

## Perfect Peace with God 2 Thessalonians 3:16-18

### 2 Thessalonians 3:16–18 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord *be* with you all.

<sup>17</sup> The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.

<sup>18</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

### **Introduction:**

The last few years have been some of the most confusing and unsettling times in recent history. They have produced a huge number of people stressed with anxiety and fear, both in the world and church. And it doesn't seem to be getting any better. News on the economy is dismal at best. A number of countries are having major protest from the people and farmers from the desire of some wanting to limit certain fertilizers due to a belief in climate change and supposedly poisoning the waters. Then there is the continuing escalation of conflict and war of Russia and Ukraine and the threat of nuclear war and the complete destabilization of the European

Continent and the possibility of WWIII. The threat of serious famine for a number of countries is a real potential and seems to be headed in that direction. There is talk of a Great Reset coming and the World Economic Forum, says by 2030, you will own nothing and be happy.

Here in the States, we have a very unsettled political environment, along with a rapid moral and civil decline of our culture along with destruction and indoctrination of our children.

Many of the churches have compromised and the world is in the church more than the church is in the world.

Add to all of this the constant diet that some have of the 24hr news cycle is enough to drive a person insane. Unlike 100 years ago, and the rest of human history, you did not know what was happening in most of the world. You only had the information for where you lived and what was happening to you. But now, with the touch of finger or the search of the internet you can see and hear what is happening in every part of the world in a matter of minutes.

The world is a mess to say the least, but this is not a new thing. Its history is not pretty at all. We are told that.....

“Of the past 3,400 years, humans have been entirely at peace for 268 of them, or just 8 percent of

recorded history. At least 108 million people were killed in wars in the twentieth century. Estimates for the total number killed in wars throughout all of human history range from 150 million to 1 billion. Jul 6, 2003

How many wars has America had between 1776 and 2017?

The U.S. Has Been At War 222 Out of 239 Years. An interesting statistic: America has been at war 93% of the time – 222 out of 239 years. Another way to put it: the U.S. has only been at peace for less than 20 years total since its birth.” (Mar. 19, 2017)<https://www.greynun.org/gn2/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/US-Involvement-in-War.pdf>

Even the most basic summary of human history will prove how great is our need for peace. History is largely the record of warfare and conquest, showing that, as James Montgomery Boice wrote, “wars are the chief legacy of every culture.”

Politicians respond (to war) with peace initiatives and peace treaties, yet the one result they never achieve is peace itself. James Montgomery Boice comments that “the ink is scarcely dry on these

treaties when guns begin to sound for the next fierce encounter.”

Phillips, R. D. (2015). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.; p. 404). P&R Publishing.

There has also been a noticeable rise in persecution of Christians throughout the world. One article stated that the it has risen 30% in the last couple of years and that Christians being put to death as risen 60%. It is not surprise to us that the hostility and hatred of Christianity has gained ground in these days. These are times of turmoil and trouble an the the tolerance of the God of the Bible is at an all time low.

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/march-for-the-martyrs-christians-rise-up-as-one-voice-for-the-persecuted-church.html>

The Bible has warned us that this would be the characteristic of the last days.

## **2 Timothy 3:1–5 (NKJV)**

**3** But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: <sup>2</sup> For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, <sup>4</sup> traitors,

headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup> having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

### v. 1 perilous times will come

20.2 **χαλεπός<sup>b</sup>, ή, όν**: pertaining to one who is inclined to violent and dangerous activity—‘dangerous, fierce

Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). In [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 227). United Bible Societies.

### **being troublesome, hard, difficult**

Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). In [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature](#) (3rd ed., p. 1075). University of Chicago Press.

**χαλεπός**, -ή, -όν, (fr. **χαλέπτω** to oppress, annoy, [(?)]), fr. Hom. down, *hard* (Lat. *difficilis*);

a. *hard to do, to take, to approach*

**b. hard to bear, troublesome, dangerous**: καιροὶ χαλεποί, [R.V. *grievous*], 2 Tim. 3:1; *harsh, fierce, savage*

Thayer, J. H. (1889). In [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti](#) (p. 664). Harper & Brothers.

## 2 Timothy 4:3–4 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; <sup>4</sup> and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

## 2 Timothy 3:12–13 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. <sup>13</sup> But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

God did not promise us an easy life and he did not promise to remove us from the turbulent seas. And although the waves often crash against the boat, we have a sure and steady anchor in Christ.

