

1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

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PREFACE TO THE READER

One of the most important elements of a healthy Christian life is regular study of God's word. The Psalmist writes in Psalm 19:7-8 that "*The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.*" I yearn for Christians to reap the rich benefits of scripture study, and to grow in the knowledge and love of God's word through directly engaging with the biblical text. This is why I have chosen to publish bible study questions instead of commentaries. There are many valuable commentaries to help aid your study of scripture, and I recommend using them. For guidance on commentaries visit www.bestcommentaries.com.

However, the focus of this book is to engage you, the reader, and to challenge you to answer relevant questions based on the scripture.

I have in mind three types of users for this book: First, group bible studies. Most of these questions were written for my weekly men's bible study. I recommend that the leader use this resource to prepare beforehand, reading all the questions and picking only five to seven for discussion. Twenty questions would certainly be a lot of material to discuss! For the bible study, each participant could have a copy to follow along. Second, sermon preparation. Asking questions of the text can be very helpful for understanding the flow and point of a passage of scripture. Third, personal bible study. Again, you can gain valuable insights by asking questions of the text.

My hope for these bible study questions is that they would encourage and facilitate Christians' gathering together to study God's word. One day, as Habakkuk 2:14 says, "*the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*" Critical to this prophecy in Habakkuk is our *knowing* about the Glory of God, and this is best achieved through the study of the bible. So let's do our part!

I challenge you, reader, to ask some friends, colleagues, classmates, or fellow church members to join you for a bible study. Ask God to open your eyes to understand the scripture (Psalm 119:18), and step out in faith to spread the knowledge of the Glory of God. May this book enrich your study of God's living and active word (Hebrews 4:12), and may the Lord Jesus Christ bless your bible studies!

SUMMARY OF 1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

The Apostle Paul came to Thessalonica and had a very short time there to preach the gospel and plant a church before the enemies of Christ started a riot and drove Paul from the city. In order to establish this fledgling church in a strong faith, he wrote two epistles filled with timeless words— 1 & 2 Thessalonians. They teach us what the genuine Christian life looks like in the midst of a hostile world filled with spiritual enemies. Paul also gives us vital information about the second coming of Christ and the end of the world. A careful study of these epistles will result in a rich blessing for any who embrace them by faith!

THANKING GOD FOR THE GENUINE CONVERSION OF THE THESSALONIANS

1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-10

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does this chapter show the signs/marks/evidence by which we can know whether a person we are trying to reach is genuinely converted to Christ?
2. What do we learn about repentance from the example of the Thessalonians? How could this chapter help churches be able to identify fruit that comes with repentance? In what way would churches be helped by clearly articulating what genuine repentance looks like?
3. What role does steadfastness or endurance play in the Christian life? Why is endurance in the faith one of the greatest marks of genuine conversion?
4. How does Paul discuss the importance of role modelling in the Christian life? Why is it vital for evangelism for Christians to openly live out their faith?
5. What does this chapter teach us about exponentially growing evangelism, about new converts quickly becoming evangelists?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. This epistle is from three people (Paul, Silas/Silvanus, and Timothy), but three times in the letter, Paul speaks in the first person: 2:18, 3:5, and 5:27. So in some ways, the letter was from Paul, yet he uses “we” 62 times, “us” 20 times, and “our” 26 times in the letter. Why do you think Paul included the other two in the writing of this letter, when he could easily have written it himself? Note: despite the “we” language, I am often going to speak of Paul as the author. (1)
2. As usual, Paul begins an epistle with the greeting, “Grace to you.” Why do you think that greeting is so dear to Paul? What do you think it means? How is reading a NT epistle a “channel of grace” to already converted people? (1)
3. What is the theological basis for thanking God for other Christians? How does a life of faithful prayer for other Christians that is constant and sweetened by overflowing thanksgiving keep those relationships healthy? How could Paul’s example in this matter help strengthen your own prayer life? (2)
4. What does Paul say they continually remembered before God in prayer? (3)
5. What is the significance of the fact that Paul thanks God for the Thessalonians’ hard work and endurance? What does this teach us about the relationship between God’s work in us and our work for God? (3)
6. The three couplets in verse 3 are “work of faith,” “labor of love,” and “steadfastness of hope.” How would you understand the links between work and faith, labor and love, and steadfastness and hope? (3)
7. In the Christian life, how does faith produce work? How does love produce labor? How does hope produce endurance? (3)

