

Our thanksgiving at the beginning and end of the Christian Life must focus on God's *amazing determination* to apply the blessings which His Son's death and resurrection have purchased for us. In 1 Thessalonians 5:23 Paul describes God as *determined* to sanctify us, "spirit, soul and body." God is committed to ensuring that sanctification encompasses all we are and all we have. We see the same note of Divine perseverance with us to the very end in this week's study of 2 Thessalonians 1. May these notes create within us the desire for God to sanctify us "through and through." May we especially be stirred to new thankfulness as we consider God's sanctifying grace in the light of the glory of Christ's coming.

**Monday: 2 Thess 1:1-2; 2:1-2 and Rev. 22:17-21**

**Remember the End when You're in the Middle**

God is determined that *all* of our lives, and every faculty of our beings, be molded into the image of our Lord Jesus. Rummaging through every room and Spring cleaning in every neglected closet of our lives is indeed a huge job! No wonder Paul felt compelled to write a second letter to his beloved Thessalonians, for they were far from comprehensively sanctified as young, agitated, distracted Christians. That much is clear from the warning Paul gives them in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2, which is the purpose statement of this epistle. Paul must plead afresh with the hearts of the Thessalonians in his second letter in order to supply what is lacking in their Christian lives – especially in preparation for Christ's Second Coming.

You see, Paul's first letter has not succeeded in bringing this church to a proper view of the Second Coming. There is still too much ferment about Christ's return – thus Paul must write anew with great pastoral care and skill, using his Apostolic teaching of the last things as a means of building up the weak and shaken faith of the Thessalonians. See the irony in this: Paul uses the Second Coming, the very doctrine which had so unhealthily stirred up this church in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2, to calm them down and give them persevering poise and faith! May his words likewise be effective in reassuring us as we look to Christ's return.

**Meditate and Pray:** Revelation 17:1 says, "The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.'" Ask God to restore to you a healthy view of Christ's Return so that, as part of the Bride of Christ, the Church, you are able to say with John in Revelation 22:20: "Amen. Come Lord Jesus." Let us use hymn # 426 to aid us in repairing our often lackluster and dim view of Christ's Second Coming:

*"Till He come," O let the words  
Linger on the trembling chords,  
Let the "little while" between  
In their golden light be seen;  
Let us think how Heaven and home  
Lie beyond that, "Till He come."*

*When the weary ones we love  
Enter on their rest above,  
Seems the earth so poor and vast,  
All our life joy overcast?  
Hush, be every murmur dumb;  
It is only, "Till He come."*

*Clouds and conflicts round us press;  
Would we have one sorrow less?  
All the sharpness of the cross,  
All that tells the world is lost,  
Death and darkness, and the tomb,  
Only whisper, "Till He come."*

*See, the feast of love is spread,  
Drink the wine, and break the bread;  
Sweet memorials, till the Lord  
Calls us round His heavenly board;  
Some from earth, from glory some  
Severed only, "Till He come."*

**Tues/Weds: 2 Thessalonians 1:3-10 and Amos 5:18-19****Relief is Coming**

The Church needs Paul's exhortation to anticipate, and even rejoice in, the Second Coming of Christ – because for some reason we tend to put off Christ's return in our minds, fixing them blindly on this world, not the next. Why such living for the here and now on the part of not only the un-churched but believers too? Why are our emotions and hopes chained here, as if *this* world is the ultimate reality?

We Christians can mistakenly think of the Day of the Lord *solely in terms of* fear and doom because that's all we hear in reference to Christ's coming. For example, we hear doomsdayers predicting a sharp rise in taxes which they called, "Taxmageddon." Anything fearful or chaotic in the future can have this suffix, from the word of the last great battle to take place on the plains of Armageddon in Revelation. Doomsdayers purport to help us prepare for upcoming disasters in order to survive the dire future scenarios of world apocalypse. No wonder Christians are tempted to stop thinking of the world to come when so many freakish extremists appropriate the Day of the Lord as their own hobbyhorse!

Now, to be sure, for any hypocrite who self-righteously looks forward to the Day of the Lord, believing that *others* will be condemned on that day, but not *their* self-righteous souls - they are instructed by God "not to desire the Day of the Lord" in Amos 5:18. That Day for all outside of Christ will indeed be a "day of darkness, not light."

Nevertheless, it is glory and joy, not darkness or fear, which should be the keynote of our hope for Christ's return. Though the world does tremble at Christ's return, we have so much to look forward to, according to 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10. There Paul promises so many wonderful blessings when Christ returns: rest, salvation by Christ's power, the presence of the Lord in majesty, vengeance on true oppressors, and the righting of all wrongs, injustices, sadnesses and losses. All these will be reversed at Christ's coming.

**Meditate and Pray:** Read slowly again through 2 Thess. 1: 3-10. List some items in your world that will be set right at Christ's coming. Then sing about our great hope in Christ's return with the positive and uplifting words of hymn # 317, especially verse 2:

*Wake, awake, for night is flying;  
The watchmen on the heights are crying:  
Awake, Jerusalem, at last!  
Midnight hears the welcome voices  
And at the thrilling cry rejoices;  
Come forth, ye virgins, night is past;  
The Bridegroom comes, awake;  
Your lamps with gladness take;  
Alleluia! And for His marriage feast prepare  
For ye must go and meet Him there.*

*Zion hears the watchmen singing,  
And all her heart with joy is springing;  
She wakes, she rises from her gloom;  
For her Lord comes down all glorious,  
The strong in grace, in truth victorious.  
Her Star is risen, her Light is come.  
Ah come, Thou blessèd One, God's own belovèd  
Son:  
Alleluia! We follow till the halls we see  
Where Thou hast bid us sup with Thee.*

**Thurs/Fri: 2 Thessalonians 1:8-12****Future Exhibit coming to This Spot**

The Lord Jesus will set everything right when He comes, not only *around* us, but *in us*. Perhaps the most amazing fruit of the Day of the Lord is that of Christ being perfected “*in us*,” as 2 Thessalonians 1:10 puts it. Not only will we welcome Jesus in the “splendor of *His* majesty” – *we* will share in His glory ourselves! The Greek here is worthy of notice, because I think it stresses that the glory of Christ will be vindicated and honored not simply as belonging *to* our Savior, but also as triumphant *in* our lives! We see this from several translations’ emphasis on the words “*in His saints*” or “*in those who believe*.” In this way the emphasis is on our lives and bodies as the sphere in which Christ’s glory will be revealed before all men. Consider these translations of 2 Thessalonians 1:10:

*<sup>10</sup> when He may come to be glorified **in** his saints, and to be wondered at **in** all those believing -- because our testimony was believed among you.* (Young’s Literal Translation)

*<sup>10</sup> when he shall have come to be glorified **in** his saints, and wondered at **in** all that have believed (for our testimony to you has been believed) in that day.* (Darby)

These verses teach that believers’ lives glorified at Christ’s return will be the *museum display* of glory which God will set up before a wondering mankind. This is God’s answer to all those who said it could never be done – that God couldn’t succeed in making fallen sons and daughters of Adam shine like the firmament in perfect glory and redeemed grace!

All through biblical history, the scoffing world of devils and unbelieving mankind has thrown this mocking jeer from Job 1:9-11 back in God’s face:

*“Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and **he will surely curse you to your face.**”* In other words, the world has always gain-sayed God’s ability to save a people for Himself who will truly be “zealous for good works” and whose lives could truly be adorned with a real holiness that could endure unto eternity. But God is able to accomplish just this.

**Meditate and Pray:** We began with 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 and we will end with this great statement of God’s determination to “sanctify us body, soul and spirit. “

*May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.*