

# Why Do We Suffer Persecutions and Afflictions

2 Thessalonians 1:4

2 Thessalonians 1:1-3

1 **Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:**

2 **Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

3 **We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is *only* fitting, (Why?) because your faith is greatly enlarged, (you trust God with a faith the size of a mustard seed in more and more areas of your life) and (as a result) the love (Spiritual Love) of each one of you toward one another grows *ever greater*; (in magnitude.)**

Even though they are in suffering and tribulation Paul gives thanks for their Spiritual Love toward One Another.

PRINCIPLE:

THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING  
TO BE THANKFUL FOR IN A PRESSURE SITUATION  
FOR IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY  
TO GLORIFY JESUS CHRIST.

4 **therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you** (In verse 3 they thanked God for these bells now they speak to other people, other churches;) **we ourselves** (not just others, and surprisingly we ourselves) **speak proudly of you among the churches of God** (this means local assemblies who are in Christ by faith and worship the true God—God of the Bible, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and where the Word of God is upheld as final authority and taught. As Paul’s missionary team traveled and taught they spoke very admirably about this group of believers.) **for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.**

This is so beautiful, Paul boast of this assembly of believers because in *the* midst of all these things they were glorifying the Lord.

**Perseverance** in verse 3 he gave thanksgiving for their Spiritual Love.

In 1 Corinthians 13, *the* first impact of Spiritual Love is that **love** (Spiritual Love) **is longsuffering.**

Here in verse 4 Paul boast of their **perseverance**. *The* Greek word for **perseverance** is ◊**MAKROTHUMIA**◊ translated **longsuffering** and refers to patience or perseverance or being longsuffering in regards to people.

In our Spiritual Love we are longsuffering towards One Another.

But there is yet another word translated **patience or perseverance** ◊**HUPOMONE**◊ which refers to being patient or persevering in respect to things or circumstances.

And this is *the* word we have here.

SO IN VERSE 3 PAUL GIVES THANKS FOR THEIR BEING **LONGSUFFERING IN SPIRITUAL LOVE TOWARD ONE ANOTHER**, AND HERE IN VERSE 4 HE BOAST OF THEIR PERSEVERANCE IN RESPECT TO ALL THE THINGS THAT ARE HAPPENING TO THEM.

PEOPLE, PLEASE SEE HOW AWESOME OUR GOD IS IN GIVING TO US **THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT** WHERE WE CAN BE PATIENT WITH PEOPLE OR WITH CIRCUMSTANCES IN LIFE. THE ABSENCE OF THESE IS WHY SO MANY BELIEVERS GET DIVORCED OR WHY THEY GIVE UP OR MOVE, ETC.

4 **therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith** (that is walking moment by moment by the Filling of the Holy Spirit—trusting God in His promise of *The Rapture*.)

Next Paul describes their perseverance **in the midst of all your persecutions** (from so many sources, from *the* Romans, from *the* Jews, from *the* World and Satan) **and afflictions which you endure.**

Note **in the midst of...** this means that while they were being persecuted and suffering they remained steadfast in just trusting God and walking in the Filling of the Holy Spirit.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN  
PERSECUTION AND AFFLICTIONS?

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**Persecution** suffering directed toward the believer because he is a believer **afflictions** includes hunger, poverty; loss of family and friends—all brought on because of their belief in God and His Word, His Son and His Spirit.

**which** referring back to *the* Persecutions and afflictions

**you endure** without wavering in your faith in His Word or His plan.

It is amazing how easy it is for so many believers to waver in their beliefs due to pressure—if nothing more than popular opinion

There has been severe suffering of persecutions and afflictions throughout *the* Church Age. Note *the* first century church of Smyrna.

Revelation 2:8-11

8 **“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, (Jesus Christ, their Savior and our Savior) says this:**

9 **‘I know your tribulation** (an all-inclusive word of persecution and afflictions) **and your poverty** (because of their perseverance and faith) **(but you are rich)** (not in man’s eyes, not in man’s standards, but in God’s they are rich,) **and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.** Here is *the* head of all persecutions and afflictions

10 **‘Do not fear what you are about to suffer.** (You mean there is more?) **Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested,** (your faith will be tested.)

