Women’s Bible Study

I & II Thessalonians

**Thirteenth Study** - II Thessalonians 2:11-17

**“Chosen To Salvation”**

Studies I&II Thessalonians Pages 63-67 (using Lesson 14)

Once again, the questions from Rev. Hanko’s Study Guides are in parenthesis after the questions.

All quotes by Wm. Hendrikson are from his New Testament Commentary on I & II Thessalonians

We again have a good amount of references and will sometimes have two ‘Food for thoughts’ a day.

**\_Day One\_**

**God’s Eternal Predestination**

Today we begin to look at verse 13 with a study of predestination.

**II Thessalonians 2:11-13 - Study Guide page 63**

**Read:** II Thessalonians Chapter Two Malachi 1:1-4 John 10:26-29 John 15:16

**Do:** 1. Read the introduction to Lesson Fourteen on page 63.

2. What are the two parts of God’s eternal predestination? (Q. 2. pg. 63)

3. Who hold that God elects and reprobates on the basis of foreseen faith and unbelief? (Q.2.a. pg.63)

See Canons of Dordt First Head error 3.

**Food for thought:** “By the predestinating purpose of God we understand, of course, that eternal counsel of God, according to which He, with absolute sovereignty, determined from eternity the destiny of all His rational creatures. In that predestinating purpose God has made among the rational creatures the distinction of election and reprobation. The former, God has chosen in Christ in His sovereign grace, to be conformed to the image of His Son, and to share with Him in His eternal glory, while with respect to the latter, He has just as sovereignly predetermined that they shall be destroyed forever, through the way of their sin. Moreover (and we particularly stress this truth), we do not conceive of these two, election and reprobation, to be on a par; rather, we understand the predestinating purpose of God to be such that the reprobation must serve the election of grace. Also here, the Scriptural maxim is attained: “All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28). And this means that, as the chaff is related to the wheat, or as the scaffolding is necessary for the construction of a building, so the Lord God sovereignly uses the reprobation for the realization of the election of grace. The two are inseparably connected, and in such a way that the former must serve the latter.”

Rev. M. Schipper in the Standard Bearer article: God’s Predestinating Purpose Realized

# To take with you today: Romans 9:18

## “God sovereignly works out reprobation

**Just as sovereignly as He works out election!**

**In the truth of sovereign predestination the truth is maintained that God is God.”** Rev. Schipper

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# \_Day Two

**Predestination – Soundly Scriptural**

Today Rev. Hanko has us look into scriptural proofs for the doctrine of predestination.

# II Thessalonians 2:11-13 - Study Guide page 64

**Read:** II Thess. 2:11-17 Matthew 11:25-27 Rom. 8:29-33 Rom. 9: 9-23 Eph. 1:1-6

Continued

\_Day 2 cont\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Do:** 1. Show that the doctrine of sovereign predestination is soundly Scriptural. (Q. 2.b. pg. 64)

Romans 8:29&30

Romans 9:11,13,18

Ephesians 1:5&6

2. Should we consider eternal election and reprobation (predestination) to be a hard doctrine? (Q.2.c.pg.64)

See Canons of Dordt First Head, article 6

**Food for thought:** “We would emphasize two things in speaking of reprobation: first, it neither makes God the author of sin, nor absolves the wicked from accountability for their sins; and second, God has a purpose in reprobation. The great difference between election and reprobation is this: God, because he has sovereignly chosen his people from eternity and determined all things necessary for their salvation, takes all the credit – all the glory of their salvation – for himself. Though he is equally sovereign in reprobation, he takes none of the discredit. In this respect, election and reprobation are not equal. God is the author of salvation because of election, but he is not the author of sin because of reprobation. In Romans 9:17-20 even the suggestion that God is wrong to find fault with sinners is called ‘replying against God.’ It follows, too, that the wicked are held fully accountable for their sins. This is clear from Acts 2:23, which not only tells us that the sin of crucifying Christ was foreordained by God but also that it was done with ‘wicked hands.’ All this does not imply that reprobation is arbitrary. It is not true that God eternally rejects some for no reason. Romans 9:22&23 gives two reasons: that God might make his wrath and power known, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy. Even reprobation serves God’s purpose of showing his mercy to his people, as is clear in the crucifixion of Christ (Acts 4:24-28).