8. How would you define Christian hope? How is it different from worldly hope? How can our hope get stronger? How would a stronger hope produce a more vigorous endurance of the trials we face in this world of suffering? (3)
9. What does Paul assert plainly in verse 4? This is the doctrine of election, taught many places in the Bible. For example, in Ephesians 1:4, it says that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. How is it helpful to meditate on the fact that Paul is certain that God chose the Thessalonians? (4)
10. According to verse 5, what is the basis of Paul's certainty that the Thessalonians were chosen by God? What does this teach you about good evidences of conversion? What are the evidences listed in verse 5? (5)
11. What does it mean if the gospel comes to someone in "power"? (5)
12. What do you think Paul meant by saying that the gospel came "in the holy spirit and with full conviction?" What role does the Spirit play in our conversion? (5)
13. Verse 5 mentions "conviction" or "assurance." What is the difference between them? How are these evidences of genuine conversion? (5)
14. Paul next addresses the way he and his team were role models to them, and how the Thessalonians then became role models to others? Why was this a big part of the success of the gospel in Thessalonica and around the world? (5-7)
15. How was the Thessalonians' genuine faith in Christ especially evident in the midst of their suffering and severe trials? How do trials put supernatural hope on display? What role does the "joy of the Holy Spirit" play in this? (6-7)
16. How did the Thessalonians model joy in suffering to other believers in Greece? Why is it easier to suffer when you see others go before you who suffer well? (7)
17. What does Paul say about the reputation of their faith and the advance of the gospel in verse 8? How far did it spread? How does this show the effectiveness of joy and hope-filled evangelism in the midst of suffering and affliction? (8)
18. How is verse 9 a clear description of repentance? How is repentance both a turning from and a turning to? Why is it essential for converts to turn from idols? How is this an issue in our day and age as well? (9)
19. What does it mean to serve the living God? (9)
20. How important is it to eagerly awaiting the second coming of Christ? See 2 Peter 3:12; also the word "looking" in Hebrews 11:10, 11:14, 11:26, 13:14. (10)
21. What does this teach us about Jesus Christ? (10)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul begins his letter to the Thessalonians with a warm greeting, assurance of prayer, and a joyful recounting of the amazing work of grace and conversion God has worked in their hearts and lives.

PAUL'S LOVING MINISTRY TO THE THESSALONIANS
1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-20

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. In Acts 17:1-10, it is plain that Paul was run out of town by his enemies. What slanderous attack does Paul seem to be refuting in chapters 2-3? Why would he need to defend his own reputation in the eyes of the church he planted there? See also Paul's joy-filled reaction to their pleasant memories of him in 3:6-9.
2. Why is role modelling so vital to Christian ministry? How does Paul appeal to his example in this chapter? In what ways is this chapter a defense for Paul's ministry against false accusations made by his enemies?
3. How could meditating on Paul's sufferings for the gospel help prepare American Christians for the challenges of the future?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PAUL'S BOLDNESS IN THE FACE OF STRONG OPPOSITION (VV. 1-2)

1. What false idea is Paul refuting in verse 1? Why is it important that the Church know that Paul had a very clear purpose and goal in coming to Thessalonica? (1)
2. How was Paul's ministry not in vain? What does Paul say about his suffering? How does this show a regular pattern of suffering in gospel ministry? (2)
3. How did Paul display purposeful boldness in proclaiming the gospel? Why does faithfulness in evangelism require courage and purposeful boldness? (2)
4. What does Acts 17:5-9 teach us about the "strong opposition" of Thessalonian Jews to the gospel? How does Acts 17:13 show the level of the determination these Jews of Thessalonica had for stopping Paul? (2)

PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIS LOVING MINISTRY (VV. 3-16)

5. In *The Gospel and the End of Time*, John Stott says Paul portrays himself as a steward (3-4), a mother (5-8), a father (9-12), and a herald (13-16). How do each of these present different aspects of Paul's ministry to the Thessalonians? (3-16)
6. What slanderous attack does Paul refute in verses 3 and 5? How are flattery and greed often motives for false prophets? (3, 5)
7. How is Paul a faithful steward of the gospel according to verse 4? How does seeing yourself as a steward of God's words and God's people help free us from concern about human opinion? (4)
8. What is the difference between flattery and encouragement? Why is flattery such a poisonous tool for evangelists and pastors to use? (5)
9. Why does Paul stress so vigorously how little he sought praise from men? See also Galatians 1:10. How would being overly concerned about human praise cause someone to change his message? (6)

10. How could Paul have been a burden to the Thessalonians, and how did he choose not to? See also 1 Corinthians 9:12, 18. (6)
11. In what ways does Paul say he was like a mother with them? Why is gentle, tender, caring nurture so vital for ministering to new disciples? (7-8)
12. Why is it vital in ministry to share life and not merely the Word of God? How is the same pattern reflected in Jesus and his apostles? (8)
13. What does verse 9 teach us about Paul's role modelling for his disciples? How does it relate to verse 6b and 1 Corinthians 9:12, 18? How does it relate to issues the Thessalonians had themselves with work ethic in 4:11-12? (9)
14. What amazing claim does Paul assert in verse 10? How can the man who wrote Romans 7:14-25 make this claim? Yet, why is such an example essential to fruitful Christian ministry? (10)
15. In verse 11, Paul compares himself to a father. How was this manifested in his care for the Thessalonian Church? (11-12)
16. How is verse 13 a key to being a healthy disciple and church member? (13)
17. What was the result of the seriousness with which the Thessalonians accepted Paul's teaching according to verse 14? How were the Gentile Thessalonian believers just like the Jewish believers in Judea? (14-16)
18. What does Paul say about the Jews in verses 14-16? How would you answer people who say such ideas are "anti-Semitic"? (14-16)

