

2 Thessalonians

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Introduction

Second Thessalonians, written approximately 53AD to the church in Thessalonians. The Christians in Thessalonica were grateful to God for Paul's first letter, as he commended them on their faith, their labor of love, and taught them the deeper things pertaining to the Rapture. But this church, although know throughout the whole region for their faith, was not loved and respected by all for their faith, in fact they were being persecuted for their faith in Christ. Can you relate to that today? This persecution and tribulation, left this model church with many questions, and as we will read in chapter two, the main reason for the confusion and troubling was due to false teachers telling them erroneous things, some even sending letters signing Paul's name to them.

The Theme and purpose of this book:

(2 Thessalonians 2:1 NKJV) Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

(2 Thessalonians 2:2 NKJV) not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

(2 Thessalonians 2:3 NKJV) Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

The persecution for this church grew so bad that some believers thought that they were living in the times of the Great Tribulation, that they had missed the Rapture. When the letter arrived claiming to be from Paul, stating that the Day of the Lord was actually present, fear and confusion entered many.

Other believers concluded that since the Lord's Second Coming was so near, they ought to quit their jobs and spend time waiting for Him. This meant that the other members were under an extra burden to care for them. Satan was working overtime, as a lion, he was seeking to devour (1 Peter 5:7-8), and as the serpent, he was seeking to deceive (2 Cor 11:3).

It was in response to these needs that Paul writes them this second letter. He began with their most pressing need, the persecution they were experiencing because of their faith. Then he addresses the Day of the Lord and the Anti-christ, and then he address what they are to be doing while they wait.

So the outline for this book:

Chapter 1 – Encouragement in Persecution and Tribulation

Chapter 2 – Exposing the Anti-Christ

Chapter 3 – Exhortation While We Wait

To recap the history of this church, Paul himself founded the church in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9).

(Acts 17:1 NKJV) Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.

(Acts 17:2 NKJV) Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

(Acts 17:3 NKJV) explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ."

(Acts 17:4 NKJV) And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.

(Acts 17:5 NKJV) But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

(Acts 17:6 NKJV) But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too."

(Acts 17:7 NKJV) "Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king; Jesus."

(Acts 17:8 NKJV) And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things.

(Acts 17:9 NKJV) So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

Paul was originally brought to this area of Macedonia by a vision given to him from the Lord. Macedonia is the area we call Greece today.

(Acts 16:6 KJV) Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

(Acts 16:7 KJV) After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

(Acts 16:8 KJV) And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

(Acts 16:9 KJV) And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

(Acts 16:10 KJV) And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

In Greece they first went to Philippi, then after being driven out of there, they went west about 50 miles to Thessalonica. Paul was only in the city of Thessalonica a short time, just 3 weeks (3 Sabbaths) but in those short three weeks a church was birthed. As the story is told to us in Acts 16 Paul was imprisoned in Philippi, and then miraculously freed from jail - only to be kicked out of the city. Then he came to Thessalonica and after three weeks of prosperous ministry, he had to flee from an angry mob. The charge against him was that he turned their world upside down (Acts 17:6). He then moved on to Berea - again enjoying several weeks of ministry, but soon was driven out by the same Thessalonians mob after they heard he was there. His next stop was Athens, where he preached a classic sermon but had mixed results. By the time he came to Corinth, he was in weakness, in fear and in much trembling (1 Corinthians 2:3). Paul was a very discouraged missionary!

(1 Corinthians 2:3 KJV) And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

No doubt he was greatly concerned about the churches he had just founded - how were they doing? While at Corinth, Silas and Timothy came to him from Thessalonica with great news: the church there was going strong, and Paul got so excited that he dashed off this letter to the Thessalonians, probably his first letter to any church. He wrote it just a few months after he had first established the church in Thessalonica. After writing and sending this letter, Paul enjoyed a sustained and fruitful ministry in Corinth - and eventually returned to the Thessalonians.

Paul writes (1 Thessalonians) to them to encourage them, to commend them for their faith, to continue in their labor of love, and to remain hopeful of the imminent return of Jesus Christ.

(1 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV) remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

Now it is a year later and Paul is writing them again:

2 Thessalonians 1

Encouragement in Persecution and Tribulation

We will be looking at 4 applications that come from times of persecution and tribulation in our lives. Four areas God wants us to recall in our minds when we are going through persecution.

The Growth in Persecution (1:1-4)
The Proof in Persecution (1:5)
The Repayment for Persecution (1:6-9)
The Reward for Suffering Persecution (1:10-12)

Paul writes this church in Thessalonica to remind them of these things.

1. The Growth in Persecution (1:1-4)

(2 Thessalonians 1:1 NKJV) Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

(2 Thessalonians 1:2 NKJV) Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(2 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV) We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,

(2 Thessalonians 1:4 NKJV) so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,

So often I find myself praying for God to keep me from trials and persecution. But the fact is, I know that it is those very things that produce the Christ like qualities in me. I can look back over my walk with the Lord, and I can see the greatest periods of spiritual growth came during my trails and hardships. If you want to a gem for Jesus, a diamond for the kingdom, you will have to go through hard times. Do you know what a diamond is, it is a piece of worthless coal, that has been put under tremendous amount of pressure over numerous years under considerable heat.

If you want to shine brightly, sparkle for the Lord, there is no other way. That is just the way it is, our flesh will not allow it any other way.

Paul commends them again for their faith and love. Even through the hard times they were enduring, they grew in love and faith. They didn't let the trials of life quench the spirit, they continued to love one another. So too should that be our story church, that trials will not turn us against one another, but to one another, that we will comfort and encourage each other in and through the hard times.

But, something is missing here for the model church, you remember the outline for 1 Thessalonians, that is why it was important that we memorized it, it was in verse three:

(1 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV) remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

It's a year later, and Paul is commending them still for their faith and love, but notice, not their "hope". This church has lost the hope of the imminent return of Jesus Christ, the Rapture, of Him meeting them in the air. They quit living life backwards. The secret of life: Live life backwards, when you realize you will spend forever in heaven, and you have that in your mind and in your heart, then you work back from that point and life makes tremendous sense. Tragedy, difficulties, why is this happening, it all makes sense when we work backwards from heaven. We know the big picture - Christ Wins. We know this is preparing us to rule and reign with Christ during the

millennial reign. We studied Revelation we know the craziness the world will go through for that seven-year period, and we know that it things will continue to get worse leading up to that. We can relax when everyone is bummed and depressed because we know the big picture. We have perspective in the face of tragedy and trials, while the world may be freaking out. Unfortunately the model church lost their hope, and now in the midst of trials and persecution, they are troubled and confused; this my friends will always be the resultant when you lose the hope of His imminent return, you will be troubled and confused.

Faith will take care of your past, that your sins are forgiven and you will spend eternity with Jesus. Hope takes care of your future that He is on the throne, and that at any moment he may come for me, that good is coming no matter how rotten things are at the present. Faith and Hope free me up to just love today. Faith and Hope allow me to love in the present.

This church lost their hope, and are troubled and confused for it.

(2 Thessalonians 1:4 NKJV) so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,

This is tribulation, not the Great Tribulation. The Great Tribulation is God's Wrath on a Christ rejecting world, but the church is not appointed to that wrath. This church thought they were going through the Great Tribulation, that they had missed the Rapture and were living in the 7 year period called the great Tribulation.

Remember the The Reason for the Rapture

(1 Thessalonians 5:9 NKJV) For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Thessalonians 5:10 NKJV) who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

This wrath is meant for those who have rejected the Lord, this is the reason for the Rapture, to take His children out before he pours His wrath out. We experienced God's wrath on the cross, but Jesus took our place, that should have been me on that cross. The wrath I experience today is all from Satan who is the Prince of this world, as we live in a world that says I don't need you God to rule over me, I'm just fine without you. God's wrath will come against them in the seven year tribulation period.

*(Revelation 6:16 KJV) And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:
(Revelation 6:17 KJV) For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*

Recall our study on the Rapture, If my house was infected with termites and I had to fumigate, even if my kids were being a bit rebellious or difficult, I would still make sure they were out of the house before the tent went up and the gas pumped it. Therefore if we earthly parents are concerned about our children's safety, how much more is our heavenly Father concerned about the safety of His children.

Before the Iraqi war, America called all their ambassadors out of Iraq.

(2 Corinthians 5:20 NKJV) Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

They forgot what Paul told them in his last letter:

(1 Thessalonians 5:21 NKJV) Test all things; hold fast what is good.

They forgot, how often we forget, how often we don't hold fast, test all things, and then we are troubled and confused.

2. The Proof in Persecution (1:5)

(2 Thessalonians 1:4 NKJV) so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, (2 Thessalonians 1:5 NKJV) which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer;

The fact you are suffering is proof that you are part of the kingdom; whether it is people attacking you for your faith, or Satan working against you in the unseen realm of spiritual warfare, rejoice because it is proof that you are the Kings Kid.

