

Outline of the Book of II Thessalonians

Introduction:

The primary theme of I Thessalonians was the idea of teaching and instructing. Paul had taught the Thessalonians many divine truths (I Thess. 1:5; 2:1-4, 8-9, 13; 3:1, 4, 10; 4:1-2; 5:2). The purpose of I Thessalonians was thereby to give further instructions to the Thessalonian brethren that they may grow spiritually (I Thess. 4:6, 13, 15; 5:27). Paul had received a favorable report concerning the Thessalonian's faith in the face of intense trials (cf. I Thess. 3:1-6) and thereby wrote I Thessalonians to further instruct the brethren.

Two focal points of I Thessalonians that resurfaces in II Thessalonians was the false conceptions of the second coming of the Lord and dealing with the "*disorderly*." There were apparent false teachers that were continuing to confuse and deceive the brethren regarding when the Lord would come again. Some were so convinced that the Lord was about to come at any moment that they apparently quit their jobs. Secondly, some of the disorderly that Paul admonished the brethren to correct in I Thessalonians 5:14 were continuing in their sins as is made apparent in II Thessalonians 3:6.

The purpose of II Thessalonians is thereby to give further instructions to the brethren that they would be found blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Thess. 5:23; II Thess. 1:11).

Date of writing:

The book itself gives us no information regarding dates. We are left to make conclusions based upon the context of the epistle. Consider what a few have said regarding the date. "The interval between the writing of I and II Thessalonians must have been rather short, for the Second Epistle does not presuppose any major changes in the inner constitution of the Thessalonian church not in the conditions under which Paul was writing. Silas and Timothy were still with him, and since his companions were usually traveling constantly, both Epistles must have been written between missions... II Thessalonians was written a few weeks, or at most a few months, after the First Epistle."¹ "The epistle evidently was written at Corinth not long after the first, most likely in the latter part of the year 53."² "This epistle, therefore, being written at Corinth, soon after the former, we can not be much mistaken in supposing that it was dated A. D. 52 in the end of the twelfth, or in the beginning of the thirteenth year of the reign of Claudius, the successor of Caius."³

This author must agree that when the contents of I Thessalonians are compared to that of II Thessalonians it is apparent that the two were written closely together. Apparently Paul sent the first epistle to the brethren in Thessalonica and someone returned the brethren's reply with further concerns. Paul writes the second epistle to reply to the current advanced problems. The time is impossible to set in concrete but not impossible to estimate. Clearly Paul was still in Corinth, on his second tour, and the year must have been around 53 to 52 AD. This being the case we can set bounds upon the time. We know that Paul first came to Corinth in the year 51 AD and remained at the least one and a half years and at the most about two years (cf. Acts 18:1, 11, 18-20).

See "Themes in I and II Thessalonians" under the introduction to I Thessalonians

¹ M. C. Tenney. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia Volume four; pp. 834-835

² Lipscomb D. and Shepherd J. W. New Testament Commentaries Based on the American Standard Version; pp. 84

³ Macknight J. Macknight on the Epistles Vol. III – IV; pp. 99.

Chapter 1

- I. Paul gives thanks to God for the growing faith of the Thessalonians (1:1-12):**
- A.** *“Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:1-2).*
1. Note that those who put their signatures to this letter are the same as those in I Thessalonians (cf. I Thess. 1:1). This is an indicator that the second epistle was written closely after the first (i.e., all three continue in Corinth).
 2. This letter was written to the *“church of the Thessalonians”* as opposed to the ‘churches’ of the Thessalonians. The first epistle was too written to the *“church of the Thessalonians”* (I Thess. 1:1); however, Paul commanded the brethren to share these divine principles with *“all the brethren”* (I Thess. 5:27).
 3. What is truth for one congregation of God’s people is truth for all local congregations and individuals (cf. I Cor. 4:17).
 4. Was there more than one church at Thessalonica at the time of Paul’s writing this epistle? Was this epistle written as a ‘universal’ epistle that would cause us to conclude that the principles written in this epistle are to be applied from church to church and from individual to individual? Such questions are important that we may fully understand the workings of fellowship, local autonomy, and the universal nature of truth. We shall examine these questions at II Thessalonians 3.
- B.** *“We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, even as it is meet, for that your faith growth exceedingly, and the love of each one of you all toward one another aboundeth; so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions which ye endure” (1:3-4).*
1. Apparently Paul’s prayer uttered in I Thessalonians 3:11-13 had been answered. The Thessalonians had received the truths delivered by the apostle and were truly studying them and growing spiritually with enthusiastic interest. Because of this, Paul gives thanks to God.
 2. The spiritual growth of the Thessalonians’ gave Paul an occasion to *“glory in you in the churches of God.”* This *“glorying”* includes communication from church to church regarding one’s spiritual welfare that is not even a member of the church where one may worship. Note that Paul had did the same *“glorying”* to Titus regarding the Corinthian brethren (II Cor. 7:14). Here are individuals who are happy about the faithfulness of their brethren and they want to tell others about this even though they are not fellow members of one particular local body of Christ (cf. II Jn. 4; III Jn. 4). Conversely, the passage infers that if the Thessalonians would not have grown spiritually Paul could not have *“gloried”* in them but would have had to give discouraging news to others when they asked him of the faith of these brethren (cf. II Cor. 8:24; 9:1-4) (cf. Appendix # 3; Church Autonomy).
 3. It was in the face of intense trials and persecution from the Thessalonians’ own countrymen that they continued to grow spiritually and so Paul was the more impressed, happy, and thankful to God. Many Christians today face no persecutions yet they do not grow spiritually. The Thessalonians had many reasons to be discouraged; however, they continued forward in their spiritual growth (cf. Appendix # 12; The Christian’s Spiritual Growth).
- C.** *“which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God; to the end that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: if so be that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you,” (1:5-6).*

