

2 Thessalonians Overview

Like the first letter, this one was written from Corinth...several months later

This was a church of new believers...taught all the important truths of God's Word in a very short period of time...and some misconceptions persist

Given the intensity of the persecution that drove Paul from Thessalonica...
and, therefore the intensity of the persecution faced by this baby church...

- torture
- death

some in the fellowship believed they were living in the Great Tribulation...
aka the Day of the Lord and Jacob's Trouble and the 70th Week of Daniel

the purpose of this letter is to correct that misconception
the main theme is the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ as Conquering King

- Ch 1 Encouragement in persecution
- Ch 2 Explanation of the timing of the Great Tribulation
- Ch 3 Exhortation to return to living

This loving church probably read and re-read both letters with great regularity

2 Thessalonians Chapter 1

- v1 the church...in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
name a better place for a church to be but
- in God the Father
 - in the Lord Jesus Christ!

- v2 Grace and peace:
the greeting in all of Paul's letters

In the midst of their hardship and pain and suffering, they are reminded of
God's grace and peace
we need to be reminded of God's supernatural gifts in this natural world

- v3 bound to thank God always for you:
"We are obliged to thank God for you.
Yours is a great fellowship!
- Sincere
 - Hungry and thirsty
 - your faith is growing
 - your love is flourishing!
- He is doing a wonderful work in and thru you!"
- Paul's prayer of 1 Thes 3:12 was answered

- v4 glory in you...for you patience and faith:
the Thessalonian church is also characterized by
- patience....in the midst of...
 - persecutions
 - tribulations
- there is definitely a connection between
- a growing faith and abounding love
and
 - persecution and tribulation

Faith is not tested in the easy times, it is tested (proved to be real or just “for show”) in trying, difficult times.

What we do in the difficult times is what we really believe
Faith does not grow in easy times but in trying, difficult times when, in a storm more powerful than our strength, we by faith cling to the promises of God.

Our Good Shepherd is faithful and He leads us thru those times.
One the other side, our faith in Him has grown.

persecution for our faith binds the Church to

- the Lord
we don't really serve the Lord unless we have a genuine commitment to Him...that commitment is revealed in persecution
And the depth of our relationship with the Lord is tested...and grows...thru persecution
- each other
as a Body, our bond with each other is strengthened and reinforced by common tribulation

so, you see, just as we did in Esther 6 on Thursday...

what Satan means for harm...persecution and overwhelming trials
God uses for good...growth, strength...locally and corporately

Paul rejoiced in this church because of its:

- patience and faith
in all of its
- persecutions and tribulations

“Yours is a powerful testimony of perseverance in persecution.

We speak of you everywhere we go.

You trust in the Lord in all circumstances as you are not hearers only of the Word but doers also...bringing credibility to our message everywhere we are sent.”

God is in complete control. He is weaving a breathtakingly beautiful tapestry.

We need not know why something is happening...it may even be for someone else's good!

We need only know God's heart. And we need to trust Him.

The gold and silver are refined in the furnace...until the refiner can see his reflection.

So... 1 Thes 5:16-18

James 1:2-5

v5 manifest token of the righteous judgment of God:
the persecution they faced was not God's righteous judgment upon them...
their patience and faith in the face of persecution and tribulation
was a clear indication of their worthiness in God's eyes

“You have suffered for righteousness sake...as the Lord promised.
Therefore, you are “deemed entirely deserving” of the kingdom of God,
which is a clear indication of the fairness of God's justice.”

worthiness in God's eyes has a strong link with patience and faith in
suffering...
Perseverance and faith in times of persecution and trial are praiseworthy in
God's eyes

Matt 5:10-12

Matt 10:24 because the servant is not above his master

v6 recompense tribulation:

God's system of justice is based on perfection and against that standard
“the proud shall be humbled and the humble shall be exalted.”

“God will exalt you in your trusting humility, and He will humble the
proud unbelievers.

He will repay all the trouble upon those who have hunted, persecuted,
tortured, and killed you.”

now Paul is talking about the Great Tribulation

- the wrath of God poured out on those who so proudly reject
His Son Jesus Christ and His death for their sins
- Rev 6-18
- When a vast majority of the inhabitants of the earth will be
destroyed in the pouring out of God's fierce wrath
- A fair treatment from the Father for those who
 1. hate His Son
 2. so cruelly treated His childrenfathers, put yourself in His place and your kids in
the church's place

Our attitude toward those who persecute us should be,

“They're all yours, Lord. You can deal fairly with them, I cannot.”

v7 you who are troubles rest with us:
the Christian life: trouble while we are here, rest when Jesus returns.