(2 Timothy 3:12 NKJV) Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

The beauty of it is that it falls in the context of you know you are living in the last days:

(2 Timothy 3:1 KJV) This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

(2 Timothy 3:2 KJV) For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

(2 Timothy 3:3 KJV) Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

(2 Timothy 3:4 KJV) Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

(2 Timothy 3:5 KJV) Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

(2 Timothy 3:6 KJV) For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

(2 Timothy 3:7 KJV) Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

What did Paul tell them about the uncontrollable that happens in our life, as we travel on this earth, through this life, as we ravel to heaven.

(1 Thessalonians 5:16 NKJV) Rejoice always,

(1 Thessalonians 5:17 NKJV) pray without ceasing,

(1 Thessalonians 5:18 NKJV) in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

It doesn't say give thanks FOR everything give thanks, but IN everything. We don't give thanks for the loses, but in the loses we can give thanks because we know that God is still in control and He will still do great things through the loss. Gang we really do not know what is best for us. IF God gave me everything I asked for, and kept me from every trial I begged out of, my life would be a mess right now, I would totally be in the wrong place, with the wrong people, doing the wrong thing. It was and is the trials that make and have made me what I am. Therefore, after years of experiences this, I can apply what Paul said we are to do with the uncontrollable comes in our life.

(1 Thessalonians 5:16 NKJV) Rejoice always,

Again I can never say this enough, know this Christian, God is always for you, no matter how bleak the situation is, even if it is your fault, He is still for you and desiring to make all things work together for good in your life.

(Romans 8:28 NKJV) And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

God is on the throne, when I remember that, then everything comes into perspective, and I can fix my eyes on Him, not my circumstances.

We don't always know the rest of the story, we think the circumstances we are in are the end of all, nothing good will come out of it, but we don't see how God may be putting you in a place or position for something better to come along.

People are persecuating you, rejoice, it means you are part of the kingdom. If no one can tell the difference, then you should be concerned.

(Matthew 5:10 KJV) Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 5:11 KJV) Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

(Matthew 5:12 KJV) Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

(John 15:20 KJV) Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

(John 15:21 KJV) But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

3. The Repayment for Persecution (1:6-9)

(2 Thessalonians 1:6 NKJV) since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,

(2 Thessalonians 1:7 NKJV) and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

(2 Thessalonians 1:8 NKJV) in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(2 Thessalonians 1:9 NKJV) These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

Don't repay evil for evil, for the Lord will take vengeance on those who do evil to you.

(Romans 12:19 NKJV) Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

When the Lord returns, all things will be set straight. Maybe that person, that boss, that loved one has wronged you greatly, there is coming a day when the Lord comes back in a flame of fire, and will take vengeance.

The word vengeance must not be confused with revenge. The purpose of vengeance is to satisfy God's holy law; the purpose of revenge is to satisfy a personal grudge. God does not hold a grudge against lost sinners. Quite the contrary, He sent His Son to die for them, and He pleads with them to return to Him. But if sinners prefer to "to know not God, and obey not the Gospel" (2 Thess 1:8), there is nothing left for God to do but judge them.

God's standard is perfection, any imperfection can not have fellowship with Him. He is too pure to fellowship with impurity for He is the Holy God.

(Habakkuk 1:13 NKJV) You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?

(Isaiah 59:1 NKJV) Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. (Isaiah 59:2 NKJV) But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.

The last thing God wants to do is pour His wrath out upon this world, but He will have to do it in the end to purify the world. If God allowed the unbeliever and unrepentant into heaven, they would pollute and defile heaven, and heaven would no longer be heaven because impurity causes destruction.

Proof, look around you and watch how man is destroying man, and polluting this world. In fact if God did not cut these days short, we are told that man would eventually destroy each other.

(Matthew 24:22 KJV) And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

When we remember that this is their destiny unless they repent, our heart should break for them, and we should reach out to them, that we might snatch them from the fire to come. This is why Jesus said pray for your enemies.

(Matthew 5:44 KJV) But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

4. The Reward for Suffering Persecution (1:10-12)

(2 Thessalonians 1:10 NKJV) when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

(2 Thessalonians 1:11 NKJV) Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power,

(2 Thessalonians 1:12 NKJV) that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Read the first three verses in chapter 2 for context:

(2 Thessalonians 2:1 NKJV) Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

(2 Thessalonians 2:2 NKJV) not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

(2 Thessalonians 2:3 NKJV) Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

Notice verse 11, counted worthy of THIS calling. This statement comes in the context of persecution and tribulation. It is hard to grasp, but God says you have to be special to receive persecution.

When Peter and the apostles were beaten for their witness, they rejoiced that they were worthy to suffer shame for His name:

(Acts 5:41 KJV) And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

Suffering, trials, persecution, and tribulations, all those lead to us bringing Him glory, and there will be a reward for that.

In chapter two, the man of sin comes on to the scene, the Anti-Christ. But before he comes we must go. That is our reward for going through these trails and tribulations, persecutions and sufferings, because will stand before the King, and we will return with the King; and I believe that we are the generation that will not see death, but fly in the Rapture.

(Romans 8:18 KJV) For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

He is coming for His Bride, and if you can grasp this, He is going to serve you for seven years, while hell is on earth, the Creator of the Universe is going to be serving you in love, a seven year honeymoon. What do you say, a 7 year honeymoon, tell me more.

The Wedding Feast

June—the season of weddings! But no wedding can hold a candle to the wedding in the passage before us. Following the description of the Tribulation in Revelation chapters 6-19, we come to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

“Wait a minute,” you say, “if the Book of Revelation does indeed flow in chronological order, since the Church is raptured in chapter 4 to begin her seven-year honeymoon with the Lord, why does the Marriage Feast not take place until chapter 19?”

The answer lies in an understanding of the Jewish marriage tradition, which comprised three stages... The Engagement, The Betrothal, and The Wedding itself.

The Engagement

Historically, Jewish children would often be engaged by the age of two or three—sometimes before they were even born. That is, families, which shared the same values and social standing, would say, “If you have a daughter and I have a son, let’s agree right now that they will marry each other.

You see, the Jewish people looked at marriage as far too important to be left up to the decision-making skills of young adults. So it was up to the father specifically to arrange with other fathers to whom his son or daughter would be engaged.

Scripture records a few cases, however, when men chose their own brides. But every marriage ended in heartache or disaster...

Against his father’s wishes, Esau married an Ishmaelite (Genesis 28:8-9).

Jacob fell in love with Rachel at first sight, but ended up working for her for seven years before unknowingly marrying her sister (Genesis 29).

Samson “loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah” (Judges 16:4).

Since the result of a man choosing his own wife without the directive of his father often resulted in tragedy or difficulty, it became the norm for the father to select his child’s spouse.

The Betrothal

The engagement led to the betrothal—usually between the ages of twelve and fifteen for a young lady. At this point, bride and groom would perhaps meet for the first time, as the father of the groom would negotiate a ‘mohar,’ or the bride price. The price would be based upon three variables:

First, it would be predicated upon the wealth and worth of the groom’s father. If the father of the groom was a rich man, he would pay a high price so as not to look like a cheapskate.

Secondly, the price would be determined by the bride’s worth. If she was attractive or otherwise gifted, her bride price would be higher.

Thirdly, the price was based upon the groom’s work. That is, in some cases it was up to the groom to pay the price.

Because Jacob chose his own bride he paid for her himself with seven years of labor (Genesis 29:18).

He who marries my daughter must conquer the enemy city of Kirjath-sepher, declared Caleb. Othniel took the challenge and won (Joshua 15:16).

A Gentile named Shechem who fell in love with Jacob’s daughter, Dinah, was informed her price would be the circumcision of himself and all of the men in his city as a sign of identification with the Jews (Genesis 34:15)

A portion of the bride price would go to the bride to use as security in the event she was divorced or widowed. This explains why Rachel and Leah accused their uncle Laban of devouring their money (Genesis 31:15).

The remainder of the bride price went to the bride father in compensation for the fact that, unlike a son, his daughter wouldn't be able to carry on his name, help defend him, or take over the family business.

After at least a portion of the bride price was laid upon the table, a contract would be signed to further validate the agreement. Then, the prospective bride and groom would sip from a single cup of wine, at which point they were legally betrothed.

For the following year, the couple would not drink together, drink of the vine, nor live together. The bride would begin to wear a veil, signifying she was taken. She would also begin to prepare her wedding dress, sometimes from material provided by the groom (Ezekial 16:10).

Meanwhile the groom would begin construction on what is called in Hebrew "a little mansion" – which is a room built onto his father's house. When the father decided the preparations were complete, his son, wearing a crown, would be sent off to his wedding (Song of Solomon 3:11).

The Wedding

Although the bride didn't know the exact day of her wedding, she knew it would most likely be in autumn to allow for the completion of harvest, and that it would most likely be on a Wednesday. Wednesday was the day couples got married because Thursday was the day the courts were opened. If it was discovered on her wedding day that the bride was not a virgin, she could easily be divorced the next day.

As the preparation of her "little mansion neared completion, the bride would begin to gather her friends to await the arrival of her groom.

