirit's fire;
- 20 do not treat prophecies with contempt.
- 21 Test everything. Hold on to the good.
- 22 Avoid every kind of evil.
- 23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 24 The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.
- 25 Brothers, pray for us.
- 26 Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.
- 27 I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.
- 28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

## SECOND THESSALONIANS NIV

### CHAPTER 1

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

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

3 We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.

4 Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

5 All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering.

6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you

7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.

8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power

10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

11 With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.

12 We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### CHAPTER 2

1 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers,

2 not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come.

3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

5 Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things?

6 And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time.

7 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.

8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.

9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders,

10 and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

11 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie

12 and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

13 But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

14 He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15 So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

16 May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope,

17 encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

**CHAPTER 3** 1 Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you.

2 And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith.

3 But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

4 We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command.

5 May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.

6 In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.

7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you,

8 nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you.

9 We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow.

10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."

11 We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies.

12 Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.

13 And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right.

14 If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed.

15 Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

16 Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.

17 I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

# ANSWERS

## Unit 1

### Lesson 1

1. Although we provide answers for most questions, in order for you to check yours, this question does not have “right” answers. Its object is for you to get your own first impressions, not ours. If you followed instructions, whatever you answered is acceptable.
2.
  - a. Silas and Timothy
  - b. by not letting them preach in the provinces of Asia (16:6) or Bithynia (16:7), then (at Troas) having Paul see a vision at night of a man of Macedonia asking them to come and help (16:9-10)
  - c. Philippi (16:12-40)
  - d. The magistrates had Paul and Silas stripped and beaten severely, then put into prison with their feet in stocks (16:22-25). But an earthquake led to the conversion of the jailer and his household (16:26-34). Next morning the magistrates asked them to leave the city (16:39-40).
3.
  - a. (1) He explained and proved from Scripture that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead.  
NOTE: Don’t forget that he included both suffering and rising.
  - (2) Jesus is the Christ. (17:2-3)  
NOTE: Christ was the title for the promised King, equivalent to Messiah. No doubt he explained that Messiah promised to return in glory, fulfilling the rest of the Old Testament prophecies.
  - b. God-fearing Greeks and many prominent women (17:4)
  - c.
    1. started a riot, looked for Paul and Silas, dragged Jason and other brothers before the officials (17:5-6)
    2. that Jason was harboring traitors who said that there was another king, named Jesus (17:6-7)
    3. They forced Jason to post bond (pay money that he would lose if there were more trouble). (17:8-9)
4.
  - a. to Berea, where the Jews eagerly received the message and many believed (17:10-12)
  - b. because Jews from Thessalonica came and stirred up the crowds (17:13-14)
  - c. to Athens (17:15)
  - d. at first to stay in Berea but to join Paul as soon as possible (at Athens?)  
NOTE: It is not clear whether they joined him at Athens or not. If so, they immediately left him again and returned to him later at Corinth.
  - e. the good news about Jesus and the resurrection (17:18; note also v. 32)
  - f. One possible title: The Real but Unknown God
5.
  - a. by making tents with Aquila and Priscilla (18:2-3)
  - b. Then he devoted himself exclusively to preaching.
  - c. that Jesus was the Christ (the promised King, 18:5)
  - d. the disbelieving Jews (18:5-6)
  - e. He told him that He was with him and no one would harm him (18:9-10).
  - f. a year and a half (18:11)
  - g. a short visit to Ephesus, then Caesarea, Jerusalem, and Antioch (18:19-22)

6. Here are some of the verses you may have listed:
- 1:6, 14; 3:3 The church suffered severely from their own countrymen.
  - 1:8-9 The church's faith had become known everywhere.
  - 1:9 The Thessalonians had served idols before conversion.
  - 2:9 Paul had worked to support himself in order not to burden them.
  - 2:17-18 Paul had tried hard to return to them but was thwarted.
  - 3:1-2 Paul had deprived himself of Timothy's help in Athens in order to send him to Thessalonica.
  - 3:6 Paul was elated to know that they still wanted to see him (which fact suggests that enemies tried to turn them against him).
  - 3:7 Paul was distressed and persecuted in Corinth.
  - 4:1-2 In his ministry at Thessalonica he had instructed them about holy living.
  - 4:13, 15 Some of the believers had died; survivors were worried about them.
  - 5:2 They already knew that the day of the Lord would come unexpectedly.
  - 5:12 They had hard-working leaders over them.
  - 5:14 They had others who were idle, timid, or weak.
  - 5:20-21 They were hearing prophecies, some valid.
7. a. Acts
- b. Greece
- c. Macedonia
- d. Egnatian Way with Aegean Sea
- e. second
- f. Silas and Timothy
- g. The Holy Spirit did not let them preach in the provinces of Asia or Bithynia, then (at Troas) gave Paul a vision at night of a man of Macedonia asking them to come and help.
- h. The magistrates asked them to leave the city—after having them beat and imprisoned the day before.
- i. (1) He explained and proved from Scripture that the Christ (Messiah) had to suffer and rise from the dead.  
(2) Jesus is the Christ (Messiah).
- j. God-fearing Greeks and many prominent women
- k. They started a riot, looked for Paul and Silas, dragged Jason and other brothers before the officials. They said that Jason was harboring traitors who said that there was another king, Jesus.
- l. Berea, Athens, Corinth
- m. After they came, he devoted himself exclusively to preaching.
- n. that Jesus was (is) the Messiah
- o. a year and a half
- p. from Corinth, right after Silas and Timothy returned from Macedonia
- q. the power of the gospel and the Lord's Second Coming

**Lesson 2**

1. One possible title for 1:2-10 is “Thanksgiving for the Change in Them.” When a paragraph is this long, it is difficult to keep the title short. You have to decide what the main point is, and limit the title to that point.
2. Here are some of the divisions you may have marked and titled. Do not expect to agree with all our divisions; yours may be better. But when they are different, see if you can determine why.
  - 2:1-12 Paul’s Ministry in Person (or Paul’s Unselfish Ministry)
  - 2:13-16 Their Response to His Ministry (or Their Acceptance of God’s Word)
  - 2:17 to 3:5 His Continued Love for Them (or 2:17-20 and 3:1-5 may be separate paragraphs)
  - 3:6-10 Timothy’s Good Report about Them (or Timothy’s Report Cheers Paul)
  - 3:11-13 Paul’s Prayer for Them
  - 4:1-2 Introduction to Pleasing God (or take 4:1-8 as one paragraph)
  - 4:3-8 Sexual Purity
  - 4:9-12 Mutual Love and Quiet Work (or Brotherly Love)
 Other paragraphs probably begin at 4:13; 5:1; 5:12; and 5:23.
3. Did you decide that he was grateful to see evidence that God had chosen them?
4.
  - a. Paul, Timothy, and Silas
  - b. faith that worked, love that labored, hope that enabled to endure
  - c. You probably answered that (1) he was expressing his true thankfulness and (2) he was also encouraging them.
  - d. Probably you answered, Yes, because Christ is at work everywhere.
5.
  - a. faith that works
  - b. “welcomed the message with...joy”
  - c. by their proclaiming (ringing out) the Lord’s message
  - d. (1) You turned to God from idols  
(2) to serve the living and true God  
(3) to wait for His Son from heaven  
(4) whom He raised from the dead  
(5) who rescues us from the coming wrath
  - e. In the persecutions the tempter might have successfully tempted them.
  - f. the good news that they were standing firm in the Lord
  - g. supply what was lacking in their faith
  - h. the breastplate
7. Faith is the acceptance of God’s message, with the intention to obey.
8. Some of the other references you probably marked:
  - 1:10 We wait for God’s Son to come and deliver us from wrath.
  - 2:12 God calls us to His own kingdom and glory.
  - 2:19-20 One’s converts will be his hope, joy, and crown at the Lord’s coming.
  - 3:13 By His strengthening our hearts (increasing our love, v. 12), we will be blameless and holy before God when Jesus comes with His holy ones.