1. The “*persecution and affliction*” the Thessalonians were enduring was the “*manifest token of the righteous judgment of God.*” A “*token*” (*endeigma*) is “proof” (LS 259). So Paul says that because the Thessalonians were suffering persecution and affliction at the hands of ungodly men, God’s righteous judgments are “*proved.*”
 2. To further explain this Paul states, “*to the end that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:*” The purpose of the Thessalonian’s trials were thereby to cause them to be counted worthy of heaven. Without the fiery trials of life a Christian is not purified (Job 23:10). James thereby said, “*count it all joy my brethren, when ye fall into manifold trials; knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience. And let patience hafve its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing*” (James 1:2-3). We all experience failures during the trials of life and are thereby motivated to do better the next time. The next affliction gives us further strength and so we continue to be perfected and strengthened in our faith knowing that there are better things awaiting us in heaven. The righteous judgment of God is seen in the fact that persecutions, afflictions, and trials in life exists. Judgment will come upon the disobedient, God desires His saints to be found “*worthy*” of heaven and so allows us to be tried to perfection that we might be with Him (cf. Appendix # 9; Consequences of Preaching Truth in Love).
 3. Next, Paul states, “*if so be that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you.*” Paul reminds the Thessalonians that those who so persecute them to perfection would in no way go unpunished for their evil deeds. God was simply using their sinful characters to perfect His own true saints. During the days of Jeremiah, the Lord used Nebuchadnezzar to afflict his people to perfection for seventy years; however, Babylon had to suffer for their evil ways even though the Lord used them (cf. Jer. 25:8-14; 30:11, 20-22; 31:17-20).
- D. “*and to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus:*” (1:7-8).
1. Those ungodly that God used to purify His people will suffer eternal punishment while the faithful and pure will have “*rest.*” The word “*rest*” (*anesis*) = “a loosening, relaxing of strings... relaxation, recreation” (LS 68). The word is used five other times in the NT (Acts 24:23; II Cor. 2:13; 7:5; 8:13; and II Thess. 1:7). From these cross references it is clear that the “*rest*” Paul speaks of is the loosening of stress that is laid upon the saints by evil doers (there will be none in heaven). Here then is an attribute of heaven. Heaven will be a place where “*all those who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*” (II Tim. 2:12) will no longer suffer the affliction of evil doers. We will be able to ‘relax’ in this respect. No more arguments with false teachers, no more hateful phone calls and e-mails. The battle will be finished (cf. Appendix # 23; What Will Heaven Be Like?).
 2. When the Lord comes again, He will come with “*the angels of his power.*”
 - a. When the Lord comes again all will see Him. John wrote, “*Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him*” (Rev. 1:7).
 - b. When the Lord comes the angels will be with Him (cf. also Mark 8:38).
 3. What will the Lord do when He comes? He will “*render vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus.*”
 - a. As a consuming fire that sweeps away the ungodly (cf. Jer. 30:23) the Lord will pour out His great wrath upon those who “*know not God.*” The apostle Paul reminded the Roman Gentiles of this claiming that they had no excuse for their

unbelief saying, *“for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who inder the truth in unrighteousness...”* (Rom. 1:18ff) (cf. Appendix # 4; The Wrath of God).

- b. The Lord’s wrath will too be poured out upon them that *“obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus.”* Whether that be Jew or Gentile, any man or woman who is presented with truth yet rejects it is reserved for punishment. Paul said, *“but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his works...”* (Rom. 2:5-10).
- E. *“Who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at in all them that believed (because our testimony unto you was believed) in that day”* (1:9-10).
1. The ungodly will suffer the punishment of *“eternal destruction.”* The word *“destruction”* (*olethros*) = “ruin, destruction, death” (LS 551). If one looses out on heaven they are eternally ruined in that they will never see the face of God nor experience His glory. Not that the word “destruction” does not mean ‘annihilation’ (cf. Rev. 20:10, 15) (cf. Appendix # 24; The Eternal State of the Dead in Christ).
 2. *“That day”* refers to when the Lord shall come again. From that point forward a separation is made between those who had loved God faithfully and those who did not.
- F. *“To which end we also pray always for you, that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire of goodness and every work of faith, with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ”* (1:11-12).
1. Paul was a praying man. His prayer for the Thessalonians was that God would find them worthy of heaven when Jesus came again. One is worthy of heaven when he has fulfilled God’s commandments (cf. Matt. 7:24ff).
 2. Everyone will sin (Rom. 6:23; I Jn. 1:10); however, that which separates the true saints of God who love the Lord from those who have no true love is one’s spirit of humility. When I sin, I am to come to God in prayer asking Him to forgive me of that sin (I Jn. 1:9). Herein I maintain my perfection and purity before the Lord (cf. I Jn. 3:3) and thereby bring glory to the name of Jesus in this world.

Synopsis of chapter one

Paul’s attitude toward the Thessalonians is defined as love. Paul truly cared for these believers and gave thanks to God in prayer because of their continued spiritual growth (II Thess. 1:3). Paul was so excited about the faith of the Thessalonians that he did not hesitate to tell others about them (II Thess. 1:4). He affectionately lets them know that he is aware of their sufferings; however, these same sufferings serve the purpose of purifying them. The Thessalonians are encouraged to keep their faith and to know that those who so ill treat them will not escape the judgment of the just God (II Thess. 1:6). In light of the terrible judgment to come, Paul admonishes the brethren to continue in their faith that God would find them *“worthy”* when He shall come with His angels in judgment (II Thess. 1:11). Prayer is a vital part of the Christian’s life and it is the litmus test for our faith in God. We ought to pray for the faith of others as Paul did for the Thessalonians. When such action occurs we exhibit a true love for brethren as we are commanded (II Thess. 1:3).

Chapter 2

I. The Lord's coming to be preceded by the lawless one (2:1-12):

- A. *“Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as the day of the Lord is just at hand;”* (2:1-2).
1. Paul mentions the coming of the Lord in II Thessalonians 1:7 and previously in I Thessalonians 5:2ff.
 2. Regarding the matter of the Lord's coming to gather His saints home to glory and render vengeance on the disobedience, Paul proclaims that the brethren *“be not quickly shaken from your mind.”* To be *“shaken”* (*saleuo*) = “to cause to rock, make to oscillate, shake to and fro... to stir them up... to be shaken to and fro, totter, reel... to move up and down, to roll, toss, as on the sea...” (LS 722). Clearly there is an association between being *“shaken”* and being *“troubled.”* Acts 17:13 uses the word *“saleuo”* to indicate a movement of people to excitement (agitation or jubilation). Acts 2:25 the word is used to indicate being *“moved”* from the faith. Both of these meaning may apply here.
 - a. Some of the Thessalonians were moved to excitement and away from the faith by false teachers who taught that the Lord was to come any moment.
 - b. These false teacher's *“spirit”* (teaching; cf. I Jn. 4:1), *“words,”* and their *“epistles”* stated that which is impossible for man to know; i.e., when the Lord would come. The Lord Himself proclaimed, *“But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only”* (Matt. 24:36).
- B. *“Let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition,”* (2:3).
1. Paul warns the Thessalonians of false teachers who would make fanciful claims of the immediate return of Christ and judgment (cf. Appendix # 25; False Teachers). If successful, these teachers would *“beguile”* the Thessalonians. To *“beguile”* (*exapatao*) = “to deceive or beguile thoroughly” (LS 270).
 2. Paul says that there are two events that are to take place before the Lord comes:
 - a. First, *“the falling away”* (*apostasia*) must come before the Lord makes His entrance into the world again. The word *“apostasia”* = “defection... departure from... revolt” (LS 107). The word *apostasia* is a noun (cf. Friberg 630). The apostatizing one is a defector; i.e., one who departs from the truth. Interestingly Paul speaks of the false teachers who beguile the Christians and then says that the Lord will not come until brethren defect from the truth by means of false teachings dreamed up in the minds of humanist. This is currently taking place and Paul warned brethren of this (cf. Acts 20:28-31; I Tim. 4:1).
 - b. Secondly, *“the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.”* Who is the *“son of perdition?”* Interestingly, Jesus referred to Judas Iscariot as *“the son of perdition”* (John 17:12). Jesus is praying to the Father in John 17. The subject of the prayer is the unity of His disciples and saints to come through truth. Truth would keep them from *“perishing”* and *“in thy name”* (walking by the authority of Christ). To *“perish”* (*apollumi*) = “done for, lost, ruined” (LS 101). This “ruined” state was stated in II Thessalonians 1:9 to indicate those who would be lost in hell for ever. There are *“sons of God”* (Gal. 3:26; I Jn. 3:1) and there are sons of the devil (cf. Jn. 8:44). Each follows a way in life that leads to one of two places; i.e., heaven and