In this life, there is no rest from

- Occupying enemy territory
- Trials and tribulations
- Pain and suffering

But there is rest when Jesus shows Himself

We rest when the Light is revealed in the world

- chasing away all the darkness
- to punish His enemies (did not put faith in Him, did not do as He commanded)
- to bind Satan for 1000 years
- to set up His kingdom of peace on earth
- to rule the nations with a rod of iron

Blessed are they who overcome the world...by faith in Jesus

John 16:33 in the world you shall have tribulation but be of
good cheer, I have overcome the world

1 John 5:4 whosoever is born of God overcomes the world and
this is the victory that overcomes the world,
our faith

Jude 14-21

v8-9 flaming fire taking vengeance on them:
God is a jealous God...a consuming fire
Deut 4:24
Deut 9:3
Heb 12:29

notice that “knowing God = obeying the gospel of Jesus Christ”

Vengeance is mine, says the Lord...and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God when He comes to judge
Heb 10:30-31

who shall be punished with:

the certain future of unbelievers is punishment...their sentence voluntary

- perpetual destruction
- eternal separation from the presence and the glory of God
- Banished...
- branded...
- forever isolated and lonely
- cast out into the darkness they *agape* (John 3:19)
- torment without end, but not ever consumed
- a place of wailing and gnashing of teeth
- a place created for Satan and the fallen angels...not for man

God gives every man what he of his free will chooses...God sends no man to hell

2 Peter 3:9

but men love the darkness because their deeds are evil...thereby choosing the wrath of God over the love of God

Time to let our Light shine and get people on the Ark!

There is no room for ...unforgiveness...bitterness

We will carry on no baggage...so get rid of it now...and shine!

v10 he shall come to be glorified...admired:
Jesus comes to conquer His enemies and to execute God's justice on all
who reject Him
then He establishes a government of peace and a kingdom after God's
heart and will reign with those who made peace with Him.

the world we see and live in today is not as God intended
the loss of the Columbia astronauts is not God's intention
Donnie having cancer is not God's intention.
God is not to blame!
The prince of this world is...Satan!

There is disease and death, suffering and tribulation, in the world because
the world has rejected the Lordship of Jesus Christ

When the Lord returns and sets up His kingdom, THEN we will see the
world as God intended...

- no sickness...
- no sorrow...
- love...
- peace

and we will marvel at His glory!

v11 God would count you worthy of this calling”
The holy God has invited us back into His presence...He has made the
way possible
we are counted worthy of the invitation by genuine faith in Jesus Christ
Gen 15:6
Gen 6:8

“By faith...

- live pure and holy lives
- Obey Him...do as Jesus commanded
(love God, love neighbor).
- Delight in His ways and His Word.
- Be a doer and not just a hearer.
- Be sold-out to His Lordship over your life.”
- God works His good pleasure (Phil 2:12-13)

v12 the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you:
by faith and by the power of the Holy Spirit, live such that the name of
Jesus Christ is glorified in you
how painful when the name of Jesus is blasphemed by the actions of His
children

as we deny ourselves, pick up our cross, and follow Jesus,
The Lord receives glory for the work of His grace that transformed

- helpless and hopeless and dead enemies
into
- new creatures at peace with Him, children with the light
of spiritual life restored

only by grace...

2 Thessalonians Chapter 2

v1-2 coming of our Lord...our gathering:
2 separate and distinct events

1. our gathering together unto Him: The Rapture
1 Thes 4:12-17
1 Cor 15:51-52
Jesus returns to the air for His Bride.
The snatching away of the righteous before God's wrath is
poured out on the wicked
2. the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: The 2nd coming.
The Day of the Lord...the Day of Christ
Jesus returns to the earth as Conquering King and Judge to
destroy His enemies and to establish His kingdom on
earth, ruling from Jerusalem

that ye be not soon shaken or be troubled:
the fellowship at Thessolonica thought the persecution they were enduring
was the Great Tribulation Paul spoke of
they had received verbal or written instruction that they were in the Great
Tribulation...therefore they missed the Rapture
Note: why Ch 3:17 is significant
"This is a genuine letter!"