- 4:13-18 Our hope should keep us from grieving about dead believers, who will rise first when He comes for us.
- 5:1-11 When waiting for the Day of the Lord, our sure hope of salvation is like a protective helmet.
- 5:23-24 Since God called us, He will sanctify us completely when the Lord comes.
9. Your comments should be similar to these.
- Acts 24:15. Paul's hope was the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked (the same as his accusers' hope).
  - Romans 5:2. We rejoice in the hope of sharing God's glory.
  - Romans 8:20-21. The hope for creation is to be freed from bondage to decay (the curse) and share in the glorious freedom of God's children.
  - Romans 8:23-24. We groan as we wait for the hope of adoption, that is, the redemption of our bodies (the resurrection).
  - Eph. 1:15-18. Having heard of the Ephesians' faith and love, Paul prays for them to know the hope God called them to.
  - Titus 1:2. Faith and knowledge rest on the hope of eternal life, which God promised.
  - Titus 2:13. Our blessed hope is the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.
  - Hebrews 3:6. We are God's house if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.
  - 1 Peter 1:3-5. Through Jesus' resurrection God has given us new birth into a living hope, a permanent inheritance, a salvation about to be revealed.
  - 1 John 3:2-3. The hope of becoming like Christ when He appears leads us to purify ourselves.
10. a. (1) At the renewal of all things, when Jesus would sit on His glorious throne, (2) they would also sit on thrones (over Israel), (3) receive a hundred times as much as they had left, and (4) inherit eternal life.
- b. (1) Jesus will come in glory to sit on His glorious throne and judge the nations (vv. 31-33). (2) He will tell the "sheep" to take their inheritance, the kingdom prepared for them since the creation of the world (v. 34). (3) They will go into eternal life (v. 46).
- c. It is the glory of **His future kingdom**, when He comes to rule and enable His followers to rule.
11. a. that assurance about the future which enables us to endure
- b. the coming of the Lord Jesus to transform our bodies and let us share in the glory of His kingdom
12. Wouldn't you question the reality of his conversion?

### Lesson 3

- Some of the best verses for motives are found in chapter 2: verses 2a, 2b, 3, 4a, 4b, 5a, 5b, 6b-11, 17, 19. Good verses for ways Paul showed love are 1:2-3, 5; 2:6-10, 11-12, 18; 3:1-2, 6, 10, 11-13; also those in which Paul continued teaching them.

3.
  - a. because he was trying to please God, who had approved him to be entrusted with the gospel (2:4)
  - b. Say good things if they are true and saying them is helpful. Don't say good things that are untrue.
  - c. idolatry (because he exalts something else above God)
  - d. in order not to hinder the gospel—but to win more people to Christ
  - e. Philippi
  - f. holy, righteous, blameless
  - g. Did you include the thought that a worthy life is one that honors God?
  - h. encouraging, comforting, urging
4.
  - a. In both verses missionaries (1) were “encouraging” new believers (2) to live right (3) as they move toward God’s kingdom.
  - b. to take part in His future kingdom and share His glory (2:12)
5.
  - a. It will fill the whole earth, come from the God of heaven.  
NOTE: Because the kingdom will come from God and heaven, the Jews often called it “the kingdom of heaven.” This title referred to its origin, not its destination.
  - b. to Jerusalem (the capital), where the temple is, to learn the Lord’s ways, resulting in a righteous world and peace
  - c. Wonderful Counselor..., from David’s throne, forever
  - d. He will prepare a feast of rich food and will destroy death.  
NOTE that the result is called “salvation.”
  - e. There will be no more afflictions like blindness, deafness, or lack of water.
6. the Lord Jesus’ future glorious kingdom on earth  
NOTE: Be sure to include in your definition that (a) Jesus is the Ruler and the kingdom is (b) future, (c) glorious, and (d) on earth.
7.
  - a. They tell of the Thessalonians’ conversion, the main proof of that claim.
  - b. “killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out” (2:15)  
NOTE: Other Spirit-filled leaders of the early church also accused fellow Jews of murdering the Messiah. For examples, see Acts 2:23 (Peter) and 7:52 (Stephen).
  - c. He kept preaching the gospel to them first.
8.
  - a. Love is the willingness to give oneself for another.
  - b. Learn five of these. The first four refer to his ministry when with them; the last four, to his ministry when absent.
    - (1) He preached to them though strongly opposed and in spite of having suffered.
    - (2) His motives were pure—no trickery or flattery.
    - (3) He supported himself instead of burdening them.
    - (4) He shared his life as a mother or father would.
    - (5) He repeatedly tried to return to them.
    - (6) He sent Timothy, depriving himself.
    - (7) He prayed constantly for them.
    - (8) He wrote them, to remind and further instruct them.
9. Did you get 1:2, 3; 3:10, 11; 5:17-18, 25?

**Lesson 4**

1. You probably noticed that none of the differences in these five verses is very important. With the possible exception of the starred one for verse 3, they all give the same meaning rather than change it.
3.
  - a. because Satan stopped him (2:18). (God allowed this to happen because of other things He wanted to accomplish.)
  - b. hope, joy, crown in which we will glory, glory (TEV explains the third one as “our reason for boasting of our victory.”)
  - c. the Lord Jesus’ Second Coming NOTE: 2 Corinthians 1:14b combines the same two thoughts of (1) Paul’s pride in his converts (2) at the Lord’s coming.
  - d. Perhaps you answered somewhat like this: I want my strongest tie to other people to be how we help each other prepare for Christ’s eternal kingdom.
  - e. (1) strengthen and encourage them in their faith, so that no one would be unsettled by their trials, (2) find out about their faith
  - f. Among other reasons, suffering produces character in us (see Rom. 5:3)—and reveals the true condition of both persecutors and persecuted (2 Thess. 1:5-7).
  - g. He might have successfully tempted them and destroyed the church (“all our work had been for nothing,” TEV).
4. Compare your summary to these. The first one has 48 words (not including references); the second has 43 words.
  - (a) Feeling like an orphan, Paul tried hard—though unsuccessfully—to return to the Thessalonians (2:17-18) because they were so dear to him (2:19-20). He decided to lose Timothy’s services in Athens and send him (3:1-2a) to help the Thessalonians through their trials (3:2b-5a) and keep the devil from destroying Paul’s work there (3:5b).
  - (b) Separated from them against his will, Paul tried but failed to return. They would be his pride at Jesus’ return. Hindered and fearing that the tempter might undo his work, he sent Timothy to help them and remind them that persecution is normal.
5.
  - a. their desire to see him (3:6)
  - b. No doubt you realized that when you love someone, you rejoice when that person does well. Also, Paul was reminded that just as God overcame great obstacles in Thessalonica, He could overcome them in Corinth.
  - c. No, because Paul’s main purposes in praying were accomplished—partly through his letters and his delegates. Also, he did visit them later.
  - d. Your summary should be similar to the following, which has 29 words:  
On his return Timothy reports that the Thessalonians still love Paul. Their perseverance cheers Paul in his own trials. He misses them and keeps praying to go help them.
6.
  - a. 1-3
  - b. Memorize this: Paul’s Ministry to the Thessalonians
  - c. for them to keep growing in love and holiness (3:12-13)
7.
  - a. blameless and holy (3:13)
  - b. “all his holy ones,” meaning at least His angels

c. This passage has 53 words. Your summary should have about 10-14 words, like this:  
He prayed for them to grow in love and holiness until the Lord's return.

8. Accept suffering as normal for Christians; remember your hope; listen to God; keep growing.

#### Review Questions

1. b      4. d      7. c      10. a      13. c  
2. c      5. c      8. d      11. b      14. d  
3. b      6. a      9. a      12. b      15. d

16. a. The Christ (Messiah) had to suffer and rise from the dead.  
b. Jesus is the Christ (Messiah).  
17. You should have any five of the answers for question 8b in lesson 3.  
18. You should have any three of the answers for question 8 above.  
19. a. Jesus is the Ruler      b. future      c. glorious      d. on earth  
20. (You should write this without any errors. If you learned it in another version, be sure your teacher knows that and has the other version.)

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

<sup>9</sup>for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

<sup>10</sup>and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

## Unit 2

### Lesson 5

- Did you comment on these passages: 1:3; 2:7-11; 3:6, 12-13; 4:3-8, 9-10; 5:8, 12-13, 26?
- Your summaries should be similar to these:
  - 1:1            Paul greets the Thessalonians.
  - 1:2-10       Paul thanks God for the evidence of their Christian virtues (2-3) and God's choice of them (4), as seen in the power of Paul's ministry there (5) and their response in spite of persecution (6-7). People in the whole region are now reporting the Thessalonians' sound conversion (8-10).
  - 2:1-12       In spite of persecution before and opposition during his ministry there, Paul had preached with success (1-2). He was bold because the message was from God (3-4). Out of love for them he worked hard to support himself (5-9), lived holily (10), and admonished them as his own children to live lives that honor God, who invites them to His kingdom (11-12).
  - 2:13-16      They received the message as from God (13), though to do so brought them persecution, as it had to the Jewish churches and to Paul from his own perverse countrymen (14-16).
- a. chapters 4-5  
b. Memorize this: God's Will for the Thessalonians
- Your summaries should be similar to these:
  - 4:1-2        Paul will remind them of earlier instructions, how to live pleasing God.