hell. The son of perdition is thus identified as one who would follow ways that are not authorized in God's word and thereby leading him to hell. Such a one will be revealed and exposed (cf. Eph. 5:11). Note that both the falling away and exposing of the son of perdition is currently taking place (cf. II Thess. 2:7). Paul has further things to say about the son of perdition:

2a. *"He that opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped"* (II Thess. 2:4). Jehovah God has delivered one law for man to follow (cf. Jer. 32:39; Eph. 4:4-5). This one law dictates the manner of life and worship of the Christian (Jn. 4:23). Those who reject God's laws of worship and Godly living reject God's authority.

2b. *"He sits in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God"* (II Thess. 2:4b). How does the *"son of perdition"* *"sit in the temple of God setting himself forth as God?"* He does so by being dependant upon his I think 'soes.' Such a one elevates his own opinions above the law of God and thereby exercises humanism. During the days of Jeremiah, the false prophets and shepherds of God's people preached their own ideas peddling it as the word of God (Jer. 23:16-17, 28). When one replaces God's laws with his own ideas he has set himself up as God (a lawgiver). Paul told the Corinthian brethren that he did not bring to them *"fleshly wisdom"* (II Cor. 1:12) nor did he teach a *"corruption of the word of God as the many; but as of sincerity"* (II Cor. 2:17) (cf. Appendix # 8; Establishing Authority).

- C.** *"Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know that which restrains, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season"* (2:5-6).
1. Paul again reminds the Thessalonians of his having instructed them in the area of the Lord's coming and the revealing of those who will not walk by the authority of Jesus Christ when he was with them.
 2. To *"restrain"* (*katecho*) = "to hold back, withhold, to check, restrain, control, bridle... to be held down, to be bound, kept under" (LS 421). The antecedent to *"he may be revealed"* is the *"son of perdition"* or *"man of sin."*
- D.** *"For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way"* (2:7).
1. The *"mystery of lawlessness doth already work"* indicates a movement against the authority of Jesus Christ occurring now. From this point forward it becomes evident that the *"man of sin," "son of perdition,"* and *"mystery of lawlessness"* is a mindset (spirit) that is opposed to the authority of Jesus Christ. Such a 'spirit' is directly associated with the apostle John's description of *"antichrist."* Below is a clip from my notes on I John 2:18-19. Note that the exposure of such a mindset is already at work by the faithful children of God.

- IV. A contrast between one who abides in the teachings of Christ and the spirit of antichrist (2:18-23):**
- A.** *“Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour”* (2:18).
1. John returned to his affectionate address to all classes of Christians and referred to all as *“little children.”*
 2. The *“last hour”* is the time of the Christian dispensation (cf. Isa. 2:2ff; Acts 2:17; 3:24; Heb. 1:2).
 3. In times past the disciples had *“heard”* of the coming of *“antichrist.”* Even as John wrote, there were *“antichrist”* already working and thereby the disciples knew that they were living in the *“last hour.”* Clearly the point is made that since God’s people had heard that *“antichrist”* would be apparent in the *“last hour,”* and since *“antichrist”* is here, we know that it is the *“last hour.”* Moses foretold of the coming of Christ in the last days and the consequence of rejecting his authority in Deuteronomy 18:15ff (cf. Acts 3:22ff).
 4. Who then is antichrist? Antichrist is the spirit, disposition, character or state of mind of one who would reject the authority of Jesus Christ and His teachings (cf. I Jn. 4:3).
 - a. False teachers of John’s day were teaching that one could continue in sin and remain in fellowship with God and brethren (I Jn. 1:5-8) and that some cannot know all truth (I Jn. 2:3, 21); they denied that Jesus was the Christ (I Jn. 2:22) and were denying the deity of Jesus (I Jn. 2:22).
 - b. These false teachers laid claims to be Christians and even worshipped among faithful brethren (cf. 2:19), but they could not endure the sound doctrine (II Tim. 4:3) and left the faithful.
 - c. To deny the Son is to reject His authorized teachings. To illustrate this point clearly compare I Jn. 2:23-24 with II Jn. 9.
 - d. Those who reject the authority and teachings of Jesus are antichrist (against Jesus and His teachings).
- B.** *“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us”* (2:19).
1. The antecedent of *“they”* is clearly the *“antichrist”* of verse 18.
 2. The antecedent of *“us”* is clearly those who abide in the teachings of Jesus (2:24; II Jn. 9).
 3. Notice that *“they”* (antichrist, the spirit of false teaching and rejecters of authority) were at one time a part of the *“us.”*
 4. Clearly that which distinguished the *“us”* from *“they”* was that the faithful *“continued”* in the doctrine of Jesus Christ and the *“they”* did not. The faithful in Asia apparently took a stand against those who displayed the spirit of antichrist, and so they left (cf. I Cor. 16:13).
 5. They were not *“of God”* and therefore are not *“of us”* (cf. I Jn. 4:6).
 6. These antichrist went out from among the faithful brethren *“that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us.”* The doctrine of Christ would not allow a marring of discipleship (cf. Matt. 13 the parable of the sower). Those who opposed truth were not tolerated, and the pure gospel truth was defended to the point that the digressive brethren left and by their leaving they were exposed as those who are antichrist (opposed or against Christ’s teachings; cf. Matt. 7:22-23)! Paul said, *“For there must be also factions among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you”* (I Cor. 11:19).
 7. Ron Halbrook quotes Foy E. Wallace, Jr. quoting on I Jn. 2:19, “If these appeasers among us who are trying to decide whom to fellowship and not fellowship, what to tolerate and not tolerate would stop compromising anything and start preaching the truth on everything, the fellowship question would take care of itself like it did in John’s day... the pressure of the preaching of the plain gospel, if it is constant, will drive heresy and heretics out- they will not stay long enough to be fellowshiped. And that is exactly what John and Paul meant by what they said” (The Doctrine of Christ and Unity of the Saints pg. 19).
 8. Again, compare II John 9 with this verse (I Jn. 2:19). The *“us”* are faithful saints who abide in the teachings of Christ and the *“they”* are the antichrists. Those who *“hath not God”* are not *“of God”* and they that *“hath God”* are the ones who *“abide in the teachings of Christ”* (II Jn. 9).

