



## 2 THESSALONIANS 2:9-3:18

*Vigilant Sincerity and Sobriety*

# Outline – 2 Thessalonians 1-3

- I. **Perseverance:** Reckoning of the Thessalonians' persecution at the Lord's return (1:3-12)
- II. **Consolation:** Quieting erroneous fears that the Lord's return had been missed (2:1-17).
  - A. Admonition to not be troubled by error that Lord had already returned (2:1-2)
  - B. Return preceded by coming of the lawless man of sin and perdition (2:3-8).
  - C. Successful deception of unrighteous pleasure seekers by the lawless one (2:9-12).
  - D. Thanks for salvation and prayer to stand fast in apostolic tradition and consolation of the Lord (2:13-17).
- III. **Adherence:** Command to follow apostolic tradition and withdraw from disobedient (3:1-18).

# “Lying Wonders”

1. [Chase] Describe the “coming of the lawless one”. To whom is he likened? **The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with <sup>1</sup>power, <sup>2</sup>signs, and <sup>3</sup>lying wonders, and with <sup>4</sup>all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (2:9-10)**
  - Use – not real miracles – but **tricks** that **appear** miraculous:
    - **Exodus 7:11-13** – Pharaoh’s magicians, hardening his heart
    - **Acts 8:9-13** – Simon the Sorcerer, believed to be “great power of God”
    - **Mat. 24:23-25** – Deceiving signs and wonders by false christs
  - Uses the same tricks, deception and behavior as the Devil himself, as do all his servants, false teachers, false prophets.
    - Wolf in sheep’s clothing (**Matthew 7:15-20**).
    - Appears as “angel of light”, “ministers of righteousness” (**2 Cor. 11:13-15**).
  - Differs only in effectiveness and “pulling out **all** the stops”.

# Supreme, Sincere Love of the Truth

2. [Stan] Whom will he persuade, and why will he have success?

The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception **among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth**, that they might be saved. **And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2:9-12)**

- Loving truth beyond the “passing pleasures of sin” (**Hebrews 11:25; 1 Timothy 5:6; 2 Timothy 3:4**).
- Not natural, but learned (“**did not receive ... did not believe**”).
- Something that is chosen – must be prioritized above all else.

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“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and **men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.** For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. **But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” (John 3:19-21)**

- Better to be ashamed now than in eternity (**Matthew 7:21-23**).

# What Does “Love of the Truth” Look Like?

3. [Kevan] How does one have and exhibit a “love of truth”?

- We exhibit a “love of truth” by prioritizing it above all, sacrificing for it.
- We develop it by saturating ourself in it, valuing its redeeming value, and fearing consequences of its absence.
- The righteous’ love of truth and the deception of the prejudiced is a reoccurring theme throughout Scripture.
- Lightly touch on several examples...

# Supreme, Sincere Love of Truth – Part 2

- **Proverbs 23:23** – “Buy the truth and sell it not!” .... Why?
- **Psalm 11:4** – “His eyelids tests the sons of men”
- **2 Corinthians 3:14-4:4** – Blinded minds – even while reading Scripture – by the god of this age through crafty, deceitful handling of Scripture.
- **Matthew 11:25-27** – Truth was hidden from wise and prudent, but revealed to babes by God’s design.
- **1 Corinthians 1:18-31** – Cross is foolishness, a stumbling block – “not many wise ... not many mighty ... not many noble”
- **2 Timothy 3:7** – “*always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*”
- **Romans 1:28-32** – God “gave them up to a reprobate mind”, because they did not *like* to “retain God in their knowledge”.
- **John 7:17** – “*If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God*”

# Supreme, Sincere Love of Truth – Part 3

- **2 Peter 3:5** – “*this they willfully forget*”, “*willfully ignorant*”
- **Proverbs 18:13** – “*He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him.*”
- **Luke 22:67-68** – Asking questions with intent to ignore answer.
- **Acts 22:21-22** – Prejudicial listening. Rejection upon 1 word.
- **Jeremiah 5:30-31** – “*The prophets prophesy falsely ... And My people love to have it so*”
- **Isaiah 30:9-15** – Wanted prophets to speak smooth deceits, turn out of the path, and remove God from before them.
- **Deuteronomy 16:19** – “*A bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous.*” What is the Devil offering, “*passing pleasures of sin*”?
- **Jeremiah 23:16-32; 27:12-28:17; 29:8; Ezekiel 13:1-16** – Speaks against self-induced dreams and visions. People dream what they want to dream and hope it is from God.