- 4:3-8 Unlike the heathen, please God by avoiding sexual sin, which wrongs others (3-6a). The Lord will judge such immorality—but has called and capacitated us for purity (6b-8).
- 4:9-12 God Himself is teaching them mutual love, in which they should abound (9-10), and which includes a quiet and self-sufficient life (11-12).
5. to please God (v. 1)
  6.
    - a. because God has already separated them to be pure
    - b. You may have said that sanctification is (1) the state of purity into which God calls sinners and (2) the goal of purity that believers should pursue.
    - c. from God
    - d. learning to control our body (v. 4)
  7.
    - a. to acquire his own wife (Another suggestion is “to live with his own wife.”)
    - b. their passionate lust (v. 5)
    - c. You probably said, by taking what rightfully belongs (or will belong) to that brother.
    - d. to live a holy life (v. 7)
    - e. because God will judge and because He has called us to holiness
    - f. His Holy Spirit (v. 8)
  8.
    - a. Love is the willingness to give oneself for another.
    - b. the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5), whom he had just mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4:8 (cf. Gal. 5:22-23)
    - c. You probably answered that nothing can take the place of love.
  9.
    - a. lead a quiet life, mind one’s own business, work with one’s own hands (4:11)
    - b. Your answer may be similar to this:  
have a calm and peaceful mind, fulfill your own obligations, earn your own living
    - c. Did you suggest putting Christ first in everything?
    - d. win the respect of outsiders, not be dependent on anybody (4:12)
  10. Only b is true.
  11.
    - a. from God
    - b. to please God
    - c. to live a holy life
    - d. (See the answers to 9a and 9d.)

### Lesson 6

1. Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. (4:13, NIV)
3. A possible title for subdivision I.B is “His ministry to them in person.” I.B.1 could be “His ministry”; I.B.2 could be “Their response.” A possible title for subdivision I.C is “His ministry to them while separated.” Making such titles may be difficult but is a good way to learn. Be sure you have made one for each section before you continue.
4. When the Lord comes, dead believers will rise first.
6. because we need glorified bodies in order to take our full part in His kingdom forever
7. the catching up and glorifying of both dead and living believers at the Lord’s coming
8.
  - a. Probably you noticed the following:

- (1) Three times they are said to have fallen asleep (vv. 13, 14, 15); once they are described as dead at the Lord's coming (v. 16). Not once are they described as alive before His coming; instead, they are contrasted with those "still alive" at that time (vv. 15, 17).
- (2) They will hear His voice and rise, preceding the living as both groups go to meet the Lord.
- b. "the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus"
- c. John 5:25
9. a. pre-tribulational, that the Rapture will take place before the Tribulation  
post-tribulational, that the Rapture will take place after the Tribulation
- b. One way is this:  
Pre-tribulation view:                    *RAPTURE/TRIBULATION      KINGDOM*  
Post-tribulation view:                *TRIBULATION      RAPTURE/KINGDOM*
10. Only the first statement is true. The others could be restated as follows:
- b. 1 Thessalonians 4:14 refers to bringing them from death to life with Christ.
- c. The center of the Christian hope is Christ's coming to rule—and our participation with Him.
- d. Each Christian receives his full reward and inheritance when the Lord starts His kingdom.
- e. We must be raised bodily in order to take full part in the Lord's kingdom forever.
11. All of these statements are true.

### Lesson 7

1. Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (5:16-18, NIV)
5. a. Apparently they knew what is meant by "day of the Lord" (v. 2), that it will come unexpectedly (like a thief, v. 2), bringing certain destruction on the unprepared (v. 3), but that they would receive salvation rather than wrath (vv. 8-9).
- b. Our main concern is to be alert (watching for that day) and self-controlled, not asleep or drunk.
6. a. Before the great and dreadful Day of the Lord, God will send Elijah to bring Israel to repentance.
- b. Before that Day there will be great disturbances both in heaven and earth.
- c. That Day will be dark, bringing God's wrath and destruction of sinful men.
- d. In His day the Lord will bring down all men's pride and destroy their idols.
- e. In that day the nations will attack Jerusalem but the Lord will come (with His holy ones) to its defense.
- f. Living water will flow from Jerusalem—and the Lord will rule over the whole world. The nations will go to worship Him in Jerusalem.
7. The Day of the Lord is the period of time in which the Lord God will establish His eternal kingdom and reign in it.
8. a. Probably you saw the following similarities:

- (1) That event will come unexpectedly, like a thief (Matt. 24:36, 42-44; compare 1 Thess. 5:2, 4).
- (2) Most people will continue their usual activities until it is too late (Matt. 24:38-39; compare 1 Thess. 5:3, 6-7).
- (3) Believers should keep watch so that they will not suffer loss (Matt. 24:42-43; compare 1 Thess. 5:6-8).
- b. Because the disciples had just asked if the *time* had come to restore the kingdom to Israel (v. 6).
- 9. a. Our main concern is to be alert (watching for that day) and self-controlled.
- b. The opposite of alert is asleep or indifferent. The opposite of self-controlled is drunk or self-indulgent.
- 10. a. the breastplate
- b. It is called the “hope” of salvation. “Hope” always refers to the future.
- 11. a. True
- b. False. The Day of the Lord is said to come as a thief because it will be unexpected.
- c. False. The pretribulation view understands “wrath” to mean Tribulation judgments. The posttribulation view understands it to mean final judgment.
- d. False. By dealing much with future things, it shows them to be important.
- 12. a. Greeting, 1:1
- b. I. Paul’s Ministry to the Thessalonians, chs. 1-3  
II. God’s Will for the Thessalonians, chs. 4-5
- c. Division I  
A. Thanksgiving that God has transformed them, ch. 1  
B. Paul’s ministry to them in person, ch. 2  
C. Paul’s ministry to them while separated, chs. 2–3
- d. Division II  
A. Sexual purity, ch. 4  
B. Mutual love and quiet work, ch. 4  
C. Comfort about dead Christians, ch. 4  
D. Vigilance toward the Lord’s coming, ch. 5  
E. Holy attitudes, ch. 5
- e. Conclusion, 5:23-28

### Lesson 8

- 2. a. Here are some of the other commands you should have written down:
  - (1) I should show love to those leaders because of what they do for me (v. 13).
  - (2) I should try to keep peace with everyone in the church (v. 13).
  - (3) I should warn any believer who does not find something worthwhile to do (v. 14).
  - (4) I should help a timid believer to see that he can do what he should do (v. 14).
  - (5) I should not get irritated when a believer is slow (v. 14).
  - (6) I should not fight back when someone is unkind (v. 15).
  - (7-9) (those in your memory verses, vv. 16-18)

- (10) I should not discourage believers who are trying to serve the Lord (v. 19).
- (11) I should not think or say bad things about someone who speaks in the Lord's name (v. 20).
3. Here are two sets of questions and answers such as you may have composed.
- Q: What three elements of the individual does Paul pray to be kept blameless?  
A: spirit, soul, body (v. 23) NOTE: This does not prove that spirit and soul are completely separate. They may be different ways of looking at the same element.
- Q: Who is counted on to accomplish this?  
A: "the one who calls you" (v. 24)
5. Check your answers against the outline printed earlier in the unit.

### Unit 3

#### Lesson 9

1. Here are some verses you probably marked—and what they show. Memorize the facts with the checked ones.
- 1:1√ Silas and Timothy were with Paul (and joined in writing?).
- 1:3 The Thessalonians were growing spiritually.
- 1:4 There were various churches in the area where Paul was ministering.
- 1:4-7√ The Thessalonians were being persecuted but were persevering.
- 2:2√ Some of the Thessalonians had been deceived into thinking that the Day of the Lord had begun.
- 2:5-6 Paul had previously taught them about the Man of lawlessness and the one who holds him back.
- 2:15 Some of Paul's teachings (such as, 1 Thessalonians) had been by letter.
- 3:1-2 Paul had opposition; he requested prayer for the spread of the message and for deliverance from wicked men.
- 3:6√ Some of the Thessalonians were idle and should go to work.
- 3:7-10 Paul had given them an example of hard work.
- 3:17√ Paul provided a mark of authenticity—a hand-written greeting.
2. You probably noticed the following themes. Memorize the part that is in all-caps.
- (a) God's **PURPOSE IN ALLOWING PERSECUTION** of believers—and how He will judge persecutors (1:4-10)
- (b) The rebellion and **THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS** before the Day of the Lord (2:1-12)
- (c) The importance of **THE DISCIPLINE OF IDLE BROTHERS** (3:6-15)
3. a. At Mt. Sinai God purposed to make Israel His kingdom, etc.  
b. Israel did become His kingdom when they came out of Egypt.  
c. From above the cover on the ark, God gave commands for Israel. (That was His earthly throne.)  
d. God's glory filled the tabernacle (God's newly built portable "house").  
e. God's glory departed from His house, the temple.
4. a. at Mt. Sinai, when God brought Israel out of Egypt

- b. when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, because of Israel's rebellion
- 5.
  - a. over all the earth, forever
  - b. yes, including Israel and nations from all the earth
  - c. His forefather would be David; His throne, the throne of David.
  - d. anointed (with the fullness of God's Spirit)
  - e. The curse would be abolished.
- 6.
  - a. by His miracles
  - b. It was present in His person.
  - c. an unexpected delay in its establishment (two comings for Messiah)
  - d. that Jesus is the expected King
  - e. It was used for the congregation of Israel when they became God's kingdom and later.
- 7. (Did you quote from two of the samples we gave?)
- 8. Any of the following is satisfactory; they all mean the same. Christians suffer for
  - ..God's Mediatorial Kingdom, as it will be restored (reestablished)
  - ..God's kingdom over Israel, as it will be restored (reestablished)
  - ..Christ's coming kingdom
- 10. See the checked facts for answer 1.