This misconception

- had really shaken up this fellowship...
- thinking they had been forsaken by the Lord
- caused them to lose hope (Ch 1:3)

"Don't worry! This is not the Day of the Lord!"
the persecution they endured was not
Rev 6:12-17 "Mountains fall on us!"
Matt 25 separation of the sheep and goats

Paul begs us to be firmly grounded in the Word of God so we are not
easily blown by the winds of false doctrine....because we are so
easily deceived
The Church needs healthy feedings of sound doctrine...found only in the
Word of God. I take this VERY seriously.

Eph 4:11-14

v3-4 that day shall not come, except:

Jewish day starts at sundown (6 pm) and ends at sundown
Therefore, the Jewish day starts with darkness

So does the Day of the Lord, which starts after the Rapture

1. Falling away from sound doctrine...apostasy
1 Tim 4:1-2
2 Tim 4:3-4
with ecumenical movement for 1 world religion, apostasy
in the Church is becoming pervasive
2. revealing of That man of sin...the son of perdition...Antichrist
 - a specific man...not the spirit of unbelief
1 John 4:1-3
2 John 7
 - After the Rapture of the Church
Rev 6:1-2
 - Come in peaceably
Dan 11:21-24
 - Establish a peace treaty with Israel
Dan 9:27a
 - Jews receive him as their Messiah
John 5:39-43
Today of rabbis: "How recognize Messiah?"
"He will lead us in rebuilding our Temple"
3. Abomination of Desolation
Dan 9:27b
Dan 11:31, 36-37
Rev 13:1-8

Q: Who wants the Jewish Temple built on the Temple
Mount in Jerusalem...God or Satan?
A: Satan! God is restraining it!
4. Great Tribulation
Final 3½ years of the "70th Week of Daniel"
Cleansing of the earth in preparation for the return of Jesus
the night is darkest just before the dawn
Matt 24:15-22 (Jewish prophesy)
Rev 12:6-9
5. The coming of Jesus, Light of the World
Rev 19

“This is not the Day of the Lord...you have not been forsaken.
That day starts in darkness

- Apostasy
- The revelation of a certain man”

v5 remember ye not:

Paul taught this

- In the first three weeks of “new birth”
- About 40 years before John wrote Revelation

we need to remember...because we are held accountable
Dan 9:24-26
Luke 19:41-44

v6-7 what withholdeth...letteth:

“to hold down”

God is holding down the lid on the boiling pot of evil and will restrain it
from erupting upon the earth until the righteous are snatched away
(Lot out of S & G, Gen 19)

God will not destroy the righteous with the wicked

out of the way:

out of the “middle, midst”

God is restraining evil...until He takes Himself out of the midst of the
darkness

John 17:20-26

When the Holy Spirit within the Church

- The Body of Christ
- The Bride of Christ
- The Temple of the Holy Spirit

takes Himself out of the midst of the world...

evil will

- no longer be restrained
- erupt upon the earth
- know no boundaries

God cannot remove Himself...what we have is the opposite of Pentecost!

Is the Church the influence on earth?

No...no more than Lot was in Sodom

The Holy Spirit is the influence of God on earth...

He is dwelling in the Church

So much of the Church has turned from the Holy Spirit...apostasy brews...

mystery of iniquity:

In the meantime, we live in the world with the spirit of antichrist

Why are people so attracted to evil?

Why do people choose the path of death rather than the path of life?

They are not in their right mind

Now that I am in my right mind, it is a mystery why I was so attracted to evil

v8 then shall that Wicked be revealed:

That man...the identity of the Antichrist...is a secret that will be revealed by God...in God's appointed time...not by men hunting for clues

much time and energy is spent on trying to figure out who the Antichrist is.

It is all wasted.

- The born-again will be snatched away BEFORE
- His identity will not be known until God in His sovereignty reveals him...in the fullness of time, the perfect time

So make sure you are watching...for Jesus Christ, not Antichrist!

The Lord shall consume:

God's Christ will consume Satan's christ...He will incinerate him by the brilliance...and by His Word

Rev 19:11-21

After evil has run its course, the Lord returns to destroy the counterfeit

By His Word the Lord created everything...by His Word He destroys His enemies when He returns to the earth

v9-10 all powers and sign:

the temptation of “I will give you all the kingdoms of the world if you will worship me” to which Jesus said Matt 4:10, this man says “Yes!”

