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Standing Firm in Hope

Definitions in **bold** letters are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 Edition
or Roget's Thesaurus – **April 28, 2013**

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2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, 9-17

Introduction: Paul taught the Thessalonian believers that God had chosen them in **eternity** past. As time unfolded, He **called** them through the **gospel**. The choice and call of God are inherent (natural, normal) aspects (features) of His eternal plan of Salvation.

Paul was also thankful that they had demonstrated genuine faith and love as Christians. The fact that they were being persecuted was a testimony that their **faith** was open and vibrant (booming). It was imperative that they **continue** to stand fast in their commitment to Christ. God gives His people **comfort** and **hope** during the present time. He provides us with comfort especially in the midst of trials.

(Source: The Bible Expositor and Illuminator, Union Press Publication- Christian Life Series)

Thought 1. Comfort and hope are by God's grace because of the knowledge we learn about him and our Lord Jesus. As a matter of fact, grace multiplies as we gain knowledge!

2 Peter 1:2, Grace and peace be **multiplied** unto you through the **knowledge** of God, and of Jesus our Lord...

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, *Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means...*

NOTE: False doctrines are like winds, that toss the water to and fro, and they are apt to unsettle the minds of men, who are sometimes as unstable as water. Then, (2.) He would not have their comforts lessened, that they should not be troubled nor affrighted with **false alarms**.

(Source: The Matthew Henry Commentary on the whole Bible classic.studylight.org/com/mhc)

2 Thessalonians 2:3 ...for that day shall not come, except there come a **FALLING AWAY** first...

Falling Away defined 646. apostasia pronounced *ap-os-tas-ee'-ah*; **defection from truth (properly, the state) ("apostasy")**: -- forsake.

Apostasy, An abandonment of what one has professed; a total desertion, or departure from one's FAITH or religion.

1 Timothy 4:1, Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times **some** shall DEPART from **the faith**, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils...

Hebrews 3:12-14, Take heed, brethren, lest there be IN any of you an evil heart of **unbelief**, in departing FROM the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be **hardened** through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, **IF** we hold the beginning of our **confidence** stedfast unto the end...

Hebrews 6:4-6, For it is **impossible** for those who were once **enlightened**, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made **partakers** of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall **FALL AWAY**, to renew them again unto **repentance**; seeing they **crucify to themselves** the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

Hebrews 10:26-29, For if we **sin willfully** after that we have **received** the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of **judgment** and **fiery indignation**, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath 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?

NOTE: This is a return to the warning uttered in Hebrews 6 regarding the final and total apostasy of persons who **WERE** once **true Christians**, concerning whom it was affirmed that it "is impossible" to renew them. Here, the reason for that impossibility is stated in the fact that the **rejection** of Christ's one sacrifice can only result in the sinner's being left with none at all, "there remaineth no more a sacrifice"! Of course, it would be a mistake to construe every strong hearted and presumptuous sin as "**an eternal sin**," although the danger that it might become so should never be overlooked.

The impossibility of apostasy, euphemistically called the final **perseverance** of the **saints**, (also known as "**Once Saved, Always Saved**") is not a teaching of the New Testament; and the acceptance of such a doctrine can quite easily lead to a Presumptuous (willful) arrogance that issues in eternal death. Clarke's words here are appropriate:

The case is that of a **deliberate apostate** - one who has utterly **rejected Christ** and his atonement, and renounced the whole gospel system. It has nothing to do with **backsliders** in our common use of that term. A man may be overtaken in a fault, or he may deliberately go into sin, and **yet neither renounce** the gospel, nor deny the Lord that bought him. His case is dreary and dangerous, but it is not hopeless; no case is hopeless **except** that of the **deliberate apostate**, who rejects the whole gospel system, after having been saved by grace, or convinced of the truth of the gospel. To him there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; for there was but the one, Jesus, and this he has utterly rejected. (Source: *Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament* studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Luke 8:13, They on the **rock** are they, which, when they hear, **receive** the word with joy; and these have no root, which **for a WHILE** **believe**, and in time of **temptation (experience of evil)** **fall away (desert** (leave permanently), **DEPART**).

2 Peter 2:20-21, For if **AFTER** they have **escaped** the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are AGAIN **entangled** (entrap: CAPTURE) therein, and overcome, the latter end is **worse** with them than the beginning.