Though we find reprobation a difficult doctrine for the flesh, we nevertheless believe that it must be taught so that men may tremble before God’s wrath and power and be in awe of his great mercy (Is. 43:4). Oh that many would tremble and be in awe today!” Rev. Ron Hanko in Doctrine According to Godliness

**Second Food for thought:** “But is not God then unjust? Is it not terribly unfair on God’s part to determine that any should perish? What kind of God is He? Stop with those charges, brother. Who do you think that God is? Thinkest thou that He must conform to your puny reasoning? Since when does the Almighty God owe to any man life? Why should the sovereign of heaven and earth be required to bestow His grace upon all? Must He bring every moral-rational creature into heaven? Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? (Rom. 9:20). The potter has power over the clay to make of the same lump one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor. (Rom. 9:21). Is God unjust when He does with His own as He sees fit? I confess that I cannot penetrate into the depths of the wisdom of God and explain why such a one would be reprobated, and another elected. All we can say, with Scripture, is that God does all things to His own good pleasure to the glory of His own Name.” Rev. G. Van Baren in the pamphlet - That ‘Horrible’ Decree

# To take with you today: Romans 9:21

### Scripture tells us some were ‘made unto dishonor’.

**Some were ‘fitted to destruction’.**

**Some were appointed to ‘stumble through disobedience’.**

**Some were ‘ordained to condemnation’.**

**It is only left for us to believe God’s word and stand in awe of his power.**

# \_\_Day Three

# Separation by the Word

Today we look into the effect of the preaching of the Word of God.

# II Thessalonians 2:10-14 - Study Guide page 64

**Read:** II Thessalonians 2: 13-17 Matthew 13:24-30 II Corinthians 2:12-17

**Do:** 1. How does the preaching of the Word separate between the elect and the reprobate?

Matthew 13:24-30 (Q.3.pg.64)

II Corinthians 2:15

2. What is the effect of the preaching upon those who believe? (Q.3.a. pg.64)

verse 13

3. What is the effect of the preaching upon those who do not believe? (Q.3.b. pg.64)

verses 10 - 12

**Food for thought:** “He (God) purposed to attain to His glory through the way of sin and grace, and along the line of election and reprobation. It is precisely this truth which the apostle is delineating in the context and particularly in the text cited above (II Thess. 2:11-14). It is evident that the apostle, neither in the text nor in the context, speaks literally of reprobation. Nevertheless, he definitely has this truth in mind. He has in mind, on the one hand, the divine disposition of those whom He places in the category “of the damned”; and, on the other hand, in sharp contrast to these, he has in mind those who are chosen of God from the beginning… Now we must notice how the apostle stresses the point that God realizes His sovereign purpose in both the reprobate and the elect. First of all, he shows how this purpose of God is realized in the reprobate. It becomes abundantly clear that reprobation is not accidental - as though God didn’t have anything to do with it, or that the wicked reprobates are thrust upon Him and, as a last resort, He finally decides to dispose of them…. Indeed, God sovereignly works out reprobation! Just as sovereignly as He works out election! Not only has God chosen the elect in Christ before the foundation of the world, but He also brings them to manifestation as His elect in the world. So also, He sovereignly works out reprobation. Not only has He determined who the reprobate are, but He also brings them to manifestation in the world. And the manner in which He does this is precisely through the same means whereby the elect are saved - the Means of Grace, particularly the preaching of the Word. These are the means which the Holy Spirit of Christ uses to bring the elect to manifestation.

Through that preaching the elect are brought to conscious faith in Christ. Through that preaching the elect are called out of darkness into God’s marvelous light. Through faith, which is activated by the preaching, they walk in all good works, which God also foreordained that they should walk in them. Now, precisely through these means, only now in an antithetical way, the reprobate come to manifestation. As a minister of the Word of God the apostle considered the proclamation of the gospel a savor of death unto death, as well as a savor of life unto life (II Cor. 2:16). It lies within the power of the preached gospel to save and to damn… ” Also here (vs. 10) it is evident that the means to realize this judgment of God over the reprobate, is the Word of truth, proclaimed to them in the gospel, which they do receive, but continue to find their pleasure in unrighteousness. But this is not all. In verse 11, he adds, “And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.” This is, indeed, strong language! God sends to the reprobate the energetic power of deception, so that they will believe the lie…. God works out reprobation. His predestinating purpose with respect to the reprobate He works out to the end.”

Rev. M. Schipper in the Standard Bearer article: God’s Predestinating Purpose Realized

Continued

\_Day 3 cont\_\_\_\_

# To take with you today: II Corinthians 2:15&16

**“No one can come so near to Christ as to hear his voice and be neutral.**

**He will either by the grace of God love that voice and desire to hear it always,**

**Or he will hate its very sound and shut his ears and heart to it.”** Rev. Ron Hanko

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# \_Day Four\_

**“Divinely Distinguished”**

Rev. Hanko has had us look at the basic teaching behind verse 13, now we will take a look at the verse itself.