Satan empowers his christ...he will be a miracle worker and people will be amazed/awed
don't believe in miracles...believe in Jesus Christ

deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish:

the delusion of sin in the hearts of unbelievers (Jer 17:9) paves the way for this man of sin who is empowered by Satan

every man must choose between God's Christ and Satan's christ
those that perish will be those that do not chose God's Christ

what all the “perish-oners” have in common?

- they hate the Light of God's Christ
John 3:14-20
- they hate the Truth
John 14:6 Jesus Christ is Truth...and life
John 17:17 thy Word is truth

v11-12 strong delusion...believe a lie...damned:
like in the days of Noah, God will not always strive with man...
there comes a point in time when God will give to man that which
he chooses

Consider

- Noah preached to millions for 120 years...yet there was only room on the Ark for 8 people...
God gave them what they wanted
- Pharaoh hardened his heart...until God hardened his heart...
God “set” in Pharaoh’s heart what he chose
He gave Pharaoh what he wanted
- James 1:12-16
God sets the “cement” we pour in our persistent choice

here, in the Day of the Lord, unbelieving man hates the Truth and loves the lie, so God will cause them to believe Satan’s lie...
God gives them what they want

Who receives the delusion?

- Blatant rejecters of Jesus Christ
- “Stealth” rejecters of Jesus Christ
Consider Matt 7:21-23
“Christians”...those who say they are a Christian but do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ...are not exempt
for 34 years I knew about Jesus but I did not **know** Jesus...
and was a lost soul...terrifying!

every person must choose one:

1. God’s Christ...God’s Truth
2. The Devil’s christ...Satan’s lie

Choose God’s Christ...today! (a “No” to Jesus is a “Yes” for the devil)
don’t wait until then! (post-Rapture)

Why risk eternity by hanging onto anything the world has to offer...

It is only going to burn and turn into pain!

Choose God’s Christ...Jesus Christ...NOW!

Don’t “play church”...don’t pretend now and wait until later!

This is not a game...we don’t have time to play games!

Jesus Christ is real. What the Bible says is real

If you have been playing church but now want to choose for real,
come up here

v13 Beloved of the Lord:

said because they were wondering if the Lord had forsaken them, having apparently received a letter telling them they missed the Rapture and were in the Great Tribulation and Paul is reassuring them of their position before God

God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation:

“Please don’t be anxious. You are chosen...not forsaken.

You believed what God said...like Abraham...and are accounted righteous...like Abraham.

You were chosen by the Lord...just as the disciples were.”

John 15:16 “You have not chosen me, I have chosen you”

Notice: past tense

When were we chosen by God to be saved?

From eternity past (Eph 1:4)

God is omniscient...He knows everything...He knows us

Jer 1:4-5 Before I formed you, I knew you

Before you were born I sanctified you and ordained you to be a prophet

Luke 1:13-17 “birth announcement” of John the Baptist...

God has free will...He chooses

With all-knowing knowledge, God chooses winners, not losers

Winner = he who puts his faith in Jesus Christ

God knowing me...choosing me...comforts me greatly

Comment:

the Bible teaches that

- God chooses
- Man chooses

Both are true

Proof that the Bible is Divine in its origin!

Man would have left one of these truths out...the one that made him less comfortable

but how can man reconcile these two truths in his finite mind?

Spurgeon: “I never try to reconcile friends.”

Another proof of the Bible’s Divine origin...

God chose me before the foundation of the earth...

because He certainly would not have chosen me after I was born!

Both proofs comfort me greatly!

Through sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth:

In contrast to those who don't believe the truth (v11-12)

Sanctification is the life-long "work in process" of

- being made holy and pure
- being transformed into the image of Jesus Christ
- being empowered by the Holy Spirit to obey and walk by faith

Notice: present tense

This also comforts me greatly!

v14 to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ:

obtaining the glory of Jesus Christ involves trials and tribulations, pain and suffering...because the servant is not above his Master

the trials and tribulations (the wrath of Satan) allowed by God to purify us cannot be compared to those suffered by unbelievers facing the wrath of God

(hint: they would rather mountains to fall on them than to face the wrath of the Lamb)

at the same time, the suffering believers face cannot compare with the glory that awaits (Rom 8:18)

notice: future tense

in v13-14, God has taken care of the past (chosen)
God is taking care of the present (sanctification)
God is going to take care of the future (glory)

What comfort!

