

Rest With Us: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-7 Explained

Scriptures for Today

""2 Thessalonians 1:1-7

Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; 4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: 5 Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: 6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,""

Introduction — A Church Bruised but Unbroken

Thessalonica was born in persecution (Acts 17:1–9). Believers were attacked from day one. Paul was forced out of the city. But the church remained — standing, suffering, believing. 1 Thessalonians encouraged them. 2 Thessalonians strengthens them.

They were facing:

- increasing hostility
- rising tribulation
- confusion about prophecy
- pressure from false teachers
- emotional exhaustion

Yet Paul writes to show them: **God sees your suffering. God measures your endurance. God will reward your faithfulness.**

The first seven verses set the tone of the entire letter — judgment for the wicked, rest for the righteous, and glory for Christ.

Verse 1 — The Church Stands in God

""2 Thessalonians 1:1

Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:""

We see Paul as the first word in this book again. We see Silvanus. We see Timotheus. Who are those three men? This is important. These three men are writing to the church of the Thessalonians. Let's look at Paul first.

Paul — The Apostle to the Gentiles

Paul is the God-chosen apostle sent to preach Christ to the Gentile world.

- Former persecutor (Acts 9:1–6)
- Saved by the appearance of Jesus Christ (Acts 9:5)
- Called and commissioned directly by Jesus (Acts 9:15; Galatians 1:1)
- Church-planter, teacher, defender of the faith
- The man who founded the church at Thessalonica (Acts 17:1–4)

When this letter is written, Paul is continuing to guide and strengthen this young, persecuted church.

Silvanus — Also Called Silas

Silvanus (Silas) is a faithful partner in Paul's ministry. The Bible never plainly says Silvanus is Silas, but all Scriptural evidence points to them being the same man, because they appear with the same ministry partners, in the same regions, doing the same work, at the same time.

- A leading man among the brethren at Jerusalem (Acts 15:22)
- A prophet who strengthened the churches (Acts 15:32)
- Paul's chosen companion after the split with Barnabas (Acts 15:40)
- Imprisoned with Paul in Philippi (Acts 16:19–25)
- Present when the Thessalonian church was founded (Acts 17:1–4)

Silas knows the Thessalonian believers personally — he suffered with them and watched them believe under pressure.

Timotheus — Paul's Son in the Faith

Timothy is the young preacher Paul mentored and trusted.

- A disciple from Lystra with a strong testimony (Acts 16:1–2)
- Joined Paul's missionary team early (Acts 16:3)
- Sent back to Thessalonica to check on their faith (1 Thessalonians 3:1–2)
- Brought Paul the encouraging report that led to 1 Thessalonians (1 Thess 3:6)

Timothy is not their pastor — but he is deeply invested in this church and helped ground them in the faith.

Why These Three Names Matter

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus are not random signatures. They are the **founders, teachers, and spiritual caretakers** of the Thessalonian church. This greeting reminds them:

- You are loved by leaders who suffered with you.
- You were planted by men who still pray for you.
- You are not alone in your persecution.
- The same men who led you to Christ now strengthen you with this letter.

About the Thessalonian Church

This church is not standing in: culture, popularity, political safety, or emotional strength. They are standing **in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**. That means:

- God is their protection.
- God is their identity.
- God is their foundation.
- God is their security.

Paul reminds them: "You belong to God and not to this hostile world."

Verse 2 — Grace and Peace in a Storm

""2 Thessalonians 1:2

Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.""

The church is suffering, but Paul does not begin with fear. He begins with **grace** and **peace**.
Grace → God helping you. Peace → God calming you.

This greeting also affirms the deity of Christ:

- Grace comes from the Father *and* from Christ.
- Peace comes from the Father *and* from Christ.

Only God can give grace. Only God can give peace. Therefore, Jesus is God.

Verse 3 — Growing Faith and Abounding Love

""2 Thessalonians 1:3

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;""

Their circumstances are getting worse and yet their faith is getting stronger.

- **Faith groweth exceedingly** — their trust in God is expanding under pressure.
- **Charity aboundeth** — their love is overflowing, not shrinking.

Persecution did not make them bitter. It made them better. It's okay to be persecuted. That will increase our faith in God and cause charity to abound.

This is the opposite of how the flesh responds. The flesh wants to fight back. Only the Holy Spirit can produce: growing faith, abounding love, and increasing unity during increasing pain. For example, many families come together during times of loss at funerals. Some families instead choose to fight.

