

## **LESSON 1: 2 THESSALONIANS 1**

### **Worthy of the Kingdom**

1. *Introductory review questions:* (a) Who are Silas and Timothy, and where did Paul meet each of them? (b) Give a brief outline of their journey together to this point. (c) Where is Paul staying as he writes this letter? (d) Describe Paul's initial visit to the Thessalonian church (Acts 17:1-10a)? (e) What did we learn of the character of this church and of its circumstances from Paul's first epistle to them (1 Thessalonians 1:6, etc.)? (f) Recall why Paul wrote that first letter, and keep that in mind as we read through this second letter, which was probably composed and sent some six months later.
2. For what three aspects of spiritual growth in the lives of the Thessalonian Christians did Paul give thanks (vv. 3-4)? Why "ought" Paul give thanks for these things? Why "ought" we? What's so important about thanksgiving? (See Psalm 107:1-3; 8-9; 15-16; 19-21; 31-43; and 2 Corinthians 4:15.)
3. What does it mean to say that their faith is "growing more and more" and that their love is "increasing" (v. 3)? How might this be significant given the situation of suffering that the Thessalonians find themselves in (v. 4)? What positive and negative influences do you think persecution has on "growing" faith, and "increasing" love and steadfast faith?
4. Why would Paul boast concerning their perseverance (v. 4)? What's so important about perseverance, anyway? (See Romans 5:1-4; James 1:2-4; and Hebrews 3:14 and 12:1.)
5. What do you think Paul means when he writes that "all this is evidence that God's judgment is right" (v. 5; see also Psalm 51:4)? What judgment is he speaking about, and what is the evidence? (Compare Romans 3:28 and James 2:24. How do you reconcile these two verses, and how does this help us understand our passage?) Finally, how does suffering make you "worthy" of the Kingdom of God?

6. What blessing is promised to suffering Christians? How is this tied to God's being "just" (v. 6)? What does this chapter say in response to the question, "Why do the righteous suffer?" (See also Romans 8:18-19 and 2 Corinthians 4:1-18.) EXTRA CREDIT: How can God be said to be "just" if he reckons sinners like us to be just (justified) when in fact, in and of ourselves, we are anything but just? (See Romans 3:19-26.)
  
7. Think about the related concepts of justice and judgment. What does it mean when we speak of God's justice? Of human justice? What does it mean to be just? Unjust? Compare the concepts of "justice" and "righteousness." How are they alike? Different? How does the doctrine of justification impact our life in a practical way? How are we no longer liable to divine judgment, and what significance does this have for our daily living?
  
8. When will "relief" come to Christians who are afflicted for the sake of Christ? What is significant about the fact that the Lord Jesus will be "revealed from heaven in blazing fire" (v. 7; compare Matthew 3:11-12)?
  
9. According to 1:8, what two charges will be made against those who suffer God's vengeance? What is the relationship of knowing and obeying the gospel in terms of our accountability to God? (See Luke 8:11-15; and 21.) In what two things will their punishment consist (v. 9)?
  
10. In whom will Christ be glorified when he comes again (v. 10)? What do you take this to mean? How is God glorified in us even now (see 2 Cor. 4:6,15.)? Why do you think God has placed such great weight on the role of testimony – to be proclaimed and believed – in the plan of salvation as he devised it?
  
11. What motivates Paul to pray for the Thessalonians (v. 11)? Specifically, for what three things does he pray on their behalf (vv. 11-12)?