He is our Rock and our Refuge, He is our strength and our stability.

No matter how much the winds blow and this how is build with a sure Foundation of Character and plan of God.

The believers at Thessalonica we're taught this. They were living in difficult times, their persecution was intensifying by the day and to understand the need for the closing words of this letter, you need to understand the context.

Two primary reasons give Paul the desire to write these last few sentences.

- 1. Suffering of Christians was Consistent**
- 2. Second Coming of Christ was Confusing.**

1. Suffering of Christians was Consistent

- 1 Thessalonians 2:14 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> ... For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they *did* from the Judeans,

- 1 Thessalonians 3:4 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know.

- 2 Thessalonians 1:4–5 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,  
<sup>5</sup> ..... that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer;

1. Suffering of Christians was Consistent
2. Second Coming of Christ was Confusing.

They had been misled by false teachers and apostolic imposters, who had told them that the Day of the Lord had come and coming of the Lord was imminent. They had been previously instructed by Paul in the time he was present with them and in the first letter he wrote to them.

In chapter one of the first letter, he

### **1 Thessalonians 1:9–10 (NKJV)**

<sup>9</sup> For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, <sup>10</sup> and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

### **1 Thessalonians 4:16–18 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are *alive and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore comfort one another with these words.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:1–4 (NKJV)**



But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. <sup>2</sup> For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup> For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. <sup>4</sup> But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Then in the Second Letter reminded them  
2 Thessalonians 1:6–10 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, <sup>7</sup> and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, <sup>8</sup> in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, <sup>10</sup> when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and

to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

And then straighten out the confusion  
2 Thessalonians 2:1–3 (NKJV)

**2** Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, <sup>2</sup> not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. <sup>3</sup> Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

And as I pointed out, some what stopped working, most likely because of a misunderstood eschatology. If the Day of the Lord is here, and the Coming is imminent, then why worry about a job, or working in this place that will be burned up. So he spends a 10 verses on the need to practice a Biblical work ethic and to hold accountable those that do not.

All of this to say that they were a people living in a time of intense unrest, and persecution and confusion. The anxiety, confusion and fear would have been difficult to live with. In fact the phrase “comfort one another” comes up a number of times.

These believers would definitely need the Peace and assurance of God.

So what Paul gives them in the last few verses is profound and particular to the need to the saints in their day and ours.

Paul assures them of

1. The Peace of Christ
2. The Presence of Christ
3. The Protection of Christ
4. The Power of Christ

## **1. The Peace of Christ.**

**16** Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way.

Peace is a wonderful thing, especially if you have been in a storm for a while.

Peace is not the absence of trouble but the ability to have assurance of the purpose of God in the midst of the Trouble.

Peace is not necessarily defined as calm although it can have this quality, but rather it is a sense that things are under control by a sovereign God and that puts our mind and spirits at ease.

Its the opposite of anxiety and fear.

Philippians 4:6–7 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; <sup>7</sup> and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Mark 4:35–41 (NKJV)

<sup>35</sup> On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, **“Let us cross over to the other side.”**  
<sup>36</sup> Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. <sup>37</sup> And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. <sup>38</sup> But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”  
<sup>39</sup> Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, **“Peace, be still!”** And the wind ceased

and there was a great calm. <sup>40</sup> But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How *is it* that you have no faith?” <sup>41</sup> And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, “Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”

Peace comes when the believer completely and fully gives all of his or her life and circumstances to the Lord.

Its not worry, its rest  
 Its not fear, its faith  
 Its not the trouble, its trust  
 It's not safety, its Sovereignty.

When you fully rest and trust in Christ, you can be asleep and at ease in the boat while the waves crash against it and the storm rages.

Charles Spurgeon said

“the peace here meant is “the deep tranquillity of a soul resting on God,” the quiet restfulness of spirit that is the peculiar gift of God, and the choice privilege of the believer”

Spurgeon, C. (2014). [Spurgeon Commentary: 2 Thessalonians](#) (E. Ritzema, Ed.; p. 82). Lexham Press.

There are 2 kinds of Peace taught in the Bible

There is

1. The Peace of God - Subjective
2. The Peace with God- Objective

You cannot have one without the other, but you can have one and not the other.