# God Tempting People to Sin?

4. [Isaac] Why will God “*send them strong delusion*”? How is God not morally responsible for their resultant sin? (Compare to **1 Kings 22:1-36; Isaiah 66:3-4; Ezekiel 14:4-5.**)
- Consider a mostly negative example to demonstrate interaction between God, man and lying spirits (Devil, demons, false teachers, false prophets).

## 2 Chronicles 18:1-34; 1 Kings 22:1-36

- Ahab gathered 400 false prophets to tell him what he wanted.
- He avoided Micaiah, because he did not like Micaiah's message.
- Jehoshaphat showed love of the truth by seeking the word of the Lord, despite many others' happy, satisfying promises.
- Micaiah warned of impending destruction even using sarcasm.
- He warned that the other prophets were given a "lying spirit".
- Ahab ignored it all and proceeded to his death.

*... Thus says the Lord GOD: "Everyone of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, **and then comes to the prophet, I the LORD will answer him who comes, according to the multitude of his idols, that I may seize the house of Israel by their heart, because they are all estranged from Me by their idols.**" (Ezekiel 14:4-10)*

- Will we be like Ahab or Jehoshaphat?

# God Chooses Our Delusions?

***“But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word. He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man; He who sacrifices a lamb, as if he breaks a dog's neck; He who offers a grain offering, as if he offers swine's blood; He who burns incense, as if he blesses an idol. Just as they have chosen their own ways, And their soul delights in their abominations, So will I choose their delusions, And bring their fears on them; Because, when I called, no one answered, When I spoke they did not hear; But they did evil before My eyes, And chose that in which I do not delight.” (Isaiah 66:2-4)***

- When we rebel against the truth & disobey God, we doom ourselves.
- God has the just right to destroy us *immediately*, or prolong our lives, using us however He sees fit – even if it is becoming an example of hardened rebellion (Pharaoh, **Romans 9:17-29**).

# God Cannot Lie or Tempt unto Sin

... in hope of eternal life **which God, who cannot lie**, promised before time began  
... (**Titus 1:2** NKJV, see also, **Hebrews 6:18**)

Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, **nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.** Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.  
(**James 1:13-15**)

“Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will **fill all** the inhabitants of this land – even the kings who sit on David’s throne, the **priests**, the **prophets**, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem – with **drunkenness!** And I will **dash them one against another**, even the fathers and the sons together,’ says the LORD.” (**Jeremiah 13:12-15**)

- Uses, **aims** wicked against other, but does not tempt Himself.

**Recall:** Jehu & Ahab, Assyria & Israel, Babylon & Assyria & Judah

# Irresistible Grace?

5. [Steve] How were the Thessalonians “called”?

*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**, to which **He called you by our gospel**, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2:13-14)*

- “by our gospel” and “belief in the truth”
- Calvinists assume that we are “Irresistibly Called” by the Holy Spirit.
  - This proves the means of the calling, the gospel.
  - Spirit operates on us, but **indirectly**, through the Word.
  - Previous verses shows we can resist, if we do not “receive the love of the truth ... have pleasure in unrighteousness”

# “Immutable ... Strong Consolation”

6. Why is the Lord’s comfort and consolation “everlasting”, as opposed to the fleeting comfort of men? How were the Thessalonians to use it?

*Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. 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, comfort your hearts and **establish you in every good word and work.** (2:15-17)*

- People are limited in knowledge, power even if sincere, honest.
- God is unlimited in knowledge & power – always sincere, honest. He will always keep His promises (**1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; Hebrews 6:16-19**).
- Use encouragement, strength to grow and do more good!

*... my beloved brethren, be **steadfast, immovable, always abounding** in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Cor. 15:58)*



# 2 THESSALONIANS

## *Chapter 3*

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- II. **Consolation:** Quieting erroneous fears that the Lord's return had been missed (2:1-17).
- III. **Adherence:** Command to follow apostolic tradition and withdraw from disobedient (3:1-18).
  - A. Confident prayers offered by both Paul and Thessalonians (3:1-5).
  - B. Withdraw from those not following apostolic traditions (3:6-15).
  - C. **Benediction and Salutation** (3:16-18).

# “Pray for us ...”

7. [Allen] Why did Paul ask the Thessalonians to pray for them (Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy)?

Finally, brethren, **pray for us, that <sup>1</sup>the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, and that <sup>2</sup>we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men**; for not all have faith. But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one. And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you. Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ. **(3:1-5)**

1. Success in preaching (“just as it is with you”)
2. Personal, physical safety
  - For those that tend to be too optimistic or naïve, understand some people are “unreasonable and wicked” (**Matthew 7:6**).
  - Get advice, develop judgment to discern (**1 Thess. 5:14; Heb. 5:14**).