On the day of his wedding, the groom and his friends—particularly his best man—would walk through the streets with trumpets blaring, taking the most circuitous route to the bride's house. Already attired in her wedding dress, when the bride heard the sounding of the trumpet, she would arise and receive a blessing from her father. Then she would run out the door to be met by the groom in the streets.

Together, they would make their way to the "huppah"—the four-postered canopy under which they would be married. The ceremony itself consisted not of vows, which were Roman and Greek in tradition, but simply a reading of the contract which had been drawn up a year before, along with a blessing.

The procession would then continue on to the "little mansion" where the best man would stand outside the door while the marriage was consummated. Why would he stand outside the door? To wait for word from the groom that the bride was a virgin—as evidenced by a blood-spotted bed sheet. If the bride were indeed a virgin, the wedding celebration would continue for seven days. If not, the guests would go home, and the bride would face either divorce or death by stoning.

Although seven days spent in an addition to one's father's house while friends and family partied just outside the door may not sound like the ideal honeymoon to us, in the Jewish culture, being waited on for a week was glorious. You see, this would be the only time in their entire lives when the bride and groom would do no labor. Remember, there were no vacations in those days—no holiday cruises, no jets, no Maui. The one and only time people were able to kick back was during their marriage week. During this week, the bride would never be seen. The groom, on the other

hand, would occasionally come out and greet the guests before bringing back food and gifts to his bride.

After seven days, the groom would present his bride to his family, friends, and community, at which time the marriage feast would begin.

Looking again at this process, it becomes a picture-perfect analogy of our Bridegroom's relationship with us...

Just as the Jewish father chose whom his child would marry, it's mind-boggling to realize that our heavenly Father elected us to be the bride for His Son (1 Peter 1:2). As proof of this intent, He paid the bride price, based first upon His wealth. How rich is God? All the gold in neither the world nor the galaxies in the universe would begin to reflect His wealth. Instead, the "mohar" God paid for us was something of which He had only one: His Son (John 3:16).

Secondly, the price had to be according to the bride's worth.

There is a story of an Arabian man who had a daughter so plain that he doubted anyone would ever want to marry her. One day, however, he received word that a man from a distant village was so taken with her that he was coming to see him with bride price in hand. Prepared to take whatever he was offered, imagine the father's surprise when the visitor offered him six cows for his daughter's hand.

"Six cows!" thought the father in amazement. "The highest price ever paid in this village has been three cows!"

So it was that the father gave his daughter's hand in marriage.

Two years later, the daughter and her husband returned to her home village where everyone was startled by her exquisite beauty.

"How is she so beautiful?" they wondered.

The answer was simple: because her husband saw her as worth six cows, a six-cow beauty is what she became.

That's how God views me. I don't understand it, but I rejoice in the fact that God looks at me and says, "I am in love with you so passionately that I'll give everything to bring you into the Kingdom in order that you might live with Me forever and ever throughout eternity." To this end, God gave not six cows or six galaxies. He gave Himself.

Thirdly, the bride price was determined by the groom's work. Jesus outdid Jacob five-fold when He labored on earth as a Man for thirty-three years. And He not only conquered a city as did Othniel, but conquered the whole world when He thrust Himself into the very heart of Hell to pay the price for my sin (Ephesians 4:9). Finally, when God became Man to identify with us in the Incarnation, it was an infinitely greater step than Shechem took to identify with the Jews, for Jesus was not only afflicted momentarily, but slain before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8).

The bride price paid, just as a contract was signed and a cup of wine shared by the bride and groom in a Jewish betrothal, we hold in our hands the "contract" of the Word of God, along with Jesus' promise that He would not drink of the cup again until He did so with us in the Kingdom (Matthew 26:29). And as a bride wore a veil which, although it obscured her vision, signified her relationship with the groom, so at present we see through a glass darkly, but shall one day see our Bridegroom face to face (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Unlike the Jewish bride who worked for a year to fashion a garment for her wedding, there is nothing we can add to the garment given to us, as we are invited to “put on Jesus Christ” (Romans 13:14) and robe ourselves in His righteousness (Isaiah 61:10).

Like the groom who added a “little mansion” to his father’s house, Jesus went to His Father’s house to prepare a place for us (John 14:2). Then, at the time appointed by the Father, the Son, wearing many crowns (Revelation 19:12), will come for us, His bride (Mark 13:32). Like the Jewish bride, we don’t know the day or hour of His return, but like her, we know the season (1 Thessalonians 5:1). We understand the place of Israel, the problems in Jerusalem, the coming together of the European Union. We understand from Bible prophecy that the Lord’s coming is near, even at the very door (Mark 13:29). Thus, like the Jewish bride, we ready ourselves for the day we will hear the trumpet and the shout (1 Thessalonians 4:16), before we are caught up to meet the Lord, not on earth, but in the clouds (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

In the context of a Jewish wedding, John’s position as “friend of the bridegroom” (John 3:29) and his message of repentance in preparation for the coming Bridegroom (Matthew 3:3) becomes clear.

“Therein lies the problem,” you say. “If the marriage is to be validated on my purity, I deserve only divorce or stoning because I sin miserably; I mess up constantly; I fail continually.”

Good news! The validation of our relationship with our Bridegroom doesn’t depend on our sinlessness, but on His. The vesture dipped in His blood (Revelation 19:13) is that which allows us to be presented to Him without spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:27).

You mean we don’t have to clean up our act, do this, or do that? No, Jesus said blessed are those who are simply watching for His coming (Revelation 16:15). Blessed are those who realize the price has been paid and the work has been done.

Precious people, that’s what true Christianity is—just marveling at the love of the Father and of the Son for me and for you.

Thus, we are afforded a glorious honeymoon with Him, not for seven days, but for seven years as He serves us, His bride, in Heaven (Luke 12:37). At the end of seven years, we come back to earth with Him in the Second Coming (Revelation 19:14) where, at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb, we are presented as His bride forever and ever.

And that is why we see the Marriage Feast in Revelation 19 rather than in chapter 4. The analogy is perfect.

Dear friend, if you have said, “Lord, I know I have sinned and failed, but I believe You love me and paid the price for me,” rejoice! Be glad! Celebrate! In the Lord’s sight, you are a six-cow woman, a beautiful, glorious bride.

So for seven years Jesus is going to serve us, in heaven. That my friend is your reward for be a faithful Bride, for enduring the hardships.

Four areas God wants us to recall in our minds when we are going through persecution.

The Growth in Persecution (1:1-4)

The Proof in Persecution (1:5)

The Repayment for Persecution (1:6-9)

The Reward for Suffering Persecution (1:10-12)

This church had lost/forgotten their hope, the hope of His imminent return, the resultant was that they were troubled and confused.....church don't let that happen to you, never stop living life backwrds.

2 Thessalonians 2

Exposing the Anti-Christ

Second Thessalonians, written approximately 53AD to the church in Thessalonians. The Christians in Thessalonica were grateful to God for Paul's first letter, as he commended them on their faith, their labor of love, and taught them the deeper things pertaining to the Rapture. But this church, although known throughout the whole region for their faith, was not loved and respected by all for their faith, in fact they were being persecuted for their faith in Christ. Can you relate to that today? This persecution and tribulation, left this model church with many questions, and as we will read in chapter two, the main reason for the confusion and troubling was due to false teachers telling them erroneous things, some even sending letters signing Paul's name to them.

The Theme and purpose of this book:

(2 Thessalonians 2:1 NKJV) Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

(2 Thessalonians 2:2 NKJV) not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

(2 Thessalonians 2:3 NKJV) Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

The persecution for this church grew so bad that some believers thought that they were living in the times of the Great Tribulation, that they had missed the Rapture. When the letter arrived claiming to be from Paul, stating that the Day of the Lord was actually present, fear and confusion entered many.

Other believers concluded that since the Lord's Second Coming was so near, they ought to quit their jobs and spend time waiting for Him. This meant that the other members were under an extra burden to care for them. Satan was working overtime, as a lion, he was seeking to devour (1 Peter 5:7-8), and as the serpent, he was seeking to deceive (2 Cor 11:3).

It was in response to these needs that Paul writes them this second letter. He began with their most pressing need, the persecution they were experiencing because of their faith. Then he addresses the Day of the Lord and the Anti-christ, and then he addresses what they are to be doing while they wait.

So the outline for this book:

Chapter 1 – Encouragement in Persecution and Tribulation

Chapter 2 – Exposing the Anti-Christ

Chapter 3 – Exhortation While We Wait

It's a year later, and Paul is commending them still for their faith and love, but we noticed in 1:3, not their "hope". This church has lost the hope of the imminent return of Jesus Christ, the Rapture, of Him meeting them in the air. They quit living life backwards.

The secret of life: Live life backwards, when you realize you will spend forever in heaven, and you have that in your mind and in your heart, then you work back from that point and life makes tremendous sense. Tragedy, difficulties, why is this happening, it all makes sense when we work backwards from heaven. We know the big picture - Christ Wins. We know this is preparing us to rule and reign with Christ during the millennial reign. We studied Revelation we know the craziness the world will go through for that seven-year period, and we know that things will continue to get worse leading up to that. We can relax when everyone is bummed and depressed because we know the big picture. We have perspective in the face of tragedy and trials, while the world may be freaking out.

