

Standing Firm in God's Choosing & Calling
2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

Introduction

Turn again to 2 Thessalonians 2. We will be looking at the last five verses as we conclude our study of this chapter. It has taken me longer than I had originally planned to preach through this chapter, but the more I studied it, the more I found that it would take a very careful analysis to work through the many issues within it so that it could be understood clearly according to the intention of its author, Paul. There is a great diversity of interpretations largely due to either not knowing or ignoring the grammatical - historical context, or by forcing it to fit into a pre-determined theological system since the chapter deals with important issues in eschatology - the doctrine of last things. There is always a danger in Biblical interpretation to either force a passage to fit into your theological system or be loose with the interpretation in order to make an application of it in the present time.

I also know that even with the time I have taken with this chapter that it is still confusing to some and others disagree with me. That is understandable since interpretation of this chapter also requires a proper interpretation of many other Scripture passages that deal with eschatology, and especially those that speak on the subjects of Israel, the Tribulation Period, the anti-Christ and the doctrine of imminence. I strongly believe that my last four sermons on this chapter have been a faithful interpretation to both what Paul has written in this chapter and in good harmony with the many other Scriptures that speak to the subjects within it.

For those that are confused, be patient and continue your study of this topic. It took me many years of both general Bible study and specific study of eschatology to understand it beyond a general outline of what God says about the future. It took even longer to be confident in my understanding of it, and much of that was due to be challenged by those who held a different view. That would force me to reexamine my own position to make sure I was not misunderstanding something. As I have done that many times over the years, I am more confident now in my position than at anytime in the past.

For those that disagree with my interpretation of 2 Thess. 2, well, take comfort in knowing that you are in good company. There are many good Biblical interpreters that are all over the map in trying to understand this passage. It is not easy. My challenge to you is simple. Make sure your understanding is 1) in harmony with the meaning and grammar of the text itself, 2) in harmony with all the other passages that address the subjects within it. Finally, for those that believe that Jesus' return for His church is not pre-tribulation, A) The argument that the church needs to be prepared to go through at least the first part of the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy is irrelevant since Christians are already supposed to be prepared for persecution as we shall see when we begin our study of 1 Peter sometime in August. B) You know that you would like it if I am right and the rapture occurs prior to the seven years of tribulation.

Review - 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

2 Thessalonians 2:13 begins with the word, "but" (δέ / de) which contrasts what he is about to say with what he already said, so I am going to quickly review what we have studied so far in this chapter so that we have the proper context. I am going to read through the text using a rather wooden translation that indicates key different Greek words that are often translated by the same English word in most versions. I will be making comments as I go.

¹ Now we (Paul, Silas & Timothy) request of you, brethren, (the Thessalonian believers) concerning the παρουσία / parousia (presence / appearing) of the Lord of us, Jesus Christ, and our gathering

together to Him (A reference to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 in which Paul explained that Jesus would appear descending from heaven, and believers, both dead and alive, would be caught up together - raptured - to meet the Lord in the air),² *that you not be quickly shaken from the mind nor to be troubled neither by a spirit, nor by a word, nor by a letter as if by us, as that the day of the Lord ἐνέστηκεν / enestāken (has arrived and is present - PFAI3S of ἐνίστημι / enistāmi)*. The Thessalonians had become quite disturbed by false teachers that had lied about the origin of their teaching that they were already living in the day of the Lord. Paul is writing to calm them by assuring them they are not in the day of the Lord which he had described for them in 1 Thessalonians 5. A day that *“will come just like a thief in the night. ³While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.”* A day that would not overtake believers in such manner because they are not in darkness. A day associated with the wrath of God that believers are not subject to for they are destined for salvation and not wrath.

Verses 3a, *Let no one deceive you in any manner, for [the day of the Lord is not arrived and present] if not first the apostasy has come* (AASub3S of ἔρχομαι / erchomai. Apostasy means to “stand separate from” and refers to a departure with context defining it. In this case, it is the apostasy - a definitive event indicated by the context to be the departure of saints from earth mentioned in verse 1. All references to a departure from the faith are too generalized to be a definitive event).