For it had been better for them not to have known the **way** of righteousness, than, **after** they **have known it**, to **turn from** the holy commandment delivered unto them.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-5 ...and that **man of sin** be revealed, the son of **perdition (destruction)**; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

NOTE: This man of sin is a prominent figure in the Bible, and the ultimate personification of the **spirit of the Antichrist** spoken of in 1 John 4:2-3. He will no doubt live many years before the Great Tribulation, but he will only be revealed as the man of sin during that period. The idea behind the title man of sin is that "Sin has such absolute domination over him that he seems to be the very embodiment of it." (Hiebert)

ii. This man of sin has many other titles in the Scriptures. He is called the **little horn** the Daniel 7:8. He is the **king of fierce countenance** of Daniel 8:23. He is the Prince that shall come of Daniel 9:26. He is the willful king of Daniel 11:36-45. He is the one who comes *in his own name* in John 5:43. And here, he is known as the son of perdition, *the man of sin, the lawless one* (2 Thessalonians 2:3 and 2:8).

(Source: David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible classic.studylight.org/com/guz/)

Daniel 7:8, I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots : and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

Daniel 11:31-32, And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall **pollute** the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the **abomination** that maketh **desolate**. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.

Matthew 24:3-21, And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the **disciples** came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the **sign** of **thy coming**, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of **wars** and **rumours of wars**: see that **ye be not troubled**: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many **be offended**, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because **iniquity** shall abound, **the love** of many shall **wax cold**. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

When ye therefore shall see the **abomination** of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the **holy place**, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) **Then** let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! **But pray** ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

NOTE: **Then let those who are in Judea flee:** These are warning specifically addressed to Israelites. **Judea, housetops**, and **Sabbath** all speak to a Jewish environment. b. This is because at the appearance of the abomination of desolation, the desolation will first be poured out at Judea, and because the

church will not be a factor at this time, having already been **caught up** to meet Jesus in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

(Source: David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible classic.studylight.org/com/guz)

2 Thessalonians 2:6-7, And now ye know what **withholdeth** that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of **iniquity** doth already work: only HE who now **letteth** (hinder: oppose) will **let** (hinder: oppose), until he be taken out of the way.

NOTE: Taken out of the way: We should not think that the **Holy Spirit** would leave the earth during the Great Tribulation. He will be present on the earth during the Great Tribulation because **many are saved, sealed, and serve** God during this period (Revelation 7:3-14 and 14:1-5), and this can't happen without the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is taken out of the way, not removed.

(Source: David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible classic.studylight.org/com/guz)

2 Thessalonians 2:8-10, 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: even him, whose coming is after the working of **Satan** with all **power and signs and lying wonders**, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received **not the love of the truth**, that they might **be saved**.

Thought 1. Love of the truth got us saved. But, in order to grow up IN Christ, we must stay with the love of the truth! This is the "first love" spoken of by Jesus in Revelation 2:4.

Revelation 2:4 ...I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast **left** thy **first love**.

2 Timothy 4:2-4 ...Preach the **word**; be **INSTANT** in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound **doctrine**; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves **teachers**, having itching ears; and they shall **turn away** their ears from the **truth**, and shall be turned unto **fables (fiction)**.

Instant defined 2186, be present [ready at hand], **assault** [to attack by words or arguments (series of reasoning) with a view to shake, impair or overthrow].

2 Thessalonians 2:11-13 ...for this cause God shall send them strong **delusion** (error coming from false views), that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed **not the truth**, but had **pleasure in unrighteousness**.
But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning **CHOSEN** you to salvation through **sanctification (purification)** of the Spirit and **belief of the truth**...

Chosen defined (to elect for eternal happiness; to predestinate to LIFE)

Ephesians 1:3-7, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: according as he **hath chosen us** IN him before the **foundation** of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having **predestinated** us unto the **adoption** of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will... the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved: in whom we have redemption through **his blood**, the **forgiveness of sins**, according to the riches of his **GRACE**...

Romans 8:29, For whom he did foreknow, he also did **predestinate** to be conformed to the **image** of his Son, that **he** might be the **firstborn** among many brethren.

Thought 1. Like Jesus, the firstborn from the dead, we have only **God's nature**. He doesn't have two natures, and neither do we.

Revelation 17:8 ...and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the **book of life** from the **foundation** of the **world**, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

NOTE: (It **seems** to indicate that the names of God's people were **recorded** before the world was created.) First, **corporate predestination** (as opposed to individual predestination) IS taught in the Bible.