Unfortunately the model church lost their hope, and now in the midst of trials and persecution, they are troubled and confused; and this my friends will always be the resultant when you lose the hope of His imminent return, you will be troubled and confused.

Last study we looked at the persecution this church was facing, and we seen Paul's counsel to them, and to us today concerning persecution and tribulations we face as Christians:

The Growth in Persecution (1:1-4)
The Proof in Persecution (1:5)
The Repayment for Persecution (1:6-9)
The Reward for Suffering Persecution (1:10-12)

We spoke of the reward for enduring persecution today on this earth, and that reward is that when we are Raptured, we will be in heaven and Jesus Himself will be serving us, when all hell on earth is breaking loose, and God is pouring His wrath out on a Christ-rejecting world.

Tonight we study what we as believers will miss, but a warning and unveiling for those of you who reject Jesus Christ today. Tonight we study the unveiling of the Anti-christ.

(2 Thessalonians 2:1 NKJV) Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,
(2 Thessalonians 2:2 NKJV) not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.
(2 Thessalonians 2:3 NKJV) Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,
(2 Thessalonians 2:4 NKJV) who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.
(2 Thessalonians 2:5 NKJV) Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?
(2 Thessalonians 2:6 NKJV) And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.
(2 Thessalonians 2:7 NKJV) For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

As we studied last week, the church in Thessalonica thought they had missed the raptured, and that they were now living and enduring the Great Tribulation period. Paul writes to bring them an understanding of the End Times things. Remember what Paul said in the last letter to them about the End Times things: I do not want you to be ignorant.

(1 Thessalonians 4:13 NKJV) But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

That Day (v.3):

That Day refers to what is known as "The Day of Lord" it is when the Lord intervenes directly to bring justice and judgment on a Christ rejecting world. It spans from the beginning of the tribulation period until the new heaven and earth are created.

The Day of the Lord will not begin, until we are taken out for God will not allow His children to be appointed to wrath:

(1 Thessalonians 5:9 NKJV) For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Thessalonians 5:10 NKJV) who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

This wrath is meant for those who have rejected the Lord, this is the reason for the Rapture, to take His children out before he pours His wrath out. We experienced God's wrath on the cross,

but Jesus took our place, that should have been me on that cross. The wrath I experience today is all from Satan who is the Prince of this world, as we live in a world that says I don't need you God to rule over me, I'm just fine without you. God's wrath will come against them in the seven year tribulation period.

for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first (v.3):

There have been volumes of books and theological discussions on what this means here – falling away. This is one of those hard sayings of the Bible that can wrap you around the axle, and get you all confused.

Some of your Bibles may say:

*(2 Thessalonians 2:3 NIV) 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.*

Falling away / rebellion - apostasia, ap-os-tas-ee'-ah; defection from truth ["apostasy"]:-falling away, forsake.

Two meanings: 1.) to depart from the truth 2.) or to depart physically.

So the great struggle comes as we read this verse, which is it, the taking of the saints out of the earth, or some think the taking of the Holy Spirit from the earth, while others say it is Christians turning from the truth and no longer living for or after God.

The Church Is Gone

Lets just start with what we know it is for sure, the Church will be Raptured and removed from this earth before the Antichrist comes because we studied that in our Revelation overview and 1 Thessalonians study. There is a chronological order in Revelation and we see that in chapter 4 the church is in heaven, and then in chapter 6 the Anti-christ comes on the scene.

(Revelation 4:1 KJV) After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.

(Revelation 6:1 KJV) And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

(Revelation 6:2 KJV) And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

Be careful, for there are people out there teaching that the church will have to go through all of the tribulation period, or the first half of the tribulation. It is called the Post Tribulation theory, and the Mid-Tribulation theory. They are both wrong because they do not line up with Scripture, with the imminent return of Jesus Christ.

Quite simply, we are not to be looking for the Anti-Christ, but Jesus Christ.

So then comes the question, then who is the "restrainer" spoken of in verses 6-7 ?

(2 Thessalonians 2:6 NKJV) And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.

(2 Thessalonians 2:7 NKJV) For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

Again the volume of books written say it is one of two things, the Holy Spirit is removed from the earth, or the church is removed from the earth:

The Spirit Is Here

Now, again by using Scripture to interpret Scripture, it can not be the removing of the Holy Spirit.

Everywhere and anywhere you go, the Holy Spirit is there:

*(Psalms 139:7 KJV) Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
(Psalms 139:8 KJV) If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.*

Without the Holy Spirit, nobody could or would get saved during the Tribulation period. We know that that is not going to be the case, many, many people will be getting saved during the tribulation period. People can not come to the Lord without the Holy Spirit leading them.

*(John 16:7 NKJV) "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.
(John 16:8 NKJV) "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:
(John 16:9 NKJV) "of sin, because they do not believe in Me;
(John 16:10 NKJV) "of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more;
(John 16:11 NKJV) "of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*

He testifies of Jesus Christ being the Messiah, the Son of God:

*(John 15:26 KJV) But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:
(John 15:27 KJV) And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.*

In Revelation, we see many people got saved during the Tribulation period:

*(Revelation 7:9 KJV) After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;
(Revelation 7:10 KJV) And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.
(Revelation 7:11 KJV) And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,
(Revelation 7:12 KJV) Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.
(Revelation 7:13 KJV) And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?
(Revelation 7:14 KJV) And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are **they which came out of great tribulation**, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.
(Revelation 7:15 KJV) Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.
(Revelation 7:16 KJV) They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.
(Revelation 7:17 KJV) For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

So from Scripture, we see that it is not the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is the church that is restraining today. It is the church as the people are filled with the Holy Spirit.

*(Isaiah 59:19 NKJV) So shall they fear The name of the LORD from the west, And His glory from the rising of the sun;
When the enemy comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him.*

Scripture again tells us, we are the salt and light of the world:

In spite of its weakness and seeming failure never underestimate the importance of the church in the world. People who criticize the church do not realize that the presence of people of God in this world gives unsaved people opportunity to be saved. The presence of the church is delaying the coming of judgment.

Have you ever walked into a room and the conversation stopped. Have people apologized to you for using the Lord's name in vain. How about the hostility they have for you, for no reason, other than your presence brings them conviction. What can we say about America's relationship with Israel. How about this nation, that is still one nation under God, do you have any idea what the world would be like without the United States, the Middle East, Muslim nations.

*(Matthew 5:13 KJV) Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.
(Matthew 5:14 KJV) Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*

(Matthew 5:15 KJV) Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

The Great Rebellion - Apostasy

How about the thoughts on the church departing from the truth, the great apostasy. You know what gang, we are seeing it today. We are seeing believers depart from the truth. Pastors leaving the pulpit for homosexual lifestyles, people divorcing because they just don't feel like being married to that person anymore. Just this week I was told of a church nearby that allows a member in the Choir to continue in that ministry even though he is going through a sex change process.

(2 Timothy 3:1 KJV) This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

(2 Timothy 3:2 KJV) For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

(2 Timothy 3:3 KJV) Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

(2 Timothy 3:4 KJV) Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

(2 Timothy 3:5 KJV) Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

(2 Timothy 3:6 KJV) For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

(2 Timothy 3:7 KJV) Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

(Matthew 24:11 NKJV) "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

(Matthew 24:12 NKJV) "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

There are many people going to church today who are playing church, playing Christian, but they are not. Imagine, at the moment the Rapture happens, there will not be one Christian on earth. What will be left, are many church going people who were never believers. These people will throw off any and all association with Christ and the truth, and they will denounce, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." The great falling away.

So the restrainer is gone, raptured, and the stage is set for the coming of the "Man of Sin".

The Antichrist:

(2 Thessalonians 2:3 NKJV) Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

(2 Thessalonians 2:4 NKJV) who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Paul did not use the term Antichrist in his letter. This term is used in the New Testament only by John (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7). But this is the name we use to identify the last great world dictator whom Paul designated as "that man of sin," "the son of perdition" (2 Thes. 2:3), and "that lawless one" (2 Thes. 2:8, literal translation). Satan has been at war with God ever since he, as Lucifer, rebelled against God and tried to capture God's throne (Isa. 14:12-15). He tempted Eve in the Garden and, through her, caused Adam to fall (Gen. 3). In Genesis 3:15, God declared war on Satan and his family ("seed") and promised the coming of the Redeemer who would finally and completely defeat Satan.

The Greek prefix anti has two meanings: "against", and "instead of". Satan not only opposes Christ, but he wants to be worshipped and obeyed *instead of* Christ. Satan has always wanted to be worshipped and served as God (Isa. 14:14; Luke 4:5-8). He will one day produce his masterpiece, the Antichrist, who will cause the world to worship Satan and believe Satan's lies. Judas was called the son of perdition. Satan entered him, Judas became Satan in the flesh. The Antichrist will be Satan in the flesh.