- v15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast
Therefore, because God
- Knows you
 - Chose you
 - Saved you
 - Called you
 - Will glorify you

1. endure, persevere, stand fast upon the Rock...Who walks above the storms
The hope of the return of Jesus Christ enables us to look beyond the current circumstances to the glory that awaits...just as Jesus looked beyond the suffering, humiliation, and agony of the Cross
Heb 12:1-3

2. cling to the Word of God
How precious is the Word of God in difficult times of suffering!
The only source of comfort
Q: Do you want to prepare yourself for the next trial?
Store up the Word of God in your heart and mind today and every day

we can stand fast with the right perspective on our trials and tribulations.

- My perspective: Ouch! Whaaa! It's not fair! Why me?
(self-centered misery)
- God's perspective: my trials and tribulations are...none of my business! (God-centered submission)
My life...my body...my will...belong to God, not me!
He purchased me with the blood of His Son
He will do with my life and my body as He pleases
He is absolutely trustworthy...His love is unconditional...

So I can stand fast in His ways

Said another way...in the face of the storms of this life, be an oak tree...
an oak tree is a nut holding its ground
The world thinks we are nuts....Hold your ground!

hold the traditions:

Traditions = "precepts"
i.e. biblical teaching of God's Word...NOT extra-biblical ways of man

v16-17 God, even our Father which hath loved us:

“Case closed”! God loved them (us) and had not forsaken them – He sent His own Son to be our substitute to bear His wrath for our sin.

No, they were not in the Great Tribulation.

God was not pouring out His wrath on them...He had already poured out His wrath for their sins on His Son on Calvary

No, He had not forsaken them...He had forsaken His own Son

Matt 27:46

They loved His Son...the Father loves them

His love, displayed at the Cross, is demonstrated every day in the comfort, hope, and grace He gives

in difficult circumstances, go directly to the Source of all

- love
- hope (Ahhh! The re-appearance of hope!)
- grace
- comfort

so you can endure and march forward in victory

Be like Joseph, comforted in the sovereignty of a loving God in the midst of every circumstance.

2 Thessalonians Chapter 3

v1-2 pray for us:

Paul was a great man of prayer
He was continually praying for these churches he had planted...
And he was continually asking them to pray for him

We bear one another's burdens
We pray for each other...I pray for you...I covet your prayers!

This ministry will be healthy as long as

- prayer is going up
- God's Word is going forth

1. that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified:

"Pray for us as we journey taking the Gospel to the Gentiles....pagans
May the Word of God be as quickly received where we go as it was by
you."

Let the Word of God have free course in your life

- the lens thru which you see all things.
- the guide of your every word and deed.
- the delight and meditation of your heart (Ps 1:1-3)

2. that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men:

"And pray that the Lord keep us from
• insane men...men not in their right minds
• men without the intellectual honesty to reason with the Lord
• men who labor to oppose the work of God."

You cannot reason with someone who cannot...or will not...reason
You cannot win an argument with a drunk...any more than you
can share an Arizona sunset with a blind man

wicked = unreasonable (Is 1:18)

the unreasonable man is the man without faith (Heb 1:6)

ie misplaced faith (Rom 12:3)

Paul was opposed everywhere he went by men seeking to hinder the work
of God

we are opposed also...what do we do in the face of opposition?

Pray!

v3-5 But the Lord is faithful...the Lord touching you...the Lord direct your hearts:
“Even though men are not faithful, the Lord is.
He is our strength and our defense against unfaithful and wicked men.
In times of persecution, He will lead your hearts to the heart of God.”
Ps 119:105

into the love of God:

God’s love is so different from man’s love!

We cannot

- Compare it
- Deserve it
- Measure it
- Make sense of it

ALL we can do is receive it...by faith

God’s love is one of Satan’s favorite points of attack...

