

“The Sure Hope Of Salvation”

2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5

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Teaching Aim: To come to the understanding that God has chosen every true believer in Christ to salvation from the beginning through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and belief in the truth. To realize the hope and assurance of salvation every born-again believer should have because of this truth. To recognize the need for every Christian to stand firm in the faith as we live our lives in anticipation of the blessed hope and glorious return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: Chosen by God and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in salvation (2 Thess. 3:13-15)

1. Paul wrote **2nd Thessalonians** in response to what appears to be a counterfeit letter from him informing the Thessalonians that they were now living in the Day of the Lord; the Day of God’s judgment on earth. This troubled the Thessalonian believers greatly as they had been taught by Paul that the Rapture would come first. (See **1 Thess. 4:16-18**) Have you ever let something that somebody said throw you off spiritually? Should we?

2. Just six months to a year after writing **1 Thessalonians**, Paul wrote **2 Thessalonians** to calm down the troubled Christians in Thessalonica and affirm his earlier teaching. Paul wrote in **2 Thess. 2:1-3** that two things had to occur before the coming Day of the Lord. What two events had to happen first? What third event would take place just prior to the arrival of the Day of the Lord? (See **2 Thess. 2:6-7**) Who or what is the restrainer?

3. As Paul transitioned from his teaching on the coming Antichrist and the Day of the Lord, he moved on to the reason why the Thessalonian believers have a sure hope of their salvation. What amazing truth do we find in **verse 13**? In what way is **verse 13** similar to **Eph. 1:4**? How does this truth place born-again Christians in a win/win situation; no matter what they face in life? In what way is this Scripture similar to Paul’s opening comments in **1 Thess. 4:4-5**? According to **1 Thess. 4:4-5**, how could the Thessalonian believers know that their election by God was sure? What was the proof?

4. The salvation of every Christian has three aspects to it: 1) justification; 2) sanctification; and 3) glorification. What is the theological meaning of the word "*justification*?" Our justification is "*past tense*;" it is the moment that we are regenerated by the Holy Spirit. In what tense do we normally find our sanctification and glorification? Note: In **verse 13**, "*sanctification*" is used in the sense of God setting the Thessalonian Christians apart for salvation. "*Belief in the truth*" is belief in the gospel message.

5. Soteriology (or the study of salvation) is a touchy subject today; it should not be. What truth do we learn from **John 14:6** and **Acts 4:12**? In salvation we find both the "*sovereignty of God*" and "*the responsibility of man*." The sovereignty of God means that God is the supreme ruler over all of creation. How do we see the sovereignty of God at work in **John 6:44** and **John 6:65**? According to these Scriptures, is God sovereign over salvation? Why did the Jews struggle so much with the teachings of Jesus in **John 6:53-55**? Was Jesus teaching from a physical perspective or a spiritual one? What did He mean?

6. We get a glimpse of the New Covenant, regeneration and the enabling of the Holy Spirit of God in **Ezek. 36:26-27**. What aspects of regeneration (or being born-again) do you see in **Ezek. 36:26-27**?

7. As was previously stated, we find both the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man at work in salvation. How do you see "*the responsibility of man*" in **Acts 16:31** and **John 3:16**? How about **John 3:36**?

8. In **verse 14**, Paul referred back to the time of the Thessalonians' conversion. Through what means did God call His people to salvation? Should Christians be out in the community sharing the gospel with others today? Why don't we? If someone were to ask you to share the gospel message with them, what would you say? What is the meaning of the word "*gospel*?" What essentials of the gospel do you see in **1 Cor. 15:3-4** and **John 3:16**? Why is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ central to the gospel message?

9. Our responsibility is to share the gospel in love, God will ultimately call his people to salvation. Why do you think so many churches fight or divide over “*the doctrine of election*” and “*human responsibility*” when both are biblical? Note: It is healthy for Christians to discuss, and at times, debate biblical issues when we do so in a loving manner and realize that not everyone is at the same place spiritually. Is it possible for Calvinists and Arminians to work side by side in the name of Jesus Christ? Should they be working?

10. The point of conflict is: Does faith precede regeneration? (The Arminian position) Or does regeneration precede faith? (The Calvinist position) Interestingly enough, both sides can agree at the point: “*We are saved by grace through faith in Christ alone*” and work together from there. Should churches divide over the point of time a person comes to faith, or is it more important to obey the great commission of Jesus Christ? (See **Matt. 28:18-20**) What are some of the challenges the modern church faces today in reaching the world?

11. What did Paul encourage the Thessalonian believers to do in **verse 15**? Should we hold to all “*traditions*” or only those that line up with Sacred Scripture? Why? What reminder did Paul give the Corinthians in **1 Cor. 16:13**?

Part II: God will comfort your heart and establish you in every good work (2 Thess. 3:16-17)

1. Paul closes **chapter 2** with a doxology (**vv. 16-17**). What is a “*doxology*?” (See Dictionary) Encouraging and comforting the hearts of the Thessalonian believers was a high priority for the Apostle Paul. (See **1 Thess. 3:1-3**) Do you find yourself easily shaken when affliction comes your way? Why or why not? How do you react when affliction does come?

Part III: Paul’s request for prayer and the faithfulness of God in protecting believers from the attacks of Satan (2 Thess. 3:1-5)

1. Even the great Apostle Paul asked for prayer in **2 Thess. 3:1-2**. What did Paul ask the Thessalonian believers to pray for? Should we be praying for the rapid spread of the gospel today? (See **Eph. 6:19-20; Col. 4:2-3; 1 Thess. 5:25**)

2. When it comes to praying, do you pray first or wait until every other option has been exhausted? Why do you think it's so hard for some people to ask for prayer when they are struggling? Should praying be to the Christian as natural as breathing is to our physical body? Why or why not? What are some ways that you can improve your praying?

3. Why is it important for believers to obey the Lord (**vs. 4**)? (See **Deut. 28:1-2, 15**) Does coming to Christ mean that all of our problems are gone? In spite of our personal problems, why should every Christian have confidence in the faithfulness and promises of God (**vv. 3-4**)? (See **Phil. 1:6**)

4. Charles Spurgeon wrote, *"Salvation is the free gift of God by Jesus Christ, and the work of it is supernatural. It is done by the Lord Himself, and He has power to do it, however weak, no, however dead in sin the sinner may be."* How important is the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit of God to your salvation? (See **John 3:3, 5**) Is there any other way to be saved?

5. What did Paul pray for in **verse 5**? How might Christians develop patience today? What are some ways that you see the patience of Christ at work in Scripture?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- Born-again Christians have been chosen by God from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.
- It is God who uses the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ to call His people to salvation.
- God sets believers apart as His children through the sanctifying work of His Holy Spirit.
- Christians should hold fast to the traditions they have received; so long as these traditions are in accordance with the teachings of Sacred Scripture.
- God comforts the believer's heart and establishes him or her in every good word and work.
- God is faithful and will protect His people from the attacks of the evil one – Satan.
- Even the Apostle Paul felt the need to ask others to pray both for him and the rapid spread of the gospel; so should we.