



# 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians

*...Not so fast*

## INTRODUCTION

Good news! You checked in on your children after they moved to college and everything is going ok. They have enough food. They are doing their laundry. They aren't getting into trouble. They really did listen to what you said! It is nerve-wracking for a parent as they look forward to the lives of their children. The choices the kids make from now on are theirs alone, but hopefully, they have been tempered by your upbringing. As you might check in regularly, you know that they don't do everything perfectly, but one hopes they are trying hard. You can be a good parent, allowing your child to choose their own path, but also offer occasional advice to get them through deficiencies and difficulties they develop toward successful adulthood.

The second letter to the Thessalonians is very much like a parent sending their child into the world, though more harrowing. The threats are physical violence and death – the same that ran him out of town. The first letter to the Thessalonians was a recording of Paul's joy after having heard that their faith is surviving despite the threat and their forcible separation. The second letter is now devoted to making sure they are still doing the right thing.

As with a student during a long semester at school, it is easy for Christians to get tired and lazy. During the course of this letter, Paul reminds us not to make lazy friends, to remember what he taught us, and finally, to keep working hard.

As hard as life may be, there is no need to worry. Paul says that the semester is almost over and it will soon be time to come home.

SO THEN, BRETHREN, STAND FIRM AND HOLD TO THE TRADITIONS  
WHICH YOU WERE TAUGHT, WHETHER BY WORD OF MOUTH OR BY  
LETTER FROM US.

NOW MAY OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF AND GOD OUR  
FATHER, WHO HAS LOVED US AND GIVEN US ETERNAL COMFORT  
AND GOOD HOPE BY GRACE, COMFORT AND STRENGTHEN YOUR  
HEARTS IN EVERY GOOD WORK AND WORD.

– 2<sup>ND</sup> THESSALONIANS 2:15-17



## 2 THESSALONIANS OUTLINE

## CHAPTER 1 - DON'T GIVE UP

### Questions from Text:

1. What is the purpose of persecution?
  
2. What will God do with...
  - a. Unbelievers?
  
  - b. Believers?
  
3. For those who don't know and obey God, Jesus depicts a reserved place of torment, borrowing ideas from the prophets like stench, fire, undying worms, and unquenchable thirst. What does Paul's description of this place look like?
  
4. What things does Paul pray will be accomplished in Thessalonica? For what purpose?

### Important Ideas:

Faith = πίστις = trust, faith, persuasion, confidence, assurance

Love = ἀγάπη = kindly concern, love, devotion

Hope = ἐλπίς = hope, expectancy

Constantly ask, "How does what Paul is talking about in the text relate to any of these three concepts?" and "How can I improve my own faith, love, and hope based on what he has been saying?"

### Questions for Discussion:

- We see "faith" and "love" in this chapter; is hope here? Explain.
  
- Does it sound like the Thessalonians listened to Paul's last letter? Why or why not?
  
- Is it fair for God to enact "eternal destruction" on those who disobey Him? Why?
  - How does persecution being "a plain indication of God's righteous judgment" fit into this?

## CHAPTER 2 - WHAT PRECEDES THE SECOND COMING

### Questions from Text:

- Paul does not want the brethren to be shaken. To what does he refer that would have shaken them?
- What must happen before the coming of Jesus?
- What characterizes the “man of lawlessness”?
- Why will God send a delusion? What will it do?
- To what must they hold fast?

### Important Ideas:

Concerning the Day of the Lord, Paul used *present* tense verbs in the previous book (“is come”). This might create some confusion. What Paul says here is in the *perfect* tense (“has come”), implying that they should not be concerned that the Day of the Lord is complete, or finished (possibly believed because Christ left).

Remember, the Day of the Lord does not equal the second coming, though it includes it as part of an overarching idea.

### Questions for Discussion:

- Is it fair for God to send a strong delusion?
- What does it mean that “God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.”?
- How can we have the comfort of God by implementing verse 17?

## CHAPTER 3 – MARCHING ON

### Questions from Text:

- For what two things does Paul want them to pray?
- What three things does Paul command them?
- What characterizes the unruly life?

### Important Ideas:

The word that Paul uses for “unruly” (v. 6, and verbal forms in v. 7, 11) is a military term, calling to mind the idea of a rank-and-file soldier. ἀτάκτως (ataktos) is defined as “*disorderly, irresponsible, not in battle order.*” As a verb, it takes the meaning of “*to neglect one’s duty, fail to discharge obligation.*”

As members of the heavenly army as depicted in Rev. 19:14, there is no room for us if we will not fall in line and carry out our orders.

### Questions for Discussion:

- What characteristics of God are mentioned throughout this letter? What is their importance to us?
- How does chapter three connect to the rest of the book?

## CONCLUSION

Paul's complete message to the Thessalonians, starting in Acts 17 and finishing in this book has been simple.

- The Christ had to suffer...
- Jesus suffered and is the Christ...
- We must suffer for His sake...
- Keep doing what is right...
- And have hope...

Both the first and second letters are encouraging and patient with new disciples in Macedonia. They are also very simple so as to be helpful to every Christian. If we find ourselves wrapped up in the minutiae and the evil business of life, it is wise to slow down and remind ourselves of what matters most. The letters to the Thessalonians are letters that help us do that by extolling the concepts of faith, love, and hope.

Whenever we think we have reached our maximum potential in Christ, remember that we can excel still more. There is always more we can do in our own lives, but there are also countless people that we can offer mentorship and edification to as well. And, if we have the endurance to make it through, following the path Christ laid out for us, we will be prepared for when He comes to claim us.

*O how sweet 'twill be to meet the Lord,  
When He comes in glory, by and by;  
What a song of praise will be outpoured,  
When He comes in glory, by and by.*

*We will have our robes all white as snow,  
When He comes in glory, by and by;  
O be ready with the Lord to go,  
When He comes in glory, by and by.*

*I am longing for that happy day,  
When He comes in glory, by and by;  
For with Him I hope to soar away,  
When He comes in glory, by and by*

*How sweet! How sweet!  
When He comes in the sky!  
What joy! What joy!  
When He comes in glory, by and by.*

- Arthur Westbrook