

Pilgrim Way Commentary on **2 Thessalonians**



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Apology for This Work

This commentary on 2 Thessalonians follows in a long line of other works by divines of the past as they have sought to study and expound this book.

This work grew out of almost 40 years of both preaching through 2 Thessalonians in three pastorates in Maryland, Delaware and North Carolina as well as teaching through the epistle as an instructor at Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland. I needed my own notes and outlines as I taught and preached from 2 Thessalonians, so this fuller commentary flows from those notes and outlines. Thus, the layout of this commentary is a practical one, written by a preacher to be preached from in the pulpit or to be taught in a Sunday School. It was not written from an isolated study of a theologian who had little contact with people or practical ministerial experience. This commentary is a compilation of materials from many sources. There are many such commentaries on the market, but they tend to be somewhat dull and “safe” and not very practical in their application. It is written as something of a theological reference manual to me, filled with quotes and outlines from various books in my library. The layout and format are designed to help me in my preaching, teaching and personal study of this book. I figured there may be others out there who may benefit from this work, which is why I make it available, but the work is basically laid out in a selfish manner, for my benefit and assistance. You, as the reader, hopefully can find some profit in this!

This commentary cannot be easily classified into any single theological system and that is by design. I believe that no single human theological system is an accurate presentation of Scriptural truth in and of itself. When Charles Spurgeon once wrote “There is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless we preach what nowadays is called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else”, he displayed a most unfortunate theological hubris and misunderstanding. Calvinism is a human, flawed, limited and uninspired theological system, as is any other theological system. There is some truth there, as there is in any theological system, but it ranks no better than other competing systems, such as Arminianism (which is nothing more than a modified version of Calvin’s teachings), dispensationalism, covenant theology, Lutheranism, Romanism, Orthodox theology, pre-wrath rapture, take your pick. All these systems are flawed as they are all the products of human attempts to understand and systematize Biblical presentations. They can all make contributions to our overall understanding of the truth, but none may claim to be the only correct such presentation, at the expense of all others. Knowing the human impossibility for neutrality (we are all influenced by outside forces and ideas) and the human love for theological systems, I readily admit that I cannot be as dispassionate and uninfluenced by human teachings in these pages as I would wish. No man can be. But I have made every attempt not to allow my own personal systems to influence my understanding of what the clear teachings of Scripture.

I have freely consulted a wide variety of commentaries from a variety of theological systems. Some were “conservative” and some were “liberal”. As the old preacher once remarked “I milked a lot of cows, but I churned my own butter.” Direct quotes are

attributed to their proper source to avoid that unpardonable sin of literary theft. But simply because I quoted a writer should not be viewed as an endorsement of all that he wrote or of his theological system. I selected the quote because I found it interesting and useful, not because I am in any degree of agreement regarding the rest of his teachings. In this sense, I have tried to follow the form of Charles Spurgeon's *Treasury of David*, where he quoted a wide variety of other writers. I consider his commentary on the Psalms to be the greatest commentary ever in reference to that format.

This commentary is based on the text of our English Received Version, commonly referred to as the King James Version or the Authorized Version. I believe this is the preserved English translation available to us and that it is the superior translation in English. I can see no good reason to use or accept any of the modern versions, especially the current "flavor of the month" of the New Evangelicals and apostate fundamentalists, the corrupt and mis-named English Standard Version (known by Bible Believers as the 'English Substandard Version'. It is nothing but an updated of the discredited Revised Standard Version.) or the new "John MacArthur Version" known as the Legacy Standard Version (which is nothing but a rehash of the New American Standard Version). When it comes to these modern, critical text versions, I reject them for a variety of reasons. One major reason is that they have not been proven on the field of battle. I have liver spots older than the English Standard Version, but I am expected to toss my English Received Text, over 400 years old, and take up this new translation, whose ink is still barely dry? How many battles has the ESV won? How many missionaries have done great exploits with an NIV? What revivals have been birthed and nurtured with an NASV? We will stick with the translations and texts that our fathers have used, and that God has blessed. We are also favorably inclined to the Geneva Bible, Tyndale Bible, Bishops Bible, and other "cousins" of our English text. The Greek text used is the underlying text of our English Received Text and its standard 1769 revision, which is the text most widely in use today by God's remnant. We will comment of the Authorized Version text and will not correct it or attack it.

Each verse is commented upon. The English grammatical notes are limited to the tenses of the corresponding Greek verbs, for I believe the study of the verb tenses is the most important element of the usage of the Greek text, even more so than word studies. Not every Greek word is commented upon, only unusual or important ones. I am guilty of "picking and choosing" my word studies instead of presenting complete word studies for every word. That system would simply be too unwieldy for my purposes.

I have included some textual studies, mainly comparing the Authorized Version readings with the inferior readings found in the English Standard Version and the Legacy Standard Version, which is an unnecessary revision of the already-unnecessary New American Standard Version. The Legacy Standard Version is the baby of John MacArthur, who financed its publication and financed it heavily through his charitable trust. I have also included the translation of the Bible by John Nelson Darby. I also refer to the readings in the English translations that preceded the Authorized Version for sake of comparison and to examine how the English Received Text readings developed from

the Tyndale Bible, through the Coverdale Bible, the Geneva Bible and the Bishops Bible.

The presupposition of this commentary is that what the Bible says is so and that we will not change the English Received Text to suit our theological fancy or because we believe there must be some sort of translation simply because we cannot understand a verse as it is given. The text says what it says and that is what we must accept, else we will be found unfaithful stewards of the Word of God, a judgment we fear. We will not amend the Authorized Version text but will take it as it is the best we can.

This commentary certainly is not perfect, nor is it the final presentation of my understanding and application of 2 Thessalonians. A commentary over 40 years in the making can never really be finished. As new insights are granted by the Holy Spirit and as my understanding of the epistle deepens, additional material will be added, and sections will have to be re-written. One is never truly “finished” with any theological book, especially a commentary, even after its publication. As one deepens and grows in his relationship with the Lord, so does his theological understandings and that should be reflected in one’s writings.

This book was also written as a theological legacy to my four children and three granddaughters. They will need to be mighty for God in their generation for their days will certainly be darker than the generation their father grew up in. This book is an expression not only of the heart of a preacher in the early 21st century but also of a Christian father and grandfather for his children and grandchildren, so they may more fully understand what their father believed and preached during his ministry.

It is my sincere prayer that this unpretentious contribution to the body of Christian commentary literature will be a blessing to the remnant of God’s saints in the earth as we approach the coming of our Lord.

Introduction to 2 Thessalonians

Liberals claim that 2 Thessalonians is widely doubted, much more than is 1 Thessalonians. This is because of the advanced prophetic presentation that liberals maintain was too advanced for the mid-first century. They assume that the early Christians were not advanced enough, or simply too stupid, to develop such advanced prophetic teachings. Naturally, Bible believers have no such problems.

Not only is 2 Thessalonians found in Marcion's canon and the Muratorian canon, but it is also quoted by name by Irenaeus, and was apparently known to Ignatius, Justin Martyr, and Polycarp. Further, it is found in the most ancient manuscripts, including the old Latin, old Syriac, and P46, showing its full acceptance from a very early period. The external testimony for 2 Thessalonians is equally as strong as, if not stronger than, that of 1 Thessalonians.

AUTHOR: Clearly it is the Apostle Paul. The liberals who think 2 Thessalonians is too advanced (prophetically) for the mid- 1st century will naturally reject Pauline authorship and suggest an unnamed writer.

DATE: The second letter obviously must certainly be dated shortly after 1 Thessalonians, for the content and style are so similar. Further, there is some urgency in the writing (cf. 2:1-3). We suggest around 52 or 53, about the same time as the writing of 1 Thessalonians. We would reject any liberal theories about a later date.

PLACE WRITTEN FROM: Probably Corinth, as the first letter.

OCCASION OF WRITING: In 1 Thessalonians 3:6, Paul tells the church that the sending of Timothy was what prompted a letter to them. When Timothy returned to Paul, he was encouraged by the good report and he penned his first letter to Thessalonica. The second letter was occasioned by an entirely different set of circumstances. In 2 Thessalonians 2:2, Paul urges them not to be moved or shaken by their persecutions or by the false prophetic teaching regarding the rapture and second coming that was circulating in Thessalonica.

The second letter was written to correct the false teaching and to comfort the Thessalonians in the light of their current tribulations.

THE CITY OF THESSALONICA: The city of Thessalonica, which was a Roman colony, enjoyed the advantages of a strategic location. It was located 100 miles west of Philippi and about 200 miles north of Athens. It was the chief city of Macedonia. The famous Via Egnatia (Egnatian Way), spanning Macedonia from east to west, passed through the walls of the city. This important Roman highway facilitated brisk travel and commerce and put Thessalonica into ready contact with the important inland districts on either side of it. It was the principal artery of communication between Rome and her eastern provinces. Due to its location, Thessalonica might well be called "the key to the whole of Macedonia." The dictum of Meletius concerning it was, "So long as nature does not

change, Thessalonica will remain wealthy and fortunate.” One of its native poets proudly called it the “mother of all Macedon.”

Thessalonica was the largest city of Macedonia. It has been estimated that during Paul’s time its population may have been as high as 200,000. The majority of the inhabitants were Greeks, but there was also a mixture of other ethnic groups, including Jews.

Morally, the Thessalonians were hardly any different from the citizens of any other large Greek city. Presumably, most were idolaters, though it is certain that some were seeking a different kind of religious experience than polytheism could provide; hence, they attached themselves (loosely) to the local synagogue.

Today, the city is known as Thessaloniki, or Salonica.

The word “Thessalonica” means “the hot springs”.

THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA: The establishment of the church is recorded in Acts 17:1-9. On his second missionary journey, Paul and his companions (Silas and Timothy) had just left Philippi and passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia to arrive at Thessalonica. As was his custom, Paul immediately located the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews for three Sabbaths concerning Jesus Christ. While some of them were persuaded, including a great number of devout Greeks and leading women, the unbelieving Jews became jealous and created an uproar in the city. Therefore it became necessary to send Paul and Silas away secretly by night to Berea.

Despite such ominous beginnings, a strong and mostly Gentile church was established in Thessalonica.

The church in Thessalonica was a model church. Paul cited it to the Corinthians as an example (see 1 Thessalonians 1:7; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5).

Paul may have had some difficulty in the type of people he was dealing with in Thessalonica and the Scripture says, they were not as noble as the Bereans were. But any such handicap did not prevent Paul from establishing a fine church here.

PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE: The abrupt departure from Thessalonica so soon after the beginning of the church naturally left Paul anxious about the condition of the young church. When Timothy joined Paul at Athens (cf. Acts 17:14-16), his concern prompted Paul to send Timothy at once back to Thessalonica to encourage and ground the new disciples in the faith, and to learn how they were enduring persecution (cf. 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5).

When Timothy returned to Paul in Corinth (cf. Acts 18:5), the news was mostly encouraging (1 Thessalonians 3:6-7). Despite persecution they had remained strong (1 Thessalonians 2:13-16), and even proved themselves to be an example to others (1 Thessalonians 1:6-8). As with any (young) church, they needed further instruction concerning holy living (1 Thessalonians 4:1-12). They also needed to be reassured that their loved ones who died in Christ would not miss out on the blessings involving the coming of our Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

OTHER REMARKS

“The two epistles to Thessalonica are the most important Pauline epistles for a new convert to Christ to read. We often recommend the Gospel of John for its emphasis on

the Deity of Christ and “believing”, but that was written primarily to convert a sinner (see John 20:31). First Thessalonians was written especially for brand new converts to Jesus Christ (see 1:2,5,6,9,10).”¹

Second Thessalonians has 3 chapters, 47 verses and 1,042 words in our English text.