2. So now Paul says, “*ye know that which restrains*” i.e., “*I told you these things*” of God’s revelation (cf. II Thess. 2:5). Clearly Paul is saying that the Christians have knowledge of divine revelation (the gospel message of truth) (cf. Appendix # 26; Can We Know Truth?). This truth is what suppresses, restrains, holds in check the spirit of antichrist, son of perdition, and man of sin and will continue to do so until this ‘spirit’ is completely “*taken out of the way.*”
- E. “*And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of his coming*” (2:8).
1. When the spirit of antichrist, son of perdition, man of sin (the mind that rejects the authority of Jesus Christ) is “*taken out of the way*” the “*lawless one*” will be slain by Jesus.
 2. Note that the “*mystery of lawlessness*” (2:7) is connected to the “*son of perdition and man of sin*” (2:3). Together, this spirit of antichrist, is referred to as “*he*” (2:7). The “*lawless one*” of 2:8 is therefore the “*he*” of verse 7, the man of sin or son of perdition of verse 3. When this ‘spirit’ (mindset against the authority of Christ) is “*taken out of the way*” (2:7) “*he*” shall be “*revealed*” and Jesus will slay this ‘spirit’ “*with the breath of his mouth*” (divine truth).
 3. To put this in perspective we find Christ coming, all will see Him (Rev. 1:7), all will be raised and judged according to His word (Jn. 5:27-29; 12:48), at that time all will know that Jesus is Christ and filled with all authority. This being so, every knee shall bow to him (Phil. 2:10). The mind or spirit of antichrist and son of perdition will be destroyed because truth will be fully known to all mankind as they see with their eyes the wonderful coming of Jesus (i.e., “by the manifestation of his coming”).
- F. “*even he, whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved*” (2:9-10).
1. The spirit of antichrist, son of perdition, man of sin, and lawless one are all now connected with Satan. This spirit of antichrist is “*according to the working of Satan.*” It is the devil’s work to delude men with strange doctrines (cf. Appendix # 10; The Work of Satan). It is the devil’s work to have man dream up ways of service to God rather than obeying the doctrine of Christ.
 2. The devil gains disciples by using “*power, signs, lying wonders, and deceit.*” Paul told the Corinthians not to be “*ignorant of Satan’s devices*” (II Cor. 2:11) and then names the devices as “*craft and deceit*” when it comes to handling the word of God (II Cor. 4:1-2). Lying wonders, signs and power came in the form of sorcery, witchcraft, magic, and trickery in the days of the apostles (cf. Acts 8:11) yet today it comes in even more subtle ways. Some of our brethren are telling us that the love of Jesus equals tolerating everyone’s differences in doctrinal beliefs. Still others quench the sting of error and false teachers that espouse erroneous doctrines by saying that they are not a false teacher unless their characters are flawed. The devil is the author of these human ideas. These ideas never came into the mind of God. Those who receive these false doctrines will perish “*because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.*” Some are never satisfied with the truth (cf. II Tim. 3:7). Such a one is of the spirit of antichrist and often adds and takes away from God’s divine revelation. They are every learning and never able to come to the knowledge of truth (II Tim. 3:7).
- G. “*And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*” (2:11-12).

1. Note that those who had “*pleasure in unrighteousness*” are those who “*received not the truth in love.*” During Jeremiah’s day, when the prophet preached the word to them they received it in anger and tried to kill Jeremiah (Jer. 11:18ff; 15:10-18; 18:18; 20:1-2) and put him into prison (Jer. 32:2-3). During the Lord’s day, Jesus was hated because he too exposed men’s sinful deeds (Jn. 7:7). Jesus told His disciples that this would be their lot in life (Jn. 17:14) and tells us that this is our lot (Jn. 15:18ff). The apostle Paul said that “*all those who live Godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*” (II Tim. 3:12). The nature of the gospel that we preach is that it exposes men’s sins (cf. Jn. 16:8-9). Now, if the gospel has this effect on some they naturally will want to seek out teachers who comfort them in their error (cf. Appendix # 25; False Teachers). This is exactly what took place in the days of Jeremiah. God’s people were serving Him with sacrifices and worship (Jer. 6:20; 11:15; 14:11-12; 26:2) and considered themselves innocent of sin (Jer. 2:35; 16:10). God; however, viewed their actions as sinful and rebellious (Jer. 6:15-16). Thereby the Lord sent Jeremiah to expose their sins (Jer. 17:19ff; 26:1-7). The people respond by threatening his life and casting him into prison. Why? Because “*the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so:*” (Jer. 5:31). These false teachers comforted and encouraged Judah in their sin (Jer. 23:13-17). Due to this state of mind, the Lord raised up Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon and called him His servant (Jer. 25:8-9). Nebuchadnezzar was evil and God used his wicked ways to accomplish His desires to punish sinful Judah. When God had accomplished this task, he punished Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon for their wickedness (cf. Jer. 25:12ff). Now, God did not make Nebuchadnezzar wicked, Nebuchadnezzar made his own decisions. God simply used Nebuchadnezzar’s wickedness to punish His people. The Lord does not tempt anyone to sin (James 1:12ff).
2. Thereby the “*working of error*” sent by God cannot be vices to tempt man of sin but to harden sinful men who already have “*pleasure in unrighteousness*” as the Lord hardened Pharaoh (Ex. 7:11-14, 22; 8:12-15, 19, 32; 9:32-35; Rom. 9:17-18). The point being, that those who truly have no love for the truth will sink further and further from the truth and the Lord will see to it that they find those teachers who will comfort them in their error.

