

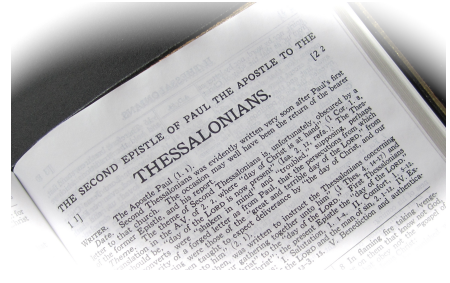
Books of The Bible

A Fresh Survey of Second Thessalonians - Part 1

Introduction

In this first part of a two-part series on a new survey of Second Thessalonians, there will be fresh perspectives presented which we trust will expand the truths of the book in a new light.

In younger days I learnt navigation for my ambition was to sail the world in my own yacht. To navigate I had to learn where I presently was, where I wanted to go, and know how each leg of the journey furthered my progress and was connected to that which went before and after.



- a) The study of any Biblical book is the same. The student must determine what is the starting point, historically, geographically, spiritually, how the parts are interconnected, what is the thought flow that leads to the ultimate goal.
- b) Some will say the goal of the book was one or more of the following reasons, any of which would be perfectly true:
 - i) To encourage saints in their persecutions and understanding it is for a reason (2 Thess. 1:3-12).
 - ii) To correct erroneous teaching concerning the Day of the Lord (2 Thess. 2:3).
 - iii) To tell of the environment which will enable the man of sin to be revealed (2 Thess. 2:3-8).
 - iv) To give information how to discipline those who refuse to work (2 Thess. 3:6-15).
 - v) To remind the Thessalonians of his prayers for them and seek their prayers for him (2 Thess. 1:3; 3:1).
 - vi) To tell of the Lord's coming (2 Thess. 1:7, 10; 2:1, 8-9, 14).
- c) To see it as such, the book then only records matters on which the apostle writes, but does not inform of the main truth being emphasized nor the connection between the sections of the book. I suggest:
 - i) The connection between every section in the book is the righteousness of God to the harvest of man's sowing. Let me illustrate. I have a boomerang, when thrown correctly it comes back to the one who threw it. It serves as an illustration of the boomerang effect of decisions made in this life, which 2 Thessalonians teaches. Because of this, I understand the key verses, to be: "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: Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you" (2 Thess. 1:5, 6). Note the double reference to "righteous", that is the righteousness of God.
- d) When consideration is given to the Thessalonian epistles, it is often stated that 1 Thessalonians deals with the Lord's coming to the air for His own of this age, and 2 Thessalonians deals with the coming of the Lord in judgment. While this is true, I do not see the coming of the Lord as the major focus of the book. A careful look will show that there are only 14 verses given to His actual coming in the second epistle. I repeat, that which Paul is presenting is sowing and harvest, cause and consequences. Ignoring God, man thinks that he is in control of happenings, that things can be done covertly, or spins put on happenings or cover-ups. Foolish is the individual who thinks like this for 2 Thessalonians teaches there will be consequences for what is done or endured.
- e) It is important to see the condition of the saints win on three levels:
 - i) Spiritually: They were spiritually developing and having a stupendous outreach of the gospel but there's always room for improvement. Despite the hostility from the outside world, this did not hinder their spiritual development, rather they were more aware than ever of the need for each other.
 - ii) Conditionally: They were living in a hostile environment, a hostility of a doctrinal nature.
 - iii) Ecclesiastically: They're having difficulties from both inside (chapter 3) and from the outside world.

- iv) When considering this, the question is, “Which of these three is the most serious?” Clearly, the Holy Spirit deemed the priority was encouragement, seeing things from the divine perspective, assurance this was not the day of the Lord, and finally to tell the individuals to get a job.