Names and titles of Christ in 2 Thessalonians:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Lord Jesus Christ 1:1 | 3. Lord 1:9 |
| 2. Lord Jesus 1:7 | 4. Christ 2:2 |

Names and titles of God in 2 Thessalonians:

1. Father 1:1; 2:16
2. Lord of Peace 3:16

Names and titles of the Holy Spirit in 2 Thessalonians:

1. Spirit 2:13

Old Testament references in 2 Thessalonians

1. The “Man of Sin”, 2:4 with Daniel 11:36

Outline from W. Graham Scroggie²

I	II	III	IV
Introduction	Encouragement	Exhortation	Conclusion
1:1-4	1:5-2:12	2:13-3:15	3:16-18
1. Salutation 1 2. Benediction 2 3. Thanksgiving 3,4	1. Inspiration for the Oppressed 1:5-12 2. Instruction for the Perplexed 2:1-12	1. To the Devout 2:13-3:5 2. To the Disorderly 3:6-15	1. Supplication 16 2. Authentication 17 3. Benediction 18

¹ Peter Ruckman, The Books of First and Second Thessalonians and Philemon, page vii.

² The Unfolding Drama of Redemption volume 3, page 51

2 Thessalonians Chapter 1

1. Introduction 1:1-4

1:1^a Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

1a Paul, Timothy and Silas were involved in the writing of this second epistle, which was written shortly after the first. Paul is the primary author, of course, but the other brethren may have added some material that Paul used. But Silas and Timothy are right there with Paul as he writes this second epistle.

1:2^a Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2a This is a typical Pauline greeting.

1:3 We are bound^{a- present} to thank^{present middle/passive participle} God always for you, brethren, as it is^{present} meet,^b because that your faith groweth exceedingly,^{c-present} and the charity^d of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;^{e-f-g-present}

3a **“We are bound”** as if “we have a debt to discharge to you.” The Geneva reads “we ought” as if Paul had a moral obligation to thank God for the Thessalonians. The King James gives more of an idea of it as a spiritual obligation. Both ideas are correct.

3b **“as it is meet”** As it is fitting and proper, something that we ought to do. This is Old English terminology.

3c **“your faith groweth exceedingly”** Persecution and tribulation make for good soil to grow a strong faith. Their sufferings not only caused their faith to grow, but to grow “exceedingly”, like a weed. The hotter the fire, the faster the faith grows.

There are four reasons why Paul commended the Thessalonian church:

1. Their faith was growing (2 Thessalonians 1:3)
2. Their love was abounding love (2 Thessalonians 1:3)
3. They were patient in persecution and tribulation (2 Thessalonians 1:4)
4. Their endurance in persecution and tribulation (2 Thessalonians 1:4)

3d AV

ESV

LSV

Darby

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;	3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.	3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is <i>only</i> fitting, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of each one of you all toward one another	3 We ought to thank God always for you, brethren, even as it is meet, because your faith increases exceedingly, and the love of each one of you all towards one another abounds;
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		increases <i>all the more</i> ,	
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Only the Authorized Version uses “charity” here. All of the other translations use “love”. “Charity” is the stronger term for “love”, speaking of divine love, and love put into action.

3e There was still not much for Paul to criticize or to be concerned about in the interval between the first and second epistle. This was still a good church, being faithful and growing in grace and knowledge.

Points of commendation:

1. Their faith was growing and that “exceedingly”.
2. Their charity (love manifested in action) was abounding

“There are three things which Paul picked out as being the marks of a vital Church.

1. A faith which is strong. It is the mark of the advancing Christian that he grows surer of Jesus Christ every day. The faith which may begin as an hypothesis ends as a certainty. James Agate once said, “My mind is not like a bed which has to be made and remade. There are some things of which I am absolutely sure.” The Christian comes to that stage when to the thrill of Christian experience, he adds the discipline of Christian thought.

2. A love which is increasing. A growing Church is one which grows greater in service. A man may begin serving his fellowmen as a duty which his Christian faith lays upon him; he will end by doing it because in it he finds his greatest joy. The life of service opens up the great discovery that unselfishness and happiness go hand in hand.

3. A constancy which endures. The word Paul uses is a magnificent word. It is *hupomonê* which is usually translated endurance but does not mean the ability passively to bear anything that may descend upon us. It has been described as “a masculine constancy under trial” and describes the spirit which not only endures the circumstances in which it finds itself but masters them. It accepts the blows of life but in accepting them transforms them into stepping stones to new achievement.”³

3f “As in the first Epistle, the apostle does not immediately grapple with the error, but prepares the hearts of the saints gradually and on all sides so as to clench the truth and exclude the error once it is exposed. This is the way of divine grace and wisdom; the heart is set right, and not the mere point of error or evil dealt with. The very snare is thus made the occasion of fresh and deeper blessing; and as all truth is consolidated, so the Lord is more enjoyed.”⁴

3g The Tyndale Bible renders this about the Thessalonians “swimming in love”.

1:4^a So that we ourselves glory ^{present middle/passive infinitive} **in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:** ^{b-present middle subjunctive}

4a Paul used the example of the Thessalonians to other churches, as an example of patience and faith in the midst of persecutions. “This is how you endure! This is how you stay faithful in the midst of a difficult situation!” Paul would use the Thessalonian church as such an example.

³ William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible*.

⁴ William Kelly, *The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians*.

4b You wonder at times why the world just can't leave us alone. Why can't the world just let us worship God and live at peace? Why must we always be the source of persecution? Because in the war between God and Satan, we have chosen God's side and are, in Satan's eyes, enemy combatants. If we will not pledge our allegiance to Satan and his system, we must be destroyed. This is why we must always expect trial and persecution if we are standing right and living godly (2 Timothy 3:12, **Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.**) If your faith is weak and compromised, then you are no threat to Satan and he will waste no energy upon you. Genuine Christians are persecuted and hated.

2. Divine Recompense for Persecution 1:5-10

1:5^a Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy ^{aorist passive infinitive} **of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:**
^{present}

5a How odd is this! Being counted worthy to suffer! How few modern Christians understand this! They see suffering as a judgment from God because you either were living in sin or that you didn't have enough faith to overcome. This is a standard teaching of "prosperity preachers". If you were a genuine Christian, God would give you a raise at work, a new car, He'd burn your mortgage and heal you of your cancer...so they claim. But God often honors His highest saints with suffering.

1:6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense ^{aorist infinitive} **tribulation to them that trouble** ^{present active participle} **you;** ^{a-b}

6a God will tribulate the tribulators with tribulation. It is their just recompense. They like to dish out tribulation upon the saints, so can they take God dishing out divine tribulation upon them? Can their heart endure in the day of their visitation? God is a God of the Recompense. He will reward people (saints and sinners) according to how they have given out, as seen in Psalm 18:20-27. And such a judgment in this case is certainly "righteous" for two reasons:

1. God is righteous and He would not deliver any judgment that was unrighteous.
2. These sinners were worthy of such judgment for they persecuted God's people and attempted to hinder the truth.

6b These sinners were sending "little tribulations" upon the saints and the local churches, so God would recompense them by sending the Great Tribulation upon them.

1:7 And to you who are troubled ^{present passive participle} **rest with us,** ^{a-b} **when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,** ^c

7a **"rest"** A rest from these persecutions is promised, but not anytime soon. For that, we must wait for the Second Coming.

7b **"with us"** Paul includes his company with the Thessalonians since he was also enduring persecution as the Thessalonians were. Paul was not writing as some coolly detached spectator, but as one who also was enduring persecution and tribulation in his Christian walk and ministry.

7c This is the Second Coming (Revelation 19) and not the rapture, since the Lord comes secretly at the rapture and is not publicly revealed at that time. It is at this time when the

ultimate judgment of God will be meted out to those who are worthy of such judgment. At the Second Coming, there will come the recompense to the persecutors and the rest from the persecutions.

1:8 In flaming fire^a taking^{present active participle} vengeance on them that know^{perfect} active participle not God,^b and that obey^{present active participle} not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ :^c

8a Notice the “flaming fire” that is associated with the vengeance and judgment of God. There is a hell and a lake of fire, both have literal fire to which literal sinners will be sentenced to literally burn for a literal eternity. It is a horrible fact and not one that anyone wants to contemplate, but it cannot be denied without denying the Scriptures themselves.

8b Again, this takes place at the Second Coming (with Armageddon) since no one is judged at the rapture and the Lord takes no vengeance upon the unbelievers at the rapture.

8c A description of the lost:

1. **They know not God.** They could. God is very easy to know and He will reveal Himself to a searching heart. But these sinners have no desire to know God and they do all they can to maintain their spiritual ignorance of Him, lest they become accountable to Him.
2. **They do not obey the gospel.** They know it for they are not ignorant of it. They simply choose to rebel and have no desire to obey God. Thus, they are unsaved men, for if they would hear and obey the Gospel, they would be saved.

1:9^a Who shall be punished^{future} with everlasting destruction^b from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

9a Things that will happen at the Second Coming in 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10:

1. The persecutors of the church will themselves receive divine persecution (1:6).
2. The Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven (1:7a)
3. The “mighty angels” accompany the Lord at the Second Coming (1:7b).
4. The Lord takes flaming vengeance upon those who oppose Him and who do not obey His gospel (1:8).
5. These people will be punished with everlasting destruction (1:9a). It is “everlasting” as the results of it shall never be mitigated or reversed, and the duration of this state of destruction shall also be unending. The location of this punishment shall be “**from the presence of the Lord**”, away from Him, in hell, forever.
6. Jesus will be glorified in His saints and will be admired in those who believe (1:10).

9b The Tyndale, Coverdale and Bishops Bibles use “damnation”. The Geneva Bible has “perdition”. This destruction is everlasting, showing that hell, and ultimately the Lake of Fire are both eternal and those who go there will be there for eternity.

1:10 When he shall come^{aoarist active subjunctive} to be glorified^{aoarist passive infinitive} in his saints, and to be admired^{a-aoarist passive infinitive} in all them that believe^{present active participle} (because our testimony among you was believed^{aoarist passive}) in that day.^b

10a The pre-Authorized Version translations all have “be made marvelous”. The Geneva Bible uses “be marveled at”.

10b The Tyndale Bible adds material about when this was preached.

3. Prayer for God's Glorification in You Through Tribulation 1:11,12

1:11^a Wherefore also we pray ^{present middle subjunctive} **always for you, that our God**
would count you worthy ^{subjunctive} ^{aurist active subjunctive} **of this calling, and fulfill** ^{aurist active}
all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:

11a Paul's prayer requests regarding the sufferings of the Thessalonians:

1. That God would count the Thessalonians worthy of this calling of suffering.
2. That God would glorify Himself through the faithful enduring of the Thessalonians in their tribulations. This is the ultimate goal of everything God does and it should be the ultimate motivation for everything that we do.

1:12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ^a may be glorified ^{aurist passive subjunctive}
in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus
Christ.