PAUL'S LONGING FOR THE THESSALONIANS (VV. 17-20)

19. How could Paul's Jewish enemies in Thessalonica use the fact that Paul fled from them and never returned to them as proof that he didn't really care for these disciples? How does Paul seek to address that in verses 17-20, and actually on into 3:1-11? (2:17-3:11)
20. What is the theological significance of the fact that Paul says "Satan hindered us..."? How do we harmonize that with the sovereign power of God over events on earth? (18)
21. What does Paul say to encourage the Thessalonians in verses 19-20 and to prove his deep love for them? How are people that we've led to Christ and/or disciple "our crown" at the Second Coming of Christ? How they our "glory and joy"? How should Paul's words here motivate all Christians to be active in evangelism and discipleship? (19-20)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul writes the Thessalonians Christians to refute slanderous accusations made by his Jewish enemies. He reminds them of his loving ministry and holy life among them as proof of his pure motives. He does this to strengthen their commitment to the gospel since they are being attacked by the same Jewish enemies.

PAUL'S JOY IN THE THESSALONIANS' SPIRITUAL HEALTH
1 THESSALONIANS 3:1-13

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. In 2 Corinthians 11, the Apostle Paul lists out in great detail some of the astonishing sufferings he endured to plant churches among the Gentiles. Read 2 Corinthians 11:28-29. How does Paul show a similar level of concern for the Thessalonian church here in 1 Thessalonians 3? What does this show about Paul? What does it show about the threats local churches face in this world?
2. What does Paul's high level of joy at Timothy's encouraging report teach about Christian love?
3. How does Paul pray for the Thessalonians in this chapter? How can we learn from this in our prayers for other Christians, and for the work of missions and church plants around the world?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PAUL'S ANXIETY AND TIMOTHY'S MISSION (VV. 1-5)

1. It seems that Paul's Jewish enemies in Thessalonica were trying to discredit Paul in the eyes of the Thessalonian church. How could the fact that Paul left them so quickly and has never returned to visit them be used against him?
2. What is the connection between 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20 and 3:1-13?
3. What does verse 1 teach about Paul's mental state before sending Timothy? (1)
4. How does Paul describe Timothy, and why did Paul send Timothy back to Thessalonica?(1-5)
5. How does suffering tend to weaken faith? How could someone like Timothy be used by God to strengthen people's faith? (2)
6. What does Paul say about the inevitability of trials in verses 3-4? Why is persecution unavoidable if we want to be truly fruitful in this world? Could it be said that, if we are not being persecuted at all, it's probably because we are not being faithful in some key areas, especially in personal holiness and/or evangelism? How could that insight help us? (3-4)
7. Paul seems to have been under extreme psychological pressure concerning the Thessalonians. What was he concerned about? Is this a valid concern? (5)
8. How does Satan use afflictions and persecutions to cause some people to fall away from their profession of Christian faith? (5)

TIMOTHY'S ENCOURAGING REPORT, AND PAUL'S RELIEF AND JOY (VV. 6-13)

9. How would you characterize the tone of Paul's writing in verses 6-13? What is the reason for such overflowing emotions? (6-13)
10. Why does Paul find tremendous joy in hearing that the Thessalonians remember him kindly? What does their fond memories of him prove about their faith? (6)

11. How is geographical separation between Christians one of the great trials we must undergo in this present age? How does Paul display some of that here in this section? See his words “torn away” in 2:17 and his longing to see them in 3:6. See also Acts 20:36-38. (6)
12. See also this moving account of John Paton, 19th century missionary to the New Hebrides islands, when his beloved and godly father walked with him to say goodbye as he departed forever to serve the Lord:

My dear father walked with me the first six miles of the way. His counsels and tears and heavenly conversation on that parting journey are fresh in my heart as if it had been but yesterday; and tears are on my cheeks as freely now as then, whenever memory steals me away to the scene. For the last half mile or so we walked on together in almost unbroken silence - my father, as was often his custom, carrying hat in hand, while his long flowing yellow hair (then yellow, but in later years white as snow) streamed like a girl's down his shoulders. His lips kept moving in silent prayers for me; and his tears fell fast when our eyes met each other in looks for which all speech was vain! We halted on reaching the appointed parting place; he grasped my hand firmly for a minute in silence, and then solemnly and affectionately said: "God bless you, my son! Your father's God prosper you, and keep you from all evil!" Unable to say more, his lips kept moving in silent prayer; in tears we embraced, and parted. I ran off as fast as I could; and, when about to turn a corner in the road where he would lose sight of me, I looked back and saw him still standing with head uncovered where I had left him - gazing after me. Waving my hat in adieu, I rounded the corner and out of sight in instant. But my heart was too full and sore to carry me further, so I darted into the side of the road and wept for time. Then, rising up cautiously, I climbed the dike to see if he yet stood where I had left him; and just at that moment I caught a glimpse of him climbing the dike and looking out for me! He did not see me, and after he gazed eagerly in my direction for a while he got down, set his face toward home, and began to return - his head still uncovered, and his heart, I felt sure, still rising in prayers for me. I watched through blinding tears, till his form faded from my gaze; and then, hastening on my way, vowed deeply and oft, by the help of God, to live and act so as never to grieve or dishonor such a father and mother as he had given me.
13. How does Timothy's encouraging report help Paul in the midst of the ongoing suffering he was experiencing in his ministry for the Lord? What does he mean by, “For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord.”? (7-8)
14. Why does Paul express such joy in verse 9? What does this teach us about his level of heart commitment to missions? (9)
15. What do verses 10-13 teach us about Paul's prayer life? What are some features of that prayer life that we could imitate? (10-13)
16. Why are the two virtues of love for the brothers and holiness toward God so vital in the ongoing Christian life? (12-13)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul writes of how encouraged he was at Timothy's good report about the Thessalonians' faith.

LIVING, DYING, AND RISING FOR THE GLORY OF GOD
1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-18

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does this chapter help us live lives that maximally glorify God? What specific commands, promises, warnings, and insights do you find in 1 Thessalonians 4 that aid us in holiness and fruitfulness?
2. Paul zeroes in on brotherly love, sexual purity, and hard work in verses 1-12. How do you see these issues being as vital in our day as they were back then?
3. Paul gives some clear instructions to Christians concerning the second coming of Christ. How should meditating on these instructions help us to be encouraged about the future, and especially about facing our own deaths?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

LIVING A LIFE WELL-PLEASING TO GOD (VV. 1-12)

1. In verse 1, Paul reminds the Thessalonians about some earlier instructions he had already given them. Why do you think there is such a need for continual repetition of biblical instruction, even for those faithfully following Christ? (1-2)
2. What is the significance of Christians being both encouraged that they are already obeying, but also being urged to do so “more and more”? (1-2)
3. What is the general topic that Paul is addressing in verses 3-8? How is this topic such a vital one in every generation of the Christian church? How is it specifically urgent for American Christians to focus on this at this time? (3-8)
4. What is God’s will for us in verse 3? How does that assertion motivate you toward holiness? (3)
5. Paul says it is God’s will for us to “abstain from sexual immorality.” As you think about this sin both in the bible and in your own experience with our world, why do you think this is such a dangerous issue for all people? (3)
6. How can Christians take specific steps to live sexually pure lives? (3)
7. Paul says that God wants Christians to know how to control our own bodies in holiness and honor. This is an issue of self-control and self-denial. How can Christians learn this vital lesson? How do the devastating falls of people around us help us to redouble our watchfulness in this area? (4)
8. Paul zeroes in on the “passion of lust” like Gentiles who do not know God. What is Paul talking about? How do we kill lust? How does ongoing failure in this area make it harder and harder as time goes on? In other words, how do bad habits increase the power of temptation over a long period of time? (5)
9. If a Christian never acts on his/her lust, why is it so harmful? How does the following passage help answer the question? And how does it show the seriousness of the battle for sexual holiness? Read Matthew 5:27-30.

10. How does the issue of sexual sin cause some brothers/sisters to wrong each other? What effect does this have on the Body of Christ? How does Proverbs 6 show how devastating this is in a relationship between two friends/neighbors? Read Proverbs 6:34-35.
11. What does God say He will do in this matter in verse 6? (6)
12. What does verse 7 teach us about the Christian life? (7)
13. How does verse 8 show us the seriousness of these commands? (8)
14. What is the next topic Paul brings up? How does the “more and more” aspect of sanctification discussed earlier help us to understand this command? (9-10)
15. What aspiration does Paul set before the Thessalonians? How does it relate to Paul’s “ambition” in Romans 15:20 to preach the gospel where Christ had never been preached before? How does this point to different life callings? (11-12)
16. Why is it vital for Christians to do what they are able to do to provide for themselves and their families, and not be dependent on anyone? (11-12)

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST (VV. 12-18)