Verse 3b, *and the man of lawlessness is revealed* (ἀποκαλύφθῆ / apokaluphthā - something hidden, a mystery, that is made known), *the son of the destruction* (a fitting description of his character and what is associated with him according to Biblical prophecies about him. The prophecies in Daniel 9:24-27 indicate this man is revealed when he makes a firm covenant with the people of Israel).

Verse 4 continues with a description of this man. ,⁴ *the one in opposition and exalting himself above all being called god or object of worship, so that in the temple of God he sits down publically showing himself that he is God.* ⁵ *Do you not remember that yet being with you I was saying this to you?* Paul had taught the Thessalonians much about the day of the Lord and the events surrounding it as indicated in 1 Thessalonians. Here it becomes obvious he had also taught them about the prophecies of Daniel since that is the source of this description. The man who is revealed by his firm covenant with Israel is the same one that 3 ½ years later carries out the prophesied abomination of desolation.

Verse 6, *And you have known the one now restraining him so that he is revealed* (ἀποκαλύφθῆναι / apokaluphthānai) *in his time ⁷ for the mystery of lawlessness is already working, only he who is restraining at this moment until he goes out of the midst.* (A reference to the Holy Spirit who is the only one that can fit this description. Going out of the midst / being “taken out of the way” refers to the ceasing of His ministry of restraint which is closely tied to His current ministry within the church. When the church is raptured, that particular ministry will cease). ⁸ *And then will be revealed* (ἀποκαλυφθήσεται / apokaluphthētai - FPI3S) *the lawless one whom the Lord will execute by the spirit of the mouth of Him and He will cause him to cease by the glorious manifestation* (ἐπιφάνεια / epiphania) *of the appearance / presence* (παρουσία / parousia) *of Him.* ⁹ *The appearance / presence* (παρουσία / parousia) *of whom is in accordance with the Satan in all power and signs and lying wonders,* ¹⁰ *and in all deception of unrighteousness to those perishing because they did not accept the love of the truth so that they be saved.* ¹¹ *And for this reason God sends to them power of delusion so that they believe the lie,* ¹² *in order that they may be condemned all the ones not believing.”* (The success of the anti-Christ is only temporary. He will deceive the masses because they reject the truth and God then yields them to the delusions to believe the lie and thus confirming their condemnation).

In contrast to the delusions received by the followers of anti-christ and their condemnation that comes as a result of that, Paul speaks of salvation, comfort and peace that belong to the Thessalonian believers in verses 13-17.

¹³ *But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.* ¹⁴

It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁵ So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.¹⁶ Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace,¹⁷ comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

Giving Thanks For God's Choice - 2 Thessalonians 2:13

As already mentioned, Paul begins verse 13 with a word that contrasts what he will say in this section about the Thessalonian believers with what he has just said about those who reject the truth and fall for the delusions of the man of lawlessness. It is also a contrast with how the Thessalonians were reacting to the false teaching that they were in the day of the Lord with the truth and the comfort and peace that actually belonged to them because God had chosen and called them to salvation. In doing this Paul presents a succinct yet powerful presentation of God's work in salvation and the proper response of those who are saved.

Paul begins verse 13 with another statement and reasons that he, Silas and Timothy, gave thanks to God for the Thessalonian believers. Such thanksgiving is normal for Paul and his companions. He begins 1 Thessalonians 1:2 with a general statement that they gave thanks to God for them quickly tying that to also praying for them because they kept in mind their *"work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father."* In 1 Thessalonians 2:13 they thanked God that the Thessalonians had received the word of God from them and that it performed its work in them including them becoming imitators in endurance as they suffered at the hands of their countrymen for their faith. In 1 Thessalonians 3:9 they gave thanks to God for the joy the missionaries had received on their account. After his salutation, Paul also began this letter stating,³ *"We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater;⁴ 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."*

