



The Second Coming
of Christ

Thoughts from Second Thessalonians ...

The Lord is Faithful

There are many songs speaking of the faithfulness of the Lord, and justifiably so. "If we are faithless," are the words of one of Paul's trustworthy statements, "He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself" (2 Timothy 2:13). One of the tremendous and powerful qualities of God is His faithfulness; He can be counted upon to keep His word and His promises ... and on time! It is certainly reassuring, for example, for a saint who is defending the truths of the gospel and the way of salvation to know that "the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). It is confidence-building to know that "if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us" (1 John 5:14). How encouraging it is for Him to say, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake

you" (Hebrews 13:5).

- **Protection** — The apostle had asked that the brethren pray that he might be delivered from perverse and evil men so that he could continue to preach the gospel. But evil men not only attacked the apostles, they opposed anyone who would proclaim Christ as the only Lord over all. Evil men often occupy positions of influence and authority, or have the ability to influence those who do. Hence at some point powerful forces work against those who teach the word of God, and the more visible the teachers, the more likely the pressure and persecution will come. "Is it not the rich who oppress you," James had asked, "and personally drag you into court? Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?" (James 2:6,7). What defense, then, does the saint of God have against such rich and powerful forces? Not surprisingly, the Lord of Hosts comes to the rescue! "But the Lord is faithful," explains the apostle Paul, "and He will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one" (2 Thessalonians 3:3). The amazingly loving and totally dependable God has promised to strengthen the brethren in their faith, and to take steps to protect them — protection from evil men, and protection from the evil one. Properly understood, what earthly force or what power of Satan could possibly stand up against what the Lord offers His saints.

- **Confidence** — The scripture encourages God's people through the ages. "Be strong and very courageous," were the words of the Almighty Himself to Joshua (Joshua 1:7). "Take courage," were words Jesus often used. "In the world you have tribulation," the Christ had spoken to the apostles in the night in which He was betrayed, "but take courage; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). "Strengthen your hearts," James had exhorted (James 5:8). And Paul had just prayed that God would "strengthen your hearts" in this epistle to the brethren in Thessalonica. So, it is not surprising that Paul would now say, "And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will do what we command" (2 Thessalonians 3:4). What the apostle Paul and others had commanded was for the brethren to be faithful to the Lord and to continue to preach and teach the word of God in the face of every type of opposition.

Because of the perversity of evil men, because of the intensity of the persecution, and because of the temptations coming the way of the brethren, Paul thus prays: "And may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ" (2 Thessalonians 3:5). Jesus had made the statement concerning what happens when law and order breaks down, and chaos arises because of persecution. "And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold" (Matthew 24:12). The hearts of the disciples therefore would have to be directed into the love of God. Similarly, their hearts would have to be guided into that steadfastness of faith which comes from full commitment to Christ. God is faithful; He is working to produce that same characteristic in those who would be sons of the Father in heaven.

**God is faithful,
and He is working
to produce faithful
disciples as well.**

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