*(John 17:12 KJV) While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the **son of perdition**; that the scripture might be fulfilled.*

Paul had explained all of this to the believers in Thessalonica, referring them, no doubt, to the relevant Scriptures in the Old Testament. We are fortunate to have the entire Bible to study, so we can get the total picture of Antichrist and his career. Prophetic students may not agree on every detail; but the main facts, when they are related, give us the following description, bibliography, of Antichrist in the last days.

- 1.) The peacemaker**
- 2.) The peace-breaker**
- 3.) The persecutor**
- 4.) The prisoner**

1.) The peacemaker (Revelation 6:1-2).

I believe this man is among us today, maybe even in the political arena of local or even national government. He will mostly likely be on the scene before the Rapture of the church, and will probably use the event as a staging point to calm a confused and chaotic world. We know from Revelation and Daniel that he will be a peaceful political leader who unites ten nations of Europe into a strong power bloc (see Rev. 17:12-13).

The Antichrist will then broker the peace agreement with Israel.

To fully understand this prophecy of the antichrist brokering a peace agreement with and for Israel, we have to understand the prophecy of the seventy weeks spoken of in the Book of Daniel. To believe the part about the antichrist, then you have to see the part about Jesus Christ, and understand the full context of the seventy weeks.

(Daniel 9:20 NKJV) Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God,

(Daniel 9:21 NKJV) yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.

(Daniel 9:22 NKJV) And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand.

(Daniel 9:23 NKJV) "At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:

(Daniel 9:24 NKJV) "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

(Daniel 9:25 NKJV) "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

(Daniel 9:26 NKJV) "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

(Daniel 9:27 NKJV) Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

"Daniel's prophecy of the seventy 'sevens' (weeks) (vv.24 -27) provides the chronological frame for Messianic prediction from Daniel to the establishment of the kingdom on earth and also a key to its interpretation."

The Hebrew word for "weeks" used here is shabua meaning "a unit of measure." "So here, Seventy Weeks means seventy sevens. It could be seventy sevens of anything. It could be units of days or months or years. In the context of this verse it is plain that Daniel had been reading in Jeremiah about years, seventy years. Jeremiah had been preaching and writing that the

captivity would be for seventy years)'. So then seventy sevens would be 70 times 7, equaling 490 years. But we have the blessings of all the Scriptures and all the history books that we know this is talking about years.

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city:

We know that Daniel was a Jew, and we know the holy city is a reference to Jerusalem. So this prophecy deals with the nation Israel and God's prophetic timetable.

To finish the transgression

All the verses in verse 24 deal specifically with Jesus Christ. For as we will see only Jesus Christ could fulfill them. *To finish the transgression:* John 19:30 *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.* "As Jesus hung on the cross He took the wrath of God for our sins. After He completely paid the price for our transgression, He dismissed His Spirit."

And to make an end of sins...

Jesus made an end of sin for all those who believe. God says in Hebrews 8:12 *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.* Jesus put an end to sin once and for all, no one else could have done this. The verse goes on to say, *and to make reconciliation for iniquity:* Reconciliation means to be made right. Isaiah 59:1-2 *Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.* It is because of man's sin that man is separated from God. And to be separated from God is to be not right with God, but God has provided a way for every man to be right with Him through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

and to bring in everlasting righteousness:

"Everlasting righteousness refers to the return of Christ at the end of the 490 years to establish the kingdom." It is obvious that we do not have everlasting righteousness right now because evil is still in the world. But the day is coming when God's grace is over, and God will put an end to all evil.

And to seal up the vision and prophecy:

"This means that all that is said here will be fulfilled, as well as all other prophecies in Scripture." We must remember that at the time Daniel wrote all this it was several hundred years before the prophecy was fulfilled. This prophecy indeed was fulfilled, which is encouraging to me for I know that all will be fulfilled. I am especially encouraged to know that means that Jesus will be coming back to establish His kingdom.

and to anoint the most Holy.

This is a reference to Jesus Christ Himself because in verse 26 there is a reference to the Messiah (called anointed) which is clearly Jesus Christ.

(Daniel 9:25 NKJV) "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

The 70 "sevens" would begin Gabriel said, with the issuing of the decree to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem.

The Years Calculated

Here in verse 25 we see a total of 69 seven year periods ($62 + 7 = 69$) ($69 \times 7 = 483$ years) (173,880 days) before the Messiah would come. The last 7-year period will be talked about in verse 27, that one deals with the antichrist. Now these years are based on the Babylonian calendar, which is 360 days in a year. Using our Julian calendar, 365.25/yr, that equals 476 years (also note that 1BC to 1 AD is one year, not 2).

Artaxerxes

This decree was the fourth of four decrees made by Persian rulers in reference to the Jews. The first was Cyrus' decree in 538 B.C. (2 Chron 36:22—23, Ezra 1:1—4, 5:13). The second was the decree of Darius 1 (522—486) in 520 B.C. (Ezra 6:1,6—12). This decree actually was a confirmation of the first decree. The third was a decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus (464-424) in 458 B.C. (Ezra 7:11—26). The first two decrees pertain to the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and the third relates to the finances for animal sacrifices at the temple. These say nothing about the rebuilding of the city itself. Since an unwalled city was no threat to a military power, a religious temple could be rebuilt without jeopardizing the military authority of those granting permission to rebuild it.”

“The fourth decree was also by Artaxerxes Longimanus, issued on **March 14, 445 B.C.** (Neh 2:1-8). On that occasion Artaxerxes granted the Jews permission to rebuild Jerusalem's city walls. This decree is the one referred to in Daniel 9:25.”

“So Secular history tells us the order was given on 14 March 445 BC in our calendar we use today. So the countdown began, and 483 Babylonian years / 476 years using our current calendar, from that day the Messiah would come.

Tiberius Caesar

Now here is a golden nugget in the Scriptures, which at first reading means little to us, but when we place it in the big picture, it becomes golden, The Baptism of Jesus. The baptism of Jesus Christ happened in the 15 year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar.

(Luke 3:1 KJV) Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,..... (Luke 3:21 KJV) Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

Tiberius Caesar was a Roman Emperor and the Romans kept impeccable historical accounts of their empire. We use their secular history writings to tell us that Tiberius began his reign 19 August 14AD. So Jesus began His public ministry in 29AD.

The Passovers

The Jewish Passover was always celebrated on the 14th day of the first month, that month is called Nissian which falls in our March/April calendar.

(Leviticus 23:5 KJV) In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover.

Jesus celebrated 3 Passovers: John 2:23, John 6:4, John 11:55. Based on his baptism in 29AD (15th year of Tiberius Caesar), Jesus first Passover would have been in 30AD, second in 31AD, and His final Passover would have been 32AD.

In that year 32 AD Jesus went up to Jerusalem for the Passover, He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey on the first day of the week, that day was the 10th of Nissian, for our Julian calendar that comes out to April 6, 32 AD. And on that very day Jesus rode into Jerusalem and was heralded the Messiah.” Thus also fulfilling:

(Psalms 118:24 NKJV) This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.

(Psalms 118:25 NKJV) Save now, I pray, O LORD; O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity.

(Psalms 118:26 NKJV) Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.

“Prior to this day Jesus had never allowed public worship of Himself. Every time they tried to make Him King He would slip away from them, but the day He rode into Jerusalem on the donkey He actually promoted it.” Luke 19:39-40 *And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.*

How many days was it from March 14, 445 BC, to April 6, 32AD – **173,880**.

476 years X 365 days..... = 173,740 days
14 March to 06 April (both inclusive).....= 24 days
Add for Leap Years.....= 116 days
173, 880 days

(Daniel 9:26 NKJV) "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

"For seventy years Daniel had longed for the restoration of the city and temple of God. Now that it was about to take place his attention was directed to a more distant and loftier peak in the history of redemption. Even a new temple in a rebuilt city made by human hands could be destroyed; Daniel's eyes were therefore to be fixed on a temple (John 2:19), on one that could not be destroyed (Rev 21:22-27) Daniel was receiving the prophecy of the coming Messiah. But verse 26 starts off with that He would be cut off. "Jesus was crucified that week and rejected by man. Jesus did not receive the kingdom at that time.

The prophecy continues with a description of the judgment that would come on the generation that rejected the Messiah. "The prince to come refers to 70 AD when Titus and the Roman army destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple. Just as Jesus prophesied in Luke 19:43-44.

"The Jewish people were then dispersed throughout the world. But Israel is the only nation who kept a nationality without a homeland, for almost 2,000 years they had no place to call home. But May 14, 1948 the Jews were gathered back together into their homeland." This is a miracle, and God has a reason for it; and that is for final prophetic events leading up to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

It would be a mistake to read the Bible as dry history and miss all that God has for us. Reading this prophecy gives me a deep desire to share the gospel with the lost. As I study prophecy it becomes clearer and clearer that the return of Christ is soon. To the day, to the day He came, and what does that mean to you? As sure as the Prince of Peace came the first time, He will come again the second time.

Now back to the Antichrist, the peacemaker:

(Daniel 9:27 NKJV) Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate."