# Too Broad or Too Narrow Application?

8. *[Travis]* Do Paul's instructions for withdrawal apply **only** to the apostolic tradition regarding labor? Explain.

# “Stand Fast and Hold the Traditions”

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.** For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for **we were not disorderly** among you; ... For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a **disorderly manner, not working at all**, but are busybodies. ... 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. (3:6-7, 11, 14)

- Gr. *ataktos* – “1) disorderly, out of ranks (often so of soldiers) ... 3) deviating from the prescribed order or rule” (Thayer)
- General purpose word – could have many applications, “orders, rules”.
- “in this epistle” – What other commands are in this letter?

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

# “Stand Fast and Hold the Traditions”

But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is <sup>1</sup>sexually immoral, or <sup>2</sup>covetous, or an <sup>3</sup>idolater, or a <sup>4</sup>reviler, or a <sup>5</sup>drunkard, or an <sup>6</sup>extortioner -- not even to eat with such a person. For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore “**put away from yourselves the evil person.”** (1 Corinthians 5:11-13)

Now I urge you, brethren, **note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.** (Romans 16:17)

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds. (2 John 9-11) See also: **Mat. 28:18-20; 16:12; Rev. 2:14-15; Jude 3-4.**

# Christian Work Ethic

9. [Nathan] Why was Paul's "work ethic" such a powerful example? For you yourselves know how you ought to **follow us**, for we were **not disorderly among you**; 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**, not because we do not **have authority**, but to **make ourselves an example** of how you should follow us. (3:7-9)

- Ate no one's bread.
- Worked night and day, so as not to be a burden.
- Only to be an example, not because he was required!
- Do we stretch ourselves so we are "not a burden" – or take advantage of every kindness, shortcut regardless of impact on others?
- What is our work ethic in work ... school ... family, home .... Bible class, church, individual growth?

# Tough Love

For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, **neither shall he eat**. ... Now those who are such we **command and exhort** through our Lord Jesus Christ that they **work in quietness and eat their own bread**. (3:10-12)

10. [Stephen] Is it not cruel to deny food to our fellow man? How do we reconcile this command to withhold food with other requirements for love, compassion, and benevolence?
- Which is more cruel? Which is more loving?
  - To permit physical or spiritual destruction (1 **Corinthians 5:5**)?
  - Undergirding most **reluctance** to exercise “tough love” is typically some combination of **naivete, shortsightedness, selfishness, and unbelief**.
  - Do we believe in God & that His commands will work? Are we smarter?
  - Why delay to act (**Ecclesiastes 8:11**)? Family (**Matthew 10:20-40**)?

# Enemy or Brother?

11. [Jim] If we refuse to “keep company” with a disobedient brother, are we not treating him like an enemy? How do we reconcile verses 14 and 15?
- Tough love (**1 Corinthians 5:5; Hebrews 12:5-13**)
  - Difference in motivation:
    - **Enemy** seeks the other’s **destruction**.
    - **Brother** seeks the other’s **restoration**.
  - Our speech and actions will manifest our desired outcome.
  - **Opportunity** to save: “**that** he may be ashamed” -> implication: repentance.
  - **Consistency**: 1 person breaking ranks can destroy the influence of 100 holding fast.
  - Similar effect to **Ecclesiastes 10:1**, “a little folly”.

# Counterfeit Countermeasures

12. Name at least one counterfeit prevention measure that Paul employed?  
How does this help us?

*Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all. The **salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. (3:16-18)*

- Proof of authenticity – assures inspired origin.
- This measure of prevention not only directly assures us of the letters' authenticity, but it also implies a general awareness and diligence to protect against the threat of imposters and fraud, which provides deeper confidence, assurance.

## 2 Thessalonians – Key Lessons

### 1. The Lord's Return:

- Eternal judgment and reckoning.
- Apostasy and man of sin must be revealed first.

2. **Love of Truth** – Loving and obeying truth protects us from deception.

3. **Tough Love** – True love may require withholding of food or fellowship. Withdraw from not obeying apostolic tradition.

4. **Fight Weariness** – Use prayer and focus on the Lord, the reward, others' benefit, and God's approval.

5. **Work Ethic** – Christians are to be diligent workers, not pilfering mooches.

6. **God Is In Control** – Jesus will finally destroy the man of sin when He returns.

7. **Encouragement** – Express thankfulness and confidence