Compare this statement with *the* way it is stated in 2 Thessalonians 1:5 ***so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God*** here it is stated as *being tested*

**and you will have tribulation for ten days.** duration **Be faithful** In 2 Thessalonians, they have *perseverance and faith*, here...**faithful** In Galatians 5:22 this is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, so this is an exhortation to be Filled with the Holy Spirit **until death**, death is not bad, it is a promotion and here is *the* confidence of **rewards**

**and I will give you the crown of life.**

(Reward for perseverance of faith in tribulations in life due to your faithfulness to *the* Word of God)

11

**'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes (and believes in JESUS CHRIST) will not be hurt by the second death.'**

Back to 2 Thessalonians 1:  
Verses 5-12 addresses two related subjects:

## **The Coming Rapture and Coming Judgment.**

5 ***This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.***

6 ***For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you,***  
(of Second Advent)

7 ***and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, (coming judgment)***

8 ***dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.***

9 ***These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,***

10 ***when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.***

11 ***To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power,***

12 ***so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and *the* Lord Jesus Christ.***

5 ***This is a plain indication* (Greek: *to give proof*) of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.**

This verse is packed with theological issues, like **why suffering and being worthy of *the Kingdom of God*.**

**God's righteous judgment** ◇ **DIKAIOS** ◇ that which is right, that which is just;

From 'The Complete Word-study Dictionary New Testament' "This is expected by the one who sets the rules and regulations whereby man must live, whether that be society or God. Therefore, it means that which is expected as duty and which is claimed as a right because of one's conformity to the rules of God or society."

Plus ◇ **KRISIS** ◇ to judge, to make a decision.

Whether of society or God, there should be righteous judgments.

Deuteronomy 16:18-19

18 **"You shall appoint for yourself judges and officers in all your towns which the LORD your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment.**

19 **"You shall not distort justice; you shall not be partial, and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous.**

And in describing the reign of JESUS CHRIST in the Millennium.

Isaiah 11:3-4

3 **And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear;**

4 **But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.**

Once again, people, please understand *the* all importance of *the* Righteousness of God. Yes, **GOD IS LOVE**, but God is, also, righteous, and will judge **Un-righteousness!**

We saw this in *the* Ten Questions of Job. Sloppy and erroneous theology says that since Christ died for all *the* sins of the world and all are forgiven that everyone is saved. This kind of theology ignores the fact that being minus sins is not the full condition for eternal Salvation.

There must be the presence of perfect righteousness.

Salvation has a minus {-} and a plus {+}.

{-} **Minus sins** which Christ took care of on the cross.

{+} **Plus God's perfect righteousness** which God imputes to everyone who believes in JESUS CHRIST.

This is *the* presence of Religion. Religion proclaims that you get rid of sin by asking God to forgive you, or confess your sins or stop sinning.

And Religions try's to **add righteousness** by being moral, being good or doing their list of do's and don'ts or do and do, do and do, and your good will outnumber your bad. The bible is very clear there is nothing we can do to take away our sins and there nothing we can do to make ourselves righteous before God.

Galatians 3:11

11 **Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."**

Since we are not justified by the Law,  
**HOW THEN ARE WE JUSTIFIED?**

Romans 5:1

1 **Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,**

There is so much faulty theology being taught in churches around the world. You must be aware of the necessity of both the minus{-} and plus{+} of *the* Gospel and how each of these is accomplished.

{-} The minus (of Penalty of sin) is graciously taken care of by JESUS CHRIST on the cross.

{+} The plus (of perfect righteousness) is by Faith alone in Christ Alone.

There are so many people today who deny judgment by God, especially, judgment in time and for Eternity.

In John 16

JESUS EXPLAINS THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS  
of 'sin'—not believing in Him as Savior—  
of 'righteousness'—which is required to spend eternity with Jesus—  
and  
of 'Judgment'—for it is certain—

## **Righteous judgment**

2 Thessalonians 1:5

5 ***This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment*** When does this judgment take place?

This is answered in verse 7:

7 ***When the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire***

When At the Great White Throne Judgment?

We will examine this in verse 7.

Let us note a few important points about **righteous judgment**

1 This is future tense as indicated by *the judgment—you will be considered worthy.*

2 Not translated in our text, but there is a definite article before the word *judgment*—**NOT A JUDGMENT BUT THE JUDGMENT**

- 3 Judgment is in the singular. So all these point to a future judgment by God of these believers lives.

And, people, there is going to be a judgment of your life at *the* Judgement Seat of Christ.

1 Corinthians 4:5

- 5 **Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, *but wait* until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of *men's* hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.**

2 Thessalonians 1:5

- 5 **This is a plain indication (proof) of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.**

- 1 Yes, on *the* cross, JESUS CHRIST bore *the* judgment for all sins.

- 2 God judged JESUS CHRIST in Righteous Judgment which means that God judged JESUS CHRIST rightly and for very unrighteous act.

- 3 This fundamentally means two things:

- 1 That *the* sins of everyone are judged and forgiven.

- 2 At the Great White Throne Judgment no one will pay for sins. They are at *the* Great White Throne

Judgment for rejection of JESUS CHRIST and it is for 'the sin' of unbelief that they will be sentenced to eternal separation from God.