17. These are some of the most famous verses in the epistles to the Thessalonians. How does a healthy doctrinal instruction on the future (i.e. our own death, the Second Coming of Christ) help us live daily lives now?
18. Why is it vital for Christians who are grieving the loss of other Christians not to grieve like those who have no hope? (13)
19. What doctrinal insights does Paul give concerning the Second Coming? (14-17)
20. It seems the Thessalonians had come to the false conclusion that those who died before the Second Coming were either lost or at some kind of grave eternal disadvantage. How do these verses cut off that kind of thinking? (14-17)
21. What do we learn from these verses about the “rapture” (being “caught up” in the clouds)? According to these verses, when does the rapture occur? Do these verses imply that the rapture will happen secretly or openly? (14-17)
22. “Someone is doing a U-Turn”! Either the descending Lord (vs. 16) will turn around and go back up to heaven (secret rapture), or the ascending saints will turn around and follow the descending Lord to earth. Which fits these verses better? (16-17)
23. What does Paul command us to do with these ideas? (18)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul instructs the Thessalonians on holy living in light of the Second Coming of Christ, and to not grieve as those who have no hope, for when Christ returns the dead in Christ will rise and meet the Lord.

THE COMING DAY OF THE LORD
1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-11

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this passage teach us about the coming “Day of the Lord”?
2. How are the “children of the light” different from those who are of the darkness? How does this impact how we live?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. What is Paul speaking of when he says the “times and the seasons”? (1)
2. Why would Paul say, “you have no need to have anything written to you” but then write instructions for them? What does this teach us about the need for continual reminder and affirmation about the Christian doctrine that we have learned? (1)
3. What is the “Day of the Lord”? What does it mean that it will come “like a thief in the night”? See also 2 Peter 3:10, Matthew 24:29-31, 36. (2)
4. What does verse 3 tell us about the surprising nature of the second coming of Christ? See also Matthew 24:36-42. What comparison does Jesus make with the days of Noah? How does that inform how we understand verse 3? (3)
5. What is the “sudden destruction” that Paul speaks of? (3)
6. Why is the coming “Day of the Lord” not a surprise for us Christians? (4)
7. What does it mean that we are “children of light” and not of “darkness”? What is the spiritual significance of these words “light” and “darkness”? How does this relate to John 1:4-5, 1:9, 8:12, and 11:9-10? (5)
8. What does Paul mean in verse 6? Surely he is not saying that Christians can never go to sleep to get rest! Explain in your own words what you think Paul means here? (6)
9. Paul twice mentions that we must be “sober”? Why is sobriety, both with respect to alcohol but also life itself, so important for us Christians? (6-8)
10. How can twenty-first century western Christians put into practice Paul’s command to be sober and be children of the day? (6-8)
11. Paul uses armor imagery to illustrate the power of faith and love, and the hope of our salvation, very similar to Ephesians 6:10-17. How are faith and love like a breastplate? How is the hope of our salvation like a helmet? How do these keep us from taking part in the deeds of darkness? (9)
12. What does it mean to be “destined for wrath”? What does it mean to be “destined...to obtain salvation”? (9)
13. Who does Paul say is doing the destining in verse 9? What does this teach us about God’s sovereignty? (9)

14. Paul speaks of obtaining salvation through Jesus Christ as if it is in the future, but he is writing to justified believers in Jesus. What part of our salvation is still yet to come? (9)
15. What is the connection between Jesus dying for us, and us living with him? (10)
16. How does the coming day of the Lord and our future salvation provide encouragement for us? (11)
17. How could you use this text (verses 1-11) to encourage and build up a fellow believer? (11)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul instructs the Thessalonian church about the impending Day of the Lord, and the need to live godly, upright lives as children of the light, awaiting final salvation.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR A HEALTHY CHURCH LIFE
1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-28

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What do these verses teach about the elements of a healthy church life?
2. Why is it vital for the church to have an attitude of respect and honor for the elders who shepherd them well?
3. What do these verses teach about genuine Christian fellowship and accountability?
4. What does this passage teach us about corporate worship?
5. How would consistent obedience to verses 16-18 improve your Christian life? How would it improve your witness to a lost world?
6. How does the doxology of verses 23-24 give you assurance in your Christian life?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

RESPECTING GODLY ELDERS (vv. 12-13)

1. How do these verses describe church leaders? What do these descriptions teach us about faithful Christian ministry? (12-13)
2. What do verses 12-13 command Christians to be/do concerning their elders? (12-13)
3. Why do many church members carry themselves in an attitude of disrespect toward church leaders? How do churches tend to go to extremes when it comes to either being dominated by leaders or totally disrespecting them? (13)
4. How do the words “Live at peace with each other” fit into this context? (13)

DEALING FAITHFULLY WITH SINFUL BROTHERS (vv. 14-15)