### Lesson 10

1. Here are some possible paragraph divisions and titles. Yours may be better; however, use our divisions.
  - 1:1-2 Greeting
  - 1:3-10 Suffering for the Kingdom
  - 1:11-12 Prayer for Their Holiness
  - 2:1-5 The Man of Lawlessness
  - 2:6-8 What Holds Him Back
  - 2:9-12 Why God Allows Him
  - 2:13-17 Confidence that God Chose Them
  - 3:1-5 Prayer Requests and Confidence
  - 3:6-15 Discipline of Idle Believers
  - 3:16-18 Final Prayer and Conclusion
2. Division I. Do you think the prayer in 1:11-12 goes with the first subject? If so, the first division would be 1:3-12.  
 Division II. Assuming that the confidence expressed in 2:13-17 is closely tied to the preceding paragraph, the second division would occupy all of chapter 2.  
 Division III. The word "finally" in 3:1 shows that a new topic begins there. Are the prayer request and confidence in 3:1-5 closely connected to the discipline section that follows in 3:6-15? If so, 3:1-15 would be the third division.
3.
  - a. They prove "that God's judgment is right" (v. 5). NOTE: Christian endurance in suffering shows (1) that God is working and also (2) that He will keep his promise of admitting the believer into the kingdom of righteousness.

- b. They prove that God is right to punish the troublers and give relief to the troubled (vv. 6-7).
- c. “when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels” (v. 7) NOTE: The fire and angels are evidence of His complete ability to set things straight.
- d. “everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power”
- e. “to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed”
- f. In this way they show their true character and the saints show theirs, which vindicates God’s justice (proves that it is right).
4. a. participation in the future kingdom
- b. “Sabbath-rest”
- c. He says that He will tell the “cursed” to “depart...into the eternal fire” (v. 41)—and contrasts their “eternal punishment” to “eternal life” for the righteous (v. 46). NOTE: Many believe that the description of each recompense as “eternal” proves that each group will be forever alive and conscious.
- d. (If you are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, yet endure, that is good evidence.)
5. a. that God would count them worthy of His calling and that by His power He would fulfill all their good purposes and acts prompted by faith
- b. God’s calling “into his kingdom and glory” (1 Thess. 2:12)
- c. to glorify the name of the Lord Jesus in them and to glorify them in Him
6. Here are sample summaries of some of the short paragraphs.
- 1:11-12: For their glory and Christ’s, Paul prays for God to bless these kingdom heirs.
- 2:13-14: God chose the Thessalonians for salvation (13), then called them to glory through the gospel (14).
- 2:15-17: They should hold to the apostolic teachings (15) and let God keep working in them (16-17).
- 3:1-5: Paul requests prayer for his own ministry (1-2). The Lord will protect the Thessalonians (3); they will obey (4) and learn love and steadfastness (5).
- 3:16-18: Paul prays for God’s peace for them (16), writes his own greeting and benediction (17-18).
7. (Of course, you will write only the verse—not the titles—in the examination.)

WHAT PAUL OUGHT TO DO	<b>But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord,</b>
REASON TO DO IT	<b>because from the beginning God chose you to be saved</b>
GOD’S MEANS	<b>through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.</b>

**Lesson 11**

2. a. the Lord's coming and our being gathered to Him  
 b. by a prophecy, report, or letter supposed to have come from Paul (v. 2)  
 c. that the Day of the Lord had already come (v. 2)  
 d. the rebellion and the revelation of the man of lawlessness (v. 3)  
 e. He will set himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. (v. 4)  
 f. all kinds of miracles, signs, and wonders (v. 9)  
 NOTE: These are probably real but "deceptive" rather than "counterfeit."  
 g. because there is one who holds him/it back until taken out of the way (vv. 6-8)  
 h. At His own coming the Lord Jesus will overthrow him "with the breath of his mouth" and destroy him (v. 8).  
 NOTE: This seems to mean that the Lord will use nothing but His word to destroy that man.  
 i. so that those "who refused to love the truth" and "delighted in wickedness" will "believe the lie and...be condemned" (vv. 10b-12)  
 NOTE: As you saw in 2 Thessalonians 1, God wants true character to be revealed. (See answer 3f for lesson 10.)
3. a. as a little horn—with eyes and a mouth speaking boastfully—on the fourth beast (v. 8)  
 b. "for a time, times and half a time" (v. 25)  
 NOTE: The simplest meaning for this would be 3 ½ years (half of 7).  
 c. At the beginning he will "confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.'" At the middle "he will put an end to sacrifice and offering and...set up an abomination that causes desolation."  
 d. that "he will exalt...himself above every god and...against the God of gods"  
 e. the antichrist  
 f. He speaks proud words and blasphemies (vv. 5-6). His authority lasts for forty-two months, which is 3 ½ years (v. 5). He fights and defeats the saints (v. 7). He rules over and is worshiped by the whole world (vv. 7-8).
4. a. an image of the Man of Sin being placed in the rebuilt temple  
 b. the Roman Empire of Paul's day  
 c. Governments do not always fulfill God's purpose; the Man of Sin did not appear at the end of the Roman Empire; the Man of Sin will rule in a time of super-government.  
 d. "steps aside"  
 e. The Restrainer is God through the church; the removal is the Rapture.
5. a. SC            c. SC            e. R            g. SC            i. R  
 b. SC            d. R            f. SC            h. R            j. R
6. a. John 14:1-3  
 b. in the Thessalonian Epistles  
 c. It makes two comings (*parousias*), which must be distinguished in each passage.  
 d. It seems to contradict the need for the two mentioned signs before that Day.

7. Statements a, b, c, g, i, j, k, and o are true. The others can be changed to be true, in ways suggested below.
- d. According to 1 Timothy 4 and 2 Timothy 3 and 4, at least some of those who take part in the end-time apostasy will be religious.
  - e. Pretribulationists believe that the Lord's coming in 2 Thessalonians 2:1 will be before the Tribulation.
  - f. Pretribulationists identify the Restrainer as God through the church.
  - h. During the rule of the Man of Sin, there will be super government on the earth.
  - l. The abomination of desolation refers to an image of the man of sin being placed in the temple.
  - m. The evil ruler will have power over the saints for 3 ½ years.
  - n. The Man of Sin will be destroyed by Christ's word.
8. a. 1 Thess. 4      d. 2 Thess. 2      g. 1 Thess. 3, 5  
 b. 1 Thess. 1      e. 1 Thess. 5  
 c. 2 Thess. 1      f. 1 Thess. 2

### Lesson 12

3. a. because from the beginning God chose them to be saved  
 NOTE: "From the beginning" probably means before creating the world. "God's secret wisdom" was "destined for our glory before time began" (1 Cor. 2:7). He "chose us in him [Christ] before the creation of the world" (Eph. 1:4).
- b. through Paul's (preaching of the) gospel, to share in the glory of the Lord Jesus
  - c. "God...calls you into his kingdom and glory"
  - d. by his letters
  - e. Perhaps you said that he wants them to make the Thessalonians cheerful in hard times and always ready to do and say good things.
4. a. Abram; with his family he worshiped other gods.
- b. God chose him to direct his family in the way of the Lord so that the Lord could fulfill the promises.
  - c. to be His treasured possession  
 NOTE: Exodus 19:4-6 includes this same purpose—and makes it clear that He had the whole earth—which was all His—to choose from. Deuteronomy 10:14-15 says virtually the same thing. Deuteronomy 7:7-8 says that His motive was His love for them and His determination to keep the oath freely given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
  - d. He "formed" Israel.  
 NOTE: Many verses in Isaiah emphasize the fact that He created Israel (see 43:15; 45:11). He was the Potter, and Israel was the clay (Isa. 64:8).
  - e. He chose the younger twin, Jacob, instead of the firstborn, Esau.
  - f. In Matthew 22:14, only a few of the called are saved; in 1 Corinthians 1:24, all of them.  
 NOTE: Theologians refer to the former as "the general call" and to the latter as "the efficacious call" (because it accomplishes what it offers).