# II Thessalonians 2:13 - Study Guide page 63 (Introduction)

# Read: II Thessalonians 2:13-17 Deuteronomy 7:7&8 I Peter 2:8-10

**Do:** 1. Verse 13 begins with “But”. What is the contrast Paul is making here?

1. Review the many contrasts Rev. Hanko lists in the introduction to Lesson 14 on page 63:

First:

Second:

Third:

Fourth:

1. How does Paul make it plain in verse 13 that salvation is God’s work?
2. According to verse 13, we are chosen to salvation through what two things?
3. What is sanctification of the Spirit?

**Food for thought:** “But!... Amazing contrast! In the preceding the apostle had written about the work of God with respect to the Antichrist and his world; here he speaks of the work of God in His own, the elect, “the beloved of the Lord”. In the context he spoke of a work of God the result of which was a strong delusion, so that men should believe a lie; here he speaks of His sanctifying Spirit and His efficacious calling unto the belief of the truth. There the delusion and belief of the lie must end in the damnation of all that had pleasure in unrighteousness; here the calling unto the belief of the truth has its purpose in the obtaining of salvation, the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ… How beautifully the Church is distinguished, when viewed in contrast to the antichristian world! Distinguished by grace! Chosen, called, sanctified, glorified by grace! Divinely distinguished!

Divinely distinguished! For, even as there is nothing in that glorious end unto which we are

distinguished, so the way in which that distinction is realized is wholly God’s. It is He, that sanctified us through His Spirit, and it is He that called us unto belief of the truth!... Sanctification and belief of the truth! By the one we possess our salvation, the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, in principle; by the other we possess it all by faith and hope! For, sanctification is the divine work of the Holy Spirit whereby we are delivered from the power and pollution and dominion of sin, and receive the beginning of a new life, the firstfruits of all the spiritual blessings in Christ, a new light, a new knowledge, a new righteousness and holiness, new power to fight the good fight even unto the end. And this sanctification reveals itself in us exactly as the beginning of perfection. It is perfection in principle. It is perfection in the midst of imperfection. It is the Spirit surrounded by the flesh. It is holiness in the midst of corruption. And, therefore, it reveals itself as fighting, always fighting to have dominion in our whole life. It expresses itself in sorrow over sin and hatred of all corruption and in a new delight after God. It is the beginning of the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Food for thought continued….

**\_Day 4 cont\_\_** “And, yet, even now we possess that final salvation! For, we have been called unto the belief of the truth! And the truth is the gospel, the Word of God concerning His Son, setting forth the fullness of that salvation we have in Christ, and assuring us of the divine purpose to realize that glorious salvation unto us. And belief of that truth is the activity of the saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as it embraces that gospel, appropriates all its promises, relies upon it in life and death, so that the believer is saved by hope!” Rev. Herman Hoeksema in the Standard Bearer article: Divinely Distinguished

# To take with you today: II Thessalonians 2:13

**From the very beginning God took you unto Himself,**

**made you His portion, His peculiar possession, preferred you!**

**What shall we say then?**

**What else can we say than: Thanks be to God!”** Rev. Hoeksema

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# \_Day Five\_

**Called by God to What?**

Today we look at what the gospel calls us to.

# II Thessalonians 2:14 - Study Guide page 64

**Read:** II Thess. 2: 13-17 Is. 55:11 Matt. 11:28 John 10:3&4 John 17:21-24

Rom. 8:17 &30 II Tim. 1:9 I Peter 2:9

**Do:** 1. Who calls us?

1. By what are we called?

3. To what are we called? (Q. 3.c. pg. 64)

verse 14

4.What does this calling mean? (Q. 4. d. pg. 64)

**Food for thought:** - - “Chosen unto salvation! Chosen, sanctified, called unto the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ! Unto salvation! And more specifically: to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ! For these two, ***salvation*** and ***the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ,*** are very closely related, refer to the same thing. They may, indeed, be distinguished. Salvation is the more general, the more comprehensive term of the two; the “glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” the more specific term, looking at salvation from the viewpoint of its final realization and perfection. But the two can never be separated. Salvation is the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the latter is salvation. Glorious distinction!! And in the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ salvation shall have reached its end, its final perfection… God’s knowledge and wisdom, God’s righteousness and holiness, God’s beauty and grace and mercy, God’s power and authority – all are imparted to the Lord. He is clothed with them. That is the glory of the Lord! The obtaining of that glory is the perfection of salvation! For we shall share it!

Always, indeed, it will be the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, never ours. For, He merited it through His suffering and death and resurrection; and He possesses it in Himself as the eternal Son of the Highest. Yet, also to His people He will impart it. To them also will be given perfect righteousness, holiness, wisdom and knowledge, power and authority, heavenly beauty.

Called by the gospel. Called by God. For, He called us through the gospel. The gospel is more than a mere presentation, it is more than a mere setting forth of the salvation in Christ. It is more than a mere offer. It is a calling. It addresses itself to you. It calls you to believe the truth.