12a AV	ESV	LSV	Darby
12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.	12 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.	12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and <i>the</i> Lord Jesus Christ.	12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus <i>Christ</i> may be glorified in you and *ye* in him, according to the grace of our God, and of <i>the</i> Lord Jesus Christ.

The ESV and LSV omit the first use of "Christ". Darby puts it in italics.

2 Thessalonians Chapter 2

This is one of the most abused and misinterpreted prophetic sections in Scripture, mainly to the stampede to change “Day of Christ” in 2 Thessalonians 2:2 to “Day of the Lord”, thus throwing off the entire meaning of this passage.

4. The Day of Christ 2:1,2

2:1^a Now we beseech^{b-} present you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together^c unto him,

1a All of this has reference to the rapture, with the “**coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**” and “**our gathering together unto Him.**”

1b AV	ESV	LSV	Darby
1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and <i>by</i> our gathering together unto him,	1 Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers,	1 Now we ask you, brothers, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,	1 Now we beg you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him,

“**beseech**” A very strong word of “ask” or “plead”. The ESV and LSV have the weaker “ask” for “beseech”. Darby is better with “beg”.

1c “**gathering together**” Strong’s #1997 episunagwgh episunagôge; a gathering together in one place, the (religious) assembly (of Christians). The “epi-” prefix strengthens the meaning of the word. “A late word found only in 2 Maccabees. 2:7; 2 Thessalonians 2:1; Hebrews 10:25 till Deissmann (*Light from the Ancient East*, p. 103) found it on a stele in the island of Syme, off Caria, meaning “collection.”⁵

2:2 That ye be not soon shaken^{aorist passive infinitive} in mind,^{ab} or be troubled,^{present passive infinitive} neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.^{c-d-e-f-perfect}

2a There was still a lot of uncertainty and confusion in Thessalonica regarding prophetic themes, despite Paul’s first letter. Most of this more current confusion regarding the false teaching that was circulating in the area that the “Day of Christ” was at hand and that the Thessalonian believers had missed the rapture and were about to enter into the tribulation period, or were already in it. In this sense, they had mistakenly wandered into holding to a post-tribulation rapture position.

“There is ever a strong tendency among Christians to Judaize the hope; i.e., to be overly occupied with the kingdom. It manifests itself in various forms. In post-tribulationism it involves, among other things, making Christians out of those who are really the elect of the Jews in the events just preceding the appearing in glory. In amillennialism, we have the kingdom here and now on the earth and this leads to behavior inconsistent with the heavenly calling for Christians. In postmillennialism the great idea is that the gospel will bring in the kingdom. What this scheme

⁵ A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament.

really amounts to is that the great blessing for the earth will be brought about by man's effort, not by Christ coming in power and glory. Results accomplished by man is the essence of Judaism. When we see the confusion in Christendom everywhere, even though we have the complete canon of Scripture available, it should not surprise us that there should be some confusion in the minds of the Thessalonians, who did not have the complete canon of Scripture."⁶

2b **"be not soon shaken"** Compare:

1. Isaiah 26:3, **Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.**
2. Mark 13:7, **And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet.**

2c There was several avenues that this false prophetic teaching was making its way into Thessalonica:

1. **By spirit**
2. **By word**, or by the preaching of a false teacher
3. **By letter as from us.** Some false teachers were probably circulating forged letters that supposedly came from Paul, that were promoting this false teaching under the guise of apostolic teaching.

2d These false teachings were resulting in the Thessalonians being:

1. **Shaken in mind.** Strong's # 4531 saleuô, a motion produced by winds, storms, waves, to agitate or shake, to cause to totter, to shake thoroughly, of a measure filled by shaking its contents together, to cast down from one's (secure and happy) state, to move, agitate the mind, to disturb one
2. **Troubled.** Strong's # 2360 throeô, to cry aloud, make a noise by outcry, to trouble, frighten, alarm.

2e AV	ESV	LSV	Darby
2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.	2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.	2 that you not be quickly shaken in your mind or be alarmed whether by a spirit or a word or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.	2 that ye be not soon shaken in mind, nor troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as <i>if it were</i> by us, as that the day of the Lord is present.

"Day of Christ" Nearly all commentators claim the Authorized Version has mistranslated this and this should read "Day of the Lord". Even the dispensationalist Darby makes the change and that is very disappointing. He, of all translators, should have known better. The translators mainly just parrot what some Greek Critical Text commentary claims without searching it out for themselves. Even the "fundamentalist" Scofield Reference Bible picks up the error. But "Day of Christ" is the correct and proper reading, as preserved in the proper manuscripts. Any attack on this traditional reading is an unnecessary and an unfaithful compromise to the perverted critical texts. The correct (traditional and received) manuscripts read "ἡμερα του χριστου", showing

⁶ R. A. Huebner, Elements of Dispensational Truth, volume 2, page 42.

that the Authorized Version is correctly translated. The corrupted Critical Texts (the 1% minority manuscripts that have been historically rejected by the true and remnant saints and church) is in error.

John Nelson Darby and the “Brethren” who followed him, make an error where he claims in his notes in 2 Thessalonians “If we change the word “present,” the whole epistle becomes unintelligible.” That’s funny, as I have absolutely no trouble understanding the text as preserved for us in the Authorized Version. The editor of the entry in the Cambridge Greek New Testament For Schools (George Findlay?) claimed “This paragraph is the most obscure in the whole of the Pauline Epistles. It is composed in a reserved, elliptical fashion and bears reference to St Paul’s oral communications, without which indeed he does not expect what is here written to be understood.” But it is much easier to understand the passage if you pray over it and believe the Authorized Version text as the Holy Spirit gave it! Too many of these destructive critics relied on their “scholarship” to interpret such passages and when their “scholarship” failed them, they are lost and have no clue how to proceed, so they simply throw their hands up in the air, claim the text is “obscure” and then go play golf. Many non-dispensational commentators do the same thing while trying to exposit those tough passages in Hebrews where the author seems to lay out the possibility that a Christian can lose his salvation (which is not what is being taught in Hebrews!).

“Day of the Lord” is **not** the same as the “Day of Christ”. “Day of the Lord” relates to the tribulation and Armageddon as well as other associated events. The Day of Christ refers to the Bema Judgment of Christ.

The following English translations translate it properly:

The Tyndale Bible
The Coverdale Bible
The Geneva Bible
The Bishop’s Bible
21st Century King James Version
Tyndale Version
Young’s Literal Translation
New King James Version
Majority Standard Bible
Daniel Webster’s translation
World English Bible

Incorrect translations as “Day of the Lord”

American Standard Version- 1901
The Contemporary English Version is totally incomprehensible in verse 2.
The Message is totally incomprehensible in verse 2.
Darby’s translation (and probably the one by William Kelly, which is very similar to Darby’s)
Revised Version 1881
Rhems-Douay
Wuest’s translation
Recovery Version (published by a group headed by Witness Lee, influenced by the ministry of Watchman Nee)⁷
New International Version
New American Standard Version
Amplified Bible

⁷ Since Lee/Nee’s group is Plymouth Brethren, we would expect them to follow the Brethren errors regarding critical text versions.

New Living Translation
English Standard Version
Holman Standard Christian Bible
Wycliffe's Version
Latin Vulgate
New World Translation (Jehovah Witness, they use "Day of Jehovah")

Commentators who follow the "Day of the Lord" error:

1. William Kelly, in his notes on 2 Thessalonians, is greatly upset at the Authorized Version rendering of the entire idea of the "day of Christ is at hand", insisting (wrongly) that the Revised Version is more accurate. This was an unfortunate problem with many of the early "Plymouth Brethren" in that they never hesitated to correct the Authorized Version with the corrupted minority critical texts. Those Brethren writers were too infected with destructive Greek critical "scholarship".
2. William Robertson Nicoll *Sermon Bible*
3. F. W. Grant, *Numerical Bible*
4. Lange's Commentary
5. A. T. Robertson, *Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament*
6. John Nelson Darby
7. *Scofield Reference Bible*
8. Ethelbert Bullinger, *Companion Bible*
9. Jamieson, Fausset and Brown *Commentary*
10. D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Thessalonian Epistles*
11. J. Sidlow Baxter, *Explore the Book* (he explicitly cites the RV mistranslation)
12. Walter Scott, *Bible Handbook*
13. W. Graham Scroggie, *The Unfolding Drama of Redemption* (he seems to lean in this direction)
14. A. C. Gaebelein, *The Annotated Bible*
15. Harry Ironside
16. D. Edmond Hiebert
17. Newberry Reference Bible does not suggest changing "Christ" to "Lord".⁸

Commentators who keep the correct "Day of Christ" reading (or who at least don't attack the correct reading)

1. Peter Ruckman
2. John Trapp
3. John Bengel, *Gnomon of the Greek New Testament*
4. John Cereghin (yours truly)
5. Robert Hawker, *The Poor Man's Commentary*
6. Albert Barnes
7. Joseph Exell, *The Biblical Illustrator*
8. Adam Clarke
9. David Allen Hoffman, *The Common Man's Reference Bible*
10. H. T. Spence, *The Canon of Scripture*
11. John Gill. He acknowledges the other reading but seems to accept the traditional reading.
12. David Guzik

⁸ Thomas Newberry's version was also called The Englishman's Bible, designed to focus on the grammar of the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. Newberry was a Plymouth Brethren and was also affected by higher criticism but he does not mention or suggest the modern reading.

Henry Morris take his position in the middle of the street and gets hit by the traffic going in both directions when he says on page 1852 of *The New Defender's Study Bible* "Some manuscripts read 'the day of the Lord' here, but the meaning would be essentially the same either way." Um, no, no it would not.

"Day of Christ"- Biblical unfolding of the term:

1. Philippians 1:10, That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till **the day of Christ**; (ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ)
 - A. Paul desires the Philippians to be "sincere and without" offense until this day.
 - B. None of the versions attack this reading.
2. Philippians 2:16, Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in **the day of Christ**, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. (ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ)
 - A. Paul wants to rejoice in this day.
 - B. It seems a judgment is associated with it, as he may find out whether he has "run" or "labored" in vain on this day.
 - C. None of the versions attack the reading yet Darby has it as "Christ's day".
3. 2 Thessalonians 2:2, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the **day of Christ** is at hand. (ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ)
 - A. It had not yet come at the time of this writing.
 - B. The versions attack the reading, having "Day of the Lord".

Why read it as "Day of Christ" in Philippians 1:10 and 2:16 but change the reading in 2 Thessalonians 2:2? The Greek is the same in all three passages, ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ. It appears someone is trying to sow prophetic confusion by trying to read 2 Thessalonians 2:2 as "Day of the Lord" instead of the "Day of Christ".

The "Day of Christ" refers to the Judgment Seat of Christ, which takes place immediately after the rapture (Revelation 4). It is included within the overall Day of the Lord presentation but is a specific event within that prophetic context. The two terms are not identical.