Features Of The Book

1) The Doublets

- a) Grace and Peace (2 Thess. 1:2; 3:16, 18)
- b) We are bound to give thanks (2 Thess. 1:3; 2:13)
- c) The description of the Lord’s coming (2 Thess. 1:7-8; 2:8)
- d) The double sins of the individual (2 Thess. 3:6; 11)
- e) Believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness (2 Thess. 2:12)
- f) Unreasonable and wicked men (2 Thess. 3:2)

2) The Triads

- a) Confusion either by letter, or word, or spirit (2 Thess. 2:2)
- b) The description of the evil one, “man of sin, son of perdition, Wicked one (2 Thess. 2:3, 8)
- c) The triplicate works of the man of sin: power, signs, lying wonders (2 Thess. 2:9)

3) Repeated Words

- a) There are a number of repeated words and concepts, for instance:
 - i) Glory (2 Thess. 1:4, 9; 2:14)
 - ii) Glorified (2 Thess. 1:10, 12; 3:1)
 - iii) Peace (2 Thess. 1:2; 3:16)
 - iv) Grace (2 Thess. 1:2, 12; 2:16; 3:18)
 - v) Righteous (2 Thess. 1:5, 6)
 - vi) Worthy (2 Thess. 1:5, 11)

It Was Written At a Crisis Point In Paul’s Ministry

This second missionary trip had taken them as far as Thessalonica where a crisis arose which was brought about because Barnabas wanted to take Mark with them (Acts 15:37-39) but Paul was against it. Due to this there was a change of fellow-workers. Paul and Barnabas separated and Paul chose Silas to go with him (Acts 15:40). It seems that Paul went alone to Derbe and Lystra (Acts 16:1) where he met Timotheus (Acts 16:1). Paul then took him as they journeyed to Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, and Troas (Acts 16:6-8). Following the vision of the man of Macedonia they went to Philippi (Acts 16:10-40), where evidently Silas rejoined Paul so that they were three, Paul, Silas, and Timotheus (Acts 16:17, note the “us”). However, for whatever reason, only Paul and Silas were cast into the prison (Acts 16:25) and from there they came to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9). They were there for three Sabbath days where they reasoned with them in the synagogue (Acts 17:1-3). When the lives of Paul and Silas were in danger they were sent away by the brethren and came to Berea. Thus, at this time there was a change of companion and of direction because of the vision. It was shortly after this that Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians and then after further time wrote 2 Thessalonians.

Before there can be any understanding of the goal of 2 Thessalonians, there must be a consideration of that which was first written and the situation of the saints. Timothy was sent to learn how they were faring in the conflict (1 Thess. 3:2), knowing that Satan uses the afflictions of life to upset the saints (1 Thess. 3:5). Timothy returned with good tidings and that, despite their sufferings, Paul informed the saints that there would be suffering (1 Thess. 3:4). At the time Paul wrote they were experiencing persecution (1 Thess. 2:14; 3:3), being something the saint is appointed to (1 Thess. 3:3-4). Their longing was to see Paul, as he desired to see them (1 Thess. 2:17; 3:6), which brought Paul great comfort (1 Thess. 3:7-8). Yet, there were disturbing influences at work, for:

- a) The saints had received communication, apparently from Paul, teaching that the day of the Lord had already come. This was a subject the Jews with the Old Testament would have understood. They knew the day of the Lord would be a day of terror in which there would be dreadful suffering, and the reasoning among the saints, because of the apparent letter from Paul, was that what they were suffering was because they were in the day of the Lord! This caused confusion, and with the persecution they were enduring their confidence in the Lord's return to deliver them from wrath to come (2 Thess. 1:10) was being questioned. Thus, the epistle was written as a military campaign battling on three fronts:
- i) The clarification concerning the day of the Lord and the man of sin called the "wicked" (2 Thess. 2:8).
 - ii) The encouragement not to get downhearted and take things into their own hands of retaliation (2 Thess. 1:7).
 - iii) To re-emphasize those who were not working to get a job and the discipline which must be exercised if the individuals refuse to do such (2 Thess. 3:11-15).