Food for thought continued….

\_\_\_Day 5 cont\_ “It does not merely say that there is perfect righteousness, but it calls you into the state of that righteousness. It does not simply set forth the meaning of the spiritual blessing of forgiveness, but it assures you of it, it binds it upon your heart: thy sins are forgiven! It does not only explain to you the glory of the resurrection, but it calls you into that glory. It calls: come unto me and I will give you rest! Come to the waters and drink! Forsake your way and taste that the Lord is merciful and that he abundantly pardons! And that gospel is His Word! Nay more; it is He that calls us through that gospel. For, otherwise we would not hear and believe and embrace the promise and have eternal life and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. So foolish are we; so darkened in our understanding; so perverse of will that we refuse to heed that blessed call of the gospel. But He calls! And when He calls we hear and believe the truth and are saved. Glorious, divine distinction! Why, then, should He call me and you to believe the truth unto the obtaining of salvation, the glory of our Lord? Why should we be loved of Him, while others are not? There is but one answer: the divine distinction is, and remains divine, purely divine even to its very beginning, to its eternal source: He hath chosen us!” Rev. Herman Hoeksema in the S.B. article: Divinely Distinguished

**To take with you today: I Peter 2:9**

“When He created the world He had His mind on you,

that you might be His own and obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ!

With a view to you He created all things.

With a view to your glory in Christ He ruled all things ever since!” Rev. Hoeksema

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# \_Day Six\_

**Standing Fast**

Today we begin to look at what we are commanded to do in the admonition – ‘stand fast’.

# II Thessalonians 2:15 - Study Guide pages 64-65

**Read:** II Thess. 2:13-17 Psalm 57:7 I Cor. 15:57&58 Eph. 6:10-18 Phil.1:25-28

**Do:**

1. What words do the Canons of Dordt use for stand[ing] fast? (Q. 4. pg. 64)

verse 15

Canons of Dordt Fifth Head

1. Does “stand[ing] fast” or steadfastness mean: (Q. 4.a. pg.65)
2. That God holds us in His power,
3. That we cling to God depend on Him,
4. Or that God holds us and gives us power to cling to Him?

**Food for thought:** “Now the ministry of Paul, great apostle of freedom, was unrelenting warfare against this legalistic holding of the traditions, against what he calls, in [Galatians 1:14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=9&search=Galatians+1:14), “the traditions of my fathers.” This makes it all the more striking that he commands believers to “hold the traditions.” This is what this most determined enemy of illegitimate tradition does in [II Thessalonians 2:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=9&search=II+Thessalonians+2:15): “hold the traditions which ye have been taught.” He uses the same word as that used in [Mark 7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=9&search=Mark+7) for the vain doctrines of the Pharisees. He uses the same verb for honoring the traditions as that used in [Mark 7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=9&search=Mark+7) to describe the wicked observance of the Pharisees: “hold.” Jesus condemned the Pharisees for holding their traditions. Paul commands Christians to hold the traditions.

There is a difference.

Paul refers to the gospel-truths taught by the apostles of Christ—doctrines that are to be believed and commandments that govern the Christian life. These are handed over to the saints by the Word of God. The church of Paul’s day received them partly through the teaching of the apostles and partly through the Scriptures. We receive them through the Scriptures.  Food for thought continued

\_\_Day 6 cont. These truths about doctrines to be believed, about right worship, about church government, and about the Christian walk, we must hold. The exhortation is urgent. This is implied in the very nature of the traditions: they are the truth and will of God. This is their value. The urgency is expressed in the command in [II Thessalonians 2:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=9&search=II+Thessalonians+2:15). “Hold” is forceful: “hold on for dear life,” or “hold with might and main.” You think of the shipwrecked sailor holding on to the plank that saves him. Or, you think of a mother clasping her child against someone who threatens that child. Besides, the command is, “Stand fast, and hold.” A church that stands in the love of God by the Spirit will hold the traditions. Abandonment, one by one, of the traditions shows that the church has already fallen.

The context lends urgency to the imperative. The summons to hold the traditions immediately follows the prophecy of the great falling away that precedes the coming of Christ and the prophecy of the coming of the man of sin who will delude still more churches and professing Christians. “Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions.”

This is what we are doing when we maintain the creedal Reformed faith, worship, church government, and life—the Reformed tradition. For the Reformed tradition is, in its various aspects, the traditions handed down by the apostles in the Scriptures, as can readily be demonstrated by comparing this tradition with the Scriptures.