The statement here in 2 Thess. 2:13 of their obligation to give thanks to God for the Thessalonian brethren is in keeping with his other statements. Giving thanks to God is something they ought to do, but notice the specific reasons given in this verse for they are also reasons to give thanks to God in regard to any believer. Anyone involved in seeking the salvation of others will be thankful to God when they see God's hand at work and others are saved. That thanksgiving is even greater if you have been personally involved in that effort, but all Christians should rejoice. If *"there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents"* (Luke 15:10), then Christians should also rejoice and be thankful when others are saved whether you were personally involved or not. I don't know about you, but I love to hear stories about how God brought someone to salvation. That is why I love to hear testimonies and I love to read reports from missionaries and evangelists. I love to hear about good things that are happening in other churches - and I praise God that more churches have now opened up in our state. If you love God, you love to hear about what He is doing wherever He is doing it.

There are two specific actions of God in verse 13 and one in verse 14 that are foundational reasons for giving thanks to God. The main verb in verse 13 is God Himself choosing and it is given specifically as the ground for giving thanks. However, the participle that comes before that is also crucial and a reason to give thanks for it is actually the reason for God's choice.

Notice that Paul addresses the Thessalonians as *"brethren, beloved by the Lord."* The term "brethren" here, like the 18 times he used it in 1 Thessalonians and twice he has already used in 2 Thessalonians, signifies that they are part of one family though made up of both Jews and Gentiles. Jesus breaks down the wall of separation that exists between cultures and ethnic backgrounds so that all

Christians are brothers and sisters in Christ. That is significant, but the participle phrase used here is even more so.

Beloved is a perfect passive plural participle in the nominative case. For all of you who are not that rare person who was an English major focused on the fine points of grammar, that means that this verbal noun refers to someone who has passively received the action of being beloved by the Lord in the past and it continues in the present.

God's actions arise out of His very being and He is a God who is characterized by ἀγάπη / agape love (1 John 4:8). This is the love that sacrifices of itself for the best interest of the one that is loved (John 15:13). God's ultimate demonstration of this love was Jesus Christ when He died as the substitute sacrifice for the sins of man while man was still in rebellion against God (Romans 5:8). John 3:16 ties this love and salvation together - *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."* It must be emphasized that this love arises from within God Himself as an expression of His own nature and is not in any way a response of God to the object of love. As 1 John 4:10 states it, *"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."* God is not like man in this. He initiates love. We respond to it as stated in 1 John 4:19, *"We love, because He first loved us."*

There is a very close connection between God's love and His choice which Paul brings up next. They give thanks because *"God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation."* The particular word for chosen here, the aorist middle indicative of αἰρέομαι / haireomai, which means "select, choose or elect," is only used once in the New Testament, but it is also used in the Septuagint in Deuteronomy 7:6-7 which states, ⁶ *"For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth."* ⁷ *"The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples."*

God did not set his love on Israel because there was something inherent in them to attract His love. There was not. They were a stubborn and obstinate people (Deut. 7:13; Exodus 32:9). God does not set His love on and choose any of us because of anything good in us for there was not. We, like all people, were like sheep that had gone astray and turned to our own way (Isaiah 53:6) being unrighteous and not doing good (Romans 3:10-12) with any deed we might present as being righteous being a filthy rag before our holy God (Isaiah 64:6). We are saved by God's mercy and grace and not because of anything within us or that we do (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

This is all backed up by the grammar in the phrase for it is literally *"because he has chosen you"* followed by *"the God"* in the nominative signifying He is the subject of the verb. Or to put it into sensible English this would be *"because God Himself has chosen you."* It is as Jesus said to His disciples in John 15:16, *"You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit . . ."*