5. What varieties of sin are addressed in these two verses? (14-15)
6. How is idleness a problem in the Christian life? How might it seem to have been a specific problem among the Thessalonians? See also 1 Thess. 4:11-12, 2 Thess. 3:6-15. (14)
7. What does Paul command be done with the idle? (14)
8. Who are the “timid (fainthearted)”? How would this come up in the Christian life? What does Paul say to do for them? (14)
9. Who are the “weak”? What are different kinds of weakness in the Christian church? What does Paul say to do for them? (14)
10. What role does patience have in dealing with various sinners in the Body of Christ? (14)

11. Why is it vital for Christians to be forgiving and to refuse to be bitter or seek revenge, especially toward other Christians? (15)
12. How would you define kindness (doing good) toward one another? To whom does Paul command it here? (15)

ELEMENTS OF A LIFE OF HEALTHY WORSHIP (VV. 16-22, 27)

13. Though these verses could be seen to be dealing with one's own personal walk with Christ, it is better to see it in terms of corporate worship. What are elements of corporate worship in verses 16-22 and 27?
14. What is it vital for the Christian life to be characterized by joy? Why should a strong theme of joy be evident in corporate worship? Why do so many Christian services seem so joyless? (16)
15. Paul commands the Thessalonian church to "pray without ceasing." How could this be a part of an individual Christian's daily life? How could it be a part of the corporate life of a healthy church? (17)
16. How would consistent obedience to verse 18 improve a Christian's personal life? How would it enrich corporate worship? (18)
17. What topic is Paul addressing in verses 19-20? Are these verses still relevant today? What is "prophecy"? What is "quenching the Spirit?" How would you understand that expression? (19-20)
18. Why is it a danger to accept prophecies unquestioningly? How do these verses from 1 John 4:1-3 help us understand what Paul is talking about here?
19. What does Paul tell them to do with the prophecies? (21-22)
20. How does verse 27 fit into an understanding of healthy Christian worship? (27)

FINAL DOXOLOGY AND FAREWELL (VV. 23-28)

21. This doxology (23-24) has some amazing theology behind it. What do these verses imply about God's sovereignty in salvation? How do they help give us courage that we will finish our Christian race? (23-24)
22. How do these verses also give us a sense of God's commitment to our personal holiness? (23-24)
23. What do these verses teach us about God's plan for comprehensive salvation of human persons? (23)
24. What do the final greetings teach you about Paul or about the church?

III. SUMMARY:

Paul gives clear instructions concerning a healthy church life to the Thessalonians.

THE REVELATION OF THE GLORY OF JESUS CHRIST
2 THESSALONIANS 1:1-12

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How do you see this book as a display of God's control over history? Why is it vital for Christians to see history as the unfolding of a carefully worked out plan by God rather than random occurrences that have no meaning whatsoever?
2. There were three types of people troubling the Thessalonian church: persecutors (chapter 1); false teachers (chapter 2); and idlers (chapter 3). How does this book of 2 Thessalonians seek to address each? How do these same threats challenge the church today?
3. How does this chapter display the central theme of the glory of Jesus Christ? See verse 7, 10, 8-9, 12. How does it motivate you to live for Christ's glory?
4. How does this chapter strengthen and instruct Christians who face persecution?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S EFFECTIVE GRACE (VV. 3-4)

1. Paul says we ought always to give thanks to God for the spiritual growth of others. Why?(3)
2. What does Paul thank God for concerning the Thessalonians in verses 3-4? How does the thanksgiving section of 2 Thessalonians compare with that in 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3?
3. How does the idea of our Christian faith increasing both encourage and challenge you? (3)
4. Paul says that the love they have "every one of you for one another" is increasing. What is the relationship between the "one" and the "all" in a healthy local church? (3)
5. Paul says that he has been boasting about them to other churches. Given that he clearly ascribes the spiritual growth of the Thessalonians to God (because he thanks God for it), how do you understand the boasting in verse 4? How does it relate to 1 Corinthians 1:31, "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord"? (4)
6. What does Paul specifically boast of concerning the Thessalonians? How is their endurance in persecution clear evidence of the genuineness of their faith? (4)

ASSERTING GOD'S JUSTICE FOR THE PERSECUTED (VV. 5-10)

7. The Thessalonian's flourishing in the midst of persecution is "evidence" (proof, clear indication) of the righteous judgment of God. Given that many Christians who are undergoing persecution and have lost property, liberty, or loved ones are strongly tempted to question the justice of God, what does Paul mean? (5)
8. How does their spiritual flourishing in such persecution help prove them "worthy of the Kingdom of God"? Since Paul would never assert that any

human achievement can merit heaven, what does Paul mean by persecuted Christians being “considered worthy”? (5)