Our calling is to maintain the Reformed tradition. It is not our calling to create a new theology, to invent a new form of worship, to hammer out a new church polity, and to shape a new Christian life. We have no business doing this. This would be the grossest disobedience to the command of the apostle, “hold the traditions.” Precisely this is underway in Reformed churches today, as in many other churches. This is the falling away foretold in [II Thessalonians 2:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=9&search=II+Thessalonians+2:3).” Prof. D. Engelsma in the S.B. article: Holding the Traditions (2)

##### To take with you today: II Thessalonians 2:15

**“Standing fast is the opposite of being deceived.**

**Standing fast means to stand firmly in place, to be immovable.**

**Keep on standing fast by holding on to the traditions of the Word of God.”**

Prof. R. Decker in the Reformed Witness Hour sermon: Holding the Traditions

### \_Day Seven

**Hold the Traditions**

Today we look into what needs to be done in order to stand fast.

# II Thessalonians 2:15 - Study Guide page 65

**Read:** II Thessalonians 2:13-17 Psalm 27:11-14 Psalm 62:5-8 Mark 13:33-37

**Do:**

1. Does our perseverance depend in any sense at all upon us? (Q. 4.b. page 65)

see Canons of Dordt Fifth Head article 8

2. What is included in the admonition to stand fast? (Q. 4.c. page 65)

verse 15

3. What word is used for steadfastness in Psalm 62:8? (Q. 4.d. page 65)

4. What word is used for steadfastness in Psalm 27:14? (Q. 4.e. page 65)

5. What word is used for steadfastness in Mark 13:37? (Q. 4.f. page 65)

6. What is the difference between the three different words for steadfastness? (Q. 4.g. page 65)

**Food for thought:** “There is a body of doctrine. There is a definite worship. There is a prescribed and time-tested government. There is a defined Christian life. Hold it!

This is not easy. Church history proves how difficult it is for churches to hold the traditions. It requires resolve. It demands effort. It calls for courage. Joshua’s parting words to Israel apply: “Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside there from to the right hand or to the left” ([Josh. 23:6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=9&search=Josh.+23:6)). Today, all the emphasis is on church growth and mission. Few acknowledge the tremendous struggle that is necessary just to maintain the fundamentals of the Christian faith. But this is the emphasis of Christ in His charge to the seven churches of Asia Minor. He praises Pergamos and Philadelphia for holding fast His Name and keeping His Word ([Rev. 2:13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=9&search=Rev.+2:13); [Rev. 3:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=9&search=Rev.+3:8)). He calls Thyatira, Sardis, and Philadelphia to hold fast that which they have ([Rev. 2:25](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=9&search=Rev.+2:25); [Rev. 3:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=9&search=Rev.+3:3); [Rev. 3:11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=9&search=Rev.+3:11)).

Although we may not boast, since our holding the traditions is due to the grace of God that chose us to salvation “through . . . belief of the truth” and that called us by the gospel ([II Thess. 2:13, 14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=9&search=II+Thess.+2:13,+14)), it is remarkable that the Protestant Reformed Churches are still doing this after 65 years. It is remarkable that the *Standard Bearer* is holding the traditions in its 65th year. No one on earth praises us for this, but the apostle of Christ does. In [I Corinthians 11:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=9&search=I+Corinthians+11:2), he writes, “Now I praise you, brothers, that you keep the traditions, just as I handed them over to you.”

This points out something about the way in which we are to hold the traditions. The manner of holding them is important. When the apostle says, “just as I delivered them,” he makes plain that we must hold the traditions carefully. There must be doctrinal precision; pure worship; orderly church government; and a holiness in walk that pays attention to the details.

If the Bible teaches election and reprobation, we confess double predestination. If the Bible teaches that preaching is the heart of Christian worship, we allow nothing to detract from the preaching at every service. If the Bible teaches church rule by a body of male elders, we disallow women elders. If the Bible teaches avoidance of whatever arouses unchaste thoughts, I shun movies, the dance, television programs, and whatever reading materials tend to estrange me in thought and desire, as well as in deed, from my holy Friend, Jesus.

But my main concern regarding the way in which we hold the traditions is especially that we do so in a biblical, spiritual, living, dynamic manner. There is also a way of holding the traditions—a way of holding the Reformed traditions—that is all too human, natural, dead, and impotent. In the church as in society there can be a petrified conservatism that simply dislikes change. This is “traditionalism.” Tradition differs from traditionalism. The Lutheran theologian, Jaroslav Pelikan, described the difference this way, “Tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.”

Prof. D. Engelsma in the Standard Bearer article: Holding the Traditions (2)

*(The previous editorial closed by contending that a living, genuine holding of the traditions takes place only in the way of our constant, free interpretation of the Bible. The church holds fast what has been handed over to her by going back to Scripture.—Ed.)*

“When this free interpretation of Scripture goes on, it is possible that the tradition that has come down to a Reformed church is both corrected and developed.

