

**1194 Lord's return, perseverance, let-it-be, encouragement, blessings - 2 Thess.(1)1-(3)18
(by Whirlwind)**

First, we discussed the greetings and gave thanks for the disciples' life of faith, hope, and love, citing a previous article. Second, we addressed the Lord's return and the judgment that will accompany it; Paul also prayed for them, hoping they would have a place in the Book of Life. Third, we mentioned the signs and timing of the Lord's return, and in doing so, clarified a seemingly controversial issue regarding "let-it-be." Fourth, he urged the believers to hold fast to the message Paul had passed on orally and written in his letters through divine revelation. Fifth, he asked the believers to pray for him in his ministry. Sixth, he spoke of the need to conduct themselves in an orderly manner and encouraged them not to grow weary in doing good. Finally, he offered a blessing and mentioned his own handwriting.

Please note that this article is an expansion of the topicwise Bible study held on Sunday (6/14/26). Unless otherwise specified, verses refer to those in NASB95. If this article refers previous articles, they can all be found on our website, '<https://a-christian-voice.com/>'; click on 'Understanding Spiritual Life'.

1. Greetings and thanks to God for the disciples' lives of Faith, Hope, and Love

"Paul and Silvanus and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater; therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure."(2 Thessalonians 1:1-4)

In "1192 Paul's first book and some situations of the Thessalonian church - 1 Thess.(1)1 - (2)20" under "1. The Book of 1 Thessalonians is the first book Paul wrote," we discussed why 1 Thessalonians is the first book Paul wrote; naturally, he subsequently wrote a second book, which is 2 Thessalonians. The greeting is essentially the same as in 1 Thessalonians, except that it explicitly states that grace and peace come from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith and love are explicitly mentioned, while hope is found in endurance, as in "...for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure."(2 Thessalonians 1:4) In other words, "You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved."(Matthew 10:22)

2. The Lord's return and the judgment at that time

"This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in

flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed. To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, 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 the Lord Jesus Christ."(2 Thessalonians 1:5-12)

He began by essentially explaining, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Lovingkindness and truth go before You."(Psalm 89:14) He did not say that retribution and tribulation would certainly be brought upon those who persecute you in this life; it may happen in this life, or at the very latest at that time, "when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire."(2 Thessalonians 1:7) That is, at the time of the final judgment when Jesus returns.

The passage then describes what will happen on the day of the Lord's return. Other scriptures say, "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."(Revelation 20:11-15) In other words, there are at least two scrolls; the primary focus is on the Book of Life, while the rest pertains to Christians having works of faith, as this scripture states: "Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself."(James 2:17)

Please note that Paul's prayers can only be "...according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."(2 Thessalonians 1:12) Because God has absolute sovereignty; He decides whether or not to answer them. He prays for them, hoping they will have a place in the Book of Life: "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 the Lord Jesus Christ."(2 Thessalonians 1:12) What is referred to here is the name of the Lord Jesus—that is, the Lord Jesus Himself—because a person's name represents who he is. Those who have continually caused you suffering will certainly not be in the Book of Life, but will be cast into the lake of fire, as it says here: "These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."(2 Thessalonians 1:9)

3. Signs and timing of the Lord's return

"Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be

disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness."(2 Thessalonians 2:1-12)

Clearly, there were already people's letters claiming to be his ones at that time. Essentially, He was saying from the very beginning that the Day of the Lord would come like a thief in the night; if one believes this, why would they be moved to fear or panic? One of the signs of His coming is the appearance of the lawless one, and this passage also clearly describes what he will do. One of these is that the lawless one will arise claiming to be God, but the mere appearance of someone claiming to be God does not mean He is returning. Isn't there an example right now—the Church of Almighty God, known as “Eastern Lightning”—where Yang Xiangbin claims to be the Female Christ? It is very clear that this is a falsehood.

So what exactly does "he who now restrains" refer to? Some say it is the church; others say it is the Holy Spirit. Both of these interpretations are absolutely wrong, because the Bible says, "...only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way."(2 Thessalonians 2:7). Neither the Holy Spirit nor the church will be taken out of the way. I agree with those who say that this passage simply reveals God's absolute sovereignty—that everything is under His control, and when the time comes, the one who is holding it back will naturally be removed. As for what exactly "he who now restrains" is, the Bible does not explicitly state it, and it is impossible to guess. It is better to respect God and refrain from making wild speculations.

The following passage states, "that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders."(2 Thessalonians 2:9) This passage refers to the false prophet and the beast in the Book of Revelation. This becomes clear from the verses describing their wonders: "And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone."(Revelation 19:20)

The Lord Jesus will indeed slay the lawless one "...with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming."(2 Thessalonians 2:8) Just as this scripture says, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire,

and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." (Revelation 19:11-16) He is called Faithful and True, and is also called "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."—it is very clear that this refers to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Regarding this passage: "and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason (G2532, and) God will send (G3992) upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness." (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12) When reading this passage, one might focus on these phrases, "For this reason" and "will send", and conclude that God is the one causing them to have a mind that leads to error. In fact, this is not the case. Those people did not believe the truth to begin with; God merely provided them with a situation and left them to make their own decisions—just as Adam's disobedience toward God was his own choice, and God did not interfere but left him to decide for himself, i.e. "let-it-be."