"The Facts: The beginning of the Day of the Lord is not associated with comforting believers (i.e., the Rapture) but with the Lord's vengeance against His enemies (Isaiah 2:12, 13:6, 13:9, 34:8, 46:10; Lamentations 2:22; Ezekiel 13:5, 30:3; Joel 1:15, 2:1, 2:11, 2:31, 3:14; Amos 5:18, 5:20; Obadiah 15; Zephaniah 1:7, 8, 1:14, 1:18, 2:2, 3; Zechariah 14:1; Malachi 4:5; Acts 2:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:2). These passages concerning the onset of the Day of the Lord (when the Lord takes control upon this earth) refer to destruction, howling, cruel wrath, fierce anger, desolation, vengeance, recompense, day of terrors, the Lord's anger, cloudy day, time of the heathen, alarm trumpets, trembling, great and very terrible day, sun turned into darkness, moon into blood, darkness, day of the Lord's sacrifice, punishment, bitter crying, dreadful day, and all of this coming as a thief upon an unsuspecting, unrepentant world (Revelation 9:20-21, 16:9-11). This surely does not equate to the Day of Christ mentioned in the ten examples above! The Day of the Lord will encompass the Lord's day of vengeance upon His enemies and continue through the Lord's 1,000 year reign upon the earth (2 Peter 3:10), the heavens passing away, and the formation of the new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21:1). Those failing to distinguish between the Day of the Lord and the Day of Christ are doomed to doctrinal error and private interpretation."⁹

2f **"...at hand"** This is Greek perfect tense, giving the idea that the "Day of Christ was *fully* here" and fully under way, which is was not in Paul's day. There may have been certain elements of the that day that were seen in this day in the persecutions, but all of the elements of

⁹ Douglas Stauffer and Andrew Ray, *Reviving the Blessed Hope of Thessalonians*, volume 1, page 96.

this day were not in evidence yet. You often have small foreshadowings of prophetic events long before the actual event is fulfilled in history. So Paul is dealing with the rapture and the Bema Seat that immediately follows it (see Revelation 4:1-3), saying that it is not here yet nor has it taken place, although this is “at hand”.

5. The Falling Away and the Son of Perdition 2:3-5

2:3^a Let no man deceive^{aorist active subjunctive} you by any means: for that day^b shall not come, except there come^{aorist active subjunctive} a falling away^c first,^d and that man of sin^e be revealed,^{aorist passive subjunctive} the son of perdition;^{f-g}

3a There was a lot of deception regarding these prophetic doctrines, with many false teachers to spread them. It was up to the Thessalonians to make sure they were not deceived.

3b **“that day”** The Day of Christ, the Bema Seat. Before “that day” comes, two things happen:

1. **There will be a falling away.** Literally, an “apostasy”. This will be the Great, and Last, Falling Away, that will close out the end of this dispensation. We have seen many “little apostasies” in Church History but Paul is referring to “the Big One”. We already see it in force, with the following characteristics:

1. More and more churches and Christians going over to Contemporary Christianity and music.
2. We see modern Bible versions continue to grow at the expense of the King James Version and other associated English translations.
3. Attendance in remnant churches down and attendance in compromising “mega churches” increasing.
4. “Hyper-evangelism” at the expense of saint building and preaching on sanctification.
5. Increasing political activity by the churches.
6. Ecumenism and the resurgence of Rome, both politically and spiritually.
7. Spread of the cults and other world religions.
8. General decline in holiness among God’s people and increase of sins in the church and in the pulpit.
9. Increasing apathy and carnality in the church.

2. **The “man of sin” is revealed.** This is obviously the Antichrist, also known as the “son of perdition”. Before the Bema Seat, he will be revealed. This does not mean that he will come into his full authority and power in the tribulation, but that he will finally step out of the shadows and begin to manifest himself. Right now, he is in the shadows, unknown to the world. But he is busy working, plotting, planning, laying the foundation for his ultimate unveiling and manifestation, which comes at the Abomination of Desolation at the midpoint of the tribulation period. The rapture does not take place until he has been revealed. This does not mean that he fully comes into his tribulational activity and powers. It simply means he begins to “make his move” and starts manifesting himself as to who and what he is. At the time of the rapture, the Antichrist will be in the public spotlight in some fashion, just how much we are not told. He will not fully reveal himself until the Abomination of Desolation, but that is halfway through the tribulation, and the rapture occurs 42 months before that. The Antichrist has also already been revealed right now in the sense that any Bible student can “spot him” as the Bible has already given us a full description of him and his activities. When he really does “step forward”, any Bible believer will be able to spot him “a mile away”. Thus, he is already revealed long before he physically shows up.

3c AV	ESV	LSV	Darby
3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for <i>that day shall not come</i> , except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;	3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,	3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for <i>it has not come</i> unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,	3 Let not any one deceive you in any manner, because <i>it will not be</i> unless the apostasy have first come, and the man of sin have been revealed, the son of perdition;

“falling away” The Tyndale, Coverdale and Geneva Bibles use “departing”. The ESV has “the rebellion”, which is an interesting term for the “apostasy”.

3d **“falling away”**, Strong’s #646 apostasia, a falling away, defection, apostasy.

3e **“man of sin”** The ESV and LSV use “man of lawlessness” which does technically describe the Antichrist, but “man of sin” is still better. Darby agrees with the Authorized Version.

There is no question that the “Man of Sin” is the Antichrist but the interpretation as to who exactly the Antichrist will be varies. Many of the Reformed commentators held him to be the Pope. I don’t hold to this position as I hold that the Pope (or whatever that office mutates into by the time of the Tribulation) would be better suited to the False Prophet. But we can certainly understand how the Reformers identified the Pope with the Antichrist. Most (Ana)Baptists probably did as well.

3f The Antichrist is referred to as:

1. **The Man of Sin.** He is sin personified, of sin, by sin. Everything about him is sin. He can do nothing but sin and everything he does is sin.
2. **The Son of Perdition.** He is of destruction and hell. Hell spawned him and he will return to it. While on earth, he will spread it and condemn as many as he can to perdition.

3g **“perdition”** Strong’s # 684 apôleia; destroying, utter destruction, a perishing, ruin,

2:4^a Who opposeth ^{b-present middle/passive participle} **and exalteth** ^{present passive participle} **himself above all that is called** ^{present passive participle} **God, or that is worshipped;** ^c **so that he as God sitteth** ^{aorist infinitive} **in the temple of God, shewing** ^{present active participle} **himself that he is** ^{present} **God.**

4a Activities of the Antichrist:

1. **He will oppose God.**
2. **He will exalt himself against God-** not just the God of Israel, but against anything that is called God. He will not only “offend” the Christian and the Jew but the Moslem, Hindu, Buddhist, etc., but opposing their gods as well. Hence the “anti-“ prefix, one who is “against” or “opposed to” Christ.
3. **He will sit in the temple as God.** This shows that the temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt for him to abominate. It won’t take long for Israel to rebuild the temple with modern construction technology. The temple need not be fully finished for it to be used, either. It could be only partially complete, as long as the Holy of Holies was built, with an

ark in use. The only thing stopping this rebuilding is the politics in dealing with the Moslems with their mosque on the temple mount. But this is probably how the Antichrist comes into his initial favor with Israel (enough for Israel to sign a seven-year covenant with him). He will somehow smooth the way politically to allow Israel to rebuild their temple without the Moslems rioting over it.

4. **He will show that he is God.** Here is the Abomination of Desolation, when he enters the rebuilt temple, declares himself to be God, and defiles it. I would imagine it something like this. The temple has been rebuilt and a day has been set aside for its dedication. Heads of state worldwide have been invited, as well as the Antichrist, seeing as he was a major force to allow it to be rebuilt. The dedication ceremony will be televised worldwide. During the proceedings, the Antichrist is asked to speak. During his speech, he declares himself to be God, the Messiah of Israel, as demands that the first sacrifice made in this new temple be to him. It is at that point that Israel's eyes are finally opened to who this man is and they will refuse him on worldwide television. Humiliated and mortified, the Antichrist then lashes out in anger and declares all Jews to be Enemies of Humanity for spurning him, and he will then launch into a Jewish pogrom that will surpass anything Hitler ever imagined doing.

5. Daniel's description of this is in Daniel 11:36,37, **And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.**

4b The pre-Authorized Version translations all have the Antichrist as an "adversary".

4c **"worshipped"** The Coverdale Bible has "God's service" for "worship". But worship is not just service, it is a heart attitude towards God as well.

2:5^a Remember ye ^{present} **not, that, when I was** ^{present participle} **yet with you, I told**
^{imperfect} **you these things?**

5a It seems like they did forget, or became confused by some false teachings or interpretations on the subject, which is why Paul had to write this second epistle.

6. The Hindering Ministry of the Holy Spirit 2:6-12

2:6 And now ye know ^{perfect} **what withholdeth** ^{a-present active participle} **that he might be**
revealed ^{aorist passive infinitive} **in his time.**^b

6a It is the Holy Spirit Who (or the "what" Paul refers to here) is currently restraining and withholding the full revelation and manifestation of the Antichrist. As long as the Holy Spirit is in the world, the Antichrist (the "he" in this verse) cannot reveal himself. But after the rapture, when the Holy Spirit is taken out of the world with the Church, this restraining force is removed. After the rapture, there will be nothing (or no one) in the earth to restrain the full disclosure of the Antichrist, or the spirit of Antichrist. Right now, the Holy Spirit restrains, but does not prevent, this influence. We see it and it is getting worse as we get closer to the tribulation. It is as if the closer we get, the more the Holy Spirit lengthens the Antichrist's chain. But the chain will be cut after the rapture and there will be no one and nothing to restrain him. For the first time in human history, the Antichrist and his spirit will have full and free reign on the earth

among men with no divine restraining. If you think things are bad now (and they are), just think how much worse it will be without the restraining power of the Holy Spirit!

Simply because we say that the Holy Spirit is “removed” or “taken out” of the world does not mean that He is still not operating during the tribulation, nor is such teaching an attack on the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit. The rapture marks a change in dispensation, from the Church Age to the Tribulation. With the change in dispensation comes a change in the activities of the Holy Spirit. Of course He is still active in the world during the Tribulation, but His current activities, as revealed in John 14 and 16 will end. The John references describe His ministry among believers in the Church. With the Church and the believers taken to heaven at the rapture, that element of His work ceases and He shifts to new operations among the believers during the Tribulation.

6b **“in his time”** and not before. No doubt Satan and the Antichrist are “chomping at the bit” to get their program underway, but they are limited in what they can do as long as the Church is still here and as long as the Holy Spirit is functioning as He is in this dispensation. They cannot start their Tribulational work until God says it is time.

2:7 For the mystery of iniquity^a doth already work: ^{b-present middle indicative} **only he who now letteth** ^{present active participle} **will let,** ^c **until he^d be taken** ^{aorist middle deponent subjunctive} **out of the way.**

7a **“mystery of iniquity”** The revelation of the Antichrist and the spirit of Antichrist. It was a hidden thing but as we approach the end of the age, it will become more manifest and evident. The progress and intensity of the spirit of Antichrist, while in the world since Genesis 3, seems to ebb and flow through history, stronger at some times, weaker in others. But as it progresses through history, it will become stronger and more intense until it reaches its full maturity in the tribulation.

AV	ESV	LSV	Darby
7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth <i>will let</i> , until he be taken out of the way.	7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.	7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains <i>will do so</i> until he is taken out of the way.	7 For the mystery of lawlessness already works; only <i>there is</i> he who restrains now until he be gone,

“mystery of iniquity” The ESV, LSV and Darby have “mystery of lawlessness”. Iniquity” is stronger and better.

