

2 Thessalonians

CHAPTER 1

PAUL, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

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

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith grows exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other abounds;

4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure:

5 Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer:

6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on

them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:

12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 2

NOW we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together to him,

2 That you be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by

1:6 The world doesn't understand why the Christian turns the other cheek. This isn't because he is weak. Rather than take the law into his own hands, he simply commits himself to "Him who judges righteously." If God sees fit to repay, He will. The Scriptures tell us, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, said the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

1:7-9 Judgment Day: Such a thought should stir in us a passion for evangelism. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. For verses that warn of its reality, see 2 Timothy 4:1.

1:10 Our beliefs govern our actions. Those who don't believe that they are in danger of God's wrath will not flee from it.



"I never thought much of the courage of a lion-tamer. Inside the cage he is at least safe from people."

George Bernard Shaw

word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

4 Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

5 Do you not remember, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

6 And now you know what withholds that he might be revealed in his time.

7 For the mystery of iniquity does already work: only he who now lets will let, until he be taken out of the way.

8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall

destroy with the brightness of his coming:
9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

13 But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I further believe, although certain persons deny it, that the influence of fear is to be exercised over the minds of men, and that it ought to operate upon the mind of the preacher himself: "Noah...moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house" (Hebrews 11:7).

CHARLES SPURGEON

15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which has loved us, and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

2:11,12 If sinners refuse to truly embrace the gospel, God in His righteousness will give them over to "powerful delusion" and a "depraved mind" (Romans 1:28). Those who refuse to come to the light will be given over to darkness. See John 3:19,20 footnote.

CHAPTER 3

FINALLY, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:

2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.

4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that you both do and will do the things which we command you.

5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

7 For yourselves know how you ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample to you to follow us.

10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

12 Now them that are such we com-

mand and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

13 But you, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.



Archaeological discoveries confirm the Bible's account of historical events.

See Matthew 26:54 footnote.

15 Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

16 Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.

17 The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

3:1 Paul again requests prayer for the evangelistic enterprise. "The word of the Lord" refers to the salvation message. "Unreasonable and wicked men" (v. 2) continually seek to stop the gospel from having "free course."

Hinduism

ORIGIN: India, about 1500 B.C. to 2500 B.C.

FOUNDER: No single person

ADHERENTS: 1998 worldwide: 825–850 million; India 780 million; Bangladesh 20 million; Nepal 20 million; Indonesia 7 million; Sri Lanka 3 million; Pakistan 2 million. In Fiji, Guyana, Mauritius, Surinam, and Trinidad and Tobago, over 20 percent of their people practice Hinduism. A considerable number of Hindus live in Africa, Myanmar, and the United Kingdom. U.S.: Estimated 1.5 to 2 million.

SCRIPTURES: *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *epics*, *Puranas*, and the *Bhagavad Gita* explain the essence of Hinduism. Hinduism is the world's oldest surviving organized religion. It is a complex family of sects whose copious scriptures, written over a period of almost 2,000 years (1500 B.C.–A.D. 250), allow a diverse belief system. Hinduism has no single creed and recognizes no final truth. At its core, Hinduism has a pagan background in which the forces of nature and human heroes are personified as gods and goddesses. They are worshiped with prayers and offerings. Hinduism can be divided into Popular Hinduism, characterized by the worship of gods through offerings, rituals, and prayers; and Philosophical Hinduism, the complex belief system understood by those who can study ancient texts, meditate, and practice yoga.

GOD: God (*Brahman*) is the one impersonal, ultimate, but unknowable, spiritual Reality. Sectarian Hinduism personalizes Brahman as *Brahma* (Creator, with four heads symbolizing creative energy), *Vishnu* (Preserver, the god of stability and control), and *Shiva* (Destroyer, god of endings). Most Hindus worship two of Vishnu's 10 mythical incarnations: Krishna and Rama. On special occasions, Hindus may worship other gods, as well as family and individual deities. Hindus claim that there are 330 million gods. In Hinduism, belief in astrology, evil spirits, and curses also prevails.

Christian Response: If God (Ultimate Reality) is impersonal, then the impersonal must be greater than the personal. Our life experiences reveal that the personal is of more value than the impersonal. Even Hindus treat their children as having more value than a rock in a field.

The Bible teaches that God is personal and describes Him as having personal attributes. The Bible regularly describes God in ways used to describe human personality. God talks, rebukes, feels, becomes angry, is jealous, laughs, loves, and even has a personal name (Gen. 1:3; 6:6, 12; Ex. 3:15; 16:12; 20:5; Lev. 20:23; Deut. 5:9; 1 Sam. 26:19; Ps. 2:4; 59:9; Hos. 1:8–9; Amos 9:4; Zeph. 3:17). The Bible also warns Christians to avoid all forms of idolatry (Gen. 35:2; Ex. 23:13; Josh. 23:7; Ezek. 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:20). No idol or pagan deity is a representation of the true God. They are all false deities and must be rejected.

CREATION: Hindus accept various forms of pantheism and reject the Christian doctrine of creation. According to Hinduism, Brahman alone exists; everything is ultimately an illusion (*maya*). God emanated itself to cause the illusion of creation. There is no beginning or conclusion to creation, only endless repetitions or cycles of creation and destruction. History has little value since it is based on an illusion.