II. Paul gives thanks for the Thessalonian’s love for truth (2:13-17):

- A. “*But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, for that God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth*” (2:13).
 1. Paul prayed “*always*” for the Thessalonians giving thanks to God for their election.
 2. A contrast is now made between those who represent the “*son of perdition*” and those who are sanctified in their belief of the truth.
 3. “*Before the foundation of the world*” had been created God had chose those who would belong to Him (cf. Eph. 1:4; Rom. 8:28-30). Those who would be “*holy and without blemish before him in love*” would stand in eternal fellowship with the heavenly Father (Eph. 1:4) (cf. Appendix # 27; God’s Divine Election of Grace).
 - a. Paul told the Roman brethren, “*For whom he foreknew he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren: and whom he foreordained, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified*” (Rom. 8:29-30).
 - b. To “*foreknow*” (*proginosko*) = “to understand beforehand, to judge beforehand” (LS 673).

- c. To “**foreordain**” (*proorizo*) = “to determine beforehand, to predetermine, pre-ordain” (LS 682).
 - d. Paul states that Jehovah God made a predetermined judgment upon mankind before they were even created. God would justify and glorify individuals who willingly conformed themselves to the teachings of Jesus Christ.
 - e. We know that this is exactly what he is saying due to the fact that Paul ties in the idea of being called of God to being foreknown and foreordained. We ask then, who is called by God for justification and glorification? The answer is found in Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:8, 16), i.e., all nations (every individual who ever walked the face of the earth has this opportunity (cf. II Pet. 3:9).
 - f. Those who answer the call of the gospel (cf. below) will be glorified as was the Lord Jesus (i.e., the firstborn among many in the resurrected state [cf. I Cor. 15:20-23]).
4. The standard that determines the state of “*holiness*” and being “*without blemish*” is the “*truth*.” The gospel message is the “*word of the truth*” (Eph. 1:13) (cf. Appendix # 5; The Nature of the Gospel).
 5. Those who “*believe*” truth and practice truth are “*sanctified*” (set apart). Said ones are distinguished from the “*son of perdition*” in that their actions and words are dictated by the authority of Christ as opposed to one’s own self will. These **Do** receive the word of truth in love that they may be saved (cf. II Thess. 2:10). Said ones **Do Not** exercise “*pleasure in unrighteousness*” (cf. II Thess. 2:11).
 6. The two characters are now revealed. One is accepted of God (those who’s will it is to serve God by His divine standards). The other is rejected of God because said one does what he feels is right in his life in relation to his spiritual welfare. One humbly submits to the authority of God the other does not (cf. Appendix # 28; A Study of Two Characters of Man).
- B. “*Whereunto he called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (2:14).
1. Again, the gospel message is the truth (Eph. 1:13). This truth has the power to save sinful man (Rom. 1:16). Man exists outside of Christ as one alienated and in a dark place of sin before conversion (Col. 1:13, 14, 22).
 2. The gospel message is an invitation that calls one out of a state of sin and into a state of fellowship with God through the forgiveness of sins (cf. I Pet. 2:9-10) (cf. Appendix # 5; The Nature of The Gospel).
 3. One thereby hears the gospel and obtains faith (Rom. 10:17). The subject matter that is heard is the law of Christ. The law points up sin in one’s life and leaves the individual with a choice; i.e., repent or go on in sin (cf. Lk. 13:3; Acts 2:38; 17:30). When one makes the decision to subject himself to the law of Christ, he is to indeed confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Rom. 10:9-10). Having heard, believed, repented of sins, and confessed the name of Christ one is to now be baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38). The rest of their life the saint maintains their fellowship with God through prayer, worship, and faithful living.
 4. The result to such a choice in life is, “*to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus.*” The Lord Jesus is currently in a resurrected immortal state dwelling at the right hand of God (Acts 1:9ff). The faithful Christian shall be resurrected in immortality and live eternally with the heavenly Father in a glorified state as Jesus (cf. I Jn. 3:1-2) (cf. Appendix # 29; The State of those Who Die in Christ).
- C. “*So then, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours*” (2:15).

1. With the reality that mankind can obtain the glorified and immortal state of Jesus at stake, Paul concludes by saying, “*so then, brethren, stand fast.*” To “*stand fast*” (*steko*) is to “make a stand, stop, stay, check... to raise, rouse, stir up... to stand firm” (LS 384-385). The word indicates a battle. The Thessalonians were in a battle against those who had no real love for truth. They are admonished to take a stand for what they believe to be right and not to move from this truth.
 2. Not only were they to take a firm posture in truth but they are admonished to “*hold the traditions which ye were taught.*” To “*hold*” (*krateo*) = “to be strong, mighty, powerful... to rule, hold sway, be sovereign... to conquer, prevail, get the upper hand... to conquer, master, outdo, surpass” (LS 448).
 3. The Thessalonians are commanded to take a firm, strong, and bold stand in truth. They were told to conquer, prevail, and get the upper hand in the “*traditions*” that they had been taught by the apostle Paul. *Traditions* (*paradosis*) = “a handing down, transmission.. of legends and doctrines” (LS 595). Those gospel truths that Paul handed to the Thessalonians were to be taken hold of with a firm and strong resolve.
- D. “*Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word*” (2:16-17).
1. The grace of God is that he mercifully offers salvation to those who would accept His authoritative standard of living and thinking (cf. Eph. 2:1ff).
 2. Note that the Christians life lies in “*hope,*” “*comfort,*” and “*rest*” (cf. II Thess. 1:7).
 3. The only way the Thessalonians or any other saint of all times for that matter, may establish their hearts in such a determined and strong attitude is through a knowledge and respect for God’s words. Such a life reveals one’s true faith.

Synopsis of chapter 2 “The Son of Perdition”

The church that Paul had established in Thessalonica had some who set out to “*beguile*” the faithful Christians in regards to the immediate return of Jesus (cf. II Thess. 2:3). Paul explains to the Thessalonians that they are not to trouble themselves over this faulty information. He then gives them an idea as to when the Lord would come again. Before Jesus comes again, there will be a “*falling away*” on the part of many Christians and the “*son of perdition*” will be exposed (II Thess. 2:3). Note the connection between the “*falling away*” and the “*son of perdition*” being exposed. The two events coincide even to the point to their being synonymous. Other synonymous terms for the “*son of perdition*” in the chapter are “*man of sin*” (II Thess. 2:3) and “*lawless one*” (II Thess. 2:8).

The “*falling away*” is associated with “*the mystery of lawlessness*” (II Thess. 2:7) and “*the working of Satan*” (II Thess. 2:9) as consequences of the son of perdition’s work. Interestingly, Paul states that the “*mystery of lawlessness doth already work*” (II Thess. 2:7). If then the “*mystery of lawlessness*” already works, the falling away has already begun, the son of perdition is already in existence in the days of Paul, and the day of the Lord is at hand.