7b **“doth already work”** Even in Paul’s day, and certainly before. Think about how much more it is working, 1900 years later.

7c **“only he who now letteth”** This would be the Holy Spirit, as seen in notes under 2:6 above. And He will continue to do so until He is **“taken out of the way”** at the rapture, when He goes up with the Church. Then we return to a more Old Testament dispensation in the tribulation, in relation to the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit on the earth.

“letteth” Is an obsolete word for “hinder” or “prevent”. It is the Holy Spirit Who is hindering the spread of the mystery of iniquity.

7d The Tyndale Bible has “it” instead of “he”. The other translations all use the masculine pronoun.

2:8 And then shall that Wicked^a be revealed,^{b-future passive} whom the Lord shall consume^{c- future} with the spirit of his mouth,^d and shall destroy^{e- future} with the brightness of his coming:^f

8a **“that Wicked”** as in “that Wicked One”, referring to the Antichrist, who will be wickedness and sin personified. The Geneva rendering expands on the reading by using “that wicked man”.

“Wicked” Strong’s #459 anomos; from a a (Strong’s #1) a negative particle; and nomos (Strong’s #3551) law; destitute of law, departing from the law, a violator of the law, lawless, wicked. The Antichrist is literally a “Lawless One”, who acknowledges no law but his own.

This shows that the Restrainer of 2 Thessalonians 2:7 cannot be Satan or the Antichrist (which is taught by some) as verse 8 presents the Wicked as a separate person from the Restrainer.

AV	ESV	LSV	Darby
8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:	8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.	8 And then that lawless one will be revealed—whom the Lord Jesus WILL SLAY WITH THE BREATH OF HIS MOUTH and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming—	8 and then the lawless one shall be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the breath of his mouth, and shall annul by the appearing of his coming;

“Wicked” The ESV, LSV and Darby water this down with “lawless one”. “Wicked (One)” is a stronger and better rendering.

8b **“be revealed”** Compare with notes under 2 Thessalonians 2:3. These verses show that the Antichrist will not be revealed to the world in his full “glory” until after the Holy Spirit has been taken out of the world at the rapture. No doubt the Antichrist will be on the world scene and be somewhat active before his full unveiling, but he cannot totally manifest himself as the Antichrist as long as the Church and the Holy Spirit are still in the world. Once both the Church and the Holy Spirit have been removed from the earth in the rapture, then the restraining power of the Holy Spirit, which has been holding the Antichrist and the Mystery of Iniquity in check, will be removed and there will be nothing to prevent or to restrain the Antichrist and the Mystery of iniquity from running their full courses. This is what mankind has wanted ever since Cain killed Abel- full, free and unfettered liberty to do what they want without God interfering or restraining. Man will get that “liberty” for seven years, with the Antichrist leading the way and showing man “how it’s done”. God will allow it for these seven years, but He will also be judging it severely during that time, with 21 judgments (three sets of seven judgments- seals, trumpets and vials).

“be revealed” is passive in the Greek, showing that someone else is revealing the Antichrist, not the Antichrist himself. The Antichrist cannot reveal himself until allow to be the Lord, and even then, the Lord controls the timing and the circumstances of this unveiling. Will it be Satan who will be allowed to reveal his “son” to the world, under the permissive will of God?

8c **“consume”** The ESV has “kill”. The other translations have “consume”. “Kill” is a questionable translation here. The “destroy” or “abolish” gives the idea that the Antichrist will be defeated once and for all at the Second Coming, unable to rise or to resume his activities. “Destroying” has the idea of “rendering something unfit for its intended use or purpose” and this is surely the idea here. “Kill” misses this idea.

8d **“whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth”** Revelation 19:15, where Jesus destroys the Antichrist and his armies with nothing more than the sword that comes out of His mouth. This takes place at the Second Coming and at the Battle of Armageddon, which take place at just about the same time.

8e The ESV has “bring to nothing” for “destroy” which is a very weak rendering. There is no good reason to change “destroy”. The LSV and Darby make unnecessary changes as well. The Geneva Bible uses “abolish”, which is still inferior to “destroy” but is much better and stronger than “bring to nothing”.

8f **“shall destroy with the brightness of his coming”** The divine glory of Christ, which will be unveiled at the Second Coming, would be sufficient to destroy the Antichrist and his armies, in addition to the sword from His mouth in Revelation 19:15, **And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.**

2:9 Even him, whose coming is^{present} after the working of Satan^a with all power and signs and lying wonders,^b

9a The Antichrist is the Son of Satan, the second person of the Satanic trinity. As Christ came in the name of the Father with His power and authority, so will the Antichrist come in the name of his father (Satan) with similar power and authority. The Antichrist is a mirror-image of Christ in this regard.

9b As Christ had signs and wonders (as the Prophet Like Unto Moses, who also had these signs for Israel), the Antichrist will also possess signs and wonders, in order to deceive Israel into thinking he is their Messiah. Any Jewish Messiah must be in possession of the signs, since the Jews seek after signs. Moses had them. Jesus had them. So the Antichrist must also have them. But his signs will be Satanic, not divine, in origin and power, but who would really be able to tell the difference?

The Antichrist will possess:

1. Power.

A. The Greek word here is “dunamis”. Dunamis denotes power in the sense of being able to do the thing. This would refer to Satanic power.

2. Signs

A. The Greek word here is “semeion”, which is an indication or pointer to something. This is the word used throughout John’s gospel.

3. Lying wonders.

A. They are great wonders but they are a lie, and point to a lie.

B. The Antichrist will probably claim to do his wonders through the power of “god” (whatever he might identify as God), but he is really doing them through the power of Satan. Satan can do miracles so why not the Antichrist?

C. The Charismatic and Pentecostal movement, with its emphasis on signs and wonders, are a precursor to this.

**2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness^a in them that perish;^{b_present}
middle/passive participle because they received^{aorist middle} not the love of the truth, that
they might be saved.^{aorist passive infinitive}**

10a Unrighteousness can be very deceiving, especially if you are unsaved, in the tribulation period, have no use for the revelation of the Bible and do not have the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth. Unless you are a convert of the 144,000, you would probably be deceived by the Antichrist, with his miracles and powerful personality.

10b Why do they perish? Why were they deceived? Because they **“received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”** They had no use for the gospel in the Church Age when it was being preached. They had no use for the message of the 144,000 in the tribulation when it was being preached. Since they rejected the love of the truth in one or two (!) dispensations, there is no alternative for them but to accept the Antichrist, take his mark, and be damned.

2:11 And for this cause^a God shall send^{future} them strong^{b-c} delusion,^d that they should believe^{aorist infinitive} a lie:^e

11a **“For this cause...”** Since they chose error and rejected the truth, God will withhold any further truth from them and give them nothing but error. They chose this and desired this, so God is only giving them what they desired. He will not force truth down anyone’s throat, but will give them over to lies, delusions, corruptions and ultimately hell if they so desire. Yes, God does deliberately deceive people if they are worthy of it.

11b To whom is this **“strong delusion”** sent? To those in 2:10 who are damned since they received not the love of the truth. Since they have no use for the truth, God will send them delusion. You get one or the other from God. And notice that it is God who is sending this strong delusion, not the Antichrist.

What is the **“strong delusion”**? The **“lie”** that the Antichrist is God and the Messiah of Israel. Those in the tribulation will either believe that (and be damned) or not (and be severely persecuted, suffer greatly and probably be martyred). The Antichrist tells this lie and God basically forces these damned unbelievers to believe it. The phrase has the idea of an active power of misleading.

11c **“strong”** Strong’s # 1753 *energeia*; working, efficiency. The “strong delusion” is thus a very effective and successful delusion, one that works well and strongly.

11d **“delusion”** Strong’s #4106 *planê*; a wandering, a straying about, one led astray from the right way, roams hither and thither, error, wrong opinion relative to morals or religion

11e **“a lie”** The Authorized Version is a bit stronger than the Geneva Bible here, which has simply “lies”. No doubt there are many lies the Antichrist will tell in the tribulation that will be believed, but it is the “big one” that does the damage- that the Antichrist is God. Believe that one and take the mark, and you are damned with no hope for salvation.

The pre-Authorized Version translations all have simple “believe lies”. The ESV has “believe that which is false.” But there “a lie” that will be told in the Tribulation, the Lie to End All Lies, the biggest Whopper ever told, that the Antichrist is God. The Authorized Version rendering is superior here, as usual.

2:12^a That they all might be damned^{b-aorist passive subjunctive} **who believed**^{aorist active} **not the truth, but had pleasure**^{aorist active participle} **in unrighteousness.**^c

12a This basically summarizes the last several verses.

12b **“damned”** They will be judged, but this will be a negative judgment for all of them as they will all be condemned and damned.

The ESV uses the weaker “condemned”, as if the ESV had an aversion to these unbelievers being “damned”.

12c Summary of the Man of Sin I 2 Thessalonians 2:

1. His character- the son of perdition, 2:3
2. The time of his appearing- after the rapture
3. His mission- to oppose and exalt himself above God, 2:4
4. His methods- using the power of Satan, using signs, lying wonders and deceivableness, 2:9,10
5. His temporary assistant- God, Who sends strong delusion upon those in the Tribulation, 2:9-12
6. His destruction- he will be consumed by the Lord, 2:8

7. Why Paul Was Thankful for the Thessalonians 2:13-15

2:13^a But we are bound^{b-present} **to give thanks**^{present middle/passive participle} **alway to God for you, brethren beloved**^{perfect passive participle} **of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen**^{perfect passive participle} **you to salvation**^{cd} **through sanctification**^f **of the Spirit and belief of the truth:**

13a This is a verse listed by O. Talmadge Spence in his *Quest For Christian Purity* that he lists as a “guiding verse” for that quest. This is a verse that deals with some aspect of the Christian’s growth and pursuit of God.

13b **“We are bound”** “We feel an obligation to thank God for you, your example and your testimony in the midst of your tribulations, for it encourages and strengthens us and the other brethren.”

13c **“God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation”** This is election onto salvation. No basis for this election is mentioned here but it is associated with being **“through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”** The fact that the Thessalonians were sanctified positionally by the Spirit and the fact that they believed the truth played some role in their election, so it cannot be said to have been totally “unconditional”. Again, we simply cannot know everything there is to know regarding the basis for our salvation or why God elects us to salvation.

13d **“chosen”** is in the perfect tense, showing an absolute and completed act that cannot be amended or reversed. Both election and salvation are completed and final acts of God that cannot be so reversed or undone.

13e **“sanctification”** The setting apart of someone or something for a holy purpose. In this context, it is for both the positional sanctification of the Thessalonians (done at salvation) and the practical outworking of that sanctification in the lives of the Thessalonians. This is the

ultimate goal of election and salvation, not just the keeping from hell, but the sanctification of the believer unto the glory of God.

2:14 Whereunto he called ^{aorist} you by our gospel,^a to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.^b

14a “**our gospel**” is the gospel Paul and his company preached, which was the Gospel of the Grace of God that he received from the Lord, the true gospel that is to be preached in this dispensation.

14b The goal of the election mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:13 is to obtain the “glory of our Lord Jesus Christ”. Election always lends itself to the ultimate goal of the sanctification of the elect.