The Church, as a whole, was part of **God's plan** from **the beginning** and in that sense we, as a group, were PREDESTINED and FOREKNOWN. Ephesians 1:4 says that we were **chosen** in Christ before the foundation of the world. Next, the translation of this verse is not precise. So far as the Greek goes, an equally likely translation of 13:8 is "Those whose names have been written in the Book of Life of the **Lamb** who was **slain** from the **foundation** of the **world**." 1 Peter 1:20 says that Jesus was "destined before the foundation of the world." The phrase in question appears again in 17:8.

There the translation is more precise and seems to favor the RSV rendering of 13:8. Thus, 13:8 in all likelihood simply emphasizes that the **Church** as **a whole** was **chosen before** the foundation of the world. The consistency of the scriptures forbids us from using 13:8 to **toss** the notion of **free will** out the window. (If, instead, we toss out the consistency of scripture then why are we here?) God would have **all men SAVED** but he wants us to **come** to him by our own volition (*will and pleasure*) and free choice.

If we can **come** to him by **choice** THEN we can **LEAVE him** by **choice**. He has promised that he will not cast us out but we are still able to climb out on our own. (Source: http://www.thywordistruth.com/Revelation_Commentary/Chapter_13.html)

2 Peter 3:9, The Lord is **not** slack concerning his promise... but is **long-suffering** to us-ward, **not willing** that ANY should **perish**, but that **ALL** should come to repentance.

2 Thessalonians 2:14 ...whereunto he **called** you by our **gospel**, to the obtaining of the **GLORY** of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thought 1. As we know, while IN sin, all humans come **short** of the **glory** of God. So, the glory of which he's speaking is the glory of being sons and daughters of God. (Heb. 2:10)

Romans 3:21-24, But now the **righteousness of God** without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God *which is by faith* of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: for **all have sinned**, and **come short** of the **glory** of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...

Romans 8:30, Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also **called**: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also **GLORIFIED**.

2 Thessalonians 2:15, Therefore, brethren, **stand fast**, and **hold the traditions** which ye have been taught, whether by **word (preaching)**, or our epistle.

Thought 1. In essence, the traditions they'd received made God's word effective. Whereas, the doctrines and commandments **of man** make God's word of no effect!

Mark 7:7-13, Howbeit in vain do they worship me, **teaching for doctrines** the commandments of **men**. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the **tradition of men**, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things... Full well **ye reject** the commandment of God, that ye may keep your **own tradition**. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him **die the death**: But **ye say**, If a man shall say to his father or mother,

It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; **making the word of God of none effect through your tradition** ...ye have delivered...

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, AND God, even our Father, 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**.

Grace defined 5485, charis pronounced khar'-ece; gratifying [giving pleasure]), of spiritual; especially the **divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude** [gratefulness. Gratitude is a virtue of the highest excellence, as it implies a feeling and generous heart, and a proper sense of DUTY.]): **favour** (favor, 1. kind regard; friendly disposition; Kindness ever accompanies love). 2. a gift or present; a token of love.], **gift** (POWER [strength], the faculty {ability} of moving or of producing a change in something)], **joy, liberality** (abundance), **pleasure**.

Stablish defined 4741, to set fast, to turn resolutely in a certain direction, or to confirm (make firm or certain, SETTLE):-- **fix, strengthen**.

Thought 1. Before Paul was born again, he wanted to do good, but couldn't! And HE did the evil he didn't want to do.

Romans 7:18-21, For I know that in me (that is, in my **flesh (human nature)**), dwelleth no good thing: FOR to **will** is present with me; but **how** to perform that which is **good** I find not. For the good that I **would (desire)**, I do not: but the **evil** which I **would (desire) not**, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I **would (desire, be inclined to)** do good, **evil** is present **with me**.

Thought 2. Now, Paul makes plain to the Thessalonians, that through Jesus, as new creatures, they can now **DO** the **good** they desire and not do evil! We, Paul, and, they, CAN do the good we desire, pleasing God, because we're no longer in the flesh!

Romans 8:8-9 So then they that are **IN** the **flesh (human nature)** cannot please God. But YE are **NOT** in the **flesh** but IN the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.

James 2:24, Ye see then how that by **works** a man is **justified (show righteous)**, and not by **faith only**.

Thought 3. Notice that he did not say "is born again" by works!

Titus 3:3-14, For we ourselves also **were** sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by **works of righteousness** which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to **maintain good works**. These things are good and profitable unto men. But avoid foolish questions ...genealogies ...contentions, and strivings about the **law**; for they are unprofitable ...vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is **subverted** (pervert the mind, and turn it from the truth), and sinneth, being condemned of himself. ...And let ours (our fellow Christians) also **learn** to **maintain good works** for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.