

A stylized mountain range graphic in white and light blue. The word 'ENCOURAGEMENT' is written in a bold, blocky font across the top of the mountain. Below it, the word 'HOPE' is written in a similar font, with the 'H' and 'O' of the second line overlapping the 'H' and 'O' of the first line. The background is a dark blue gradient with faint, light blue diagonal lines.

ENCOURAGEMENT HOPE

A study from the books of Thessalonians



Macedonia and Achaia

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- It appears that 2 Thessalonians was written quite soon after 1 Thessalonians, perhaps within 12 months. This would place the date of composition in the early 50s AD and would make this epistle the second or third of Paul's canonical writings (with Galatians).
- The epistle gives evidence that Paul had recently heard news about conditions in the church. Probably this information came to him from the messenger who delivered 1 Thessalonians and returned to Corinth. Perhaps other people who had news of the church informed the three missionaries (Paul, Silas, and Timothy) also. Some of the news was good: the Thessalonians were continuing to grow and to remain faithful to Christ in spite of persecution. But some was bad: false teaching concerning the day of the Lord had entered the church and was causing confusion and leading some of the Christians to quit their jobs in expectation of the Lord's return.

2 Thessalonians chapter 1

*Second letter written a few months after 1 Thessalonians

*Paul probably had received a second report from the church in Thessalonica



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.

2 Thessalonians 1:1-2

*Grace is God's unmerited favor which He freely bestows on all who accept Jesus Christ's substitutionary work for them on the cross by faith.



After these things he [Paul] left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers. And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. Acts 18:1-5





ITALY

ADRIATIC SEA

MACEDONIA

Philippi

Thessalonica

Berea

Troas

AEGEAN SEA

ASIA

IONIAN SEA

ACHAIA

Athens

Ephesus

Corinth

PELOPONNESE

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Macedonia and Achaia

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CRETE



We ought always to give **thanks** to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged [ὑπεραυξάνω *hyperauxano* grow exceedingly], and the love [ἀγάπη *agape*] of each one of you toward one another grows [πλεονάζω *pleonazo* abounds] ever greater; 2 Thessalonians 1:3



From Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians...

We give **thanks** to God always for all of you,
making mention of you in our prayers;
constantly bearing in mind your work of faith
and labor of love and **steadfastness**
[endurance] of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ
in the presence of our God and Father,
1 Thessalonians 1:2-3



**Paul was thankful for the followers
of Jesus in Thessalonica.**

For what are we thankful this week?



Give **thanks** to the Lord, for He is good, for His lovingkindness is everlasting. Give **thanks** to the God of gods, for His lovingkindness is everlasting. Give **thanks** to the Lord of lords, for His lovingkindness is everlasting. To Him who alone does great wonders, for His lovingkindness is everlasting; to Him who made the heavens with skill, for His lovingkindness is everlasting; to Him who spread out the earth above the waters, for His lovingkindness is everlasting; to Him who made the great lights, for His lovingkindness is everlasting: the sun to rule by day, for His lovingkindness is everlasting, the moon and stars to rule by night, for His lovingkindness is everlasting. Psalm 136:1-9

*Lovingkindness = חֶסֶד chesed, loyal love, covenant faithfulness



“To be grateful is to recognize the Love of God in everything He has given us - and He has given us everything. Every breath we draw is a gift of His love, every moment of existence is a grace, for it brings with it immense graces from Him. Gratitude therefore takes nothing for granted, is never unresponsive, is constantly awakening to new wonder and to praise of the goodness of God. For the grateful person knows that God is good, not by hearsay but by experience. And that is what makes all the difference.”

— Thomas Merton



“He who offers a sacrifice of **thanksgiving** honors Me; and to him who borders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God.”

Psalm 50:23

Let us come before His presence with **thanksgiving**, let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. Psalm 95:2



“Some virtues of Christian character, such as holiness, love, and faithfulness, are godly traits because they *reflect* the character of God. They are Godlike qualities. Other virtues are godly traits because they *acknowledge* and *exalt* the character of God. They are God-centered qualities that enhance our devotion to God. Such are the virtues of humility, contentment, and thankfulness. In humility we acknowledge God’s majesty, in contentment His grace, and in thankfulness His goodness. Thankfulness to God is a recognition that God in His goodness and faithfulness has provided for us and cared for us, both physically and spiritually. It is a recognition that we are totally dependent upon Him; that all we are and have comes from God.” - Jerry Bridges



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 1:4

Because of such good growth the apostles frequently spoke with justifiable pride to other churches about the Thessalonians, using the Thessalonian church as a model to be emulated. In particular, their perseverance (*hypomonēs*; cf. 1 Thess. 1:3; 2 Thess. 3:5) in the midst of persecutions was outstanding. The Thessalonians did not react to discomfort the way many Christians do, by running away from their uncomfortable situations. Instead they viewed their circumstances as God's will and determined to brace up under the pressure. Their attitude was not to endure by force of their own strength, however. They had faith in God; they looked to Him for grace sufficient to bear up and accepted their circumstances as conditions which He was allowing for His glory. - Bible Knowledge Commentary



From Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians...