4 But there is judgment by God for sins during history, during *the* life time of every person.

- 1 The emphasis in this verse is suffering from judgment which often disorients believers in *the* Church Age. *The* Thessalonian believers were suffering terribly. Needless to say we could spend months on the study of Why Christians suffer, but we will limit our study to pertinent issues in 2 Thessalonians and the coming rapture.
- 2 This suffering is a demonstration that God meets the needs of individual believers who will keep trusting in Him.
- 3 God is always in the process of judging unbelievers, even in time. It is these unbelievers who constantly attack believers in time and cause them to suffer. It seems unfair, it is unfair, but life is not fair, therefore, God provides for the believers under unfair suffering.
- 4 Believers can only suffer time, not in eternity. Whereas *the* unbeliever can suffer in time and will suffer for all eternity.

Does verse 5 mean that a believer may be considered unworthy of *the* Kingdom of God? Anyone, everyone who believes in JESUS CHRIST as their Savior will be in *the* Kingdom of God for all eternity. Believing in JESUS CHRIST makes one worthy to enter *the* Kingdom of God.

5 **This is a plain indication** (proof) **of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, considered worthy** (by whom?)  
By God the Father.

## NOW WHAT QUALIFIES A BELIEVER AS BEING WORTHY BEFORE GOD?

We had a hint of this in 1 Thessalonians 2:12

12 **so that you would walk** (live each day) **in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.**

Question: *WHAT IS WALKING WORTHY OF GOD?*

1 We start off with Hebrews 11:6 **and without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.***

2 Then Galatians 5:16

**But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.**

3 So we walk by faith in the Holy Spirit who qualifies us as walking worthy of *the* Lord. Walking worthy of the Lord is not what we do, but in who's power we walk.

4 This has always been the walk that is worthy of *the* Lord

As we look at a passage in Ezekiel remember, he wrote during the Babylonian Captivity.

Ezekiel 36:27

27 **“I (God) will put My Spirit (Holy Spirit) within you and (by Him, you will be) cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.**

People, it is not what we do, what God is looking for is the work of His Spirit. Two Christians can give money, sing, witness, even come to Bible study... one is worthy of God and the other is not.

What makes the difference? One is Filled with the Holy Spirit by grace through faith, while the other is in the energy of the flesh.

5 Remember the Obedience that God is looking for is **to bring about the Obedience that is faith** Romans 1:5 and Romans 16:26...*the* Scriptures ... **has been made known to all the nations leading to the obedience of faith.** if you want to know what does it mean to obey God, look at *the* first and last sentences of Romans.

6 To walk worthy of God is to walk in a manner of perfect righteousness and *the* only way you can do this is by walking in His Spirit.

Romans 8:4

4 **so that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**

## 2 Thessalonians 1:5

5 **This is a plain indication (proof) of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, For which indeed you are suffering**

This is a wonderful statement given to Paul by the Holy Spirit.

This introduces a very important Principle:

Many believers suffer persecutions and afflictions for reasons other than considered here.

**For example,**

**Many**

- (a) — suffer because of sins; .
- (b) — trends of their sin nature; or
- (c) — because of overt sins .

Many suffer by association throughout their lives;  
*they do not break fellowship with those who do not desire to walk in a manner worthy of God and therefore suffer by association with these people.*

And thirdly...

Because they simply do not want to walk  
in a manner worthy of the Lord,

be where God wants them to be,

marrying whom God did not design for them,

not being in the operational will of God

or in the mind-set will of God.

They simply have their own mind-set on things on earth  
and suffer because of being out of the will of God.

*So just because a believer suffers  
does not mean they are being tested by God for rewards,  
but simply because they make bad decisions throughout their lives.*

**1 Thessalonians 1:5 reveals how we are to understand suffering.**

**Paul, in the filling of the Holy Spirit declares that believer's suffering is God's righteous judgment.**

**Most Christian teachers, etc., relate suffering with sin(s); an evil in themselves, to be avoided by the Christian and if you are suffering it is because of sin.**

The Word of God however teaches an entirely different understanding of suffering.

SUFFERING FROM GOD IS A MEANS FOR THE BELIEVER TO BE  
TESTED AS TO HIS FAITH,  
THE PERSEVERANCE OF HIS LIFE IN CHRIST.

Suffering from God is for God's own good purpose.

JESUS CHRIST taught on *the* night before His crucifixion that in *the* world you will have tribulation, it is unavoidable.

We should look at suffering as an opportunity to glorify Christ by revealing to man and angels that **JESUS CHRIST is our purpose for being here—to Glorify our Savior friend Jesus the Christ.**