The only other place in our Bible that uses the term “*son of perdition*” is John 17:12 where Jesus so labels Judas Iscariot. Jesus is praying in John 17 and the subject matter is unity through truth. Judas did not hold to the truth. Rather than being a son of God (Gal. 3:26; I Jn. 3:1), Judas was of his father the devil and thereby a “*son of perdition*” (cf. Jn. 8:44). Judas was not unlike many fallen away Christians today. Said ones are ‘defectors’ from the faith having ‘departed’ from the truth. The words ‘defector’ and ‘departure’ define the words “*falling away*” (Greek; *apostasia*; cf. LS 107). That which caused Judas (a son of perdition) to defect from the truth was his interest in the “*mystery of lawlessness*” which was the

“*working of Satan.*” Judas did not “*receive the truth in love,*” but rather “*had pleasure in unrighteousness*” (II Thess. 2:10-12).

Note that the son of perdition’s work is “*lawlessness*” which is a “*working of Satan*” (II Thess. 2:8-9). His work is further identified as one who “*opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sits in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God*” (II Thess. 2:4). To oppose, exalt against, and set one’s self up as God is to reject everything that God stands for. Simply put, such a state of mind looks to make one’s own way, standards, and law of life. This is who the “*son of perdition*” is. One who has left the faith and exercises a ‘spirit’ or disposition that opposes the teachings and authority of the Lord. He is directly associated with the Apostle John’s use of “*antichrist.*” John writes, “*Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour*” (2:18). The word “*antichrist*” means ‘against’ Christ. Like the son of perdition, antichrist is the spirit, disposition, character, attitude, or state of mind of one who would reject the authority of Jesus Christ and His teachings.

Both the spirit of the son of perdition and antichrist exist today. Many of God’s people today hold dear a beloved false teacher over the word of God because they love to be comforted in their sin. Through such ‘spirits,’ attitudes, or dispositions of opposition, the Lord “*sends a working of error, that they (those who received not the love of the truth) should believe a lie*” (II Thess. 2:10-11). So God winnows the wheat of mankind. As God used Judas Iscariot’s disposition of sin (Jn. 17:12) along with Pharaoh of Egypt (Rom. 9:17-18), the Assyrian army (Isa. 10:5-14), and the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 25:8-14) to accomplish His own ends even so the Lord uses the “*son of perdition*” against those who “*believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*” (II Thess. 2:12). God did not make any of these men or nations evil, they made the choice themselves (cf. James 1:13ff). Their true love was their sin. Jeremiah records, “*the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so:*” (Jer. 5:31). Lovers of error are exposed as well as the lovers of truth when the gospel is preached. When one makes a choice to live in dereliction to God’s laws it is because he desires the pleasures of unrighteousness over godliness.

Yes, the spirit of the son of perdition and antichrist exist today. Those who deny the authority of Christ by word and or deed do make it manifest that they are sons of the devil rather than a son of God. The attitude of the son of perdition is one that “*hath not God*” because such a one rejects God’s authorized teachings (please compare I Jn. 2:23 with II Jn. 9-11). The son of perdition and spirit of antichrist are thereby equivalents and represent an attitude of rebellion against the authority of Christ. This being so, the Lord’s coming is surely at hand today as it was during the days of Paul and the Thessalonian’s life. We are living in the last days (II Pet. 3:3ff).

Chapter 3

I. Paul request the Thessalonian’s prayers and gives various exhortations (3:1-5):

- A. “*Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified, even as also it is with you; and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and evil men; for all have not faith*” (3:1-2).
 - 1. Paul request that the Thessalonians pray for him and his preaching companions.
 - 2. The two prayer request are:
 - a. “*That the word of the Lord may run and be glorified.*” Paul’s prayer request was that the gospel message may be proclaimed throughout the world with the least bit of resistance that all those who would love truth may be exposed to its blessings and glorification.

- b. Secondly, *“that we may be delivered from unreasonable and evil men; for all have not faith.”* Here is a real fact in life, *“not all have faith.”* To be *“unreasonable”* (*atopos*) = “out of place... strange, odd, eccentric (departing from a direct or charted course) (LS 130). Chapter two verse three used the word *“falling away”* to depict the course of the *“son of perdition.”* The mind that first accepts Christ but then rejects His authoritative laws is the spirit of the *“son of perdition.”* Such a one has made a “departure” and has “defected” from the truth. Paul identifies the defecting Christian here naming such a one *“evil.”* Paul had run into many brethren who would not stand wholly for the truth and thereby hindered the gospel message (cf. Acts 15). Paul’s prayer request is that preachers be delivered from such individuals (cf. Appendix # 30; A Christian Can Fall From Grace).
- B. *“But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and guard you from the evil one”* (3:3).
1. How would the Lord *“establish”* the Thessalonians? It would be through truth (II Thess. 2:15-17) (cf. Appendix # 5; The Nature of the Gospel).
 2. The Lord would *“guard them* (the Thessalonians) *from the evil one”* with truth. Truth stands in opposition to the one who rejects the authority of Christ (cf. II Thess. 2:4).
 3. This verse does not teach “perseverance of the saints” (i.e., Calvinism). Remember that the gospel calls all peoples to repentance and glorification (II Thess. 2:13-14). This same gospel, when studied and obeyed, will keep one from defecting from the Lord. The effort must be there by the individual (cf. Appendix # 12; The Christian’s Spiritual Growth).
- C. *“And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command. And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ”* (3:4-5).
1. Paul has already praised the Thessalonians for their stand in truth even in the face of intense persecution (cf. II Thess. 1:4). Paul expresses confidence in the brethren’s ability to continue such a firm stand in truth.
 2. Paul was not affirming a ‘direct operation of the Holy Spirit’ upon the Thessalonians. The Lord *“directs”* the minds of men with the gospel message. When one studies the word of God it becomes his guide in life (II Tim. 2:15).

II. The Thessalonians response to those who are *“disorderly”* (3:6-15):

- A. *“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us”* (3:6).
1. A brother who *“walketh disorderly”* has the spirit of the *“son of perdition.”* The word *“walketh”* is an active present tense verb (Friberg 632) which indicates that the individual **continues** to do *“disorderly”* acts (i.e., “of troops; not in battle order... undisciplined, disorderly, irregular, lawless” [LS 128]). Such a brother continues in a state of rebellion against the authoritative teachings of the Lord (*“traditions”*) and is thereby in a lawless state.
 2. Paul delivers instructions as to what the faithful brother is to do to the unfaithful brother. The faithful are to *“withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly.”* To *“withdraw”* (*stello*) = “to shrink from a thing, avoid it” (LS 744). “To contract one’s self, to shrink; to withdraw from, avoid, shun, II Cor. 8:20; II Thess. 3:6” (Moulton 374). This verse clearly indicates social consequences toward the erring Christian.
 3. This verse has implication regarding longsuffering and patience. It implies that faithful brethren made an attempt to teach the erring out of his error (cf. I Thess. 5:14). Secondly, it implies that there comes a time when patience and longsuffering ends. The introduction of this study looked to the time frame between the writing of I and II

Thessalonians as being undetermined; however, the content does imply a closeness of time. Whether the two epistles are separated by two months or two years the fact remains that the period of longsuffering and patience has an end (cf. Rev. 2:20) (cf. Appendix # 20; Longsuffering).