What is it that God chose them for and when did that happen? It was *"from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth."* The textual evidence favors this being a reference to the beginning which in Paul's writings in relationship to salvation are tied to the start of time. He put it this way in Ephesians 1:4, *"just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him."* In 2 Timothy 1:9 he stated it, *"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 granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity / before the ages."*

Salvation (σωτηρία / sōtāria) is rescue from sin and its consequences. That encompasses both present and eternal realities. Salvation is from sin in the present so it is no longer master over you as Paul explains in Romans 6 - *"having been freed from sin you became slaves of righteousness."* It is also from eternal condemnation which is the consequence of sin. As Paul states in Romans 8:1, *"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*

The means of salvation is *“through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.”* Sanctification is simply being set apart from sin to God and righteousness by the Holy Spirit. As 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 explains, whatever wretched sinful person you were before is changed as you are washed, sanctified and *justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God.* Sanctification has three elements which are inseparably linked together. You are separated unto God at salvation when you are regenerated and justified by faith in Jesus Christ. Throughout life you are continually sanctified as God conforms you into the image of Christ. You will be completely sanctified when you either die or are raptured and are transformed to be like Christ for eternity. All of that is the work of the Holy Spirit in you.

The human factor is “faith in the truth” which encompasses belief in the person, work and promises of Jesus Christ who is the truth (John 14:6). As succinctly stated in Ephesians 2:8-10, ⁸ *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;* ⁹ *not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.* ¹⁰ *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”*

All of this is the exact opposite of those Paul talked about in 2 Thess. 2:10-12 who *“did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved”* and *“took pleasure in wickedness”* resulting in being condemned.

They gave thanks to God because the Thessalonians were among God’s beloved who He chose for salvation. Paul continues in verse 14 with a third reason for giving thanks to God which is the working out in time of God choosing them from the beginning for salvation.

God’s Calling Unto Glory - 2 Thessalonians 2:14

“And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The universal call of God is the gospel in which sinners are called to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 17:30), but this verse is a reference to what is often referred to as the effectual call that comes to those chosen by God when the gospel is proclaimed. Paul gives the sequence of God’s action in saving people in Romans 8:29-30. Those He foreknew, He predestined. Those He predestined, He called. Those He calls, He glorifies. What begins in eternity past and reaches its final fulfillment in eternity future enters time and space with God’s effectual calling.

Those in Thessalonica who were beloved by the Lord and chosen by God were called by Him when Paul and his friends proclaimed the good news of Jesus Christ to them. What began rather small as recorded in Acts 17 continued to grow as those who had been saved then proclaimed the gospel they had received to others in Thessalonica and beyond. The gospel continues to be used by God in that same way for Romans 1:16 is still true that *“it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”* That is an amazing truth when you stop to consider it for a few minutes. God uses ordinary humans according to His sovereign plan from eternity to bring it into reality in the present time by having them proclaim the gospel which is His effectual call to those that are His chosen. God is so powerful that He uses weak and often failing humans to bring His sovereign will into fruition. Keep that in mind next time you become intimidated or afraid to proclaim Christ to someone. The eternal, omnipotent, sovereign Creator is using you to accomplish His will.

The final result of salvation is the gain of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 8:29 promises that those foreknown by God are predestined to be conformed into His image. 1 John 3:2 explains that *“when He appears, we will be like Him, because we see Him just as He is.”* That will happen at the Rapture when we are changed in the twinkling of an eye and these natural, mortal, perishable bodies will be changed to be spiritual bodies that will be like Christ as described in 1 Corinthians 15:42-54. As Philippians 3:21 states it, Jesus *“will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”*

Stand Firm and Hold - 2 Thessalonians 2:15

Having explained these things to the Thessalonians who had been so shaken in mind and disturbed by false doctrine, Paul can now exhort them according to the truth giving two commands in verse 15. *“So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word [of mouth] or by letter from us.”*