In other words,

You cannot have the Peace of God without having Peace with God

But you can have Peace with God and not have the Peace of God

So the starting point and most essential is

### **1. Peace with God.**

We mentioned earlier that there have been many wars on this earth for thousands of years but what many do not realize is that there's another war that has been going on even longer and still goes on even today and there are some of you sitting in this building that are in this war right now. It is the war between God and man the war between a holy and righteous God and unholy sinners.

Before someone is saved, the war rages. God considers the sinner His enemy deserving of his full and furious wrath. And the sinner considered God as

his enemy and an intrusion into his life and only worthy of rejection and dishonor. His commandments are disobeyed, His name is cursed, and His rule over their lives spurned. And if the war does not cease and the peace does not come, the war will continue into all eternity with the casting of the sinner into eternal hell to experience the full justice of a holy God against a rebellious sinner.

John 3:36 (NKJV)

<sup>36</sup> He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

Psalms 2:12 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,  
And you perish *in* the way,  
When His wrath is kindled but a little.  
Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him.

Romans 1:18 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

Romans 5:9–10 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

<sup>10</sup> For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Ephesians 2:3 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> were by nature children of wrath.

Ephesians 5:6 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Hebrews 2:2–3 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, <sup>3</sup> how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*,

Hebrews 10:29–31 (NKJV)

<sup>29</sup> Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son



of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? <sup>30</sup> For we know Him who said, “*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,*” says the Lord. And again, “*The Lord will judge His people.*”  
<sup>31</sup> It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

The wrath of God is deserved and war rages because the sinner is unrepentant. Unwilling to turn from his idols and his sin and trust the all sufficient death of Christ on the Cross for his sin. But if he does, the war can end, and peace can come.

Romans 5:1 (NKJV)

**5** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Acts 10:36 (NKJV)

<sup>36</sup> The word which *God* sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all—

Ephesians 2:14–17 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, <sup>15</sup> having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, <sup>16</sup> and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. <sup>17</sup> And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.

#### Colossians 2:13–14 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, <sup>14</sup> having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

If someone has been given Peace with God, they now are in a position to have the Peace of God,

#### John 14:27 (NKJV)

**27** Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Philippians 4:6–7 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; <sup>7</sup> and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

**16** Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way.

Lord of peace— —

The ancients recognized that it was the role of the gods to establish *peace*, but the apostle affirms that only Jesus Christ is truly *the Lord of peace*.

Green, G. L. (2002). [The letters to the Thessalonians](#) (p. 358). W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos.

The one petitioned is called “the Lord of peace,” a designation used only here in Paul’s letters.

Elsewhere Paul uses “the God of peace” (Rom. 15:33; 16:20;

2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23)

Hiebert, D. E. (1996). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (Revised Edition, p. 383). BMH Books.

Romans 15:33 (NKJV)

<sup>33</sup> Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

Romans 16:20 (NKJV)

<sup>20</sup> And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

2 Corinthians 13:11 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:9 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NKJV)

<sup>23</sup> Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

John MacArthur writes:

God is at all times at perfect peace, without any discord within Himself. He is never under stress, worried, anxious, fearful, unsure, or threatened. He is always perfectly calm, tranquil, and content. There are no surprises for His omniscience, no changes for His immutability, no threats to His sovereignty, no doubts to cloud His wisdom, no sin to stain His holiness. Even His wrath is clear, controlled, calm, and confident.

Unlike the worldly idea of peace, God's peace does not merely consist of the absence of strife but involves harmony, wholeness, and prosperity. Leon Morris comments, "Paul ... is not saying here that he trusts that the ... believers will not find themselves caught up in a war. He is speaking about the deep and abiding peace that comes when people are right with God."

Phillips, R. D. (2015). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.; pp. 403–404). P&R Publishing.

**16** Now may the Lord of peace  
*Himself*

The prayer is introduced by the particle *de*, here rendered “Now.” This rendering simply makes it transitional in force, marking the passing to the conclusion of the letter. Ellicott holds that it is mildly adversative, “putting in slight antithesis the prayer with the foregoing exhortation.” It is another recognition by the writers that their own exhortations, apart from the gracious working of the Lord in the readers, would be quite ineffectual. With willing hearts they turn from censure to intercession.