2:15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast,^{present imperative} and hold^{present imperative} the traditions^a which ye have been taught,^{aorist passive} whether by word, or our epistle.^{bc}

15a These “traditions” are the apostolic teachings, which happened to be accurate and divine, since they were apostolic. They also did not contradict any Biblical teachings. These kinds of “traditions” or teachings must not be confused with human religious traditions, such as are promoted by the Church of Rome. Their traditions are man-made and are not supported by Scripture but are often contrary to Scripture. The Church of Rome uses this as a proof text to try to defend the idea that their religious traditions are somehow equal in authority to revelation, although they certainly grasp on to this verse in their desperation to justify their non-Biblical traditions.

“traditions” A “tradition” is something that is taught. The word is used again in 3:6.

The Tyndale, Coverdale and Bishops Bibles all use “ordinances”. The Geneva Bible has “instructions”. The ESV reads as the Authorized Version.

15b These apostolic traditions can be shared in one of two ways:

1. **By word**, by direct teaching and preaching
2. **By epistle**, as in an epistle just like this one

15c Two things to do with these apostolic traditions:

1. **Stand fast** in them. Keep them. Teach them and promote them.
2. **Hold** them. Don’t let some false teacher steal them from you and do not allow them to slip or be taken from you, or neglect them. Add nothing to them, subtract nothing from them.

8. A Prayer For Divine Comfort 2:16,17

2:16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father,^a which hath loved^{aorist active participle} us, and hath given^{aorist active participle} us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,^b

16a “**Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father**” This shows that the Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Father but that they are two separate and distinct persons within the Godhead. United Pentecostals and other Unitarian-type heretical groups sometimes claim that there is only one God Who manifests Himself in different ways at different times in

history. God was the Father in the Old Testament and Jesus in the New Testament. But verses like this one mention both the Father and Son existing at the same time and as separate persons.

16b What the Father and Son have given us through grace:

1. **Love**

2. **Everlasting consolation.** We have eternal life and salvation, so our consolation and peace are also everlasting. God's love towards and the benefits of salvation are not temporary but eternal.

3. **A good hope.** Salvation is a present and yet future hope. We enjoy some of the benefits of salvation now but we still hope for our full salvation in heaven, with the redemption of our bodies.

2:17^a Comfort aorist active optative **your hearts, and stablish** aorist active optative **you in every good word and work.**

17a Closing prayers by Paul for the Thessalonians, that God would:

1. **Comfort** their hearts

2. **Stablish** (or strengthen and mature) them in word and in work.

1 Thessalonians Chapter 3

“Chapter 3 is a marvelous exhortation and is what I call “The Lord Chapter”:

1. The word of the Lord (v. 1).
2. The Lord is faithful (v. 3).
3. We have confidence in the Lord (v. 4).
4. The Lord direct your hearts (v. 5).
5. In the name of our Lord (v. 6).
6. Exhort by our Lord (v. 12).
7. The Lord of peace (v. 16).
8. The Lord be with you (v. 16).
9. The grace of our Lord (v. 18).¹⁰

9. Prayer For The Ministry 3:1-5

3:1^a Finally, brethren, pray ^{present middle/passive imperative} **for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course,** ^{b-present subjunctive} **and be glorified,** ^{present passive subjunctive} **even as it is with you:**

1a Paul's prayer requests that he wanted the Thessalonians to pray about when they prayed for him:

1. That the Word of the Lord would have free course as Paul preached it, 2 Thessalonians 3:1.
 - A. Paul desired that Satan would be hindered in his attempts to hinder the spread of the Word of God.
2. That the Word of the Lord would be glorified as Paul preached it, 2 Thessalonians 3:1
3. That Paul and his company would be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men, 2 Thessalonians 3:2

1b “**free course**” This has the idea that the gospel always had to fight for every inch of advance into enemy territory as Satan always fights against the spread and progress of the gospel. Paul prays that God would smooth the way and remove these obstacles so that the gospel would have free course to spread.

What, or who, hinders the gospel from having “free course” today? It is usually state churches and governments. Mainline denominations and theological liberals also do what they can to hinder the preaching of the gospel. Don't forget the cults, like the Mormons in Utah, that try to maintain their income and attendance in the face of missionaries that move into Mormon Country. The Jehovah Witnesses do what they can as well to hinder the gospel. The Massachusetts Congregationalists whipped the Baptists and the Protestants persecuted the Baptists as well as they tried to prevent the Anabaptists, Mennonites and Brethren groups from spreading the gospel in Europe during the Reformation. These groups do everything they can to prevent the free spread of the gospel to keep the populations in spiritual darkness and under their control. In Paul's day, it was the Roman Empire and the Jews who were hindering Paul's ministry and that of the other preachers.

3:2^a And that we may be delivered ^{aorist passive subjunctive} **from unreasonable^b and wicked^c men: for all men have not faith.^d**

¹⁰ James Knox, New Testament Survey.

2a Men who oppose the gospel are certainly unreasonable and wicked and we need divine protection from them. They act this way because they have no faith and are not men of faith but rather are of the flesh and the world.

2b **“unreasonable”** These are men who are “out of place” and “out of sorts”, under no discipline, rebellious of any and all law and restraint, which is why they are unreasonable since they are “out of sorts” with God and the truth. It is not reasonable to hinder the gospel or to assist Satan in hindering the spread of the gospel, and no sane man would do it.

2c **“wicked”** All the other translations use “evil” here.

2d **“all men have not faith”** An obvious observation but one that is universally true. In fact, the vast majority of men do not have faith as most are unsaved and are yet in their sins.

3:3 But the Lord is^{present} faithful,^{a-b} who shall stablish^{future} you, and keep^{future} you from evil.^c

3a **“the Lord is faithful...”** an attribute of God. He is faithful, trustworthy and reliable in all things and cannot be otherwise. Man is not faithful as he often fails, but not so with God.

3b In His faithfulness, and in the light of the activity of these unreasonable and wicked men of 3:2, the Lord will:

1. Stablish us
2. Keep us from evil

3c AV	ESV	LSV	Darby
3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep <i>you</i> from evil.	3 But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.	3 But the Lord is faithful, who will strengthen and guard you from the evil one.	3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you and keep <i>you</i> from evil.

“evil” The ESV and LSV make another unnecessary change from “evil” to “evil one”. But Satan, personally, is not in view here, but the generic definition of evil, including bad or unfortunate circumstances and reversals, as well as direct Satanic attacks.

3:4 And we have confidence^{ab-perfect} in the Lord touching you, that ye both do^{present} and will do^{future} the things which we command^{present} you .^c

4a The Lord helping and enabling them, Paul was confident in the faithfulness, fidelity and obedience of the Thessalonians to the teachings (the “traditions”) that had been given to them.

4b **“have confidence”** is in the perfect tense, which means Paul had absolutely no doubts whatsoever that this would be accomplished since it was God who was doing it. We are to have no confidence in the flesh and it is vain to put your trust in man, but you may trust God totally and absolutely without fear of failure on His part.

4c The Geneva Bible renders this as “things which we warn you of.”

3:5^a And the Lord direct^{aorist active optative} your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting^b for Christ.

5a Paul prays that the Lord will direct the hearts of the Thessalonians into two areas:

1. **Into the love of God.**

2. **Into the patient waiting of Christ in the second coming and rapture.** We must be patient for this for there is nothing we can do to “speed it up”. We think/hope that we are in the generation that will see the rapture, but if we are not, we must wait patiently for it while we fulfill our ministries and the will of God for our life. Who knows- the rapture may not happen until the generation of our children or grandchildren. We simply do not know.

5b AV	ESV	LSV	Darby
5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.	5 May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.	5 And may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.	5 But the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of the Christ.

The Tyndale and Coverdale Bibles and the ESV and LSV omit “waiting”, rendering it either as “patience of Christ” or the “steadfastness of Christ”, which removes the second coming theme of this phrase.

10. Separation Part I 3:6

3:6^a Now we command^{b- present} you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw^{c-present middle infinitive} yourselves from every brother^d that walketh^{e- present active participle} disorderly,^f and not after the tradition^{g-3862} which he received^{aorist} of us.^h

6a This separation from disorderly brethren is something that is commanded, not suggested. We must practice this. We have no option or choice in the matter. When separation is practiced, it keeps the people of God doctrinally pure and the doctrine of God uncorrupted.

6b The Tyndale and Coverdale Bibles have “we require you”.

6c **“withdraw”** To remove yourself from association and cooperation from these disorderly brethren. It has an idea to “unfurl your sails and sail away from such a one.” We cannot assist them or work with them in spiritual matters. We may have Mormons or Roman Catholics who share many of our political and moral concerns, such as being anti-abortion. But we cannot march in demonstrations with them or work with them politically because both Roman Catholics and Mormons are certainly disobedient, and probably are not really “brothers”. This may not apply so much to secular matters. After all, you can’t help who your co-workers are, and you certainly cannot quit your job simply because there is a Jehovah Witness or a Muslim in the office with you. Nor can you control who is on your son’s little league team or who your neighbors are. This then is primarily a spiritual application.

6d **“brother”** Some of these people that we must separate from are genuine Christians who are acting in a disobedient and disorderly manner. A man might be orthodox in much of what

he says and does but if he is willingly and knowingly disobedient, then he must be separated from if he refuses to change his ways.

6e **“walketh”** This is their standard mode of life, their conduct.

6f **“disorderly”** It is used of soldiers who are out of step with the other soldiers in their ranks. A disorderly Christian is one who is out of step with the Word of God, the Holy Spirit and other Christians.

AV	ESV	LSV	Darby
6 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 he received of us.	6 Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.	6 Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who walks in an unruly manner and not according to the tradition which they received from us.	6 Now we enjoin you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw from every brother walking disorderly and not according to the instruction which he received from us.

“disorderly” The ESV uses “idleness”, which is not the idea of this word at all.

It is the spiritual duty of Christians to walk disorderly, or “out of step” with this world system and generation. What the world says we are to do, we are to the opposite. What the world says to think, we are to think the opposite. There is to be no compromise or accommodation with the world. We must either walk in cadence with the world or with God, but we can only do one. The world and God are out of sync with each other and it is impossible to walk in step with both at the same time.

6g **“not after the tradition...”** These brethren rejected apostolic teachings for some reason and replaced them with their own teachings, which were at variance with sound doctrine and practice.

“tradition” The pre-Authorized Version translations use “instruction”. A **“tradition”** is something that is taught. The word is used again in 2 Thessalonians 2:15. There is nothing wrong with a human “tradition” as long as it has a Biblical basis. This is why we reject so many of the traditions of the Church of Rome since they have no such foundation (rosary, veneration of Mary, clerical celibacy, confession to a priest...)

6h What is the determining factor in deciding if we can fellowship with an individual or a church or a religious organization, such as a mission board or a Bible college? Ultimately, it has to come down to the heart of that individual or organization. No two people will agree of everything and no two people will do things in exactly the same manner. Doctrine and practice must be examined and weighed, but of more importance is the heart. If a person wants to do right, wants to serve God, takes the right stand against the apostasy of the contemporary Christianity of our generation, and want to go on with God in developing a holy life and a Christian walk, then such a person is worthy of our fellowship. The Lord will hammer out the doctrinal and practical problems at the Judgment Seat.