The reference to traditions whether by word or letter from Paul and the missionaries is a contrast to the false teaching they had received that they were in the day of the Lord. Traditions here (παράδοσις / paradosis) refers to *“giving over which is done by word of mouth or in writing.”* It is the instruction handed down from a teacher to a student. In this context, it refers specifically to what Paul and his missionary companions had taught them in person and through letter. They had given them the word of God as Paul pointed out in 1 Thessalonians 2:13. Neither this verse nor 1 Corinthians 11:2 nor 2 Thessalonians 3:6 can properly be used to support the idea that Christians are to follow religious traditions developed by men such as those in Roman Catholicism. Jesus was very direct that the problem with the Pharisees were their traditions that they used to invalidate the word of God (Matthew 15:3-6). Paul also gives strong warning in Colossians 2:8 saying, *“See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.”*

Paul commands the Thessalonians to stand firm and hold to the word of God which he and his companions had taught them when they were with them and by letter. To “stand firm” (στήκω / stākō) is another word rooted in ἵστημι / histāmi meaning “to stand.” It carries a sense of being persistent and unmovable in your position. It is used in Philippians 4:1 and 1 Thessalonians 3:8 to “stand firm in the Lord.”

In Galatians 5:1 it has a sense of no retreat in doctrine - *It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to the yoke of slavery.* Paul was exhorting that they had been saved by God’s grace through faith and not to return to trying to be justified by works of the law. In Philippians 1:27 it is used in a joint context of *“standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”* Perhaps 1 Corinthians 16:13 is the best example of the strength of this word, *“Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.”* That is the sense here. Paul is telling them to stand fast in their position and not to yield to false teaching that had come their way.

This idea is strengthened by Paul concurrently commanding them to “hold” to what they had been taught. Hold (κρατέω / krateō) had an ancient meaning rooted in the ideas of being strong, possessing power, or ruling. It developed a meaning of “having a masterful grip on a thing” and hence to seize and hold onto as it is most often used in the New Testament and is the meaning here.

The Thessalonians had been taught the word of God and they were to hold on to it and stand firm in their position with no retreat regardless of the claims of false teachers. These are commands we must be careful to obey ourselves because there are many false teachers in the world today that seek to shift you away from the word of God to follow what in reality are their own speculations and the wisdom of men. Claims of false teachers are exposed by the Scriptures contradicting what they teach. But if you do not know God’s word, you will not know their teaching is false. That is why Paul corrected the false doctrine being taught to them and why it is necessary for you to know the Bible well yourself and be part of a functioning church as described in Ephesians 4:11-16. We are to grow in maturity together so that we can stand firm against the winds of deceitful doctrine that blow across the land.

A Benediction - 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Paul concludes this section of his letter with a benediction which is an invocation of God’s blessing.

The grammar of this benediction strengthens the statement of the deity of Jesus and His equality with the Father. First, the benediction is addressed to both Jesus and the Father. Second, Jesus is listed first

with an emphasis that He is the Lord. The opening phrase is literally, “*but Himself, the Lord of us, Jesus Christ.*” It then continues “*and God, the Father of us*” identifying the special relationship God has with the redeemed.

Third, two participles are then used to further identify who is being addressed and both are in the singular form. “*The one who loved us and has given us eternal comfort / encouragement and good hope by grace.*” Both the Father and the Son love us and both are the source of what is given to us which arises out of that love. The word translated here as either comfort or encouragement (παράκλησις / paraklāsis) encompasses both meanings. It is what happens when someone comes alongside to call out words of consolation in your current situation and words of courage to keep going. But unlike the fleeting comfort / encouragement given by the world, this is eternal. And by the means of God’s grace by which we are saved, we are also given good hope. The adjective good is added to emphasize this characteristic of Christian hope for hope itself (ἐλπις / elpis) is a confident expectation that there will be what is good and beneficial in the future.