Holding the traditions is not a static activity. It is not the same as preserving a family heirloom. We ‘may not hold the traditions as the servant of [Luke 19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=9&search=Luke+19) kept his lord’s pound, laid up in a napkin.

The Reformed tradition is not only to be preserved, but it must also, and can also, be developed. Then Scripture itself is not enriched, but the form in which the truth of Scripture has come down to us is purified and enriched. We may view this as the sanctification of the tradition: Error is purged and true knowledge is deepened and increased…”

Prof. D. Engelsma in the Standard Bearer article: Holding the Traditions (3)

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# \_Day Eight\_

**Everlasting Consolation**

Today we look at part of Paul’s prayer for the Thessalonians.

# II Thessalonians 2:16 - Study Guide page 65-66

**Read:** II Thessalonians 2:13-17 Psalm 16:7-11 John 14:1-3

**Do:**

1. What is meant by everlasting consolation? (Q. 5. pg.65)

verse 16

2. What is our expectation after we die? (Q. 5.a. pg. 66)

Psalm 16:10

John 14:3

II Corinthians 5:1

**Food for thought:** “The main thrust of Paul’s prayer here is that the Thessalonians may be consoled. And well he might, for they were in awful straits. He speaks of “all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure” verse 4 of chapter 1. Also, in verse 5 “for which ye also suffer,” and in verse 6 “that trouble you.” And in chapter 2 “that ye be not soon shaken in mind and troubled.” Hence, Paul supplicates Christ and God our Father that the Thessalonians may be consoled in their hearts and set firm on the only foundation unto all good words and work. And so Paul addresses the Mediator between God and man in behalf of these poor and yet so rich Thessalonians that He may console their troubled hearts and minds. And what is the ground of that petition? This: “which hath loved us.” God had shown that love clearly. He had sent Paul to them and they were called from darkness to light. And through the power of both Word and Spirit they had been formed into the church that was at Thessalonica… And here is the second ground for Paul’s prayer. “Hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.” Everlasting consolation, what is it? The word ***consolation*** means to call someone alongside one’s self in order to dry his tears and to fold such a one into one’s bosom. And note that this consolation is called everlasting. From all eternity, as old as God is, before this world was created, God’s thoughts were all for your and my consolation. From all eternity it was God’s plan to call you alongside Him in order to speak to you His comfortable words of consolation. You can see that clearly when Jesus came to earth. Remember His comfortable words: “Be of good courage, my son, all your sins are forgiven you?” That is the expression in time of that which is in God from everlasting. That consolation for God’s own is further shown in the incarnation of the Son of God. Still further in the gift of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost. Then further in our own regeneration, and finally it will be shown to angels and devils, to the good and to the wicked in the day of Christ. Then the whole Universe will see how God always planned to call the poor church alongside Him in order to dry their tears and to speak eternal words of comfort to them, words that will make heaven musical forever.”

Rev. G. Vos in the Standard Bearer article: Supplication for Consolation

# To take with you today: II Thessalonians 2:16

**“Before Thy face shall I abide;**

**O God, Thy truth and grace provide to guard me in the way;**

**So I will make Thy praises known,**

And, humbly bending at Thy throne, my vows will daily pay.” Ps. #159 st. 4

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# \_Day Nine\_ Our Hope

Today we look at the hope we have whether we are alive or dead in Christ when He returns.