The Recipients

Their composition:

When Paul preached there was a response toward the gospel from two groups of people, the Jews and the Greeks (Acts 17:4), two peoples who were quite different culturally and spiritually.

1) The Jews:

- a) The Jews had their Old Testament, the Oracles of God committed to them (Rom. 3:2) as well as other glorious blessings (Rom. 9:4-5), and firmly believed the ancient prophets.
 - i) Those ancient prophets had repeatedly spoken about the coming day of the Lord which would precede the coming of the Lord (Isa. 2:12; Jer. 46:10; Ezek. 30:3; Joel. 1:15; Obad. 1:15). The Lord also taught the same message (Matt. 24:21-31).
 - ii) They also had no doubt that the Lord would come again recalling the historical fact when the Lord ascended the two men who stood by them had said: "This same Jesus . . . shall so come . . . as ye have seen Him go" (Acts 1:11).
 - iii) They also believed He would set up His Kingdom. This was evident by the thief on the cross (Lk. 23:42), the mother of Zebedee (Matt. 20:20-21), and the disciples after the Lord's resurrection (Acts 1:6).
- b) At first it was easy to wait for His return but months and years had passed and He had not returned. Were they wrong in that which they had understood the Lord and the angels said? Added to the waiting was the increase of persecution which was so severe. In time it was the normal experience. Questions began to rise in their minds:
 - i) Could it be that when Paul spoke of the Lord's coming he had not made it clear and this seeming letter from him informed them that the persecutions they experienced was because they were experiencing the day of the Lord? (2 Thess. 2:2). The expression "at hand" is "now present".
- c) For the Jewish believers, life would have been very difficult because of their accepting Jesus as Messiah. They were declaring several very serious charges against their religious leaders and nation. They were charging that:
 - i) Their leaders were wrong in crucifying Jesus, He was who He claimed to be (Jn. 19:7).
 - ii) The ceremonial law was no longer in effect and that the sacrifices they offered were of no value, for Jesus had "offered one final sacrifice for sins" (Heb. 10:12).
 - iii) Those who refused to accept Jesus as Messiah were one with those who had "trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace (Heb. 10:29).

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iv) Because of this stand, persecution was fierce and it would have made it difficult for some to find paid work. The Lord taught us to love one another and this resulted in saints providing food, etc., for those who suffered (Heb. 10:34). However, this had a down side for some saw it as an opportunity to live off others, and then added to the worsening situation by becoming busybodies (2 Thess. 3:6-11). They must work to provide for themselves for that was the example Paul gave when among them (1 Thess. 2:6-10; 2 Thess 3:8-9).

2) The Greeks:

a) They were idolators, knowing nothing or very little about the ancient Jewish scriptures. Upon hearing the gospel and being convinced that God was the true God, they “turned to God from idols” (1 Thess. 1:9). They knew almost nothing, if anything at all, about the day of the Lord, but did know that Paul had taught the Lord was coming again (1 Thess. 1:10), and at that time the dead saints would be raised and those alive would be caught up to meet him in the air (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Added to this was the fact that he had taught them He would come back with them (1 Thess. 3:13).

The Similarities Between 1st and 2nd Thessalonians

1 st Thessalonians	2 nd Thessalonians
Paul’s behavior and when preaching the gospel to them	Paul’s behavior and when preaching the gospel to them
Their response and transformation because of having received the gospel	The need for growth and correction
Grace, peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ	Grace, peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
Giving thanks (ch. 1:2)	Giving thanks (ch. 1:3)
Labour of love (ch. 1:6)	Development of love (ch. 1:3)
Patience (ch. 1:3)	Patience (ch. 1:4)
Persecutions and afflictions (ch. 1:6)	Persecutions and afflictions (ch. 1:4)
Coming of the Lord (ch. 1:10)	Coming of the Lord (ch. 1:7-10)

The Structure of The Book

An illustration:

- a) In an ideal meeting there will be possibly several hymns and a closing one. Ideally the hymns are related to the subject of the address. Singing “Jesus loves the little children” would be a suitable hymn for a message on “reaching children for Christ”, but not for a meeting on prophecy. The same goes for the hymn at the end. The structure of 2 Thessalonians is a comment, then a truth about sowing, then one about the harvest, and finally a closing comment. The following structure is based on that illustration.

