

SUFFERING FOR HIS NAME

2 Thessalonians 1

Popular misinterpretation of pre-trib view:

"Since the rapture is going to occur before the tribulation, we can relax."

"We won't have to deal with tribulation!"

The church in every age, from 1st C. to 21st C., has suffered for its identification with Christ.

That won't be any different for the last generation!

It's likely that WE will face hard times because of our faith.

God uses suffering to make His people into all He desires us to become!

Author and Date

Connection with 1 Thessalonians,

plus evidence from tradition and internal evidence point to Paul as author.

The date was several months after 1 Thessalonians, probably in A.D. 51.

Historical Background

They continue to suffer because of their faith in Christ.

Paul *still* isn't able to come to them

and is still sending Timothy as his representative.

Persecution has created theological problems

that need to be dealt with.

Some are claiming they're already in the Day of the Lord.

Purpose and Theme Paul writes:

1. To comfort and encourage us in the midst of suffering.

He wants us to grow in our faith, in spite of suffering.

2. To correct doctrinal confusion concerning the Day of the Lord.

**He wants us to understand the truth
regarding the Day of the Lord.**

3. To encourage us to stand firm and hold onto sound doctrine we've been taught.

4. To obligate those who are idle to go to work.

He wants the lazy to conduct themselves correctly.

Main idea: Comfort in the midst of their suffering.

● **He comforts us, pointing out that suffering leads to praise.**

● **Those who are faithful triumph in the end.**

WHAT RESULTS SHOULD THE TRUTHS PRESENTED IN THIS BOOK PRODUCE IN OUR LIVES TODAY?

WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL THIS MAKE?

Organization 3 chapters reveal 3-part structure:

● **Prayer (1:1-12)** that we'll be faithful and patient in the midst of suffering because God has given us the privilege of suffering for His name.

● **Instruction concerning the Day of the Lord (2:1-17)**

Present suffering, though real, can't be the Day of the Lord

because 2 prerequisites haven't been fulfilled yet.

Keep on being faithful while waiting for your salvation.

- **Exhortations–Correct problem of the lazy who take illegitimate advantage of church's love (3:1-18)**

HIS GREETING 1:1-2 *“Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

HIS PRAYER 1:3-12

Paul's letter begins with revelation of his prayer for church at Thessalonica.

He expresses concern for them because of their suffering

and his desire that they continue to be faithful

so that they will participate in the final triumph.

THANKSGIVING 1:3-10

We ought always to thank God for you. 1:3 *“We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.”*

Why?

Cause for thanksgiving based on their testimony 1:3-4

Paul thanks God for them because they continue to grow in faith and love in spite of adverse conditions.

*** Growing faith 1:3a**

Because your faith keeps growing more and more.

*** Abounding love 1:3b**

Because your love for each other keeps increasing.

*** Enduring persecution 1:4**

“Therefore, among God’s churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.”

Because your endurance in affliction produces strengthened endurance.

Ch. 2 gives us assurance that we don't go through the Great Tribulation, but McGee says: “We will go through the ‘little’ tribulation.”

Thessalonians’ struggle with suffering has convinced them that they’re in the Day of the Lord.

Peter told the dispersed, suffering church: **1 Pet. 4:12-13**

“Do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you”¹³ But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed.”

Results of their testimony 1:5-10

The result of faithful testimony now will be to participate in the enjoyment of the Lord's triumph over His enemies.

The destiny of the faithful is contrasted with those who oppose the gospel.

The faithful will participate in God's kingdom. 1:5 *"All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering."*

The faithful will be given rest. 1:7 *"and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels."*

When Christ triumphs over His enemies, the faithful will glorify Him. 1:10 *"on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you."*

In contrast, those who persecute the faithful will be repaid what they deserve.

They will receive tribulation. 1:6 *"God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you"*

God wants us to understand the fate of people who provoke our suffering.

God, the Just Judge, will correct injustice suffered.

They will be punished with everlasting destruction. for their unbelief 1:8-10 *"He will punish those who do not know*

God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power 10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you."

Those who are causing the suffering of God's people will pay.

They will suffer everlasting destruction.

PETITION 1:11-12 *"With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. 12 We pray this 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."*
Paul prays constantly . . .

That God will work in us

so that we'll receive the blessings promised.

His conviction: Suffering is part of God's purpose for us.

The result: God will be glorified in us.

That God will count us worthy. 1:11a

"that our God may count you worthy of his calling"

Our calling results in suffering.

Suffering demonstrates that we're counted worthy.

That God will fulfill every good purpose. 1:11b *“that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.”*

That God will be glorified in us. 1:12 *“We pray this 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.”*

HOW DOES THIS PASSAGE RELATE TO OUR LIVES?

McGee: If you can glorify God when your business is going well, more power to you. Somehow I am more impressed by the little old lady who is lying in a bed of affliction and may never get up again, but who continues to give glory to God in the midst of her suffering.

Superbowl Success. Suppose you're a star halfback whose team is headed for the Superbowl. A friend that you know is credible informs you that he knows for sure the outcome of the game. Your team is going to win. No doubt about it. He can even give you solid and sufficient reasons that he knows are valid.

Ultimately, though, you know that only the team that plays hardest wins. So what do you do? Do you relax and take it easy, since you know who wins? Or do you play your hardest to guarantee the win?

That's a dilemma Christians face daily. We know who wins. God has spoken. Our team is guaranteed the victory. So do we just lay back and take it easy? Paul urges us to devote ourselves to godly living so God may count us worthy of His calling. God is guaranteed the ultimate victory but we aren't guaranteed our reward unless we do our part—persevering in faith, holiness and love.

We should not be surprised when hardships come our way.

**We should expect hardship,
and be ready for our Lord's coming.**

When the hard times come, we have confidence that:

We know Who wins.

We triumph with Him!

[HIS INSTRUCTION 2:1-17

Paul turns to doctrinal problem concerning the Day of the Lord which is bothering them.]