9. What does Paul assert at the beginning of verse 6? Why is it vital for persecuted Christians to keep remember this? See also Luke 18:7-8. (6)
10. What justice does Paul promise on behalf of God in verse 6? How does it relate to Romans 12:19? (6)
11. What relief does God provide for His persecuted children in verse 7? When will it come? (7)
12. What does verse 7 teach about the Second Coming of Christ? What is the significance of the word “revealed” concerning Christ? What does the “flaming fire” of Christ’s coming teach us about God? See Psalm 18:6-9. (7-8)
13. Who will be punished at the time of the Second Coming of Christ? What is the significance of the word “obey” when connected with the gospel? (8)
14. What does verse 9 teach us about their punishment? What are the different aspects of eternal condemnation taught in this verse? How does meditating on hell help those who are being viciously persecuted? (8-9)
15. What does verse 10 teach about heaven? How does the Second Coming result in the people of God marveling? How does it result in the saints being glorified? How does this give a picture of glorification? See Matthew 13:43. (10)
16. How does Paul give the Thessalonians a sweet assurance of their salvation in verse 10? (10)

PRAYING FOR GOD’S POWER (VV. 11-12)

17. Why do these issues (persecution, perseverance, the Second Coming of Christ, retribution by God on the persecutors, glory for the saints) cause Paul to be constant in prayer for the Thessalonians? (11)
18. What does Paul pray for in verse 11? How could this instruct us in our prayer lives? (11)
19. How does God make us “worthy of his calling”? See question 8. (11)
20. What does it mean when Paul prays for God to “fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power?” How is the power of God involved in that? (11)
21. What is the ultimate result of their fruitfulness in verse 12? How should a passion for the glory of Jesus’ name motivate all our “good purposes and faith-filled acts”? (12)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul prays for the persecuted Thessalonian Christians that they will trust God’s justice and look forward to Christ’s coming, being fruitful in His service until then.

THE “MAN OF LAWLESSNESS”
2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-17

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this section teach us about the future of the world?
2. Why is it important to understand the doctrine of the “Antichrist?” How would careful preparation help future generations stand firm when the time comes?
3. How does this section display the awesome power of Christ in his second coming glory?
4. How does standing firm in doctrine lead to a fruitful life of good works?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS (VV. 1-12)

1. In verses 1-3, Paul is addressing a false teaching that was hurting the health of the Thessalonian church. What was it? (1-3)
2. What does it mean to be “shaken” or “alarmed”? Why would the idea that the “coming of our Lord” has already come be so distressing to the church? (1-3)
3. How were the false teachers seeking to use Paul’s authority to promote their false doctrine? How does verse 2 give us insight into 2 Thessalonians 3:17? (1-2)
4. What does Paul teach about the Day of the Lord in verse 3? How do you reconcile the necessary sequence presented by Paul with the command of Jesus to be constantly ready for his return? See Matthew 24:44. (3)
5. What two things does Paul say must happen before the Day of the Lord? (3)
6. What four things does Paul say about the “man” who is coming first? John Stott gives him four names: 1) “the Antinomian” (“Lawless One” hostile to all rule of law); 2) “the Doomed” (who will be destroyed by Christ); 3) “the Enemy” (who opposes everything that is called God); 4) “the Climber” (who exalts himself over God). How do you see these coming together in one individual? (3-4)
7. The Apostle John is the only person who uses the familiar term “Antichrist.” What do these verses teach about this: 1 John 2:18, 1 John 2:22, 1 John 4:3.
8. How does the verbiage of 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 relate to these verses from Daniel? Daniel 7:8, Daniel 7:24-26, Daniel 11:36-37. (3-4)
9. How does the “man of lawlessness” setting himself up in God’s temple connect with our age in which there is no temple and in which animal sacrifice has been forever abolished? How do we understand Paul calling it “God’s temple”? (4)
10. How does all this relate to the “abomination of desolation”? Daniel 9:27, Daniel 11:30-31, Matthew 24:15-16.
11. The Antichrists throughout history have tended to be of two sorts: political and religious. Explain how these two come together in one person at the end?

12. What insight does verse 5 give into Paul's teaching ministry, specifically how detailed it was? How does this help pastors/teachers today? (5)
13. What difficult idea does Paul introduce in verses 6-7? What restraining force is holding the man of lawlessness back? How is it removed? Why is it important for the lawless one to be revealed "in his time" and not too soon? (6-7)
14. What is the "mystery of lawlessness"? How does it relate to the idea of the "spirit of the Antichrist" in 1 John 4:3? (7)
15. Paul asserts that there is one who "restrains" the secret power of lawlessness. What do you think this refers to? What does Paul say will happen to the one who holds it back? (7)
16. One explanation of verse 7 is that it refers to human government. How could that interpretation fit? What will happen after this restraining force is "out of the way"? (7-8)
17. What does Paul say will happen to the lawless one? How will the Lord Jesus Christ defeat him? When? (8)
18. How does the Lord's will overthrowing of the lawless one with the breath of his mouth and the splendor of his coming relate to Revelation 19:15, 21? (8)
19. What does verse 9 teach us about the coming of the lawless one? How do you account for the power of the lawless one to work miraculous signs? How does it relate to these verses: Matthew 24:24, Revelation 13:13-14, Revelation 16:14.
20. What do verses 10-12 teach us about the effectiveness of these counterfeit signs and wonders? Who will believe them? What do we learn here about God's purposes in the counterfeit signs and wonders? (10-12)