Christian Response: Christianity affirms the reality of the material world and the genuineness of God's creation. The Bible declares that all is not God. God is present in His creation but He is not to be confused with it. The Bible teaches that in the beginning God created that which was not God (Gen. 1:1ff; Heb 11:3). The Bible contradicts pantheism by teaching creation rather than pantheistic emanation. The Bible issues strong warnings to those who confuse God with His creation (Rom. 1:22–23). God created the world at a definite time and will consummate His creation (2 Pet. 2:12–13). Christianity is founded upon the historical event of God's incarnation in Jesus Christ (John 1:1–14).

MAN: The eternal soul (*atman*) of man is a manifestation or "spark" of Brahman mysteriously trapped in the physical body. *Samsara*, repeated lives or reincarnations, are required before the soul can be liberated (*moksha*) from the body. An individual's present life is determined by the law of *karma* (actions, words, and thoughts in previous lifetimes). The physical body is ultimately an illusion (*maya*) with little inherent or permanent worth. Bodies generally are cremated, and the eternal soul goes to an

intermediate state of punishment or reward before rebirth in another body. Rebirths are experienced until karma has been removed to allow the soul's re-absorption into Brahman.

Christian Response: People are created in God's image (Gen. 12:7). The body's physical resurrection and eternal worth are emphasized in John 2:18–22 and 1 Corinthians 15. The Bible declares, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb. 9:27–28, KJV). Since we die only once, reincarnation cannot be true. Instead of reincarnation, the Bible teaches resurrection (John 5:25). At death, Christians enjoy a state of conscious fellowship with Christ (Matt. 22:32; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23) to await the resurrection and heavenly reward. A person's eternal destiny is determined by his or her acceptance or rejection of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (John 3:36; Rom. 10:9–10).

SIN: Hindus have no concept of rebellion against a holy God. Ignorance of unity with Brahman, desire, and violation of *dharma* (one's social duty) are humanity's problems.

Christian Response: Sin is not ignorance of unity with Brahman, but is rather a willful act of rebellion against God and His commandments (Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 1:28–32; 2:1–16; 3:9, 19; 11:32; Gal. 3:22; 1 John 1:8–10). The Bible declares, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23, NIV).

SALVATION: There is no clear concept of salvation in Hinduism. *Moksha* (freedom from infinite being and self-hood and final self-realization of the truth) is the goal of existence. *Yoga* and meditation (especially *raja-yoga*) taught by a *guru* (religious teacher) is one way to attain *moksha*. The other valid paths for *moksha* are: the way of works (*karma marga*), the way of knowledge (*jnana marga*), and the way of love and devotion (*bhakti marga*). Hindus hope to eventually get off the cycle of reincarnation. They believe the illusion of personal existence will end and they will become one with the impersonal God.

Christian Response: Salvation is a gift from God through faith in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8–10). Belief in reincarnation opposes the teaching of the Bible (Heb. 9:27). The Christian hope of eternal life means that all true believers in Christ

will not only have personal existence but personal fellowship with God. It is impossible to earn one's salvation by good works (Titus 3:1–7). Religious deeds and exercises cannot save (Matt. 7:22–23; Rom 9:32; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8–9).

WORSHIP: Hindu worship has an almost endless variety with color symbolism, offerings, fasting, and dance as integral parts. Most Hindus daily worship an image of their chosen deity, with chants (*mantras*), flowers, and incense. Worship, whether in a home or temple, is primarily individualistic rather than congregational.

HINDUS IN THE UNITED STATES

- Traditional movements include the Rama-krishna Mission and Vedanta Societies, Sri Aurobindo Society, Satya Sai Baba Movement, Self-Realization Fellowship, and International Sivananda Yoga Society.
- Hindu-based sects include the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (Hare Krishna), Transcendental Meditation, Vedanta Society, Self-Realization Fellowship, Theosophy, and Eckankar.
- Sects that have "Americanized" Hindu concepts include Church of Christ, Scientists (Christian Science); Unity School of Christianity; and several groups within the New Age Movement.

WITNESSING TO HINDUS

- Pray and trust the Holy Spirit to use the gospel message to reach the heart and mind of your Hindu friend.
- Share your personal faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Keep your testimony short.
- Stress the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as God's revelation of Himself.
- Stress the necessity of following Jesus to the exclusion of all other deities.
- Keep the gospel presentation Christ-centered.
- Share the assurance of salvation that God's grace gives you and about your hope in the resurrection. Make sure you communicate that your assurance is derived from God's grace and not from your good works or your ability to be spiritual (1 John 5:13).
- Give a copy of the New Testament. If a Hindu desires to study the Bible, begin with the Gospel of John. Point out passages that explain salvation.



The Great Commission

“Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (*Mark 16:15*).

“Have you no wish for others to be saved? Then you are not saved yourself. Be sure of that.” *Charles Spurgeon*

“If you do not make it a matter of study, how you may successfully act in building up the kingdom of Christ, you are acting a very wicked and absurd part as a Christian.” *Charles Finney*

“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest” (*Matthew 9:37,38*).

“Oh my friends, we are loaded down with countless church activities, while the real work of the church, that of evangelizing the world and winning the lost, is almost entirely neglected!”

Oswald J. Smith

“Why call you me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (*Luke 6:46*).

(See *John 4:7* footnote on how to effectively share your faith.)