“Now may the Lord of peace himself” names the recipient of the prayer. The pronoun rendered “himself” (*autos*) again stands emphatically at the head of the statement (cf. 1 Thess. 3:11; 2 Thess. 2:16). It is intensive in force. “Now may he, the Lord of peace” turns the thought from their own corrective efforts to the Lord, whose peace must pervade and control the readers.

Hiebert, D. E. (1996). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (Revised Edition, p. 383). BMH Books.

**16** Now may the Lord of peace  
Himself give you peace always in  
every way.

The genitive “of peace” has the definite article, “the Lord of the peace” and marks His distinctive relationship to the saints as the true source and bestower of Christian peace. It denotes the peace He established through His work on the cross (Eph 2:14–16) and now bestows as His gift to believers (John 14:27).

Hiebert, D. E. (1996). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (Revised Edition, p. 384). BMH Books.

The petition is that the Lord of peace may “give you peace.” The double use of the word “peace” in the sentence adds emphasis to the prayer. The aorist optative expresses the prayer-wish and summarily states the request for His bestowal of peace upon the readers. This peace can never be acquired by personal effort but must be received as a free gift. “Peace” again has the definite article, “the peace,” pointing to that well-known peace only Christ Jesus can bestow. The peace is objective, the peace received as a gift, but it should not be disassociated from the subjective experience of peace by the

believer. The petition is not for relief from persecution, or even the cessation of the internal confusion in the church, but for that inner calm and bliss of soul that come to those who have been reconciled to God through the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Two appended prepositional phrases mark the comprehensiveness of the peace requested for the readers, “at all times and in every way.” The first relates to the duration, the second to the manner of its experience. “At all times” (*dia pantos*), “through all” or “continually,” points to the unbroken duration of the peace, flowing uninterruptedly. “In every way” refers to the possession of the peace under the varied circumstances of life, “in every circumstance” (NASB). Outward circumstances, however unpleasant, cannot destroy this deep-seated inner peace.

Hiebert, D. E. (1996). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (Revised Edition, p. 384). BMH Books.

Paul assures them of

1. The Peace of Christ

**2. The Presence of Christ**



<sup>16</sup> Now may the Lord of peace  
Himself give you peace always in  
every way. The Lord *be* with you  
all.

The prayer ends with a blessing, *The Lord be with all of you*. This blessing, which anticipates the final benediction of the letter (v. 18), reflects the consciousness that permeated the ancient church that *the Lord* was always with them (Matt. 28:20; Acts 18:10; 2 Tim. 4:22); for that reason Paul could pray and hope for his presence in every situation (Rom. 15:33; Phil. 4:9; 2 Tim. 4:22). In the midst of conflicts and confusion, Christians are never alone. The Lord is always “Emmanuel” — “God with us” (Matt. 1:23).

Green, G. L. (2002). [The letters to the Thessalonians](#) (p. 358). W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos.

Matthew 28:20 (NKJV)

<sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even to the end of the age.*” Amen.

Acts 18:10 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.”

## Philippians 4:9 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

“The Lord be with all of you” is not a further distinct petition but rather a petition pointing to the means whereby the prayer for peace will be accomplished. It is not a gift from afar but is mediated through the personal presence of the Lord with them. The gifts of Christ cannot be separated from the person of Christ. This prayer for His presence is based on His promise (Matt. 28:20).

The writers expressly pray for the Lord’s peace to “be with all of you,” all the believers at Thessalonica, even the disorderly. All alike share their good will and their prayers. All needed the peace-producing presence of the Lord Jesus Christ “with” (*meta*) them, the consciousness of His personal presence in their midst. The Lord is among His people at all times, but they are not always aware of the reality of His presence. The fact that “all” occurs three times in this verse (*every* is the same Greek word) underlines that “God’s activity is all-inclusive

Paul assures them of

1. The Peace of Christ
2. The Presence of Christ
- 3. The Protection of Christ**

**17** The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.

It was essential that Paul's letter, as a message declaring the peace of Christ, be validated as an official apostolic writing. As was common in the ancient world, Paul seems to have dictated his letter to a secretary and then taken up the pen himself for the final verses. "I, Paul," he says, "write this greeting with my own hand." He explains further that this was his normal procedure: "This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I write" (2 Thess. 3:17; see also 1 Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11; Col. 4:18).