# II Thessalonians 2:16 - Study Guide page 66

**Read:** II Thessalonians 2:13-17 I Corinthians 15:42-58

**Do:**

1. What is our hope for our bodies that rest in the grave? (Q. 5.b. pg. 66)

see I Corinthians 15:42-44

2. What is the hope of those that are still living when Christ returns? (Q. 5.c. pg. 66)

see I Corinthians 15:51-54

**Food for thought:** “..at the resurrection we shall arise in the same body that we now have, even though this body has returned to the dust of the earth. This body will be changed from an earthly body to a heavenly body. Paul explains this to us in I Corinthians 15:42-44: “So also is the resurrection from the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.” Beginning with the last statement, we find that we now have a natural body, but that this natural body will be changed into a spiritual body. We will receive a real, heavenly body. We will see with heavenly eyes, hear with heavenly ears, and we will eat the spiritual Bread and the spiritual Drink, Christ Jesus…. We will be fit to live our heavenly life in everlasting perfection. Thus, it will also be the *same* body. When God brought us into being at the time of our conception, He gave us our own person, our own individuality, our own nature, gifts, and talents. He did so even with a view to eternity. Not only the same body arises from the grave, but with it our own individual nature, our own gifts and talents…. We will be the same person yet changed from the earthly to the heavenly and the spiritual…. When this mortal body is raised in the last day it will be raised in *power.* Notice we will still be human beings. We will still be dependent creatures. Yet we will receive power to live with our whole being, body and soul, to the glory of God. No earthly weaknesses or imperfections will hinder us from giving full expression to all the gifts and talents God has given us, that in our own individual and unique way we may serve God’s purpose in the new creation among all the saints. The lame will walk, the blind will see, the deaf will hear. There will be no semblance of death there. Our earthly bodies are sown in corruption and will be raised in incorruption…. Finally, this present body is sown in dishonor and is raised in glory. In Philippians 3:21 Paul speaks of this present body as a vilebody, a body that belongs to our present humiliation… Our bodies often stand in the way, hinder us in our spiritual activities. Our faults and weaknesses become evident in all that we do and say. We are even forced to bear with one another’s weaknesses. Only grace gives us the victory over this body of sin and death. How comforting to read, “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed!” Our resurrection bodies will be like the glorious body of Christ, fit to devote ourselves with our whole being, in the company of all the saints, and in the midst of the new creation to the praise of the glory of God’s grace in the Beloved. We will drink from the Fountain of life and eat of the Manna of life, Christ Jesus. Our youth will be renewed every day, like an eagle’s, to lose ourselves completely in covenant fellowship with our God! That will be glory, glory no end.”

Rev. C. Hanko in the Standard Bearer article; Our Resurrection Body

# To take with you today: I Corinthians 15:42&43

“We will be raised in glory.

Imagine that! No more sin. No more weaknesses resulting from sin.

No more hindrances from having full and intimate communion of life

with God through our Lord Jesus Christ!” Rev. Hanko

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# \_Day Ten

**Christ’s Return**

Today Rev. Hanko has us look, once again, at what takes place at Christ’s return.

# II Thessalonians 2:16&17 – Study Guide page 66

**Read:** II Thessalonians 2: 13-17 II Corinthians 5:1-10 II Peter 3:10-14

**Do:** 1. What takes place when Christ returns? (Q. 5.d. pg. 66)

See II Corinthians 5:10

2. Why is that a comfort for the believers? (Q. 5.e. pg. 66)

3. What will happen to this present creation? (Q. 5.f. pg. 66)

See II Peter 3:10

**Food for thought:** “Following the final judgment comes the renewal of the world. The substance (of the city of God) is present in this creation. Just as the caterpillar becomes a butterfly, as carbon is converted into diamond, as the grain of wheat, upon dying in the ground, produces other grains of wheat, as all of nature revives in the spring and dresses up in celebrative clothing, as the believing community is formed out of Adam’s fallen race, as the resurrection body is raised from the body that is dead and buried in the earth, so, too, by the recreating power of Christ, the new heaven and the new earth will one day emerge from the fire purged elements of this world, radiant in enduring glory and forever set free from the bondage of decay....More glorious than this beautiful earth, more glorious than the earthly Jerusalem, more glorious even than Paradise will be the glory of the new Jerusalem whose architect and builder is God himself.” Herman Bavinck in The Last Things

# To take with you today: II Peter 3:13

**“I know that I will not be left forgotten in the grave,**

**And from corruption, Thou, O Lord, Thy holy one wilt save.**

**The path of life Thou showest me; of joy a boundless store**

**Is ever found at Thy right hand, and pleasures evermore.”** Ps. #28 st. 4&5

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# \_Day Eleven

**Comfort in Our Suffering**

Today we look at what is meant by everlasting consolation.

# II Thessalonians 2:16&17 - Study Guide page 66

**Read:** II Thessalonians 2: 13-17 II Corinthians 4:14-18 I Peter 1:15-25

**Do:** 1. What is included in our ‘eternal consolation’ according to the (Q. 6. pg. 66)

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 1, Question 1?

2. What else has God given us according to verse 16c?

3. How does this apply to our present suffering? (Q. 6.a. pg. 66)

See II Corinthians 4:16-18

4. What does this mean for our future? (Q.6.b. pg. 66)

verse 16

**Food for thought:** “And this also is given to the Thessalonians: good hope in grace. Yes, your English Bible says ***though*** grace, but that is not correct. The original has it: *in* grace. Hope, and good hope, what is it? Ah, but there is a beautiful story. Hope is the yearning love of God which is spread abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost that is given unto us. Hope is essentially longing for God! Oh, I can understand that Jesus calls heaven the simple seeing of God! Attend to the beatitudes: Blessed are the pure in heart for ***they shall see*** God! And God gives that to us: He gives us good hope. Ah yes, that hope of the Christian is good hope indeed. And that good hope you experience *in grace*! You know, grace, the grace of God is the very fountain of all salvation with all its blessings. Everything lovely and beautiful and attractive in the entire economy of salvation springs from that grace as from a fountain. Grace is the lovely Godhead Himself. And out of the depth of that Godhead comes the Water of the river of Life, and that is Christ Jesus our Lord. Grace is that atmosphere of salvation. When you have read your Bible with a believing heart and you close its covers, then the grace of the good hope steals into your heart. Then you look towards the heavens and meditate on the coming of the Savior from heaven. Then the good hope in the atmosphere of God Himself causes you whisper: Come quickly, Lord Jesus!” Rev. G. Vos in the S.B article: Supplication for Consolation