Opening Statement	That Which Is Sown	The Harvest	Comment
ch. 2:1-2	ch. 2:3-5; 13-14	ch. 2:6-15	ch. 2:16-17
ch. 1:1-2	ch. 1:3-6	ch. 1:7-10	ch. 1:11-12
ch. 1:3-4	<u>The Saints</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The condition was physical persecution • Christlikeness in the throes of persecution, love, endurance, faithfulness (ch. 1:4) • Glorification of Christ by overcoming the attempts of Satan to destroy their faithfulness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The peace of God (ch. 1:7) “rest with us” • Counted worthy of the Kingdom of God • He shall be glorified in His saints and admired 	Pray that you would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be counted worthy of this calling • Fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness • And the work of faith with power • “That the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (ch. 1:11-12)
	<u>The Persecutors</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persecution of the loved of God, inasmuch as they do it to His own it is doing it to the Lord (ch. 1:6) • Spiritual bullies. How would I respond to an individual bullying my child? It would be taken personally, and love for the child would seek vindication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He shall come “in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel” (ch. 1:8) • Then they “shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power” (ch. 1:9) • Practicum, the solemnity of preaching the gospel. 	

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Opening Statement	That Which Is Sown	The Harvest	Comment
ch. 2:1-2	ch. 2:3-5; 13-14	ch. 2:6-15	ch. 2:16-17
<p>“We beseech you . . . by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . be not soon shaken” (ch. 2:1-2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sinners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who sowed doctrinal error among the saints that the day of the Lord is already present by deception - The chronological order and progress of wickedness cumulating in the man of sin • God’s sowing and His harvest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this present life for men generally: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The withholding by the Holy Spirit is removed, and man is left to follow his own devices and plans being blinded by Satan, living in spiritual darkness • In the future of men generally: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Because they received not the love of the truth, but had pleasure in lawlessness, they receive a strong delusion and will believe the lie. - In eternity they will be dammed • In the future of the man of sin in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming • The saints: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Standing fast in the Lord, hold the traditions which ye have been taught by us • Obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ 	<p>“Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, (twice mentioned in 2 Thess.) which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work”</p>

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Opening Statement	That which is sown	The harvest	Comment
	ch. 3:1:6	ch. 3:1-2; 6-15	ch. 3:16-18
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray for us • Reflects on His prayer for them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified • The Lord who is faithful shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stablish you and keep you from evil - You will both do and will do the things commanded - Your hearts are directed into the love of God - There will be an enduring patience in waiting for Christ 	<p>“Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all. The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”</p>
“We command you . . . in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (ch. 3:6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerning those who could work but don’t and become busybodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Step 1</u> in discipline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Withdraw from every brother that walks disorderly and does not work • <u>Step 2</u> in discipline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Command them to work • <u>Step 3</u> in discipline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have no company with him 	

- 1) Having seen this outline then the logical questions are:
 - a) How does the opening statement lead into what was being sown?
 - b) In what way does the harvest follow that which has been sown?
 - c) What does the closing comment have to do with the situation at hand?
 - d) How do the various openings, etc., balance out each other?
- 2) The following is a simplified consideration of these questions in the first section.
 - a) The opening comments and sowing (ch. 1:1-6)
 - i) Paul begins and ends this book with the truths of “Grace and peace” (ch. 1:2; 3:16-18), and part way through it is mentioned again (ch. 1:12; 2:16). Clearly, “grace” is an important issue in the need of the saints. Grace was needed if they were to maintain a Christlike witness in the midst of hostility. It was also needed grace, to have an attitude of love and not to detest the persecutors, but see them and the persecution from the divine perspective.
 1. Considering the persecutors. How very difficult it would be to have compassion on those who were torturing and causing grief to ourselves and those we love. It would take grace to see them as individuals for whom the Lord died, for it was not only for the saints He suffered the penalty for sins. Consider Saul of Tarsus, if the saints were anything like me they would scarcely ever have prayed for the salvation of such a man. He would have been counted beyond hope.