This is an interesting statement, since scholars are agreed that Paul's Thessalonian letters were among his earliest known writings. It seems that Paul had other letters that have not been preserved by the

Holy Spirit. Moreover, the problem of false letters made it imperative for Paul's letters to be authenticated. Second Thessalonians 2:2 mentioned "a letter seeming to be from us" that falsely stated that the Lord had returned. By writing the final verses in his own handwriting, Paul provided the church leaders with a basis for comparison with 1 Thessalonians and perhaps with earlier samples of his writing.

Paul's statement of authentication raises a question: how do we know that these letters are genuine apostolic writings, and therefore messages from the risen Jesus Christ, when we do not have the original copies and cannot examine the handwriting for ourselves? There are many good answers to this question.

First, we have the testimony of the early church, which includes this letter in its official collection of apostolic writings. We call this *canonization*, the process by which the church formally recognized apostolic writings as divine Scripture. It is important to realize that the church never decided that certain books should be regarded as God's Word, but rather recognized and received the letters whose apostolic origin was attested by the original recipients. The earliest record of the New Testament canon is found in the Muratorian Canon, dating from a.d. 170, which

lists all thirteen of Paul's known letters as acknowledged Scripture, including 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

In addition, the earliest known writings of Christian leaders—including second-century figures such as Ignatius, Justin Martyr, and Irenaeus—cite Paul's letters as sacred Scripture.

Finally, and most importantly, we receive these writings as Scripture today by the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit “bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts” (WCF 1.5). Just as Paul authenticated his letter to the original readers in his own hand, Jesus Christ has sent forth the hand of the Holy Spirit to certify to our hearts the divine origin of these letters.

Phillips, R. D. (2015). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.; pp. 402–403). P&R Publishing.

God has divinely and providentially protected the truth through the ages. We have thousands of copies of the originals and parts of copies. And 1000s more of the copies of Greek translated into other languages. There's an overwhelming amount of manuscripts that testify to the authenticity and veracity of the Word of God. NO other book on this planet has as much evidence, in fact. Nothing comes even remotely close to the amount we have.

You can be assured that what you are reading is an accurate copy of the original.

These letters are more than the words and thoughts of Paul the Apostle, but are the Words of the Living God communicated through with by the Apostle.

2 Timothy 3:16 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

2 Peter 1:20–21 (NKJV)

<sup>20</sup> knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, <sup>21</sup> for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

Paul assures them of

1. The Peace of Christ
2. The Presence of Christ
3. The Protection of Christ
- 4. The Power of Christ**

**18** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

**Grace** is essential, **for salvation** (Acts 15:11; 18:27; 20:24; Rom. 3:24; Gal. 1:6, 15; Eph. 1:7; 2:5, 8; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:7),

Acts 15:11 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”

Romans 3:24 (NKJV)

<sup>24</sup> being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

Ephesians 1:7 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NKJV)

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.

2 Timothy 1:9 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> who has saved us and called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own

purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,

but also for endurance (2 Cor. 12:9; cf. Prov. 3:34),  
2 Corinthians 12:9 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”

Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

**service** (Rom. 12:6; Eph. 4:7; 1 Tim. 1:12–14; 1 Peter 4:10),

1 Timothy 1:12–14 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, <sup>13</sup> although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. <sup>14</sup> And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 4:10 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.



**growth** (Acts 20:32; Heb. 13:9; 2 Peter 3:18),

Acts 20:32 (NKJV)

<sup>32</sup> “So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Hebrews 13:9 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For *it is* good that the heart be established by grace, .....

2 Peter 3:18 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To Him *be* the glory both now and forever. Amen.

**and giving** (2 Cor. 8:1).

2 Corinthians 8:1–2 (NKJV)

**8** Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: <sup>2</sup> that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy

and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.

Believers experience God's enabling, sanctifying grace by trusting Him, obeying His Word, enduring chastening, doing good, walking in the Spirit, and praying.

There is a wonderful mystery to living the Christian life to the glory of God.

To do so requires all the understanding, obedience, commitment, dedication, and effort that the redeemed can give. But all of that would be futile were it not for the peace, strength, truth, and grace that only God can supply. Paul had the balance when he wrote, "For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me" (Col. 1:29).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (p. 320). Moody Press.