4. Note lastly that Paul gives a “*command*” by the authority of Jesus Christ (in his name) to avoid and shun the persistent disorderly (cf. Appendix # 13; The Christian’s Responsibility Toward Other Christians).
 5. The question often arises as to whether this is church discipline. No it is not the church discipline of I Corinthians 5 but the act is implied on such a one. II Thessalonians 3 answers the question of how the faithful are to treat the persistent unfaithful.
- B. *“For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat bread for nought at any man’s hand, but in labor and travail, working night and day, that we might not burden any of you:”* (3:7-8).
1. Paul reminds the Thessalonians of a truth that he had previously taught them saying, “*yourselves know*” (cf. I Thess. 4:1-2). That which they had been taught is to follow Paul’s example (cf. I Cor. 11:1; Phil. 4:9).
 2. Paul, Timothy, and Silas did not act “*disorderly*” among them when present. These men upheld the truths of God’s word. Furthermore, they did nothing to indicate that what they preached and lived was for anything other than receiving the gift of salvation and glorification from Jehovah God. They did not peddle a doctrine (II Cor. 2:17) to receive wages but worked hard to keep any and all from thinking that this was the case (cf. II Cor. 11:9) (cf. Appendix # 31; Preacher’s Motivation).
- C. *“Not because we have not the right, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you, that ye should imitate us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat”* (3:9-10).
1. Those who labor in the gospel message have the authority (“*the right*”) to receive wages (cf. I Cor. 9:11-14).
 2. Here is more evidence that Paul’s purpose among the Thessalonians was to teach them. While in Thessalonica, Paul “*commanded*” that “*if any will not work, neither let him eat.*” Those who were perfectly able to work for wages, food, shelter, and clothing were to do so rather than to be a beggar. Since every man will be judged by the Law of Christ (Jn. 12:46ff) this law applies to every beggar that stands on a street corner that is perfectly able to work but will not out of laziness. God is the God of “*all flesh*” (cf. Jeremiah 32:27).
- D. *“For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. But ye brethren, be not weary in well-doing”* (3:11-13).
1. As Paul spoke and wrote we know that these words are the commandments of the Lord (cf. I Cor. 14:37).
 2. Clearly then the Lord has a strong distaste for those who would be a sponge in society.
 3. Timothy had brought back a basically good report of the welfare of the Thessalonians (cf. I Thess. 3:6-7). One adverse condition existing among the brethren in Thessalonica; however, was that some were not working but were rather being busybodies. A “*busybody*” (*periergazomai*) = “to meddle with other folk’s affairs” (LS 626). “To do something unnecessary or useless, be a busybody (a person who meddles or pries into the affairs of others)” (AG 646). Here is a picture of an individual who should be working to earn wages yet he has decided to loaf around you and meddle in your affairs as you try to make a living. Such activity is not fit for a Christian. The

Christian is to “*work* (in quietness) *and eat their own bread*” and never grow “*weary in well-doing*.”

E. “*And if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed*” (3:14).

1. A judgment must be made upon an individual’s actions in this life. If I observe that a brother in Christ is not obeying (verb-active-present tense [Friberg 633]) the commandments of God on a continual basis (i.e., is in sin), Paul states that I am to “*note that man, that ye have no company with him*” (cf. Appendix # 32; The Christian’s Judgments).
2. To “*note*” (*semeioo*) = “a sign, a mark, token... to make or take down the signal for battle... an ensign or flag... a device upon a shield or ships, a figure-head...” (LS 727). “The sign or distinguishing mark by which something is known, token, indication... of marks in the landscape showing direction... In the OT circumcision is *semeion diathekes* = a sign or token of belonging to the covenant (Gen. 17:11; cf. Rom. 4:11)” (AG 747-748).
3. The Greek word “*semeion*” is found 69 times in the NT. Out of all 69 occurrences it seems that the word is used in four ways: 1] **Proof** of the validity of something (cf. Matt. 12:38; I Cor. 14:22 etc.). 2] An **indicator** that when seen helps one identify the validity of something (Matt. 16:3; II Thess. 3:17). 3] **Miracles** (Jn. 2:23 etc.). 4] A **distinguishing mark that identifies one thing from another** (cf. Matt. 28:48; Rom. 4:11). The last use (i.e., a distinguishing indicator that helps one identify one thing from another) is how Paul has used the word “*note*” in II Thessalonians 3:14. Clearly one does not shoot a marker labeled “*disorderly*” at the erring as though he were a beast to be tagged and monitored as to his whereabouts. What we are commanded; however, is to make a judgment of one’s spiritual state and metaphorically place a distinguishing mark upon that individual. In such a case we are mentally making a distinction between the faithful of God and the unfaithful. Those whom we judge to be unfaithful (the process of “*noting*”) we are told “*not to have company with*” (*sunanamignumi*) = “to mix up together; to be associated with others” (LS 767). The reason for this social estrangement is that the brother might be made “*ashamed*” and come to repentance.

F. “*And yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother*” (3:15).

1. Why are we told not to “*count*” this erring brother (who refuses to repent and whom Paul tells us not to keep company with) as an enemy? There are times when we are to “*count*” an erring brother as an enemy (cf. Phil. 3:18-19) yet Paul tells us here not to do so. Answer: Such a one is not an enemy due to the fact that his sin is not intended to lead others astray through teaching (more on this in the synopsis of chapter 3).
2. Secondly, how can we “*admonish*” this erring brother while at the same time “*not keeping company with*” and “*withdrawing*” from (cf. II Thess. 3:6)? Clearly the idea is social. Such a persistent erring child of God cannot be ‘toyed’ with while in sin as though all were well. Our only authorized contact with this person is “*admonishing*” (*noutheteo*) = “warn or advise” (LS 536).

III. Autographic attestation and benediction (3:16-18):

A. “*Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with you all*” (3:16).

1. God is the Lord of peace (cf. Rom. 15:33; 16:20; I Thess. 5:23; Heb. 13:20).
2. Peace with God comes by doing His commandments (Phil. 4:9).

B. “*The salutation of me Paul, with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all*” (3:17-18).

1. Here the word “*token*” is used and is from the same Greek word translated “note” in verse 14 of this chapter. It is used as an ‘indicator’ of the validity of a matter. The fact that Paul wrote this epistle with his own hand gives validity, as an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the words spoken herein. There were other non-inspired epistles written at this time but this one was truly of divine origin (cf. II Thess. 2:2).
2. The Lord’s grace equates to salvation (cf. Eph. 2:1ff). I will receive the grace of God if I continue in faith (Col. 1:23). Paul is thereby willing that the Thessalonians would remain faithful to the Lord.