For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews [*Ἰουδαῖος* *Ioudaios* "Judeans", not all Jews], 1 Thessalonians 2:14

*Followers of Jesus can HAVE spiritual role models and BECOME spiritual role models



This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy [ἀξίως *axios*] of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.

2 Thessalonians 1:5

So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy [ἀξίως *axios*] to suffer shame for His name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. Acts 5:41-42



What kind of suffering?





Roman Emperors

Caligula

Gaius Caesar Augustus Germanicus



Claudius

Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus



Nero

Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus

Claudius appears in the New Testament. Acts 11:28–30 mentions a famine that occurred during the reign of Claudius. Claudius’s forcible expulsion of the Jews from Rome is mentioned in Acts 18:2. This event is also corroborated by sources outside the New Testament. Suetonius writes that Claudius expelled the Jews due to conflict surrounding someone named Chrestus. Scholars believe that “Chrestus” is a reference to Jesus Christ. Claudius Caesar had several unintended effects on Christian history. His scattering of the Jews in Rome led directly to Paul’s encounter with Priscilla and Aquila. These two became faithful partners in Paul’s gospel ministry, helping to establish several churches and guide the sincere but misguided Apollos (see Acts 18). Second, if conflict over Jesus was the reason for the expulsion, Claudius inadvertently provided more historical evidence for the existence of Jesus and the spread of Christianity. Some of Paul’s earliest letters were written under the reign of Claudius Caesar, so Claudius provided the political context for some of Paul’s writings and travels.

Types of Persecutions

- From governmental leaders, policies
- From non-believers
- From fellow believers
- From business associates
- From family members



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. 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8



“Vengeance is Mine, and retribution, in due time their foot will slip; for the day of their calamity is near, and the impending things are hastening upon them. For the Lord will vindicate His people, and will have compassion on His servants, when He sees that their strength is gone, and there is none remaining, bond or free.”

Deuteronomy 32:35-36



The present experiences of the Thessalonians, Paul pointed out to them by way of encouragement, illustrated the righteous judgment of God, that is, that God is just. When God would judge the Thessalonians they would be declared worthy of God's kingdom. Endurance in trials does not make one worthy of heaven; one does not earn heaven by suffering. But endurance in trials does demonstrate one's worthiness. A Christian is made worthy by God's grace, which he receives as a free gift by faith in Jesus Christ. His trials simply expose what is there already and since the character that emerges through the fire of testing is God-given, God receives all the glory. – Bible Knowledge Commentary



Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. Galatians 6:7

Paul explained how the Thessalonians' suffering demonstrated the justice of God. He first stated the great truth taught from Genesis through Revelation: God is just. God will balance the scales of justice. He will mete out trouble (*thlipsin*; cf. v. 4) to those who troubled (*thlibousin*) the Thessalonians. God will give relief from the tensions of trials to those who are unjustly persecuted ("troubled, pressured," *thlibomenois*; v. 4, 6) by their enemies. The Thessalonians, the apostles, and all other Christians who share in these pressures can look forward to this. Relief (*anesin*, "relaxation, rest") will come at the revelation of Jesus Christ. – Bible Knowledge Commentary



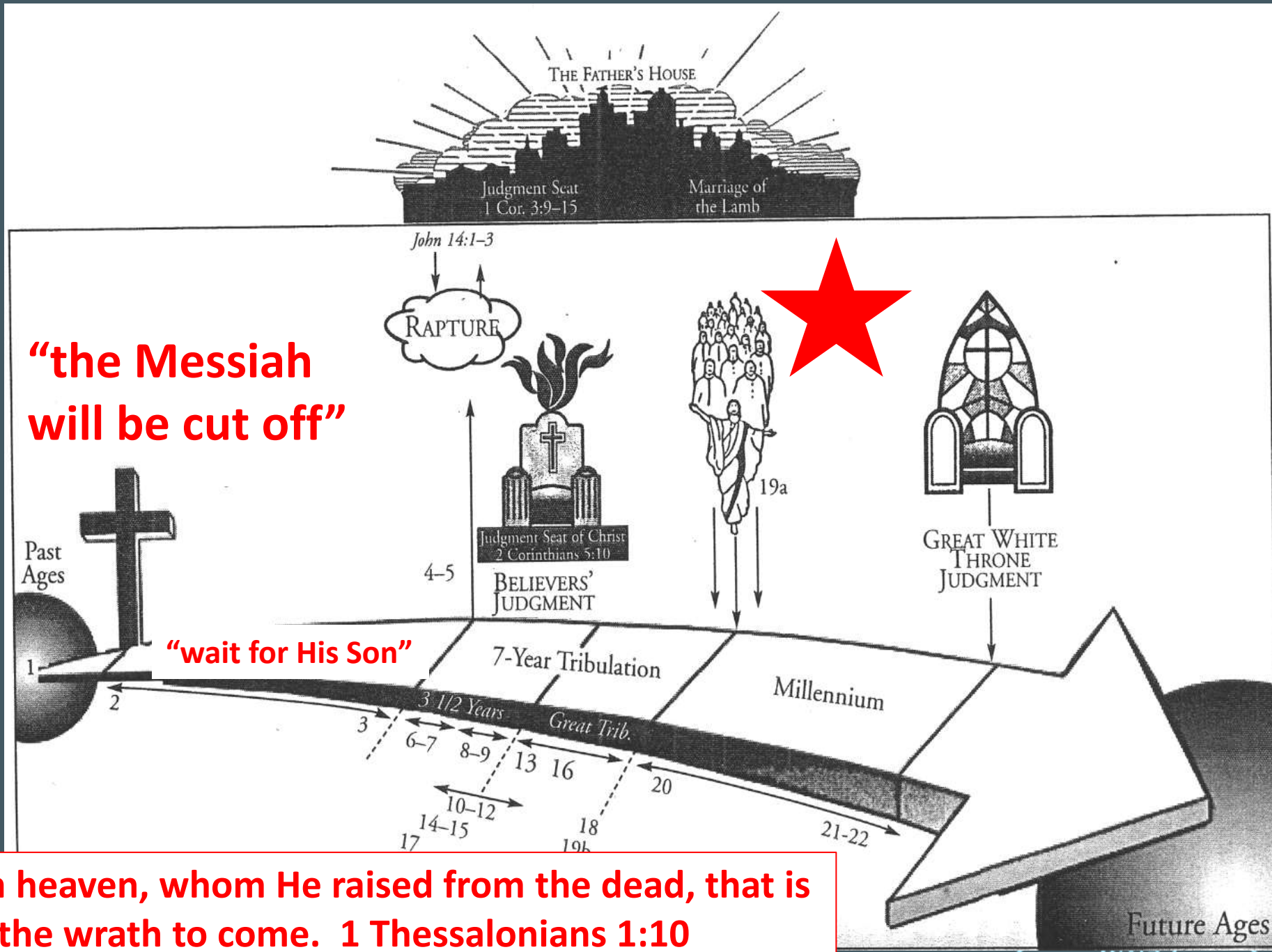
These will pay the penalty [punishment] of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.

