

11. 2 Thessalonians 1

Issues of the second coming and the resurrection of the dead from the 1 Thessalonians form the foundation for the content of 2 Thessalonians. Themes of the rise of the man of sin and the necessity for Christians to forge forward comprise most of the content of the letter.

Greeting and Prayer

2 Thess1:1-2

1 Paul, Silas

and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

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

As usual, Paul gives Silas and Timothy equal status in his salutation. In addressing the church the word *eklesia*, which is Greek for assemble. The word, church in modern English portrays many concepts foreign to the New Testament. The English word church has no etymological connection with *eklesia*, opening a flood gate of erroneous conclusions. When used is today the word may mean these uses:

- 1: a building for public and especially Christian worship
- 2: the clergy or officialdom of a religious body
- 3 often capitalized: a body or organization of religious believers: as
 - a: the whole body of Christians
 - b: denomination <the Presbyterian church>
 - c: congregation
- 4: a public divine worship <goes to church every Sunday>
- 5: the clerical profession <considered the church as a possible career>

Dictionary and Thesaurus - Merriam-Webster

In truth of these meanings, only *body of believers* and *congregation* describe the meaning of the word church in the New Testament. Vine describes the New Testament uses of the word church, which should be the only ways that it is applied in the 21st century:

1. *ekklesia* from *ek*, "out of," and *klesis*, "a calling" (*kaleo*, "to call"), was used among the Greeks of a body of citizens "gathered" to discuss the affairs of state, . . . It has two applications to companies of Christians, (a) to the whole company of the redeemed throughout the present era, the company of which Christ said, "I will build My Church," Matt 16:18, and which is further described as "the Church which is His Body," Eph 1:22; 5:23, (b) in the singular number (e. g., Matt 18:17, RV marg., "congregation"), to a company consisting of professed believers, e. g., Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:13; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1; 1 Tim 3:5, and in the plural, with reference to churches in a district. (from *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

The modern word church more aptly leads back to a Greek root meaning of *Christ*:

Middle English *chirche*, from Old English *cirice*, ultimately from Late Greek *kyriakon*, from Greek, neuter of *kyriakos* of the lord, from *kyrios* lord, master; akin to Sanskrit *śūra* hero, warrior. *Dictionary and Thesaurus - Merriam-Webster*

In this sense, when we use the word *church*, which has the root meaning of Christ, we are without any modification saying **church of Christ**. All other interpretation result from the perversion taught by men.

2 Thess 1:3-4

3 We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. 4 Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

Paul returns to the theme of their perseverance, faith, and endurance of trials of the first letter, setting the context for the next verses.

God's Judgment

2 Thess 1:5-10

5 All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. 6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power 10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

By their suffering, the Thessalonian Christians were counted worthy of the kingdom of God, proving the God is right and just. He will pay back those that trouble his children while giving relief to his children. What follows is a play by play description (to use a sport's analogy) of what will happen to the guilty when Jesus comes:

He will come in blazing fire with his powerful angels.

He will punish who do not know God and obey not the gospel.

They will be punished with everlasting destruction.

They will be shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.

For the righteous, just the opposite will happen:

He will come to be glorified in his holy people.

He will come to be marveled at among all those who have believed.

This includes we who believed Paul's testimony.

Worthy of His Calling

2 Thess 1:11-12

11 With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. 12 We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christians must secure God's calling; it is not automatic. Paul admonished in Eph 4:1-4:

4 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one

another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

The calling of the Lord is to humility and gentleness, patience and loving forbearance, and unity and peace. This is the worthy life to which we have been called.

The Hebrew writer spoke of the focus that we are to have in Heb 3:1:

3 Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.

To share the heavenly calling, look to Jesus and confess him.

In 2 Peter 1:10-11, Peter told us to make our calling and election sure:

10 Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, 11 and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Peter's *these things* are commonly called the Christian virtues, it is these virtues by which we make our calling and election sure, in 2 Peter 1:5-9:

5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.