STANDING FIRM IN DOCTRINE AND GOOD WORKS (VV. 13-17)

21. How does Paul contrast the ones who will be drawn into the deception of the lawless one with the Thessalonian Christians in verse 13? (13)
22. What do verses 13-14 teach us about God's sovereignty in salvation? How do you see a partnership between God's activity and human response? (13-14)
23. What is God's ultimate purpose in salvation according to verse 14? (14)
24. How does Paul exhort them in verse 15? (15)
25. What does the doxology in 16-17 teach us about God's ongoing work in already saved people? Why is encouragement so vital in the Christian life? (16-17)
26. What is the relationship between encouragement/hope/strength and the doing of good deeds? (17)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul prepares the Thessalonian Christians for the coming of the antichrist.

OBEYING AND SPREADING THE GOSPEL
2 THESSALONIANS 3:1-18

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this chapter teach about the rapid spread of the gospel to unbelievers?
2. What does it teach about the need churches have to obey the gospel themselves?
3. What do you learn here about the danger of idleness (laziness)? What remedies does Paul give the church in reference to idle people?
4. What does this chapter teach about church discipline?
5. What benefits do you glean from Paul's words of benediction at the end of the chapter?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PRAYER FOR EVANGELISTIC EFFECTIVENESS AND PROTECTION FROM ATTACK (VV. 1-5)

1. What does Paul ask the Thessalonians to pray for concerning him? (1)
2. Notice the interplay between God's sovereignty and human responsibility in evangelism: "pray for us that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored..." How do you put all those elements together? (1)
3. Why is it vital for the gospel to spread rapidly? Why does speed matter in evangelism? (1)
4. What does it mean for the gospel message to be held in honor? Why is that very much the issue with successful evangelism? How does it relate to the first petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Hallowed be your name"? How does such a prayer show God's sovereignty even over the hearts of unbelievers? (1)
5. What else does Paul pray for in verse 2? Why is it necessary to pray for ongoing protection for missionaries and evangelists to be protected from wicked and evil men? (2)
6. What is the significance of the assertion, "Not all have faith?" How does it relate to Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God..."? (2)
7. How is verse 3 very comforting to all who yearn to spread the gospel in the face of strong opposition? (3)
8. Notice that Paul says that the Lord is faithful to strengthen and protect the Thessalonians. One would have expected "us" in verse 3. Why does Paul point the Thessalonians to God's faithfulness in protecting them from Satan's attacks? (3)

9. Who is “the Evil One”? Why is it important for us to be aware of the threats from him and of God’s greater power to protect us from his attacks? (3)
10. How would verse 4 have been an encouragement to the Thessalonians? How would it encourage you to hear it in reference to yourself? (4)
11. How is obedience really the issue Paul’s addressing in verse 4? (4)
12. What does Paul pray for the Thessalonians in verse 5? What is the significance of the verb “direct” when it comes to our hearts? How does the heart have a direction? How is God able to affect the direction of our hearts? (5)
13. What does Paul want the direction of our hearts to be in verse 5? Why are these virtues vital in evangelism? (5)

WARNING AGAINST IDLENESS (VV. 6-15)

14. What issue does Paul address in verses 6-15? Why is idleness such a problem in the life of the church? (6-15)
15. Paul addresses the problem of idleness in six steps. What does he first tell the Thessalonians generally about themselves in verses 4-5? How could that relate to the idleness issue of verses 6-15? (4-5)
16. Secondly, what does Paul command the non-idle Thessalonian Christians to do in reference to those who are idle? How is this a powerful form of church discipline? (6)
17. Thirdly, how does Paul present his own example as a role model for them to follow? See also 1 Thessalonians 2:9. How is the power of example vital when it comes to an issue like this? (7-9)
18. Fourthly, how does Paul refer to the principle he laid down for them? What is that rule? How is obedience to Paul’s teaching a strong remedy to idleness? (10)
19. Fifthly, how does Paul directly command the idlers among them? What does he command them to do? (11-13)
20. Sixthly, what does Paul command in reference to those who may stubbornly disobey his instructions here? What is Paul’s goal in this command? (14-15)

PAUL’S PERSONAL, FINAL BENEDICTION (VV. 16-18)

21. What does Paul include in his benedictions for the Thessalonians in verses 16 and 18? How could all churches for all time benefit from these blessings? (16, 18)
22. What does verse 17 teach us about Paul and his ministry? (17)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul writes final instructions concerning prayer for evangelistic success and warnings about idleness.



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