2 Thessalonians 1:9-10

* The punishment of the wicked will be neither temporary nor will it be annihilation, but it will continue throughout eternity and those being punished will be conscious. It is eternal death as opposed to eternal life (see Matthew 25:46). – Bible Knowledge Commentary



The Second Coming “on that day” is the revelation of Jesus in power and great glory (Ps. 2:1–9; Matt. 25:31), when He will set up His earthly kingdom (Rev. 19:11–20:4). At His return He will destroy the Armageddon armies gathered against Him (Rev. 16:12–16; 19:19–21) and will judge all living people (Ezek. 20:33–38, Matt. 24:31–46).



Separation from the Lord's presence (literally His "face") is the essence of eternal punishment. On the other hand being in the Lord's presence will make heaven heaven. A Christian's hope is to see and be with the Lord; the judgment of unbelievers is to be eternally inaccessible to His presence. – Bible Knowledge Commentary

- and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come. 1 Thessalonians 1:10
- Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.
1 Thessalonians 4:17



- For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, Romans 1:18
- But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each person according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, Romans 2:5–9
- For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. Philippians 3:18-19



God's judgment is seen in the fate of those who persecute His people. At the coming of the Lord Jesus they will be repaid with the treatment they gave to others. In this way God vindicates His own people against their oppressors and also makes it clear that those who do not obey the gospel come under judgment. It should be noted that God's people must not avenge themselves on those who attack them, and that God's action is not one of taking vengeance but of upholding justice. God cannot be accused of acting unjustly or ungraciously towards them. - New Bible Commentary

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. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:17-21



From Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians...

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14



From Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians...

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-16



From Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians...

Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up [ἄρπάζω *harpazo*, raptured] up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4:17-18

The Latin Vulgate translates the Greek ἀρπαγησόμεθα as *rapiemur* meaning "we are caught up" or "we are taken away" from the Latin verb *rapio* meaning "to catch up" or "take away." – Wikipedia



To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy [ἀξίως *axios*] of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power [δύναμις *dunamis*], 2 Thessalonians 1:11



Apostle Paul also wrote...

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy [ἀξίως *axios*] of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:1-3

* Christians do not live worthily in order to obtain salvation but because they have been granted salvation.

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

*How will the name of our Lord Jesus be glorified in our lives? In our church?



Next week...

2 Thessalonians chapter 2



Lessons for Us... 2 Thessalonians Chapter 1

- Times of persecution and affliction will occur, even in the lives of faithful Christ-followers
- Persecution and affliction come in various ways and times
- God's power and strength are sufficient to sustain believers as they face these struggles
- God is the righteous Judge and vengeance is His
- Jesus is coming again to the earth and every person will be held accountable for their response to God's offer of salvation through the Messiah



Why be Grateful as Christ-followers?

When I am grateful, I am pulled toward humility.

When I am grateful, I don't complain.

When I am grateful, I am not overwhelmed by greed.

When I am grateful, I can forgive others.

When I am grateful, I can freely express love.

When I am grateful, I honor my Savior.

When I am grateful, I can overcome my past.

When I am grateful, I am content in the present.

When I am grateful, I trust God for the future.