Has been ever since the Garden of Eden

Satan is quick to sow seeds of doubt concerning God’s love...especially
when things go wrong...in times of trial and tribulation

“If God really loves you, why did He allow this to happen to you?
he turns our focus away from God onto poor little us...
and we throw a pity party

But God’s love is inescapable to see if we simply keep our eyes on Him
He does love us and He is working in all circumstances
Esther was a great example...Job will be another

and into the patient waiting for Christ:

In trying times, the Lord also directs our hearts to wait on Him

We are so impatient...we are so quick to help God!

but our “help” hinders the work of God

He lets us “help” until we see that we are actually not helping...
and then we get out of His way

I have seen time after time God work something out if I wait for Him to
work rather than jumping ahead and working on my own
when I work alone, I make a mess
when I wait for God to work, situations get resolve cleanly and effectively

timing is everything...God’s timing is perfect

v6-12 withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly:

context: there were some misguided people in Thessalonica that thought, since the Lord was coming back soon, they quit their jobs, sold everything, and were hanging around waiting for Him

These were guys who could work but chose not to work...
They were able but unwilling

Paul's admonition is a very strong one

- command:
a military term: "a directive from a superior officer"

- In the name:
"by the authority of" Jesus Christ
a very strong command!

- Withdraw yourselves:
do not associate with those who
 1. live contrary to the teaching we have given you
 2. are disorderly (God is a God of order)
 3. are busy about other people's business instead of their own

- Be fruitful and productive while you occupy and watch.
Occupy in motion and action, not like a lump on a log
occupying space and time
waiting for the Lord to act does not mean getting lazy and
checking out of life...but occupying until He comes

"We walked the talk while we lived among you.

We worked to support ourselves...we were not 'welfare cases'...even though we rightfully could have.

If someone is not willing to work, but instead is going to go sit on the mountain waiting for the Lord to come back, let him not eat.

Such a brother is not to be a burden upon the fellowship because that brother is not obeying the Lord, who commanded us to occupy until He comes.

He needs to repent and get to work!"

"Say to those brothers/sisters. 'Shut up! Get a job! Earn your way!'"

The Bible has much to say about laziness...with spiritual application as well as physical

Prov 10:4

Prov 13:4

Prov 20:4

Paul is dealing with that corrupt attitude

Walking with Christ is not about self-centered free-loading...God does not call free-loaders

consider the characters in the Bible God used...none were free-loaders...all were busy doing something when God called them

Walking with Christ...who was a carpenter until age 30...is about diligently serving God and others

after all,

- what servant does not work?
- what friend mooches?

v13 be not weary in well doing:

“So, since

- the misconception about the timing of the Great Tribulation has been cleared up
- God’s love for you cannot be doubted
- You now have God’s perspective on your circumstances
- Your eyes are fixed on the Lord

let’s get on with life.

Always do the Lord’s will and never be weary in so doing.”

We get weary when we don’t see the immediate fruit of our labor

Remember, fruit is born in its due season...not any sooner

So don’t ever get tired of honest, God-fearing living.

A life empowered by the Spirit of God never runs on empty...and is exceedingly fruitful

v14-15 have no company with him...admonish him as a brother:
Paul was very serious about those who are able to work but chose not to
There is a monumental difference between not being able to work
and not wanting to work

These are hard times for many families...the job market is very tight...
Men willing and able to work but unable to find work
my personal encouragement to those looking for work is

- start somewhere...anywhere...even if it's "different"
- take a job to be industrious and bring home a paycheck...and to demonstrate that to potential employers...
- while continuing to look for "the job" you want
- let the Lord steer a moving car
- it is easier to get a job when you have a job

for those who were able but unwilling to work, Paul exhorted the fellowship to exercise church discipline

- Matt 18:15-18
- shun the rebellious in the fellowship...
- leaving them to the Holy Spirit to bring them to repentance.
- Then restore them

Church discipline...any discipline...makes a loud, loving statement
Sometimes love is tough in the short term...but it is always
nurturing at the end of the day

The Church is not a museum of "got-it-all-together" saints...it is a hospital for sinners.

Sometimes the medicine is strong! Sometimes surgery is required.

The Church is like Noah's Ark - were it not for the storm outside, no one could tolerate the stench inside!

v16 Lord of peace himself give you peace:
with obedience comes peace

v17 with mine own hand:
this letter of clarification of end times misconceptions was important enough, requiring such credibility of authenticity, that Paul wrote it himself.

v18 grace:
the beginning and the end