He will make a covenant with Israel to protect her and permit her to rebuild her temple. This covenant will be for seven years. *He will temporarily solve the Middle East crisis.* Israel will rebuild her temple in peaceful times. It is the signing of this covenant, not the Rapture of the church that signals the start of Daniel's seventieth week, that seven-year period known as the Day of the Lord.

The one-week talked about in this verse is the final seven year period of the 70 seven year period. This final seven-year period is yet to be fulfilled. "The time gap between the seven year period is known as the age of grace, the Church-period. The reason there is no mention of it here is because remember the beginning of this revelation it told about Daniel and his people. "The proof that this final week has not yet been fulfilled is seen in the fact that Christ definitely relates its main events to His Second Coming (Mat 24:6, 15). Hence, during the interim between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks there must lie the whole period of the Church set forth in the NT. but not revealed in the OT.

"Biblical references to the seventieth week of seven years, which is divided into two halves (v. 27), the latter half being variously designated as "a time, and times, and the dividing of time" ,what we call the Great Tribulation (Dan 7:25; Rev 12:14); forty-two months (Rev 11:2; 13:5); or 1260 days (Rev 11:3; 12:6).

2.) The peace-breaker (Dan. 9:27).

(Daniel 9:27 NKJV) Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate."

After three and one-half years, Antichrist will break his covenant with the Jews *and take over their temple*. Up to this point, Antichrist has been a peacemaking leader of ten European nations, obligated to protect Israel. But now he reveals his true character by taking over the Jewish temple and demanding that the world worship him (see Rev. 13).

That is what is meant here in verse 4:

(2 Thessalonians 2:4 NKJV) who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

The Dome of the Rock:

The Temple can be rebuilt without destroying the Dome of the Rock, the Muslim Holy Site. If the Dome was destroyed or turned over, it would cause 1 billion Muslims to unite as one and come against the 5 million Jews living in Israel. The Antichrist will most likely be the one who brokers the deal that allows the Temple to be rebuilt. Many experts and Archaeologist believe that the true site of where the Holy of Holies should be established is not where the Dome is, but 100 yards away, which there is nothing there at this time. The Dome of the Rock would thus sit in what is called the "Court of the Gentiles" and interestingly in Revelation 11:1-2 John was told to measure the Temple, but not to measure the Court of the Gentiles.

(Revelation 11:1 KJV) And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

(Revelation 11:2 KJV) But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

In Ezekial 42:20 there is a wall that separates the sanctuary from what is called the profane place. Do you know that on the top of the Dome of the Rock, written in Arabic, are profane words, blasphemous words. It says, "God is not begotten, nor does He beget." A direct reference to John 3:16

The preparations have been made, all the utensils are made or currently being made by a group called the "Temple Mount Faithful". They are even teaching Jewish men how to perform animal sacrifices. They have the Blueprints drawn up already to start building the Temple, they are just waiting for someone to help them.

Since Antichrist will be energized by Satan, it is no surprise that he will seek worship; for Satan has always wanted the worship of the world. There have been various "apostasies" in church history, when groups have turned away from God's truth; but this final rebellion will be the greatest of all. The man of sin will oppose everything that belongs to any other religion, true or false. He will organize a world church that will, by worshiping him, worship Satan. Our Lord predicted this apostasy; He called it "the abomination of desolation" (Matt. **24:15**), a clear reference to Daniel 9:27. The world will wonder at this great leader who, with Satan's power, will perform signs and wonders and deceive the nations.

3.) The persecutor (Rev. 13:15-17).

After the "abomination of desolation" which will occur three and one-half years after the Antichrist makes his covenant with the Jews. (Dan. 9:27—"in the midst of the week" or three and one-half years.) This will usher in a period of intense persecution and Tribulation. Jesus said, "For then shall be great Tribulation" (Matt. 24:21). Satan will vent his wrath against Israel. He will so control

the world's economic system that citizens must bear "the mark of the beast" to be able to buy and sell (Rev. 13:16-17).

People often ask, "Will anybody be saved during the seven-year period?" The answer is, yes! Revelation 7:1-8 states that 144,000 Jews will be saved (probably, as was the Apostle Paul, by a dramatic vision of Christ). The Apostle John described a great multitude of Gentiles who will come out of the great Tribulation (Rev. 7:9-17) as converted people. Even though the Holy Spirit will be "out of the midst" as the restraining power working in a tremendously weakened church, He will still work with redeeming power.

However, it will cost dearly to trust Christ and live for Him during that time. Believers will refuse to bow down to the beast's image and will be slain. They will refuse to wear his mark and thus be unable to get jobs or make purchases. It will be quite a contrast to our situation now when even famous people admit that they are "born again."

4.) The prisoner (Rev. 19:11-21).

Keep in mind that God has a timetable. Satan will not be permitted to control the world forever. Jesus Christ will return "in power and great glory" and take Antichrist and his associates prisoner—and also Satan—and cast them into the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1-3). This will be the climax of the great Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:16) during which the nations of the world unite with Satan to fight Jesus Christ. This leads to our next event. The Return of Jesus Christ.

What does all this mean to you, you might say, being that you are going to be raptured and taken away from all this mess? Verse 7 is for the church today, the spirit of the Antichrist is already at work in the world today, and he wants to work against you.

(2 Thessalonians 2:7 NKJV) For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

For you who reject the truths of Christ, here are words for you:

(2 Thessalonians 2:8 NKJV) And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

(2 Thessalonians 2:9 NKJV) The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

(2 Thessalonians 2:10 NKJV) and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

(2 Thessalonians 2:11 NKJV) And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,

(2 Thessalonians 2:12 NKJV) that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The antichrist will come with signs and wonders and miracles. People will be more enticed with the sparkle than the substance – the substance being the truth of God. People will believe his lies, and God will not violate their free-will, and let them choose the antichrist over Him.

(2 Thessalonians 2:13 NKJV) But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,

(2 Thessalonians 2:14 NKJV) to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(2 Thessalonians 2:15 NKJV) Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

(2 Thessalonians 2:16 NKJV) Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace,

(2 Thessalonians 2:17 NKJV) comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

Here again Paul commands the Church to what he told them in the last letter, to what they failed to do and caused them this fear and confuse:

(1 Thessalonians 5:21 KJV) Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

Application for us today as we studied about the Antichrist.

Son of Perdition.

Perdition means waste and destruction. That is what the devil wants to do, he wants to waste and destroy anything that brings glory to God. He wants to destroy your marriage, your body, your mind, your home, your children, anything that will bring glory to God.

Judas, the son of perdition, the son of waste and destruction, but what do we find him saying in John 12, ohhh what a waste, that money you wasted on the feet of Jesus, that money could have went to the poor. But we know he was the keeper of the bag, and stealing from it. Yet he says ohh what a waste to pour this out on the Lord's feet. People will say to you, what a waste, you could have spent that money on a new bicycle, what a waste you could have went out to dinner and treated yourself why send it to a missionary. What a waste, you could have went to Hawaii instead of on the mission trip. What a waste not enjoying your body. What a waste waking up early to pray. What a waste going to Bible studies when you could be at the beach our BBQ on your deck.....what a waste.

Precious people, let me tell you this, nothing you do for the Lord is ever a waste, the sons of perdition will say what a waste, but the Lord says what He said.....Let her alone, she blesses me.

(John 12:1 KJV) Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

(John 12:2 KJV) There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

(John 12:3 KJV) Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

(John 12:4 KJV) Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

(John 12:5 KJV) Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

(John 12:6 KJV) This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

(John 12:7 KJV) Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

(John 12:8 KJV) For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

The Temple

The name of the Antichrist isn't the issue, the spirit of the antichrist is the issue. The spirit of the antichrist is at work today all around us.

Well what does that have to do with me you might say, you told me I'd be raptured and escape this whole mess.

(1 John 2:18 KJV) Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

The antichrist wants to come into your temple and desecrate it. You will say I know what needs to be done, I don't need to pray about it. I know what needs to be done about my child, my marriage, my body.....I know what's best for me. The antichrist wants to be in place of God, not always against. We will rule our temple we say, and then the tribulation starts in our life. We say this is what I will do, rather than God what do you want to do with me. The spirit of the antichrist will ruin and waste any temple, we have to say this temple is dedicated to the Lord,

We sit in amazement, they had the Scriptures yet they still missed the coming of the Messiah, if only they had read the Bible they could have received Him. Yet today, we have more than they did, we have all the Scriptures, yet there will be some that still miss Him. How could we miss the Coming Prince.

Just as Jesus kept that appointment down to the day to ride into Jerusalem to take on the sins of the world, He will be faithful to the exact day to meet you in the air.

2 Thessalonians 3

Exhortation while We Wait

Second Thessalonians, written approximately 53AD to the church in Thessalonians. The Christians in Thessalonica were grateful to God for Paul's first letter, as he commended them on their faith, their labor of love, and taught them the deeper things pertaining to the Rapture. But this church, although known throughout the whole region for their faith, was not loved and respected by all for their faith, in fact they were being persecuted for their faith in Christ. Can you relate to that today? This persecution and tribulation, left this model church with many questions, and as we will read in chapter two, the main reason for the confusion and troubling was due to false teachers telling them erroneous things, some even sending letters signing Paul's name to them.