- g. He chose the foolish, weak, lowly, despised, nobodies. He did not choose many wise, influential, or noble—the strong and important.  
His reason—so that no one would boast before Him (v. 29) but only in the Lord (v. 31).
- h. to the praise of His grace (glory)
- i. It is those who are predestined (to become like Christ) who are called. All the called get justified and glorified (v. 30).  
NOTE: The efficacious call works by producing faith, since justification is by faith alone (Rom. 5:1).
- j. to make them rich in faith and heirs of the promised kingdom
5. 1 Thessalonians 1:4, Paul had evidence that God loved them and chose them.  
1 Thessalonians 2:12, God was calling them into His kingdom and glory.  
1 Thessalonians 4:7, God called us to live holy lives.  
1 Thessalonians 5:24, God, who calls them, will sanctify them fully.  
2 Thessalonians 1:11, Paul prays that God will count them worthy of His calling (to the kingdom, v. 5)  
2 Thessalonians 2:13, God chose them to be saved through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.  
NOTE: This salvation refers to all God’s good work in our lives, most of it still future (as in 1 Thess. 5:9). “Sanctification” is the process in which God’s Spirit makes us like Christ; without it there can be no salvation.  
2 Thessalonians 2:14, God called them to salvation—sharing Christ’s glory—through Paul’s gospel preaching.
6. “God chose us” means that before we were born, He selected us to be saved.
7. Here are some sets of questions (Q) and answers (A) to compare to yours.  
Q What two things did Paul request prayer for? (3:1-2)  
A (1) that the Lord’s message would spread rapidly and be honored  
(2) that Paul might be delivered from wicked and evil men  
Q Into what two things did Paul pray their hearts might be directed? (v. 5)  
A into God’s love and Christ’s perseverance  
Q In verses 6 and 14, how did Paul command that they treat the person who would not work?  
A keep away from him, do not associate with him  
Q What would their purpose be in treating him that way?  
A to make him ashamed (v. 14)  
Q What rule did Paul give for the Christian who will not work?  
A If a man will not work, he shall not eat. (v. 10)  
Q Why did Paul work night and day, refusing to burden the Thessalonians?  
A to give an example/model for them to follow (vv. 7, 9)  
Q What sign did Paul give that this letter was his?  
A He wrote the final greeting in his own hand. (v. 17)
- 8 a. They should not associate with them.  
b. Did you suggest that those unwilling to work should not be helped?

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

11. Your answer should be like this:  
Greeting (ref. 1:1-2)  
I. Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians (ch. 1)  
II. Correction Concerning the Day of the Lord (ch. 2)  
III. Exhortations to Holy Living (ch. 3)  
Conclusion (ref. 3:16-18)
12. a. 5 b. 3 c. 2 d. 1
13. a. 3 b. 1 c. 2
- 14-17 You should have given any four of the following.
- ..Silas and Timothy were with Paul.
  - ..The Thessalonians were being persecuted but were persevering.
  - ..Some Thessalonians had been deceived into thinking that the Day of the Lord had begun.
  - ..Some Thessalonians were idle and should go to work.
  - ..Paul provided a mark of authenticity—a hand-written greeting.
- 18-21 You should have given any four of the following. The Man of Sin
- ..will perform miraculous signs.
  - ..will have power over the saints for 3 ½ years.
  - ..will allow no worship except that of himself.
  - ..will be destroyed by Christ's word.
  - ..will be destroyed at the Lord's coming.
22. purpose in allowing persecution
23. the man of lawlessness
24. the discipline of idle brothers

## Appendix A

### Did Jesus Establish a Kingdom?

#### The Promised Kingdom Near

Old Testament prophecies often describe a future glorious kingdom of God on earth. For examples, see Psalm 2; Isaiah 11; Isaiah 35; Isaiah 60; Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45; and Micah 4:1-8. The kingdom they promise has material, political, and spiritual elements. It is identified as a restoration and perfection of God's former kingdom over the nation of Israel; in fact, Micah 4:8 calls it "the former dominion."

Most if not all Bible interpreters agree that this kingdom as promised was the great hope of the Jews. They called it "the kingdom," "the kingdom of God," and "the kingdom of heaven." The latter term, used often in Matthew, not only avoided saying God's name but referred to the kingdom's heavenly origin (see Dan. 2). The Jewish hope shines brightly in the lengthy introduction to the Gospel of Luke, that is, chapters 1 and 2. For example, "Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied" (Luke 1:67) about that kingdom and its Ruler: "The Lord, the God of Israel...has come" (1:68), he said, "and...raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David" (1:69). What kind of salvation? "Salvation from our [Israel's] enemies...to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness" (1:71-75).

The Jews became excited when first John then Jesus began proclaiming,

"The kingdom of heaven **has drawn near.**"  
(Matt. 3:2; 4:17; showing the meaning of the Greek verb)

When Jesus sent His disciples as His representatives to "the lost sheep of Israel," He had them continue saying exactly the same thing (Matt. 10:7). Even on His final trip to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51)—where He would die and rise again—this message did not change. He repeatedly told "the seventy" messengers to preach it "to every town and place where he was about to go" (Luke 10:1, 9, 11). It was the underlying message of His entire ministry.

As suggested by the cognate adverb *near* (Matt. 24:32), the Greek verb in this message always meant to approach. However close the approach might be, the verb itself did not mean "arrive." For example, see James 5:8 ("the Lord's coming is near"), which uses the same verb form as Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; and Luke 10:9, 11. James clearly considered that the Lord's coming had approached but had not arrived. (For other examples, see Matt. 21:1; Rom. 13:12; 1 Peter 4:7.)

Notice three facts and inferences about this constant message:

- Fact 1: John and Jesus **did not define** what kingdom was near.  
Inference: They expected the Jews to understand and must have meant the kingdom the Jews knew about from the prophecies.
- Fact 2: This kingdom had "**drawn near.**"  
Inference: It was not near nor present in the period before John and Jesus began. Therefore, it was not God's universal kingdom nor His rule in men's hearts—which are always present—but the promised kingdom.
- Fact 3: This kingdom **remained near at least until Jesus' passion** (Luke 9:51; 10:1-11).  
Inference: As long as it was preached as "drawn near," this kingdom had not yet begun.

In addition to this third inference, there is positive evidence that the kingdom did not begin during Jesus' ministry. For example, the Lord specifically designed a parable to show that it would not start until His return (Luke 19:11-27; see especially vv. 11, 15, 27). After this parable Luke's Gospel referred four more times by name to the "kingdom of God": 21:31; 22:16; 22:18; and 23:51. In each of these references the kingdom was clearly future.

### **Two Views that the Kingdom Began**

Yet, during His ministry the Lord occasionally spoke of the kingdom as though it were not just near but present. Twice in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) He said, "Theirs **is** the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3, 10). Later He said, "The kingdom of God **has come upon** you" (Matt. 12:28). Do such statements mean that, in spite of the evidence already cited, the promised kingdom had actually begun? If so, then it proved to be quite unlike the one described by the prophets—and there is a discrepancy between prophecy and fulfillment. Yet, many today say that it did begin. They resolve the discrepancy in one of two different ways: (1) One view rejects the evident meaning of the prophecies and "spiritualizes" the kingdom. This view considers that the prophecies are already fulfilled. (2) Another view accepts the prophecies at face value, expecting them to be fulfilled later, but believes that the kingdom has also come in another form.

The first view just mentioned incorrectly defines the kingdom because it takes only a few Scriptures into account. It overlooks—as implied in the title of Alva McClain's superb book, "The Greatness of the Kingdom"—its many aspects. And it cannot explain why the Lord Jesus confirmed the evident meaning of the prophecies. For example, (1) He did many "miracles of the coming age" (Heb. 6:5, literal translation) befitting a kingdom both spiritual and material. Also, (2) He promised to return to earth in glory and sit "on his glorious throne" (Matt. 19:28; 25:31) in order to rule over "all the nations" (Matt. 25:32). At that time will occur "the renewal of all things" (Matt. 19:28; cf. Acts 3:21). Christ's followers will participate in His future rule (Matt. 19:28-29; 25:34), which will last forever (Matt. 25:46; Luke 1:32-33).

### **Secrets of the Kingdom**

Those who hold the second view mentioned above, believe that the Old Testament prophecies and Jesus' promises meant what they said. But they think they discover in the Gospels an additional, present form of the kingdom. They find it revealed in the parables beginning in Matthew 13 and containing "secrets of the kingdom" (13:11, NIV). They believe that it is described after the common introduction "the kingdom...is like" (Matt. 13:24, 33, etc.). Some call it the "mystery form" of the kingdom, based on the King James Version's "mysteries of the kingdom."

There is a better explanation of these secrets of the kingdom. They do not reveal a new form of the promised kingdom but a new and unexpected age in preparation for it—a gap between the King's (Messiah's) sufferings and His glories (1 Peter 1:10-12). The kingdom, though certain, will not be established until the King comes back in glory. Considering the Jewish background

of Jesus' disciples, they most likely would have understood the parables in this way. And Matthew 13:51-52 makes it clear that they did understand them.

If the parables do not describe a present kingdom, how should we understand the phrase "The kingdom...is like"? A common Jewish introduction for a parable, it does not mean that the next item mentioned is the kingdom. Consider, for example, the first things mentioned in some of the parables. The kingdom is clearly not "a man who sowed good seed" (Matt. 13:24), nor "yeast" (Matt. 13:33), nor "a landowner" (20:1). Instead, that introduction means that the whole parable tells something about the kingdom, although the kingdom itself may be only one part of the parable. Rightly or wrongly, each interpreter finds the kingdom pictured in the part that fits his own definition. For example, in the Parable of the Tares (Weeds) some identify the kingdom with the field of mixed wheat and tares, which field the Lord calls "the world" (Matt. 13:38). But others find it in the consummation that begins with the judgment at the end of the age (vv. 40-41). Some identify the kingdom with the tiny mustard seed when first sowed (v. 31); others, after it becomes a tree (v. 32). Since the Lord's disciples defined the kingdom like other Jews, they must have seen it in the grand consummation of each parable.