11. Ministerial Support and Self-Support 3:7-9

3:7 For yourselves know^{perfect} how ye ought^{present} to follow^{present middle/passive infinitive} us:^a for we behaved not ourselves disorderly^{b--aorist} among you;^c

7a The Thessalonians knew what they had to do, how they ought to live and whom they ought to follow. The use of the perfect tense shows the Thessalonians had absolutely no doubts regarding the truth of what Paul was saying about his conduct during his time among them. The Thessalonians ought to separate themselves from the disobedient brethren on 3:6 but they ought to follow obedient brethren like Paul and his party.

7b The ESV uses “idle”, missing the idea again as it did in 2 Thessalonians 3:6.

7c Paul reminds the Thessalonians his company was not “disorderly” or “out of step” with genuine Christianity while he was among them. Paul was not being hypocritical, in saying “don’t follow teachers doing this” while he himself was doing exactly the same thing.

“**behave...disorderly**” Strong’s #812 atakto, to be disorderly, of soldiers marching out of order or quitting ranks, to be neglectful of duty, to be lawless, to lead a disorderly life. Only used here in the New Testament.

3:8 Neither did we eat^{aorist} any man’s bread for nought;^{a-b} but wrought^{present} middle/passive participle with labour and travail^c night and day, that we might not be chargeable^{d-aorist infinitive} to any of you:^e

8a Paul was not a moocher or a freeloader. He did not waltz into Thessalonica and begin to take advantage of the people. He did not demand gifts, lodging, food and other material contributions from the people he ministered unto. He had some support and the occasional gift from other churches, but when the money ran low, he fell back on to his secular vocation of tent-making. That way, he would not be in “debt” to the Thessalonian church or any individuals who might have expected special treatment from Paul since they gave him a large gift or paid his expenses while he was in town.

8b “**Neither did we eat any man’s bread...**” But we ate our own bread that we labored for and bought ourselves, as in 2 Thessalonians 3:12.

8c “**travail**” Strong’s #3449 mochthos; a hard and difficult labour, toil, travail, hardship, distress

8d “**chargeable**” Strong’s #1912 epibareô; from epi (Strong’s #1909) an intensifier, on, upon; and bareô (Strong’s #916) be heavy; to put a burden upon, to load, to be burdensome. Some pastors, evangelists and missionaries are like this. They are “high maintenance” and require a lot of care and feeding. They expect to be catered to because they are the pastor, the missionary or the evangelist and that office somehow entitles them to be waited on hand-and-foot by God’s people. “Work on the outside? Why, I’m ordained! I have a doctorate! I am entitled to full support and it is beneath my dignity, call and station to have to work some secular job on the outside!” I’m sure Paul would have something to say to these hirelings.

The Tyndale Bible has “grievous”. This is a good word to use. Paul could have made himself a real “pain in the neck” (or in some other part of the anatomy) if he came to Thessalonica and demanded full support, started throwing around his apostolic authority and demanded to be waited upon hand and food because he was a “man of God”. He could have

demanded the church put him up in a 5-star hotel and feed him a steak dinner every night. What a pain Paul would have been if he had that attitude! But far too many preachers, missionaries and evangelists do.

8e There are advantages to a pastor having an outside source of income from the church.

1. No one in the church will be able to “starve him out” since he has an independent source of income and is not totally dependent upon the church. Some may try to do this to force the pastor to support certain programs of powerful groups within the church. These kinds of people usually hold back their tithes to force a pastor to accommodate them.

2. It is a good thing if a pastor owns his own home instead of staying in a parsonage. If he gets on the “outs” with the church, he has his own home, so his usage of the church parsonage and threat to kick him and his family out of it cannot be used to force him to do certain things. I lived in church staff housing once and when I resigned from that ministry, I had nowhere to go (with my young family) and had to move back with my parents for 2 months until we got back on our feet with a new ministry.

3. Having an independent source of income makes you independent of pressure groups in the church. You have your own source of income that is not dependent on the church, thus, the threat of loss of income is minimized if certain groups try to pressure the pastor to accommodate their agenda.

4. It shows the pastor is not in it for the money. He is willing to work for his living and is not trying to make his living off of the church, even if he is entitled to ministerial support.

5. It gives a pastor a good work ethic.

6. It allows a pastor to pastor any size church, even a very small one, where the people cannot support him fully.

7. It allows the pastor to better understand the working people in his congregation. Like them, he has to get up in the morning, commute, deal with unsaved people all day, put up with office politics and the business world, worry about layoffs and unemployment and fuss with his 401k and retirement accounts. He comes home from work every night tired as well and appreciates

his days off. This discourages the pastor from over-scheduling his people with activities at the church every night because he can better appreciate that they need personal time.

Of course, it is nice to be able to devote full time to the ministry. In my twenty-six years (to date) as pastor of Grace Baptist Church of Smyrna, Delaware, I have had to work full time on the outside since my church is too small to fully support my family of six. They do give me partial support, but I own my own home. I miss being able to devote full time to the ministry and pray I will be able to return to a full time ministry one day to do what God called me to do. But I realize there are certain advantages to working on the outside, as outlined above.

3:9 Not because we have ^{present} **not power,^a but to make** ^{aorist active subjunctive} **ourselves an ensample^b unto you to follow** ^{present middle/passive infinitive} **us.** ^c

9a Paul could have demanded full ministerial support from the Thessalonians (or any church), as laid out in 1 Corinthians 9:6-14. He thus would have run the danger of becoming burdensome rather than a blessing, especially to a small and poor church. And what sort of example would it have been to future missionaries and pastors if Paul acted in such a manner?

9b “**ensample**” Example.

9c **“follow us”** Only as Paul and his company followed the Lord, of course. No one should follow a man spiritually unless that man is following the Lord faithfully and correctly. This is really the entire story of Christianity- men following men to The Man Christ Jesus. You just need to make sure you are following the right man to the right Christ.

12. Laziness Condemned 3:10-12

3:10 For even when we were ^{imperfect} **with you, this we commanded** ^{imperfect} **you, that if any would** ^{present} **not work,** ^{present middle/passive infinitive} **neither should he eat.** ^{a-present imperative}

10a Some, and not just the preachers and false teachers, were trying to pull this. They may have taken the doctrine of the imminent coming of Christ and used it as an excuse to stop working. “Why bother to go to work and do my vocation if the Lord is coming next week? I’ll just lose everything then.” So they quit work. But this meant lots of idle time and no money. Some then tried to get the church or other believers to support them. But Paul puts a stop to that. If you are able to work and simply are not, for some reason, you are entitled to no support from the church or from the brethren. Now if you were a qualifying widow or were physically unable to work, that was a different situation. But with the idlers who presumed upon the charity of God’s people for no good reason, Paul says “let them go hungry. They’ll go back to work soon enough”. Now it is one thing if a man cannot work due to a physical problem. That man may be supported by the church if necessary. But a man who simply will not work is a man who deserves to starve and live in a cardboard box. He is unworthy of any support or sympathy.

This idea of quitting work because you believe the Lord is coming back tomorrow is also rebuked. During the “Great Disappointments” of 1843 and 1844,¹¹ some misguided people did this. They quit their jobs, put on white robes and sat on hilltops, waiting for the Lord to return. When He didn’t, they were in a bad situation financially. But nowhere does the Lord encourage this. Instead, we are to be working harder in the light that the Master may be coming at any moment and we want to be found busy and faithful, not idle. Even if you knew for a fact the rapture was going to be tomorrow, the Lord still expects you to get up tomorrow morning as usual and go about your duties as if the Lord wasn’t going to return for another 25 years.

3:11 For we hear ^{present} **that there are some which walk** ^{present active participle} **among you disorderly,** ^a **working** ^{present middle/passive participle} **not at all, but are busybodies.** ^{b-} ^{present middle/passive participle}

11a **“disorderly”** You can be “out of step” doctrinally and practically. They usually go together. It is hard to have a right doctrine but a disorderly walk, and vice versa.

Strong’s #814 ataktôs, disorderly, out of ranks (often so of soldiers), irregular, inordinate, immoderate pleasures, deviating from the prescribed order or rule. It is used of soldiers who are out of step with the other soldiers in their ranks. A disorderly Christian is one who is out of step with the Word of God, the Holy Spirit and other Christians.

11b **“busybody”** Strong’s # 4020 periergazomai, from peri (Strong’s #4012) about, concerning; and ergazomai (Strong’s #2038) work; to bustle about uselessly, to busy one’s self about trifling, needless, useless matters, used apparently of a person officiously inquisitive about other’s affairs. It is used only here in the New Testament. They do none of their own work and mind not their own affairs and business but they have time to do everyone else’s

¹¹ This led to the development of the Seventh-Day Adventist cult.

business. Once these disorderly ones left off working, they had lots of free time. With no constructive activity to fill up their time, they took to wandering the streets, engaging in gossip and useless activities which include sticking their noses into the affairs of other people (and probably other churches) where they had no business doing. This was their “work” and new vocation. If you won’t allow God to keep you occupied, Satan will certainly give you something to do.

How many do this today! There are even Christians who waste much time and energy arguing on social media. They immerse themselves in sports, celebrities, politics and other unprofitable activities, instead of focusing on the things of God.

3:12 Now them that are such we command^{present} and exhort^{a- present} by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness^b they work,^{c-present middle/passive participle} and eat^{present subjunctive} their own bread.^d

12a This is both a command and an exhortation, showing how important it is for this to be done.

12b “**quietness**” Strong’s # 2271 *hesuchia*; quietness, description of the life of one who stays at home doing his own work, and does not officiously meddle with the affairs of others

12c These idlers are to do their work with quietness and eat their own bread. They are to get back to their vocations and resume earning a living and being productive, so they will no longer be a burden to the church and to the brethren. The notion that it is okay to sit around idly while waiting for the rapture is rebuked. Basically, Paul is saying “Shut up, mind your own business and get back to work!”

“When they offered an East German “escapee” a forty-hour job in America (1960), he said, “I didn’t want a part-time job.”¹²

12d “**own bread**” Bread that you earned with your own labor, not someone else’s bread! We are not to be eating the bread of socialism or collectivism, where someone else is feeding us because we are too lazy or too proud to work. Now if you are out of work through no fault of your own and have been trying diligently to find work, then there is nothing wrong with accepting help from the church in that circumstance until you can get back on your feet again.

13. Exhortation For Spiritual Stamina 3:13

3:13 But ye,^a brethren, be not weary^{aorist active subjunctive} in well doing.^{b- present active participle}

13a Emphatic.

13b It is one thing to start the Christian life. It is quite another thing to finish it. Spiritual stamina is a necessity to complete the long quest for the Christian life and purity. Unless you get saved on your 90th birthday, you will have many years or decades ahead of you to “keep on keeping on”. We all get tired and discouraged at times, but we should never quit or take our eyes off of the prize, even in the face of severe persecution that the Thessalonians were suffering. It’s funny how the world never gets tired of chasing after sin. We must never be weary in chasing after holiness.

¹² Peter Ruckman, *The Bible Believer’s Commentary 1-2 Thessalonians and Philemon*.

14. Separation, Part II 3:14,15

3:14 And if any man^a obey^{present} not our word by this epistle,^b note^{c-present middle imperative} that man, and have no company with^{present middle imperative} him,^d that he may be ashamed.^e

14a If a man (a brother in 2 Thessalonians 3:15) knowingly decides to disobey and reject the teachings (or traditions) of this epistle, he was to be both noted and separated from. This is not because the offender is ignorant, but he knows what he is doing and has made a deliberate choice to reject the apostolic teachings.