Fourth, the two verbs in verse 17 which form the petitions are singular. Jesus and the Father are petitioned together as a singularity. Why? Because Jesus is deity, the second person of the Triune godhead - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The two specific petitions are that “*He may comfort / strengthen your hearts and He may establish them in every deed and good word.*”

Comfort / strengthen here is simply the verb form (παρακαλέω / parakaleō) of the same word in verse 15. God both consoles and encourages. One of the names of the Holy Spirit is derived from this same word root - παράκλητος / paraklātos - the comforter (John 14:26). Heart when used figuratively in Greek refers to the seat of the will and understanding therefore also encompasses thinking instead of the seat of emotion as it is commonly used in English. The first petition then is that God would comfort and strengthen them in how they were thinking so that their wills would be set on God.

The second petition was that God would “*establish them in every deed and good word.*” To establish (στηρίζω / stārizō) is to fix something so that it is held fast, unmoveable. In this context it is that God would enable them to be firm and unwavering in the deeds and good words they were already doing and proclaiming. Remember that Paul had commended them for these qualities (1 Thess. 1:3, 8).

These are two petitions that we ought to be making to God on behalf of one another on a regular basis. Regardless of your level of spiritual maturity, you still need God to guide and direct your thinking so that your will is set properly on Him and the pursuit of righteousness. You also need Him to make you firm and unwavering in carrying out the good deeds He created you in Christ Jesus to walk in (Eph. 2:10) and speak the truth in love in all circumstances. It is too easy to fall victim to the pressures of this world to conform you to its image, so we need God to help us instead be transformed by the renewing of your mind and conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29; 12:2).

Conclusions

The Thessalonians had become mentally and emotionally disturbed because they had been taught false doctrine. Paul was able to comfort and strengthen the Thessalonians and restore them to peace and enable them to stand firm by pointing them back to truth.

What you believe will determine how you live and react to life. If you believe lies, then you will suffer the consequences of that which will include troubled minds in this life. If in believing those lies you reject the truth of God, then it will also include eternal condemnation in the next.

If you seek after truth, you will find God’s word and Jesus Christ for both are truth (John 14:6; 17:17) and the truth will free you from the bondage of sin. Though the world will hate you for it, you will still have the blessings of God which includes having His peace in all circumstances in this life and eternal life with Him in the next.

Since none of us are omniscient, your ignorance will be used against you to get you to believe lies. This is not a matter of education, for if you are taught lies, you only earn higher degrees in falsehood and

intellectual deception. If you are a humble seeker of truth, then those lies will be exposed and removed so that you are increasingly controlled by truth and can stand firm against lies and deception. How can you seek truth? It begins by learning God's word and being a follower of Jesus Christ. All other foundations for truth are shifting sand that will lead to a collapse of the structure built on them.

Introduction

_____ from grammatical-historical hermeneutics leads to a plethora of interpretations

Eschatology (doctrine of last things) can be _____ to understand - so keep studying

A good interpretation _____ with both the meaning of this passage & the others on the same subject

Review - 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

What Paul states in verses 13-17 are as a _____ to what he wrote earlier

In verse 1 Paul ties what he says about the _____ in 1 Thess. 4:13-18

The Thessalonians were troubled by _____ teachers who claimed they were already in the day of the Lord

The apostasy (a _____ linked in this context to the rapture) must occur first

The man of lawlessness is _____ when he makes a covenant with Israel (Daniel 9:24-27)

Paul had previously taught the Thessalonians about these things - which arise from _____ prophecies

The man who makes the firm covenant with Israel will 3 ½ years _____ set up the abomination of desolation

The restrainer is the _____. His ministry changes at the rapture - allowing the anti-christ to be revealed

The success of anti-christ is temporary, but he _____ the masses who reject the truth to believe his lies

Giving Thanks For God's Choice - 2 Thessalonians 2:13

Paul gave _____ to God for the Thessalonians multiple times: 1 Thess. 1:2; 2:13; 3:9; 2 Thess. 1:3-4

Brethren - used 18 times in 1 Thess. & twice already in 2 Thess. All Christians are of _____