To summarize, the Lord throughout His ministry announced that the kingdom had drawn near. He also confirmed the Old Testament descriptions of it and promised that it would begin when He returns in glory. His "secrets of the kingdom" revealed an unexpected age in preparation for it, involving two comings of Messiah.

### **Reasons the Lord Sometimes Spoke of the Kingdom as Present**

Sometimes, however, He did speak of the kingdom in the present tense. Why did He do that if it was still future? For two main reasons:

- First, for emphasis. In a deliberate change of viewpoint, prophets often spoke of future well-known events or conditions as though they were present. For example, Isaiah 24:1-13 described the future Tribulation mostly in Hebrew present ("participle") and past ("perfect") tenses. Similarly, in Luke 20:35-36 the Lord spoke in the present tense of the future resurrection: "marry...are given in marriage...can die...are... are" are all present in Greek but refer to the future. Likewise, in Romans 2:2 the Apostle Paul wrote of the future judgment in the present tense ("God's judgment...is based on truth").

Normally, the context makes it clear that this change in tense is only a change in viewpoint. In the Old Testament example given, Isaiah 24:3, 13 show that the whole passage is future by using the Hebrew "imperfect" tense. Consider the Beatitudes, where the Lord twice (Matt. 5:3, 10) spoke of the kingdom in the present tense. Yet, in the intervening verses (5:4-9) He six times promised kingdom blessings in the future tense. And He definitely spoke of the kingdom as future in other parts of the Sermon on the Mount (5:19-20; 6:10; 7:21-23).

- Second, in a special sense. The kingdom was present in the person of the King, the Anointed One. This explains Matthew 12:28 ("The kingdom of God has come upon you") and Luke 17:21 ("the kingdom of God is within you"—that is, "in your midst"). Though anointed at

His baptism—and again at His resurrection—Jesus did not begin to reign. He is definitely the King, as the early church preached (Acts 17:3, 7). But like His forefather David, He became King long before time to sit on David’s throne (Acts 2:30).

After His resurrection, Jesus was exalted not to His own throne but to His Father’s; the two thrones are distinguished in Revelation 3:21. There He waits as the Father tells Him: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet” (Heb. 1:13 and Acts 2:34-35, both quoting Psalm 110:1). In His absence, the kingdom is no longer present. However, there are people being enrolled for it, belonging to it before it comes (Col. 1:13).<sup>7</sup>

### The Kingdom the Hope of the Church

Even though Jesus gave abundant evidence that He was the Messiah, His people Israel rejected Him. The kingdom, though still near at that time, did not begin. Instead, Jesus promised to come again and bring it. He also promised to build His own kingdom assembly, the *ekklesia* (church.) From its inception the church held undiminished the hope of the future kingdom.

1. The first clear prediction of the church related it to the kingdom.
  - This prediction was given on the occasion when Simon made the Great Confession. As spokesman for all the apostles, he declared that Jesus is the Messiah, the promised King.
  - The word for church, *ekklesia*, was well-known. It was (a) a common Greek term for the “assembly” or “congregation” of God’s people Israel in the “former dominion.” (b) It also referred to Messiah’s future congregation (see Ps. 22:22, quoted in Heb. 2:12). This is probably what the apostles understood by Jesus’ promise. In this sense the *ekklesia* being formed is already His “kingdom” before the kingdom begins (Rev. 1:6; Col. 1:13).
  - To Simon Peter as the first confessor (first of many), Jesus promised “the keys of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 16:19).
2. The King and His kingdom was the message that built the church.
  - The key message in Acts was the same as in the Great Confession. For example, on Pentecost, Peter’s climax was that “God has made Him both Lord and Messiah—this Jesus whom you crucified” (Acts 2:36).
  - “He preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12; cf. 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31).
3. The early church looked for Jesus’ “appearing and His kingdom” (2 Tim. 4:1: cf. Titus 2:13).
4. Their goal was to enter that kingdom and share that glory.
  - “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).
  - “Live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory” (1 Thess. 2:12).

<sup>7</sup> This identification of the kingdom with Messiah also explains how it could “suffer violence” (NASB, Matt. 11:12). Jesus in effect opened the doors to the kingdom, but the Jewish leaders refused to enter or let others enter (Matt. 23:13). They even killed the Son, Heir to God’s vineyard. So the kingdom was taken away from them (Matt. 21:43). The kingdom in its past form and its future form had been entrusted to them—but no longer.

- “Our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us....The creation itself will be liberated....We wait eagerly for...the redemption of our bodies” (Rom. 8:18-25; a liberated creation clearly implies an earthly kingdom).
  - “The Lord will rescue me...and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom” (2 Tim. 4:18; “heavenly” referring to its character, not its location).
5. In it they will receive their inheritance.
- “Come...take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world” (Matt. 25:34).
  - “The wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9-10; see also Eph. 5:5).
  - “Has not God chosen those who are poor...to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised...?” (James 2:5).
  - “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests...and they will reign on the earth” (Rev. 5:10).
  - At the seventh trumpet in his vision, John heard loud voices anticipating the conclusion: “You have... begun to reign....The time has come...for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints” (Rev. 11:15-18).
- Various passages, such as Acts 20:32; Ephesians 1:14, 18; and 1 Peter 5:1, 4 refer to this inheritance in the future kingdom without using the word *kingdom*. Sometimes they relate it to the Lord’s “coming” or “glory.” For example, in 1 Peter 1 our “living hope” (v. 3), “inheritance...kept in heaven” (v. 4), and “salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (v. 5) are equated to “praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed” (v. 7) and “the grace that is to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed” (v. 13).
6. The heavenly home prepared for them (John 14:1-3) will descend to a marvelous new earth (Rev. 21:1-3).
7. The coming of the kingdom was the object of their prayers.  
“This, then, is how you should pray:...your kingdom come...” (Matt. 6:9-10).
8. In view of the coming kingdom, no suffering was too great.  
“All the persecutions and trials you are enduring....the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering” (2 Thess. 1:4-5).

Consider their hope as pictured by a second century “Church Father”:

But I and whatsoever Christians are orthodox in all things do know that there will be a resurrection of the flesh, and a thousand years in the city of Jerusalem, built, adorned and enlarged, according as Ezekiel, Isaiah, and other prophets have promised. For Isaiah saith of this thousand years...“Behold I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind”....Whereof also our Lord spake when He said, that therein they shall neither marry, nor be given in marriage, but shall be equal with the angels, being made the sons of the resurrection of God. (Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 2)

### Verses Some Use to Prove a Present Kingdom

The early church did not identify itself or anything else as the kingdom—except in a very limited sense. Consider how it could understand Scriptures that some now apply to a present kingdom:

- Eight times in Acts “kingdom” refers to God’s kingdom (1:3, 6; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31). Most of these passages summarize the early message. In two of them (1:6 and 14:22) the kingdom had to be future. What about the rest? Remember that Luke wrote this book. His every use of “kingdom of God” in the last chapters of his Gospel (Luke 19:11; 21:31; 22:16; 22:18; 23:51) clearly referred to it as future. Should it not logically mean the same thing in his second book?
- In Romans 14:17 Paul says, “the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy....” There are two issues in interpreting this statement about “the kingdom of God.” (1) Can the present tense refer to the future kingdom? We have already seen that it can. (2) Does its apparent denial of material aspects (“the kingdom...is not eating and drinking”) define a strictly spiritual kingdom? No, because that **absolute** statement can and should be interpreted as **relative** (“the kingdom...is not primarily”).  
 This use of “absolute for relative” is a common figure of speech in the Bible. For example, Exodus 16:2 says that “the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron.” How then could Moses respond “You **are not grumbling against us**, but against the Lord” (v. 8)? Only if his absolute statement (bolded) clearly had a relative meaning (“are not primarily grumbling against us”). See other examples in Deuteronomy 5:2-3; Philippians 2:4; and 1 John 3:18.  
 In other words, there is no need to interpret Romans 14:17 as describing a present kingdom. It can refer to the future kingdom without negating verses like Matthew 8:11 (“the feast...in the kingdom”; see also Luke 22:16, 18, 30) or Isaiah 25:6 (“the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast”). In fact, in Romans 8 (see above) Paul had already described a future kingdom that includes material elements, and thus requires bodily resurrection. In that kingdom there will be “eating and drinking” but also—and far more important—righteousness, peace, and joy.
- In 1 Corinthians 4:20 the kingdom “is not a matter of talk but of power.” In all the other uses of “kingdom” in 1 Corinthians (6:9, 10; 15:24, 50), it was clearly the future one. There is no need to change that here. Even in this same chapter (4:8) Paul had already referred to it as future—note the touch of sarcasm: “You have become kings—and that without us! How I wish that you really had become kings, so that we might be kings with you!” In other words, they had acted as though the kingdom had begun; so in verse 20 he challenged them to prove by their power that it really had begun.
- In Colossians 1:13 the Father “has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.” This sounds like a present kingdom. But consider Paul’s point of view. In the previous verse he has just referred to our inheritance in the future kingdom: God “has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light” (1:12). Though still living in the world of darkness (where we “struggle against the powers of this dark world,” Eph. 6:12), we do not belong to it. We now belong to “the kingdom of light.” We are “sons of the light and sons of the day...we belong to the day,” though the day has not arrived (1 Thess. 5:5-9). In other words, our future is assured.