2. The persecuted: The saints needed to see it from the divine perspective. Valuable wheat, etc., will never develop in a windless environment. The storms, winds, and lashing rain cause the roots to go deep, and this results in the wheat developing fullness. So these saints (and we) needed to see that the Christian must have those storms in life, the persecutions, to make them stronger by the enablement of God. As they lived in the strength of God's peace and grace they would learn to see things from God's perspective. The persecutions were being used by God to develop love for each other, the learning of the need for each other, and the constant testing of faithfulness kept reminding them of the future and the glorification of Christ in them (ch. 1:3). There was the need for God's grace to love each other, for persecution does not make us all easy to live with. They were learning the price of being faithful, which conveys the truth Paul is exhorting them for (ch. 1:4) through much patience, and to see that this life was a sowing of Christlikeness and would reap a harvest.
3. They needed peace for the heart and mind, which can be in turmoil with thoughts such as, "what will happen tomorrow?" Every knock on the door would make the heart quiver, a loved one is taken, only God can give peace in such a situation.
4. They were "in God and the Lord Jesus Christ". What a comfort and strengthening this must have, and still brings. What a blessedness to know that all was, is, and ever will be under His control, and nothing could happen without His permission. Such knowledge has to drop twelve inches from our heads to our hearts, from intellectual knowledge to heart appreciation, and this can only happen in the storms of life. However, there are times when we must learn not to chaff at the disciplines of God.

ii) In Summary:

1. There were two sowings happening at the same time. The persecutors were afflicting and the saints developing spiritually. The wording of ch. 1:5-6 is of interest for it speaks of the "judgment of God" relative to the saints (ch. 1:5), and "recompense" regards the unsaved (ch. 1:6). My mind would have thought, "recompense for the saints just as the Lord recompensed Peter for the use of his boat by the huge catch of fishes (Lk. 5:3-7), and judgment for the sinners. But God makes a point, for the believer there will be a judgment (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10), whereas, for the ungodly it will be payment for the evil they have done.

b) The Harvest (ch. 1:7-10)

i) The harvest the persecutors shall reap.

1. The sin of these people was twofold. They were personally rejecting Christ as the only means of salvation, and persecuting those who did receive Him as Saviour. While God in grace convicted them, they had the opportunity to know the glory of His power in salvation, yet they rejected it. Some scriptures which would support such a premise are:
 - (a) "For God so loved the world" (Jn. 3:16)
 - (b) "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 Jn. 4:4)
 - (c) "God will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. 2:4).

Paul informed the ancient saints that the power that raised Christ from the dead is the power that is available to quicken those who are dead in their sins (Eph. 1:18-2:1), but these individuals were rejecting this power and the blessedness of living in His presence for all eternity. What a sowing this was.

2. This truth emphasizes the solemnity of Gospel preaching for the harvest of rejection is being, "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (ch. 1:9).

Cain went out from the presence of the Lord (Gen. 4:16) and we never read of him having another opportunity for salvation. When preaching the gospel it is vital to understand that the Spirit of God may be speaking to an individual for the last time. If they leave the meeting unsaved, they are not just going out from a building but from the presence of the Lord, and the harvest of that is, “punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power”.

3. What does it in part mean, (for we can never grasp eternal separation from God) “punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord?”. It means utter banishment from God, never again to know the convicting of the Holy Spirit, to hear a gospel hymn sung, to join with the redeemed to hear the gospel, but unending unceasing blackness of darkness, under the justified executing of God’s wrath for all eternity. It means never again that which on earth made life pleasant, for the drug addict there will be no drugs, for the lovers of prestige there will be no status of excellence, for the sex addict there will be no more perversion, no comfort, no ease, no passing of time, for in eternity there is no time. Finally no hope, forever.

ii) The harvest the saints shall reap:

1. That which they sought to do on earth in their tribulation, glorifying Him through their lives will be intensified, for then He will in full perfection be glorified in them. The whole purpose of life is to glorify Christ, to live in such a way that He is admired by all for the life He enables an individual to live.

