

## 2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5 – Thanksgiving for the Church

### I. Review of 2 Thessalonians 1-2

- A. 2 Thess 1:1-12 – Paul gives thanks for the Thessalonians and encourages their perseverance by assuring them of God’s coming perfect justice for His people and against unrepentant unbelief.

*[God will] "...grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels<sup>8</sup> in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance...<sup>10</sup> when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed..." (2 Thess 1:7-10)*

- B. 2 Thess 2:1-12 – Paul corrects errors regarding of the Second Coming and the coming “man of lawlessness”, assuring ultimately unrepentant unbelievers of their judgment in the final victory of

*"We must contemplate the judgments of God upon the reprobate in such a way that they may be, as it were, mirrors to us for considering his mercy towards us. **For we must draw this conclusion, that it is owing solely to the singular grace of God that we do not miserably perish with them.**" - Calvin, Thessalonians,*

### II. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17 – Our Breakaway from Sin

*But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits [or "from the beginning" (KJV, NIV)] to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.<sup>14</sup> To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>15</sup> So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.<sup>16</sup> Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace,<sup>17</sup> comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word. (2 Thess 2:13-17)*

1. According to Paul, what is the reason the Thessalonians are “not swallowed up in the same ruin” (Calvin) described in 2 Thess 2:9-12? How should this be a tremendous encouragement to you? How does this aspect of their salvation come to pass in space and time (v. 13)?
2. How does Paul most often use the term “sanctification” in the NT? Does the term describe a growth in holiness or a completed action? How does this refute the Roman Catholic charge that salvation without any works will lead to debauchery?

*"To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." (1 Cor 1:2)*

*"But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor 6:11)*

*"It is a fact too frequently overlooked that in the New Testament the most characteristic terms that refer to sanctification are used, not of a process, but of a once-for-all definitive act... [F]or every believer in Jesus as the Christ and as the Son of God there is the decisive and irreversible breach with the world and with its defilement and power." - John Murray, "Definitive Sanctification", *Collected Writings*, Vol 2, p. 277, 283.*

"Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?<sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?<sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?<sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life... We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.<sup>10</sup> For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.<sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.<sup>12</sup> Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.<sup>13</sup> Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.<sup>14</sup> For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace." (Rom 6:1-4, 9-14)

*Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay,  
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray!  
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care  
And fit us for heaven, to Live with Thee there.*

3. In light of all this, what are Christians doing when they willingly sin (which we will! Remember 1 John 2:1!)?
4. What is the attribute of God that stands behind the entire scheme of salvation applied to us as unworthy sinners (vv. 16-17)?

"...all that Jesus said and did was for the purpose of the Cross. 'He loved me,' says Paul, 'and gave Himself for me.' There is the heart and core of the religion of Paul." - J. Gresham Machen, *The Origin of Paul's Religion*, 167.

### III. 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5 – The 'Swift' Word of God

Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you,<sup>2</sup> and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith.<sup>3</sup> But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.<sup>4</sup> And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command.<sup>5</sup> May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.. (2 Thess 3:1-5)

1. What athletic metaphor lies behind Paul's view of the Word and its relationship to Christ's expanding Kingdom (v. 1)? How are we tempted to "compete" against the Word of God? As a side note, who would Paul go for in the NBA Playoffs?

*"He sends out his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly." (Ps 147:15)*

2. When we are confronted with evil, sin, and disappointments in this life, to what does the Lord point us through His Word and Spirit (v .5)? Do you remember this about Christ?

"Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,<sup>2</sup> so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God... Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.<sup>13</sup> But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.<sup>14</sup> If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you." (1 Pet 4:1-2, 12-14)

**"...Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him." (Heb 9:27)**