When 1 Corinthians 3:21-22 says, “All things are yours,” it even includes “the future” in the list. The future that is ours includes the future kingdom.

Therefore, our transfer to the kingdom is

*de jure* [judicial] rather than *de facto* [in fact]...Our [transfer] into the Kingdom of Christ, therefore, must be similar to that act of God when He “raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 6:12). Although we are not yet *de facto* seated in the heavenlies, the thing is so certain that God can speak of it as already done. In the same sense, we have been (aorist tense) transferred *judicially* into the Kingdom of our Lord even before its establishment. (McClain, p. 435)

Paul speaks the same way later in Colossians: “Your life is now hidden with Christ in God ...When Christ...appears, you also will appear with him in glory” (3:1-3). Are we in heaven **in fact?** No. Are we in the kingdom **in fact?** No. But in God’s plan, both are certain.

- In Hebrews 1:8, speaking of the Son, the King James Version supplies present-tense verbs: “Thy throne, O God, **is** for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness **is** the sceptre of thy kingdom.” But so clearly is this future that NIV changes the supplied verbs to “will last” and “will be.” In fact, nearly everything in Hebrews 1:5-14, as well as the “great salvation” of 2:3, refers to that future kingdom. So the author informs us in 2:5: “the world to come, about which we are speaking.”
- Hebrews 12:28 says, “we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken.” The time for us to receive it can be ascertained in passages such as Matthew 25:34 (“Take your inheritance, the kingdom”) and 1 Peter 1:3-9 (“inheritance...glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed”). In Hebrews 12 the kingdom we will receive is what will survive a future world-wide shaking (vv. 26-27).
- In Revelation 1:6 Christ “has made us to be a kingdom and priests.” Revelation 5:10 says the same thing, then adds, “and they will reign on the earth.” In other words, we are designed as His future kingdom—and are already subject to Him—but are not reigning yet. Similarly, Revelation 1:5 says that Jesus is “the ruler of the kings of the earth”—though He is not ruling them yet.
- In Revelation 1:9 John is our “companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance.” The suffering is present; the kingdom is future; and the endurance takes us from one to the other.
- Revelation 11:15 says that “the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.” As elsewhere in Revelation, this announces as a fact what is about to happen (see 1:7; 12:10; 14:8, 11; 16:17; 19:6-8; 21:3). In this case, it announces the grand outcome of the seventh trumpet.
- In Revelation 12:10 “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ.” This is another announcement like 11:15.

The church's early confidence in a future kingdom on earth has dimmed. The change came quickly when (in the fourth century) Christianity became the official religion of the Roman empire. Nowadays many Christians believe that the promised kingdom began at Jesus' first coming—or even that the church is the kingdom. This belief makes them misunderstand many Scriptures and tend to forget the goal. But it does not change God's glorious plan.

## Appendix B

### Two Future Parousias (Comings) for Christ?

Though rich and rewarding, the study of biblical predictive prophecy is not easy. The Pretribulation Rapture View proposes solutions for some difficulties. For example, it identifies the removal of the Restraint in 2 Thessalonians 2 as the Rapture of the church. Rightly or wrongly, however, this view creates new problems. For example, it proposes that when applied to Christ's future coming, terms like *parousia* have more than one meaning.

Our Lord made it quite clear that He will some day return in glory to establish His kingdom. Bible teachers often call that return the Second Coming. The New Testament uses various Greek expressions to refer to it. One is the simple verb *erkomai*, meaning *come* (for example, Matt. 16:27, 28; 23:39; 24:30, 42, 44; 25:31; 26:64; Rev. 1:7; 16:15; 22:7, 12, 20). Another is the verb *apokalupto*, meaning *reveal* (Luke 17:30; cf. 1 Peter 1:5; 5:1), and its related noun *apokalupsis*, meaning *revelation* (1 Peter 4:13; cf. Rom. 2:5). Similar to these is the verb *phaneroo*, meaning *reveal, make known* (Col. 3:4). Yet another is the noun *epiphaneia*, meaning *brightness or glorious appearing* (2 Tim. 4:1; Titus 2:13; cf. 2 Thess. 2:8). Except for *erkomai*, all of these terms suggest public appearance.<sup>8</sup>

Probably the best-known term for His return is the noun *parousia*, which literally means *presence* (2 Cor. 10:10). This noun was also used of the *coming* of humans (1 Cor. 16:17; 2 Cor. 7:6, 7; Phil. 1:26) or—in pagan literature—of gods. Like most of the terms above, it suggests public appearance. In fact, it had become “the official term for a visit of a person of high rank, especially of kings and emperors visiting a province.”<sup>9</sup> Therefore, it is appropriate for “the coming of the lawless one” (2 Thess. 2:9) when he is finally “revealed” on earth (v. 8). And it is even more appropriate for the Lord's glorious and public Second Coming to rule. That is its meaning the only times *parousia* is used in the Gospels or Acts: Matthew 24:3, 27, 37, and 39.

In the rest of the New Testament, *parousia* is used of His coming twelve times, half of them in the Thessalonian epistles (1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:1, 8; James 5:7, 8; 2 Peter 1:16; 3:4; 1 John 2:28). In some of these *parousia* obviously means what you would expect from its use in Matthew: the Second Coming to rule. That is true, for example, in 2 Peter 1:16, which associates it with the words “power” and “majesty”—and with “the eternal kingdom” in verse 11. In some passages, however, the Pretribulation Rapture View requires that the term have a different meaning. When the term involves the Rapture, pretribulationists believe that it refers to a different coming of Christ, several years before the Second Coming:

- Different in character—not public but secret
- Different in time—not after the 70<sup>th</sup> Week (and Tribulation) for Israel but before it
- Different in purpose—not to judge the world and set up the kingdom but to rapture the church

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<sup>8</sup> Yet, in some passages pretribulationists interpret nearly all of these terms to mean a secret and separate Rapture: *apokalupsis* in 1 Cor. 1:7; 2 Thess. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:7, 13; *phaneroo* in 1 Peter 5:4; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; *epiphaneia* in 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:8.

<sup>9</sup> William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952), 635.

Pretribulationists thus have two distinct meanings for the Lord’s *parousia*.<sup>10</sup> They can see both of these meanings in a single passage, such as, 2 Thessalonians 2:1 and 2:8 in the following chart.

**Pretribulation Rapture View  
Showing Two Comings (*Parousias*) for the Lord**

← Current Age →	<b>Lord’s ↓ ↑ Coming for church *Rapture* (2 Th. 2:1)</b>	<b>70<sup>th</sup> Week</b> Rebellion and Man of Sin <hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/> Great Tribu- lation	<b>↓ Lord’s Coming with church to rule *2<sup>nd</sup> Coming* (2 Th. 2:8)</b>	← Kingdom →
<b>Day of the Lord →</b>				

The meaning of *parousia* is particularly important in the letters to the Thessalonians. In them Paul refers to the Lord’s future coming in every chapter but the last. In six of those references he calls it the *parousia*. At least once—in 2 Thessalonians 2:8—this term means the same thing as in Matthew. That verse clearly refers to the public glory and judgment of the Second Coming: the Lord “will overthrow...and destroy [the man of sin] by the splendor [*epiphaneia*] of his coming [*parousia*].” But the other five passages say little or nothing about the public aspect, only the relation of the *parousia* to the church or individuals. Therefore, in most or all of those passages, pretribulationists deny that the term still refers to the Second Coming. Instead, it refers to a separate, secret, and earlier Rapture,<sup>11</sup> as do some of the other terms (see footnote 8).

Observe how pretribulationists interpret three references to the Lord’s coming in three nearly successive paragraphs of 2 Thessalonians (1:5-10; 2:1-4; and 2:5-12). As seen above, they recognize that the *parousia* in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 will be glorious and public. So will the *apokalupsis* in 1:7. In it persecuted believers will get “relief...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.” Yet, sandwiched between these two references to the Second Coming is another reference to “the coming [*parousia*] of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2:1) that pretribulationists interpret differently. This *parousia* apparently includes the Rapture (“our being gathered to him”), which—by pretribulation calculation—will be separate from the Second Coming. Thus, they interpret as follows:

<sup>10</sup> Another view is that there is one *parousia* embracing many events over various years. That view raises a different set of problems.