Verse 4 — Their Endurance Is a Testimony

""2 Thessalonians 1:4

So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:""

Their suffering wasn't quiet. It was visible. It was known. It was talked about in the churches. Paul says: "We glory in you" — we boast about your endurance. They continue through these things.

Two things shine the brightest in hardship:

1. **Patience** — staying steady when the world shakes.
2. **Faith** — trusting God when everything screams "give up."

Endurance under pressure is one of the greatest testimonies a believer can have. No matter what you're going through, just keep trusting in God alone to get you through it.

Verse 5 — Your Suffering Is Evidence

""2 Thessalonians 1:5

Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:""

This verse confuses many — but it is actually powerful comfort. A **manifest token** means visible proof. Manifest is clearly seen. Token is a sign, evidence, or proof. God will judge righteously. Many times, people forget that God will judge every situation. He will take care of it. Just have faith that He will do so. Let God be the judge.

Their persecutions and tribulations is **not proof that God abandoned them**. It is proof that:

- God sees what is happening
- God will judge righteously
- God will reward His people

- They belong to His kingdom or the kingdom of God

Persecution is not payment for salvation — salvation is already settled by faith alone. But suffering reveals that believers are living for a kingdom the world hates.

Here is the meaning in one sentence: **Your endurance in suffering is visible proof (a manifest token) that God is righteous in the way He will judge — rewarding you and repaying those who persecute you.**

Make sure you hear me on this: If believers suffer for doing right, God **MUST** repay the people who are doing wrong. Your suffering does **NOT** mean:

God is punishing you, God is absent, God is unfair, or God does not care. Instead, Paul says: **"Your suffering is proof that God WILL judge, and He WILL judge righteously."**

Verse 6 — God Will Repay Trouble

""2 Thessalonians 1:6

Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;""

God promises justice. The wicked will not get away with anything. Every act of persecution is recorded in heaven. Every injustice will be answered by God Himself. It is **righteous** for God to repay. This is **GREAT NEWS** that I don't want you to miss. This verse here means:

- You don't have to retaliate.
- You don't have to fight for revenge.
- You don't have to prove yourself.

God will handle your enemies better than you ever could. When people lie about you, make false accusations, and attack you, always remember that God will recompense. He knows who is doing right and wrong. And that's a warning for you as well to always do right. If you decide to do wrong to someone, God will recompense. The warning goes both ways.

Verse 7 — Future Rest for Present Trouble

""2 Thessalonians 1:7

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,""

This is one of the most comforting verses in the Bible for persecuted believers. The title of the sermon is **REST WITH US** for now. To you who are troubled, come here to this church and rest with us together. Relax. Be at peace. God is in control. Trust in Him.

But an even greater **Rest is coming**. Not here. Not now. Not in this world. Rest comes **when Jesus returns**. "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels."

And notice the angels from heaven are mighty. We ask God to send more of his mighty angels to help us in this area in West Louisville. Let's fight with them. Let's win these battles for the people. Rest is coming:

- When the Lord is revealed.
- When He comes with mighty angels.
- When He judges the wicked.
- When He rescues His people.

Your pain is temporary. Your rest is eternal.

Application — What God Wants Us to Learn

1. **Standing in God is stronger than suffering in the world.** Your foundation is Him.
2. **Grace and peace come from God alone.** Not from circumstances, money, or escape.
3. **Faith grows in hardship.** Pressure can multiply your trust in God.
4. **Love can abound in persecution.** The Holy Spirit produces supernatural love.
5. **Endurance glorifies God.** Your patience is a testimony to all believers.
6. **God's justice is certain.** Every persecutor will answer to Him.
7. **Rest is on the way.** Jesus is coming — and He is bringing relief.

Conclusion — Rest With Us When Christ Returns

2 Thessalonians does not hide the reality of suffering. It does not pretend persecution is easy. But it does remind us that persecution is temporary and rest is eternal. Paul tells a hurting church: God sees your endurance. God values your charity. God honors your faith. God will judge your enemies. God will give you rest.

We are not running toward darkness — we are running toward Jesus. And when He appears with His mighty angels, **every wound will be healed, every injustice reversed, every fear removed, every tear wiped away.**

Until then — stand, suffer faithfully, love deeply, endure patiently, and look for the blessed hope of His appearing. **Rest is coming. Praise God for that promise.**

Let's pray.