The Theme and purpose of this book:

(2 Thessalonians 2:1 NKJV) Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

(2 Thessalonians 2:2 NKJV) not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

(2 Thessalonians 2:3 NKJV) Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

The persecution for this church grew so bad that some believers thought that they were living in the times of the Great Tribulation, that they had missed the Rapture. When the letter arrived claiming to be from Paul, stating that the Day of the Lord was actually present, fear and confusion entered many.

Other believers concluded that since the Lord's Second Coming was so near, they ought to quit their jobs and spend time waiting for Him. This meant that the other members were under an extra burden to care for them. Satan was working overtime, as a lion, he was seeking to devour (1 Peter 5:7-8), and as the serpent, he was seeking to deceive (2 Cor 11:3).

It was in response to these needs that Paul writes them this second letter. He began with their most pressing need, the persecution they were experiencing because of their faith. Then he addresses the Day of the Lord and the Anti-christ, and then he addresses what they are to be doing while they wait.

So the outline for this book:

Chapter 1 – Encouragement in Persecution and Tribulation

Chapter 2 – Exposing the Anti-Christ

Chapter 3 – Exhortation While We Wait

It's a year later, and Paul is commending them still for their faith and love, but we noticed in 1:3, not their "hope". This church has lost the hope of the imminent return of Jesus Christ, the Rapture, of Him meeting them in the air. They quit living life backwards.

The secret of life: Live life backwards, when you realize you will spend forever in heaven, and you have that in your mind and in your heart, then you work back from that point and life makes tremendous sense. Tragedy, difficulties, why is this happening, it all makes sense when we work backwards from heaven. We know the big picture - Christ Wins. We know this is preparing us to rule and reign with Christ during the millennial reign. We studied Revelation we know the craziness the world will go through for that seven-year period, and we know that things will continue to get worse leading up to that. We can relax when everyone is bummed and depressed because we know the big picture. We have perspective in the face of tragedy and trials, while the world may be freaking out.

Unfortunately the model church lost their hope, and now in the midst of trials and persecution, they are troubled and confused; and this my friends will always be the resultant when you lose the hope of His imminent return, you will be troubled and confused.

The first study we looked at the persecution this church was facing, and we seen Paul's counsel to them, and to us today concerning persecution and tribulations we face as Christians:

The Growth in Persecution (1:1-4)
The Proof in Persecution (1:5)
The Repayment for Persecution (1:6-9)
The Reward for Suffering Persecution (1:10-12)

We spoke of the reward for enduring persecution today on this earth, and that reward is that when we are Raptured, we will be in heaven and Jesus Himself will be serving us, when all hell on earth is breaking loose, and God is pouring His wrath out on a Christ-rejecting world.

Last week we study the glorious prophecy of Daniel 9, 173,880 days the Messiah came, and we know He will come again for His church in the rapture, and after that the antichrist will be revealed. The following description, bibliography, of Antichrist in the last days.

- 1.) The peacemaker
- 2.) The peace-breaker
- 3.) The persecutor
- 4.) The prisoner

Tonight we study the exhortations while we wait for His return.

While we wait we should be the Praying Believer (3:1-2)
While we wait we should be the Trusting Believer (3:3-7)
While we wait we should be the Working Believer (3:8-12)
While we wait we should be the Enduring Believer (3:13-18)

1.) While we wait we should be the Praying Believer

(2 Thessalonians 3:1 NKJV) Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you,

Paul is asking them to pray that he may proclaim God's Word freely, that it would not be hindered.....hindered by whom, himself. Paul isn't asking them to pray for his program, but his teaching. Today many preachers are teaching to entertain the people, rather than teach the people. Teaching is the reason God calls them Pastors and Teachers (Eph 4), not entertainers.

Paul said I'll teach, you pray. He didn't ask for money, he didn't ask for his radio program, he asked them to pray.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon – who became know as the prince of preachers, who in the 1900's, at the age of 17 his church was already 3,000. His church was in London, called the Metropolitan Tabernacle. One day some other pastors came to visit to find out what and how God was working through this church, which at this time the Tabernacle seated 7,000 and had a couple Sunday services. They seen these rather stout man wearing bib overalls, thinking him to be the janitor, and said sir, can you show us where the power plant is to this church (power plant being where the heating and air conditioning system was for the building). He took them downstairs, though some corridors opened a door and said here is the power plant behind the Metropolitan tabernacle. Expecting to see some massive steam generator, they were surprised to see 200

men on their knees praying that Sunday afternoon, for the evening service. To their surprise at that evening service the man in the overall bibs stepped up to the pulpit to teach.

They said that while he preached, if he felt his message lacked power, he would stomp his foot on the wood floor.....for right underneath the pulpit was the that prayer room, and everytime he taught there would be a room full of people praying at the same time.

Do you want to see God do a work in this ministry, then pray for this ministry. Every praise report that comes out of this ministry will be credit to your account in heaven.

Great preachers do not make great congregations; but great congregations make great preachers.

I'm encouraged because I was ready something written by him, and he said he had preached sermons that he went home and wept over feeling they were so bad, but later to find out the Lord moved in peoples heart and many got saved from that very message he wept over.

Paul said to them, in you their power. Please pray not just for the Pastor/Teacher, but pray also for the Sunday school teachers, for the Assisted Living teachers, to the small group leaders.

(2 Thessalonians 3:2 NKJV) and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

Acts 16&17 tells us who these men were. What did they do, they went and stirred up strife to get Paul in trouble. They were upset because Paul was ruining their personal lives financially.

We see those people around us today, they stir things up because we are making their lives uncomfortable. When faced with sin, a man's true heart will be revealed.

They are unreasonable and wicked. Proverbs sums this up, you can't reason with a fool.

(Proverbs 18:2 NKJV) A fool has no delight in understanding, But in expressing his own heart.

(Proverbs 23:9 KJV) Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.

(Proverbs 26:4 NKJV) Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him.

They will twist your story, take your biblical principles and statements and twist them to other people to turn them against you. Believer, don't waste you time arguing or defending, Paul here says not all have faith, just leave them, and go pray for them. Don't complain, don't explain, if you start defending yourself you will never get to stop. Do what the Lord says, and let the Lord take care of your reputation.

2.) While we wait we should be the Trusting Believer

(2 Thessalonians 3:3 NKJV) But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.

(2 Thessalonians 3:4 NKJV) And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.

The Lord is faithful to protect you from the evil one, and the evil people. He is not just the Lord of Good Friday, but resurrection Sunday. He is alive and is living in your life.

774,747 words in the Bible:

Psalm 118:8 – the middle verse of the Bible

(Psalms 118:8 KJV) It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.

Why is that the middle verse, because that is what it is all about, trusting in Him, not trusting in man. The problem with us is that we look upon man for our satisfaction, and we get disappointed, let down, and upset with people. The Scripture says put you trust in the Lord, not man.

Notice the link here, the Lord's faithfulness and protection is based on the obedience to the Word. When you leave His word, you leave His protection. We joke the angels leave the car at 65. You can't ask god where He was when that guy/gal broke your heart, if you were having sexual relations with them. Or where was the Lord when you marriage failed, yet you were never home. Why you lost your job if you were not giving them 8 for 8.

Who is on the throne will determine the kingdom you live in. If you are ruling and reigning on the throne then your kingdom will be what it is.....Failures, depressions, disappointments. If Jesus rules on the throne and there are hardships, though it may be difficult, there will be a peace because of this verse.....I know the Lord is faithful, and He is on the throne in my heart.

This word command here in verse 4 means a military order passed down from a superior officer. Paul will use this word in verse 6, 10, and 12 also. Christ is the captain of our salvation, we are His soldiers (2 Tim 3-4). In a battle it is not enough for only the officers to fight; every man must do his duty. This is true in the work of the church. What if an army was run with the same lack of obedience, order, and discipline that we so often see in the church. It would never win a war. If soldiers attended drill whenever they felt like it, they would never be equipped to face the enemy. If the recruits disobeyed their officer's order the way some church members disobey the Word of God, they would be court-martialed. A soldier obeys primarily out of loyalty and fear, but a Christian has much higher motives.....obedience

(2 Thessalonians 3:5 NKJV) Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

Better translated, "in the waiting of Christ".

The people who are truly content in life are the ones who are waiting for the return of Christ; they have the patience of Christ. They are not all worried about getting their stuff today, they know they will get what they truly desire, when he comes.

(2 Thessalonians 3:6 NKJV) But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

(2 Thessalonians 3:7 NKJV) For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you;

Do the things we commanded you.....You are not to hang out with the disorderly, they will surely take you down.

Also, you witness to them on your terms, not theirs. There is no need for Christians going into bars, having a few beers, so that they can witness to their friends. God will open the opportunities outside those environments to protect you from what's inside those environments.