<sup>11</sup> Pretribulationists have different opinions about 1 Thessalonians 3:13: “...so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.” In the Old Testament and inter-testamental Judaism, “holy ones” who come with God are angels. So are the ones who come with the Lord in Mark 8:38, Luke 9:26, and Jude 14, which reflect the prophecy of Zechariah 14:5. Some therefore believe that Paul’s similar prophecy in 1 Thessalonians 3:13 refers to the same Second Coming—with angels—for judgment. (He draws the same picture in 2 Thess. 1:7.) Others emphasize that by “holy ones” Paul elsewhere means Christians. They then interpret 3:13 as they do 4:14—that the souls of Christians will come with Christ at the Rapture.

2 Thess. 1:7	2:1	2:8
<i>apokalupsis</i>	<i>parousia</i>	<i>parousia</i>
Second Coming	Rapture	Second Coming

Words do acquire new meanings. Therefore, we should test the possibility that the Lord's *parousia* could mean two different things in New Testament epistles. Sometimes it clearly meant Christ's Second Coming, as it did in Christ's teaching. What evidence is there that it sometimes refers to another coming distinct in time and character? Walvoord seems to give no historical evidence. He finds no Rapture at all in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John 1-13. Jesus' "first mention of the Rapture" was in John 14:1-3—just before His death.<sup>12</sup> But even John 14 was unclear, says Walvoord, because the disciples still did not understand that He would leave them and return. To the extent that they understood His departure, they believed that the Rapture "was a part of the promise to come to earth a second time." In other words, the disciples saw no distinction between the Rapture and the Second Coming. Walvoord cites no other passage in John or Acts in which such a distinction was made.

When, then, was the separate Rapture explained? "Much later Paul was converted, and God revealed the doctrine of the Rapture to him....Apparently he introduced the doctrine of the Rapture to the Thessalonians....to them, he explained the Rapture at length".<sup>13</sup> Thus Walvoord believes that the first clear written explanations of the Rapture were in the two Thessalonian epistles. At this point, *parousia* and similar terms could each refer to two separate events. If so, how does the pretribulationist determine their meaning in each passage? By his own eschatological framework. If the passage deals with public glory, judgment, and the kingdom, it must be the Second Coming. If it deals only with individuals and the church, it must be the Rapture. There is still no passage that distinguishes them in time: "No biblical passage states precisely when the Rapture will occur in relation to the tribulation or the Second Coming" (Walvoord, p. 112). The real reason for separating them is doctrinal, not historical.<sup>14</sup>

#### Pretribulationist Distinctions of Two Future *Parousias* for the Lord

<b><i>Parousia</i> # 1 (as in 2 Thess. 2:1) (called "the Rapture" by pretribulationists)</b>	<b><i>Parousia</i> # 2 (as in 2 Thess. 2:8) (called "the Second Coming" by pretribulationists)</b>
Purpose—to take the church away	Purpose—to begin the kingdom
Imminent—has no predicted event before it	Not imminent—follows other events
The only expected event before the Day of the Lord	Comes after other signs of the Day of the Lord
Comes before the Seventieth Week for Israel	Comes after the Seventieth Week for Israel
Secret to the world in general	Glorious and public before the world

<sup>12</sup> John F. Walvoord, *Prophecy: 14 Essential Keys to Understanding the Final Drama* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993), 109.

<sup>13</sup> Walvoord, *Prophecy*, p. 110.

<sup>14</sup> Most pretribulationists see little in common between the church and the nation of Israel. When any passage involves promises or warnings to Israel, they feel justified in keeping them separated.

Are both these alleged comings found side by side in any paragraph? Walvoord thinks he sees both of them in Titus 2:13, where the KJV speaks of “that **blessed hope**, and the **glorious appearing** of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Walvoord assumes without discussion that these two titles refer to separate events. Then he argues that the first title proves that the Rapture will be before the Tribulation, because “a rapture climaxing a tribulation is hardly a blessed hope” (p. 114). The NIV gives a different possible translation of Titus 2:13: “We wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”<sup>15</sup> That translation agrees with many other passages, that our hope is for the Lord to come in His kingdom.

Now compare the Post-tribulation Rapture View, which has only one *parousia*.

**Post-tribulation Rapture View**  
**Relation of Lord’s Coming, 70<sup>th</sup> Week, Day of the Lord**

← Current Age →	70 <sup>th</sup> Week Rebellion and Man of Sin	Great Tribu- lation	↓ Lord’s Coming for church (Rapture) and to rule (2 Th. 2:1, 8)	← Kingdom →
<b>Day of the Lord →</b>				

This post-tribulation view is simpler because it keeps the same meaning for Christ’s *parousia* in Matthew and the Epistles. “Simpler,” however, does not mean better unless it better fits all the facts and Scriptures. For example, here are some of the questions pretribulationists often ask post-tribulationists: (a) Who is the Restrainer if not God-in-the-church? (b) How can the Lord’s coming for believers be imminent if the Tribulation must come first? (c) Don’t Revelation 3:10; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9 mean that the church will escape God’s wrath during that Tribulation?<sup>16</sup>

Post-tribulationists also have questions to ask pretribulationists. For example: (a) Why did the Church Fathers not know your view? If the Lord truly revealed a separate Rapture, did the whole church miss the point or forget it? (b) Is it likely that the Lord’s *parousia* would refer to two separate comings that can sometimes be distinguished only by theology? (c) Won’t those

<sup>15</sup> In Greek a single article ties together the nouns *hope* and *appearing*. Thus, the two nouns are closely related and possibly refer to the same event. Though it is unusual that two entities thus joined are identical, an example is Acts 1:25. There NIV combines “this ministry and apostleship” (literal) as “this apostolic ministry.”

<sup>16</sup> To summarize another question: If all believers are glorified in a Rapture just before the millennium starts, where will the rebels come from at the end of the millennium (Rev. 20)? Glorified people will not marry. Therefore, there must be enough time after the Rapture to accumulate a group of unglorified people to enter the millennium. As the centuries of the millennium pass, many descendants of these people will become rebellious.

converted during the Tribulation (Rev. 7) be baptized in the Spirit—which results in union with Christ and His church (1 Cor. 12:12-13)? (d) By insisting that the only predicted event before the Day of the Lord is the Rapture, don't you contradict 2 Thessalonians 2:3: “that day **will not come until** the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed”<sup>17</sup>

These are only samples of the many issues in the Rapture question. That question is worthy of continued study. But observe the following precautions.

- The Rapture question should not be allowed to divide evangelical believers in their service and communion. The order of final events is interesting but not essential.
- The Rapture question should not take the place of seeking “his kingdom and his righteousness” (Matt. 6:33). The Lord did not tell us to pray for the Rapture but for the kingdom to come (Matt. 6:10). Whether we escape the Tribulation or not, our hope is His coming kingdom.

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<sup>17</sup> Walvoord erases the problem by making the verse refer to “the Second Coming” rather than “the Day of the Lord.” He says, “The ‘falling away’ will occur before **the Second Coming** (2 Thess. 2:3). The ‘man of sin’ must come to power and reveal himself before **the Second Coming** will occur (v. 3)” (p. 115, bolding added). Perhaps Walvoord forgets that he himself begins the Day of the Lord seven years before the Second Coming. A more common pretribulationist solution to this problem is to accept that the final rebellion/apostasy may *start* but cannot reach its climax before the Day of the Lord. “The Day of the Lord will not be present until this great apostasy sweeps the earth” (Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *First and Second Thessalonians*, p. 104).

## Paragraph Summaries for 1 Thessalonians

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Refer- ence	Word Limit	Student's Summary	Words Used
1:1	4-7		
1:2-10	41-52		
2:1-12	54-68		
2:13-16	27-34		
2:17 to 3:5	42-53		
3:6-11	28-36		
3:12-13	10-14		

**Paragraph Summaries for 1 Thessalonians****STUDENT REPORTS**

Refer- ence	Word Limit	Student's Summary	Words Used
4:1-2	10-13		
4:3-8	22-29		
4:9-12	18-23		
4:13-18	32-41		
5:1-11	42-53		
5:12-22	25-33		
5:23-28	15-20		

## Paragraph Summaries for 2 Thessalonians

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Refer- ence	Word Limit	Student's Summary	Words Used
1:1-2	6-9		
1:3-10	40-50		
1:11-12	14-18		
2:1-5	24-31		
2:6-8	15-20		
2:9-12	16-21		
2:13-14	11-15		

**Paragraph Summaries for 2 Thessalonians**

**STUDENT REPORTS**

Refer- ence	Word Limit	Student's Summary	Words Used
2:15-17	11-15		
3:1-5	17-22		
3:6-15	44-56		
3:16-18	11-15		