This is also similar to Pharaoh's decision in the Book of Exodus; it was his own choice. Although many believe that God hardened Pharaoh's heart during the ten plagues, when viewed in light of "what God tells us through the Bible is consistent," it becomes clear that the original text speaks of "let-it-be" —God merely created the circumstances for the ten plagues (cf. Exodus 7:14-11:10). "When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart toward the people, and they said, 'What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?' So he made his chariot ready and took his people with him; and he took six hundred select chariots, and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them." (Exodus 14:5-7) Don't you see that Pharaoh changed his mind again?

If you still have doubts about this, let's look at the following passage: "The LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said this while another said that. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.' The LORD said to him, 'How?' And he said, 'I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' Then He said, 'You are to entice him and also prevail. Go and do so.' Now therefore, behold, the LORD has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; and the LORD has proclaimed disaster against you." (1 Kings 22:20-23)

Some people who read this passage find it hard to understand, thinking that the spirit of falsehood was sent by the LORD. In fact, the LORD knew that the spirit of falsehood would surely succeed in tempting them, so He permitted it to go, just as this passage states: "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. ...Then the LORD said to Satan, 'Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.'" So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD." (Job 1:6-12) Therefore, the LORD merely permitted Satan to attack Job. This

becomes very clear when viewed from the perspective that "what God tells us through the Bible is consistent."

4. To urge believers to hold fast to the message Paul conveyed orally through revelation and wrote in his letters

"But we should always (G3784, are bound) give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word."(2 Thessalonians 2:13-17)

Paul certainly had reason to thank God for them, for they knew that he and his companions "...had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, ..." (1 Thessalonians 2:2). Without the work of the Holy Spirit, how could they have been sanctified and saved? Therefore, they were called.

When it says, "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us." (2 Thessalonians 2:15), this refers specifically to what was taught orally by them; it does not mean that everything taught orally is from God. Do not be like some who use this passage as an excuse to accept what was taught orally afterward, calling it "tradition." Later, it is mentioned that even Paul and his companions could only hope; God has absolute sovereignty, and it ultimately depends on a person's true choice. For example, this passage says, "For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies." (2 Thessalonians 3:11) Such people were certainly not true Christians at that time—and we can only speak of that specific time. Perhaps those individuals would eventually respond to God's call, and it is entirely possible that God would make them true Christians.

5. Asking believers to pray for Paul's evangelistic work

"Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly (G5143, run) and be glorified, just as it did also with you; and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith. But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. We have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will continue to do what we command. May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ." (2 Thessalonians 3:1-5)

Since the text later mentions "are doing," some have led me to think that faith must be accompanied by works. This is what the Scripture says: "Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself." (James 2:17) Didn't Jesus say the same thing? "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; ..." (John 14:21) So it is not merely

that, "...faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."(Romans 10:17). The Great Commission states, "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; ..." (Matthew 28:20). Therefore, this is also consistent with the Great Commission.

In the previous letter, he asked the brothers to pray for him; now he asks the believers once again to pray for him regarding his preaching ministry, and he also speaks of the Lord's faithfulness. Indeed, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."(1 John 1:9) Is this not the way to be delivered from the evil one? Here, too, there is another mention of living a life of faith, hope, and love; faith and love are explicitly stated, while hope is found in Christ's endurance—that is, "You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved."(Matthew 10:22)

6. Walk in an orderly manner and encourage them to do good without losing heart

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you; not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example. For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good. If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."(2 Thessalonians 3:6-15)

When Paul was compelled to speak of the hardships he had endured (see 2 Corinthians 11:23-28), he mentioned the danger of false brothers, among whom were those who did not follow the rules. He himself set an example by working day and night, and on this point he stated very clearly, "...if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either."(2 Thessalonians 3:10) This does not refer to those who are unable to work.

He encouraged them not to lose heart in doing good—truly, they must not lose heart in doing good—"Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."(Romans 12:17-18) Even if you know someone might be a false brother, do not regard him as an enemy; the purpose of keeping your distance from them is to make them feel ashamed. But there is a limit to this, as the Scripture makes very clear: "save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh."(Jude 1:23)

7. Blessings and Paul's handwriting

"Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all! I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all."(2 Thessalonians 3:16-18)

To have peace at all times comes from the Lord; it is not easy to have peace in the midst of suffering, but if we deeply believe the Lord's words, how could we not have peace? He said, "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."(John 16:33) Paul sincerely desired for them to have the Lord's peace and presence. Although He usually works through people to resolve problems, He intervenes directly when necessary. For example, "Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind..."(Job 38:1) and when Abraham was weak (see Genesis 20:1–18). In the New Testament, it is even more evident: "And the Word (the Lord Jesus Christ) became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."(John 1:14) Paul sincerely hoped, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all."(2 Thessalonians 3:18)

Some say that when Paul wrote, "...this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write."(2 Thessalonians 3:17), it was because it was customary at the time to have a scribe write letters on one's behalf, and Paul followed this custom by having someone else write the letter while he merely signed his name. However, this is incorrect, because the Bible does not say this. Let's look at the previous sentence: "I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, ..." (2 Thessalonians 3:17). He greeted them right at the beginning. Paul would not have knowingly told a lie; he clearly stated that he wrote the greeting with his own hand, so the entire book was written by him.

Finally, we see that today handwriting analysis can be used to determine whether a document is authentic. Although it is not 100% accurate, when combined with other supporting evidence, it is legally admissible. Paul did not have this technology at the time, yet he somehow knew that it could be used to determine whether a letter was written by him—he was truly ahead of his time!