14b The words written down in this epistle were regarded by Paul to carry the same weight and authority as if Paul were physically there, preaching or teaching these doctrines and commands.

14c **“note”** Strong's #4593 semeioô; to mark, to note, distinguish by marking, to mark or note for one's self. It is used only here in the New Testament. This offender is to be marked, labeled and publicly identified as a disobedient brother. How else can he be separated from if no one knows who he is and why this disciplinary action has to be taken? He is to be marked as a man to be avoided.

14d We are not to associate with this this person. I would extend this even to secular activities as far as possible. If the offender is seen in public, we are not to acknowledge him. We are not to associate with them outside of church. The Amish and some Anabaptist groups (including the Amish) call this the “ban”. The goal for this is to shame them into repenting from their sin and bringing them back into obedience and fellowship. It may be hard to treat friends and brethren (even family members!) like this but they need some “tough love” and some public shame to bring them back to fellowship and obedience.

14e **“ashamed”** The idea is similar to repentance, but it may take a public humiliation, either in the church or in society at large, to bring about this turning.

3:15 Yet count^{present middle/passive imperative} him not as an enemy, but admonish^{a-present imperative} him as a brother.^b

15a **“admonish”** We should warn him about the error of his disorderly ways and the sure judgment that lies ahead if he continues in such a manner of life without repentance.

15b He is a brother, even if he is disorderly. The ultimate goal of separations and church discipline is the restoration of the offender back to full fellowship and communion. While we are separating and even shunning, we do it in love and concern, with prayer, urging him to repent and re-align himself with the Word of God and God's people.

15. Closing Benediction 3:16-18

3:16 Now the Lord of peace^a himself give^{aoist active optative} you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.

16a A title for the Lord is the **“Lord of peace”**- the God Who gives peace, Who is the Source and Author of peace, and without Whom peace would be impossible.

3:17 The salutation of Paul with mine own hand,^a which is ^{present} the token in every epistle: so I write. ^{present}

17a “**mine own hand**” Paul’s very own signature, so prove the authenticity of the letter. The Thessalonians might have been able to recognize Paul’s own handwriting.

3:18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

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About the Author

Dr. John Cereghin was saved on February 9, 1978 at the age of 13 after being raised in the Roman Catholic church. He was saved after listening to a program on missionary shortwave radio station HCJB from Quito, Ecuador. He left the Catholic church in 1983 and joined Maranatha Baptist Church in Elkton, Maryland in 1985. In 1986, she transferred from the University of Maryland to Maryland Baptist Bible College, earning the first doctor's degree awarded by the school in 1995. Dr. Cereghin also earned his Master of Theology degree from Foundations Theological Seminary in 1994.

Dr. Cereghin's ministry background includes working at Radio Station WOEL in Elkton, Maryland (1986-1998), teaching in various capacities at Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland from 1988-1998, also serving as Dean of Men, Registrar and Academic Dean, and pastoring Queen Anne's Baptist Church, Centreville, Maryland (1989-1990), Charity Baptist Church, Mebane, North Carolina (1994-1995) and Grace Baptist Church in Smyrna, Delaware (1998-present).

Dr. Cereghin is married to the former Teresa Piggot of Greenwood, Nova Scotia and they have four children and four grandchildren.

Booklist on 1 and 2 Thessalonians

! *An Annotated Bibliography of Reference Works and Commentaries on the Greek New Testament*, by Jon Weatherly, Cincinnati Bible College & Seminary, for Fall Semester, 2003.

@ *Commenting and Commentaries* by Charles Spurgeon

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\$ *The Minister's Library* by Cyril Barber

% *New Testament Commentary Survey* by D. A. Carson

& Ligioner Ministries blog

= *Biblical Viewpoint*, Bob Jones University

@ @ *Tools for Preaching and Teaching the Bible* by Stewart Custer

* by the author, John Cereghin

Comments are that of the reviewer and not necessarily those of the author. As always, discernment in choosing commentaries is required.

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Auberlin, C. A., and Riggerback, C. J., "The Two Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians," Lange's *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*. 1950. Valuable textual exegesis with an abundance of ethical, homiletical, and practical material added, much of which is definitely dated. A conservative Lutheran commentary. The additions by the translator add to the value of the work.

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\$ It is generally inferior to Milligan and cannot hope to compete with Hiebert's masterful study.

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technical treatment of these epistles is still of value for the advanced student. Places strong emphasis on grammatical matters.

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! Green, Gene L. *The Letters to the Thessalonians*. Pillar New Testament Commentary, 2002. Very thorough treatment of Thessalonica as the setting of the letters, consistently close examination of the significance of Greek words in the letters.

& Because the epistles to the Thessalonians contain some of the most difficult and debated texts in the entire New Testament (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12), it is next to impossible to find a commentary with an interpretation of this text with which there are no unresolved problems. Green's outstanding commentary is not without its own problems on this text, but all things considered, this is probably the best commentary on these letters currently available. It contains much helpful background information and very helpful theological insight.

= This volume continues the excellent reputation established and deserved by the Pillar series. Green is a former missionary in Costa Rica and currently a professor of New Testament at Wheaton. He writes clearly and engagingly without sacrificing scholarly content. This work is particularly valuable for its interaction with recent scholarship, most especially recent archaeological work in Macedonia. The footnotes alone serve as a valuable reader's guide to scholarship related to the two epistles.

The Pillar series uses the NIV as its base translation, something that is probably driven by the broad market acceptance of the NIV, for more than one author in the series routinely criticizes its relative freedom with the text, and Green is no exception. The reader gets the feeling that the author would have preferred another translation. In any case, Green interacts directly with the Greek text throughout.

Green is well informed on literary forms of the apostolic period, and he frequently demonstrates similarities in Thessalonians without trying to force the text into the mold of contemporary secular literature. He is also particularly well studied on the subject of patronage in Roman society, something he often sees implied in the text.

Green seems to avoid studiously any specific eschatological position. His discussions of I Thessalonians 4 and II Thessalonians 2 are careful and true to the text but are worded in such a way that a proponent of any of the millennial positions could use the material with little if any difficulty.

One of the strengths of the book is Green's thoroughness. When there are major exegetical issues, as in the reference to the Restrainer in II Thessalonians 2:7, he covers the various interpretations thoroughly and with abundant documentation, carefully noting the strengths and weaknesses of each position.

The volume contains several indices, of which the most thorough are the Scripture index and the index to extrabiblical literature. As in most commentaries, the topical index is of limited usefulness.

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\$ Amillennial.

Hiebert, D. Edmond, *The Thessalonian Epistles. A Call to Readiness*, 1971. Uses the American Standard Version. A full exegetical treatment of these epistles on the basis of the original but suited to the English reader. Premillennial.

@ @ 383 pages With this book, Hiebert provides the most thorough premillennial commentary. The author discusses how long Paul was in Thessalonica (pp. 16-17); gives Greek word studies (p. 44); notes the force of the perfect tense (pp. 65); stresses the imminent return of Christ (pp. 70, 219); at times discusses textual variants and translations (pp. 83, 93, 169); emphasizes the rightfulness of prayer to the Lord Jesus (pp. 153-54); and attacks the posttribulation rapture view (p. 205).

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@ @ 307 pages. This book is a conservative exposition that emphasizes word studies. The authors defend the authenticity of the book (pp. 11-12); list its major doctrines (pp. 14 ff.); show that the Lord Jesus Christ is called Lord (pp. 22 ff.); give special word studies on Word (p. 39), Satan (pp. 82-83), sons (pp. 158-59), Christian joy (pp. 186 ff.), Spirit, soul, and body (pp. 204 ff.); and teach a premillennial return of the Lord (p. 144).

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@ Jewel, John, *Expositions upon I & II Thessalonians*, 1583. Reprinted 1811 and 1841. Also in his *Works*. Hooker calls Jewel "the jewel of bishops." This work is in the usual style of the first Reformers, but rather more lively than most of them. Many of the topics touched upon were peculiar to the times in which the exposition was written. It will serve as a good specimen of the preaching of the Fathers of the English Church.

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@ @ 93 pages. Lineberry writes a conservative exposition that provides special Greek word studies. He distinguishes between the rapture and the revelation (pp. 7, 26); defends verbal inspiration (pp. 8, 68); gives an expanded translation (pp. 13-15); stresses the deity of Christ (pp. 27-28, 36); holds that parousia refers to the rapture and apokalupsis to the revelation (p. 37); identifies the falling away with the rapture rather than with the apostasy (p. 42); and interprets the hinderer as the church or the Holy Spirit in the church (pp. 49, 52).

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@ Manton, Thomas, *Eighteen Sermons on 2 Thessalonians II., concerning Antichrist*, 1679. Here Manton smites heavily at Popery. Richard Baxter wrote a commendatory preface to this valuable exposition.

! Marshall, I. Howard. *1 and 2 Thessalonians*. New Century Bible, 1983. Clearly written comments with balanced, informed conclusions.

\$ Martin, Michael, "1 and 2 Thessalonians", *New American Commentary*, 1995. Accessible but not penetrating.

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significant interpretation by a recognized Baptist New Testament scholar of the past century.

! Wanamaker, Charles A. *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. NIGTC, 1990. Best available commentary on the Greek text of the epistles, advocating the unusual notion that 2 Thessalonians was written first.

\$ The best all-around commentary on the Greek text.

& Wanamaker attempts to resolve some difficulties related to these letters by arguing that 2 Thessalonians was actually written before 1 Thessalonians...Like all commentaries in the NIGTC series, it is technical and requires some knowledge of Greek. A very useful work for those doing in-depth study.

@ @ 316 pages. This commentary gives some help on the Greek text, but places more emphasis on Pauline Christianity “as a socio-religious movement” (p. xii); argues that II Thessalonians was actually first (pp. xii, 37-45); describes conversion as a “resocialization” process (p. 14); defends Pauline authorship (pp. 17-28); gives a rhetorical analysis (pp. 48 ff.); holds that Paul believed in a personal evil power but had not developed a clear doctrine of Satan (p. 122); urges that “Evangelical Christianity needs to strive to create a social context or community in which converts may be resocialized into a new and distinctive Christian pattern of behavior and practice. Without this, conversion is not complete and has little chance of being genuinely transformative in the long term” (p. 139). He holds that the assumption was presented in symbolic terms, but probably Paul believed “in some type of historical realization” (p. 173); does not use the term Rapture; sees the “Day of the Lord” as a threatening time of judgment (p. 225); argues that Paul does not teach the “final annihilation of the godless” (p. 229); and thinks that Paul took the “defilement of the temple” as part of Old Testament prophecy (p. 247).

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& Witherington, Ben, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 2006. Witherington has written a series of “socio-rhetorical” commentaries on a good number of New Testament books. Some are better than others and this volume is one of the better ones. The primary benefit of reading his commentaries is the wealth of contextual background information he provides.

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New Testament saints will be resurrected at the rapture, though the Scofield Bible disagrees (p. 72); and holds that the "Day of the Lord" includes the tribulation period and the millennium (pp. 76-78).

"Biblical Viewpoint", from Bob Jones University, volume 38, Number 1 (April 2004) has a listing of commentaries on 2 Thessalonians, but not a description of them as earlier versions of the journal had. I'll list them for the sake of reference.

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