Grammar of "Beloved" = A passive _____ of God's love in the past which continues in the present

God loves because it is His _____ (1 John 4:8) - sacrificing of Himself for the best interest of the beloved

God _____ love despite our sin (Rom. 5:8) and we respond to Him (1 John 4:19)

God _____ (αἰρέομαι / haireomai) to love and to save (Deut. 7:6-7)

Salvation is by _____ mercy & grace & not because of anything in you or that you do (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5)

God chose from the _____ - before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4), before the ages (2 Tim. 1:9)

Salvation is rescue from _____ enslavement in the present (Rom. 6) & its condemnation in eternity -Rom. 8:1

The Holy Spirit _____ - sets apart from sin to righteousness transforming the person (1 Cor. 6:9-11)

The human factor is "_____ in the truth" - Jesus Christ (John 14:6), God's word (John 17:17)

God's Calling Unto Glory - 2 Thessalonians 2:14

The sequence of God's _____ actions: Foreknew → predestined → called → justified → glorified

The call was given to the Thessalonians when Paul proclaimed the _____ to them (Acts 17)

God uses ordinary _____ to issue His eternal, effectual call

Salvation will result in the _____ of becoming like Jesus (Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:2; 1 Cor. 15:42-54; Phil. 3:21)

Stand Firm and Hold - 2 Thessalonians 2:15

Traditions here refers to the _____ given to them orally & by letter by Paul (1 Thess. 2:13)

Stand firm = be persistent and _____ in their position and not yield to false teaching

Hold = having a masterful _____ on a thing - seize and hold onto what Paul had taught them

Claims of false teachers are _____ when the truth is known - learn the word of God

A Benediction - 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

A benediction is an _____ of God's blessing

It is addressed to _____ the Lord Jesus & God the Father emphasizing Jesus is Lord & God is the Father

The participles - the one who loved & the one who gives - are in the _____ form

_____ the Father & the Son love us and are the source of the comfort / encouragement given which is eternal

Hope is a _____ expectation that there will be what is good and beneficial in the future

Both verbs in verse 17 are singular - Jesus & the Father are petitioned _____ as a singularity

Comfort / strengthen in the verb form of verse 16 and a title of the Holy Spirit is from same root (paraklāsis)

Heart refers here to the seat of the _____ and understanding

To establish is to fix something so that it is _____, unmoveable - here it is deeds & good words

All Christians need God to guide & direct our thinking so that our _____ is set on Him & righteousness.

All Christians _____ God in being firm & unwavering to doing good deeds & speaking truth in love

Conclusions

The disturbance brought by false doctrine was corrected by _____ which brought peace & comfort

Believing _____ has negative consequences

Believing _____ (Jesus & God's word - John 14:6; 17:17) frees you from the bondage of sin & condemnation

Learning God's word & following Jesus are the only foundations for _____ - everything else is shifting sand

KIDS KORNER – Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. Young Children – draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. Older Children – count how many times God is mentioned. Talk to your parents about the things you should give thanks to God for.

THINK ABOUT IT – Questions to consider in understanding the sermon and its application. Why is interpretation of 2 Thess. 2 difficult? How does 2 Thess. 2:13-17 contrast with what was said earlier in the chapter? What did Paul give God thanks for concerning the Thessalonians? Why is "brethren" a significant term? Believers are "beloved by the Lord" - What is the basis for this love? What is the basis for God's choice? When did God choose? What is the basis for salvation and what are you saved from? What is sanctification and what is the Holy Spirit's role in it? What truth has to be believed in order to be saved from sin? What is God's calling? What is the means of God's calling? What is the final result of salvation? What does "traditions" refer to in verse 15? Why were they to "stand firm and hold" to them? How does that protect from false teachers? What is a benediction? How does the one in verse 16-17 support the deity of Jesus? What are the two petitions in verse 17 and why are they still important for believers today? How can you pursue truth?