3.) While we wait we should be the Working Believer

Paul sets the example for work

(2 Thessalonians 3:8 NKJV) nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you,

(2 Thessalonians 3:9 NKJV) not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

Many people there in Thessalonica had quit their jobs because they thought the Lords return was going to happen any day now.

Labor and toil – it wasn't easy, but we did it for your sake. We worked hard for an example that you too should work hard. The minister is worthy of his wages (Luke 10:7, Gal 6:6, 1 Tim 5:17-18), but Paul chose to work to set the example for others. Christian the challenge to you today is are you giving your employer eight hard hours of work for the eight hours of pay they are giving you.

Why would God find it so important to talk about work, while this church was going through tribulations and persecution, and He is talking about the antichrist and to be ready for the rapture. The reason is, because work is what we are to be doing while we wait.

History over and over shows us why God says work while you wait, because people who have too much time on their hands get weird. Just recently was the Heavens Gate Cult, who all committed suicide because the thought God was coming on Haley's Comet. A group in Korea sold all they had, put on white robes and sat on a mountain waiting for the Lord's return, when it didn't happen the Pastor said opps.....people do weird stuff. Work while you wait.

Paul sums up the New Testament Welfare System:

(2 Thessalonians 3:10 NKJV) For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

The Scripture is clear, no work, no food. Notice it says "will not" work, it doesn't say can not work, or could not work. There are people who can not work, and the Bible has much to say about compassion and taking care of those in need. But here Paul is talking about people who want to take the free ride.

Here is another Jewish Law (the Law of Gleaning).

(Leviticus 19:9 NKJV) 'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest.

(Leviticus 19:10 NKJV) 'And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the LORD your God.

The law of the times said a landowner could only harvest the field once and you could not pick anything off the ground. So the poor could pick up anything that was left. Remember the first harvest not everything would be ripened yet; so people could come later and still be provided for. This was their form of welfare, but if you notice, no work, no food. No freebies.

There are many people who need welfare, but unfortunately many today are abusing the system. Welfare is allowing them to be lazy and ungrateful. For many, welfare enables them to live a life that is un-pleasing to God.

Parents apply this to your kids, don't wait on them hand and foot, give them everything they want, submit to them when they whine or put on a fit. What you do is enable them to develop a pattern for life. A pattern of selfishness, and that it is for others to serve them. They will carry this into their marriages, and every other aspect of their life

(2 Thessalonians 3:11 NKJV) For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.

(2 Thessalonians 3:12 NKJV) Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

When a person who could/should be working and they don't, they become a busybody getting into everyone else's business. In the garden, God in His wisdom said you will work with the

sweat of your brow. God in His wisdom knew that after the fall, we would need to stay busy or we would be getting into everyone's business. Even in the curse, God gives a blessing.

You know it only takes a couple busybodies to cost much pain and suffering to other people. These people, Paul is saying, should be working. We gave them an example, but they didn't heed it. They are out mooching off of generous people, taking advantage of them, when they should be working.

You know what happens with busybodies, they have nothing to talk about, so they just start picking away at other people. Pointing out this fault or that fault, complaining about this and complaining about that.

A few years back, at the space center two woodpeckers stopped a Space shuttle flight. They had gone out and pecked some 190 holes into the external fuel tank of the shuttle. NASA engineers were concerned that ice would form during tanking in those hole, and then break the foam off which would fall and damage the shuttle itself. They had to roll the shuttle back into the Assembly building, repair the holes, then roll about out to the launch pad. The flight was delayed for weeks and cost the taxpayers tens of millions of dollars.....all for two woodpeckers.

People do this in the church, they are not involved in any ministries, not busy with their hands, and instead they just sit around being a busybody in the church stirring up all kinds of strife and division. They say why is he doing that.....peck, peck, peck. Why don't they do this..... peck, peck, peck. Why is he teaching and not me..... peck, peck, peck.

It only takes a few of them to greatly weaken the work God is doing in that ministry.

4.) While we wait we should be the Enduring Believer

(2 Thessalonians 3:13 NKJV) But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.

Psalms 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible (176 verses); the whole chapter is on the power and beauty of the Word. The second is Numbers chapter 7 (89 verses). The Lord not only remembers what you have giving unto Him, but He also records it. Verse after verse, we read the account of what was given; God did not consider it a waste of space to tell us what each person gave. God has it written for all mankind from generation to generation to read.

(Hebrews 6:10 NKJV) For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

(Hebrews 6:11 NKJV) And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,

(Hebrews 6:12 NKJV) that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Remember the Son of Perdition, he said ohh what a waste. God said it is not a waste, it will be rewarded.

You know on April 14th, when I'm doing my taxes, I am always so glad that I gave. Yes there were plenty of times that it was tough to write that check, but on April 14th I am always so glad that I was faithful month after month.

You may say I don't have a lot of money, nor a lot of talent, but God doesn't care. You at least have the ability to go to a nursing home, soup kitchen, etc and listen to someone who is lonely. God will remember you good work, it will not go unnoticed.

You may say all I care about is getting into heaven, I really don't care about rewards and crowns. I want to do well for me today, here and now. I want to use my time and money on me. You may say that now, but listen, you will care about on that day. Have you ever gotten a Christmas gift

from someone that you didn't buy for. Have you ever gone to a birthday party and not taken a gift, you will care on that day. Your heart will break when stand before the Bema Seat (judgment seat of Christ) and you have nothing to give to Him. The what seat?

Believer, there is a judgment for you to come. Not a judgment of sin and salvation, for that was paid in full on the cross. Not the white Throne judgment spoken of in Revelation 20, that is for all those who never received Jesus as Lord and Savior.

(Revelation 20:11 KJV) And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.
(Revelation 20:12 KJV) And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.
(Revelation 20:13 KJV) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.
(Revelation 20:14 KJV) And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.
(Revelation 20:15 KJV) And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

But the Believer will face the "Bema Seat" the "Judgment Seat of Christ" and be judged according to your works here on earth.

Remember our Ressurrection/Rapture Study, this passage is written to believers:

(2 Corinthians 5:8 NKJV) We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.
(2 Corinthians 5:9 NKJV) Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.
(2 Corinthians 5:10 NKJV) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Again written to the Church:

(1 Corinthians 3:11 NKJV) For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
(1 Corinthians 3:12 NKJV) Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,
(1 Corinthians 3:13 NKJV) each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.
(1 Corinthians 3:14 NKJV) If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.
(1 Corinthians 3:15 NKJV) If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

(1 Corinthians 9:24 NKJV) Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.
(1 Corinthians 9:25 NKJV) And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.
(1 Corinthians 9:26 NKJV) Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.
(1 Corinthians 9:27 NKJV) But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Just a thought, It is after the new heaven and new earth that there will be no more tears:

What does it mean to you right here and now. It means down you will go. From my years in ministry and walking this walk, growing weary will take you down.

I see that the marriages that are doing well are the couples that are serving together. Me and my wife read more, pray more, we appreciate our moments alone so much more, because they are so much fewer. We become more like Jesus, therefore there is less of us, and more of Him in our marriage. Less of me is always a good thing in a marriage.

You singles and youth may say I don't have money to give, then give of your time to others. The more you give of yourself, the less time you have to think about what you don't have, that boyfriend, husband.

Those of you who are 5 days, 5 weeks, 5 years drug free, don't grow weary of doing good. Those of you being pure, those of you who have quit smoking, those of you who have guarded you tongue from cursing,.....don't grow weary, your reward is near.

We should all long to hear those words:

(Matthew 25:21 NKJV) "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

In driving piles to build bridges or piers, a machine is used by which a huge weight is lifted up and then made to fall upon the head of the pile. Of course the higher the weight is lifted the more powerful is the blow which it gives when it descends. Now, if we wish to impact our age and society with ponderous blows, we must see to it that we are uplifted as near to God as possible. All our power will depend upon the elevation of our spirits. Prayer, meditation, devotion, communion, are like a windlass to wind us up aloft. It is not lost time which we spend in such sacred exercises, for we are thus accumulating force, so that when we come down to our actual labor for God, we shall descend with an energy unknown to those to whom communion is unknown. – Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Don't grow weary,

(Philippians 3:14 KJV) I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

(2 Thessalonians 3:14 NKJV) And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.

(2 Thessalonians 3:15 NKJV) Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

The word of God says that if anybody is a busybody, you are not to have them over for dinner. The reason is they will start spewing their garbage all over you. If people don't have anyplace to complain, then they will stop. The idea is they will figure it out, hey nobody invites me over anymore, I wonder if there is something wrong with me. Remember I told you before how they rob you, for what goes in your mind via your ears or mind, it will stick to you.

It is not prayer requests. If it is about restoration and you want to do something about it, that is different. If you want to point the dirt out on someone else's feet, then know this, the only person who has the right to point it out, are those who are willing to humble themselves, wrap a robe around themselves, and bend down to wash their feet lovingly.

(2 Thessalonians 3:16 NKJV) Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all.

(2 Thessalonians 3:17 NKJV) The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.

(2 Thessalonians 3:18 NKJV) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Verse 1 we started with grace and we end here with grace. It's all about grace.