3) He shall be admired, we shall stand in astonishment:

- a) He shall be admired in them, that is, in the depths of their innermost being they will be in wonder. Note that it is in connection with His coming and exercise of judgment on the unbelieving. Despite all their intimidations, afflictions, and degradations showing themselves superior, in that day we will be shown as right and it will all be due to Him. Such ability, sealing their eternal destiny when they sought to seal our temporal destiny.
- b) Because of the glory of His grace in securing such a redemption that exceeds everything we could ever imagine of liberation.
- c) Then we shall “admire” Him. It will not be the same as Sunday when we remember Him which can be a series of declarations of His person, nor will it be a reiteration of His work. It will be the deepest soul appreciation that causes one to be amazed at the greatness of His glory in multiple ways:
 - i) Within the larger context, in His ability to exercise judgment in perfect justice, but with unwavering onward movement to victory. There will be no waning of His conflict as in a normal campaign among men, and as we see the totality and intimidating exercise of power, we will be in amazement.
 - ii) In the immediate verse context it is dealing with “when” He comes. What will happen? When we see the fulness of the judgment exercised on sinful man, and knowing that could have been us but for His grace and the depths of His work at Calvary, we shall be amazed.

[The Closing Comments \(ch. 1:11-12\)](#)

Paul does not only give thanks to God for them (v. 3) but also prays for them along several avenues:

- a) That our God would count you worthy of this calling
- b) Fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness
- c) And the work of faith with power
- d) That the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

To Be Glorified In His Saints

At the present time every overcoming increases one's worthiness of the calling to rule with Christ in the Kingdom of God, and all his purposes for us will be fulfilled. God said to Israel: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (Jer. 29:11).

- a) The natural tendency is for us to rebel and sin, but by overcoming temptation, not by laws nor self resolution, or preventing circumstances, but by the power of the resurrected Christ, unseen by the world He is being glorified in us. At the present time we are glorifying His Name (ch. 1:12), then His person.

This is the follow on from ch. 1:7, then there will be rest on at least two levels: Rest from the natural urgings of the flesh to get even, to wish God's judgment on them. Such naturalnesses are the opposite to the Lord: "Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not" (1 Pet. 2:23).

- a) Rest from the strivings against sin which indwells us and is opportunistic for His glory. Then we will have no sin nature and His glorification IN us will be automatic. In Rom. 5:2 we, "Hope of the glory of God", that is, sharing His glory. Here we do not just share but will, in perfect bodies and completely conformed to Him, in every way we shall reflect His glory. It will be the fulfillment of the words of John: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as He is" (1 Jn. 3:2).

It is the prayer of Paul for the saints to be worthy of their calling. Paul could never have prayed this in sincerity had he not himself longed for such in his own life. Then the supreme goal of this prayer was that, "the name of our Lord Jesus Christ be glorified in you", which was Paul's personal burden for the saints at Galatia (Gal. 4:19). Concerning himself, Paul desired that Christ would be magnified in his body either by life or death (Phil. 1:20). Then he ends his comments with the glorious hope, "us glorified in Him" (ch. 1:12). This is what Paul meant when he wrote: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27); and we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2). What will that be like when we are perfectly conformed to Christ, sharing His glory, eternally clothed with His righteousness, and in a state of permanent unchanging sinless perfection?

- a) The precious truth is that it is all of grace. Well may we sing:
On such grace my soul still ponder, love so great so full so free,
Say while lost in holy wonder, why O Lord such love to me.

Glorious are the words: "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20).

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

Rowan Jennings, Abbotsford, British Columbia