# To take with you today: I Peter 1:3-5

“Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/1-Peter-1-4/)To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, [5](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/1-Peter-1-5/)Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

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# Day Twelve

**‘Comfort and Stablish’**

Today we look at verse 17 and what the apostle prays there for the Thessalonians and for us.

# II Thessalonians 2:17 - Study Guide page 67

**Read:** II Thess. 2:13-17 Romans 1:8-12 Hebrews 4:1-12 Jude 24 I John 3:16-19

**Do:**

1. What does Paul mean by ‘stablish’ you?

2. What incentive does this give us? (Q. 6.c. pg.67)

See verse 17

See Hebrews 4:11

**Food for thought:** “The main idea is that the Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father (united in purpose) has given everlasting (that is, never-ending) *encouragement* and *good hope* to the readers. In view of their fears and doubts this help was, indeed, needed…The *good* hope of which Paul speaks is a hope that is well-founded, namely, upon God’s promises, Christ’s redemptive work, etc., is full of joy, never ends in disappointment, and has its object in God Triune. When, by God’s sovereign grace, the words of II Thessalonians (for example, with respect to the “*rest*” in store for God’s children, the “*victory*” of Christ over Satan, the divine “*election*” and “*calling* of the readers) are taken to heart, the readers will experience everlasting encouragement and good hope. Objectively (also subjectively, but only *to a certain extent*) they have it even now. Subjectively it will *then* be applied to their hearts *in full measure*. Of course, such encouragement and good hope never ends in man. Here, too, the circle must be completed. Everlasting encouragement and good hope result in gratitude and a desire to please the Giver. Hence, Paul writes, “Now many he . . . encourage your hearts (the central organ of your life) *in every good work and word*.” Such works and words are those which redound to God’s honor. Thus, the circle has again been completed. What came from God has, by way of thanksgiving, returned to him!” (Hendriksen)

# To take with you today: II Thessalonians 2:17

“Stablish you in every good word and work.

**Stablish you means that you are founded, that your feet are set on a rock,**

**and the Rock is Christ Himself.**

**If that happens you are able to stand,**

**and to stand firmly against all the onslaughts of the devil and of the world and the flesh.**

**Then nothing can unsettle you or trouble you.**

**Then you stand and say with the prophets:**

**I shall not be moved even though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.”** Rev. Vos

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# Day Thirteen

Notes for this review were taken from the above listed Reformed Witness Hour sermons,

Standard Bearers, and the commentary by Jamieson, Fausset, Brown.

**2:13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:**

2:13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning (from before the foundation of the world) chosen you to salvation (taken you for Himself, adopted in His eternal purpose) through sanctification of the Spirit (in sanctification worked by the Spirit, who sanctifies all the elect people of God, first by eternally consecrating them to perfect holiness in Christ, once for all, next by progressively imparting it.) and belief of the truth:

**2:14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

2:14 Whereunto (Unto which) he called you (God irresistibly called you) by our gospel, (by the preaching of the gospel) to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, which believers are privileged to share with Him)

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

**2:15 Therefore,** (For that reason – God’s sovereign choice of believers, so far from being a ground for inaction on their part, is the strongest incentive to action and perseverance in it) **brethren, stand fast, (**firmly rooted in one place. This is not something done once and then it is finished. This is an on-

going action. The Thessalonian believers must keep on taking a firm position so as not to be shaken or troubled) and hold (so as to not let go) the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. (truths delivered and transmitted orally, or in writing, which Paul preached to them and wrote to them in his letter.)

**2:16** **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,**

2:16 (Paul’s prayer for the Thessalonians) Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, (by His own might, ensuring the efficacy of our prayer) and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, (referring both to our Lord Jesus and to God our Father Who loved us in the work of redemption) and hath given us everlasting consolation (comfort in the present) and good hope (and good hope for the future) through grace, (in grace – how the gift was given)

**2:17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.**

2:17 Comfort your hearts, (comfort, rather than being unsettled as you have been through those who announced the immediate coming of the Lord.) and stablish (established, founded, confirmed, to make sure or stable) you in every good word and work. (the young converts needed to be established in work and word, {obedience}and not fanatical teaching.)