Synopsis of chapter 3

The main theme of the final chapter to the Thessalonians is how to handle the disorderly. The word “*disorderly*,” as used in II Thess. 3:6 is an active present tense verb. The present tense indicates ongoing action. Simply put, the disorderly of II Thess. 3:6 is one who has continued in his sin despite the admonition and period of longsuffering and patience mentioned in I Thessalonians 5:14. II Thessalonians 3 gives clear instructions regarding the fact that longsuffering and patience with the erring has an ending point. What are the faithful to do at such point? Paul calls upon the faithful to “*note*,” “*withdraw*,” “*have no company with*,” “*do not count him as an enemy*,” and “*admonish*” such a one. To “*note*” one is to make a judgment of one’s attitude toward truth. The apostle John authorizes said test of one’s attitude toward truth in I Jn. 4:1-2. When it has been determined that one is truly “*disorderly*” (present tense), said one is to be noted. My relationship with this individual has now changed. I do not “*have company with*” such a one. I am to “*withdraw*” (avoid and shun) the “*disorderly*.” Though I have changed my relationship with this individual, Paul commands that I do not “*count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother*” (II Thess. 3:15). The only authorized contact with the “*disorderly*” is to “*admonish*” (warn and advise).

A Distinction between Paul’s use of “*note*” (II Thess. 3:14) and “*mark*” (Rom. 16:17-18)

Paul warns the Roman brethren of individuals who would lead divisive movements within the church in Romans 16. Paul states, “*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent*” (Rom. 16:17-18). The word “*mark*” as used in Rom. 16:17 is similar in meaning to that of “*note*” in II Thess. 3:14. To “*mark*” (*scopeo*) = “to look at or after a thing: to behold, contemplate... to look out, watch... to look to, consider, examine, to look out for” (LS 735). Paul simply instructs the Roman brethren to be on the look out (watch) for people in the church who would lead a factious movement causing many to stumble and loose their souls. Said individuals have an agenda that is of their own interest (they serve their own belly). They teach others with smooth words and coerce many into error. We are instructed to “*mark*” (look out for and watch for) those who walk by the authority of Christ too (Phil. 3:17).

There is a clear distinction between the objective of each of these passages and words. The objective of “*noting*” in II Thess. 3:14 is to help restore the individual (said one is not factious nor teaching a misleading doctrine). The objective of “*marking*” in Romans 16:17 is to identify, watch, and “*turn away from*” (*ekklino*) (avoid and shun). Interestingly, Paul commands avoiding and shunning toward the one “*noted*” in II Thess. 3 as well as the individual in Romans 16. The distinction is that one is to be counted not as an enemy and warned while the other is not to be warned but altogether avoided. Here then is the distinction. To “*note*” (II Thess. 3:14) is to make a judgment of one’s attitude toward truth with a view to restore the soul and to “*mark*” is to watch and be on the look

out for factious brethren who teach others erroneous doctrines. Both are to be avoided; however, the factious are not to be admonished but altogether avoided.

Who do we count as an enemy of the cross and altogether avoid?

We do not count the erring of I Corinthians 5:1ff an enemy and altogether avoid because Paul said that the purpose of delivering their soul to Satan is “*that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*” (I Cor. 5:5). The objective is to save the child of God who has persistently engaged in sinful conduct out of weakness of the flesh (cf. Gal. 6:1; I Thess. 5:14; II Thess. 3:14, 15; Jude 22, 23).

There are those who are to be counted “*enemies of the cross.*” Paul said, “*For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: who end is perdition, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things*” (Phil. 3:18-19). They are enemies because they serve the lust of their own belly as did those in Romans 16:17-18. Such a one “*opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sits in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God*” (II Thess. 2:4). This is the spirit of the “*son of perdition*” (II Thess. 2:3). Such make up their own doctrines and look for followers. Paul refers to such as being cursed (Gal. 1:6-10; II Tim. 3:1-9). Christians are not to be lured into said one’s traps. The apostle Paul instructs that once the determination has been made; i.e., such a one is factious (teaching his own doctrines for a following), he should be warned twice and then altogether avoided (Titus 3:9-10).

The true enemy of the cross is thereby identified as one who has obeyed the gospel but is not satisfied with the gospel alone. Said one seeks to introduce new doctrines and leads others away from the faith. This one is to be altogether avoided after two warnings.

A case in point

Louis Zamora in his article entitled “Dealing with Sinning Christians: Restoration and Purification” gives an example of one who at first was to be avoided yet admonished but later altogether avoided. Luis writes, “Take as an example the writings of Paul to Timothy. In 1 Timothy 1:19-20, Paul tells Timothy he has ‘delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan’ so that they will learn not to blaspheme after having ‘suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.’ We read of this ‘delivery to Satan’ in 1 Corinthians 5:5—one of our *restoration* passages. It is evident that these men have fallen away, and that the church has disciplined them. Please note that Paul said they had suffered shipwreck with regard to their own faith.

Now consider also what Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2:16-18, ‘Avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, and their **talk will spread like cancer**. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and thus **they upset the faith of some**.’ We read of avoiding individuals in Romans 16:17-18 and Titus 3:10—some of our *purification* passages.

What changed for Hymenaeus between 1 Timothy 1:20 and 2 Timothy 2:17? Why was he **withdrawn from** in 1 Timothy but **noted and avoided** in 2 Timothy? In 1 Timothy, Hymenaeus suffered shipwreck with regard to **his own faith** and was a ‘brother overtaken in a trespass.’ But in 2 Timothy, Hymenaeus was **upsetting the faith of others** and was ‘deceiving the hearts of the unsuspecting.’”

Final thoughts on I and II Thessalonians:

The Thessalonians had received the gospel in much affliction (I Thess. 1:6). The affliction continued to assail the saints even from within (II Thess. 2:3). The Thessalonian Christians had met their “*appointed*” affliction head on (I Thess. 3:3) because they looked intensely upon their future “*appointment*” with salvation (I Thess. 5:9). Paul’s purpose of writing both epistles may be summed up in II Thessalonians 2:2; “*to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind nor yet be troubled.*” The Thessalonians and all Christians today must combat false doctrines and brethren with the purity and simplicity of the gospel message! The saints of God must remain focused knowing that our appointment and hope of salvation will surely come in the Lord’s own time. Let us now “*rejoice always*” (I Thess. 5:16) in this “*hope*” (II Thess. 2:16) and thereby continue to press forward in obedience!