

1 and 2 Thessalonians More Thanksgiving

Interpreting the Text:

1. Professors Attridge and Bartlett discuss the disputed nature of 2 Thessalonians, proposing that this letter was written much later and by someone other than Paul who would have been familiar with Paul's work. How does this affect the way this letter is read, both as scripture and as a historical document? What evidence in the first chapter suggests that this might be someone writing as Paul pseudepigraphically (in his name and style)?
2. This letter places stress on the judgment that God will bring on the ungodly at the end of time. What might this tell us about the historical moment this letter was written in? What might it tell us about this audience?

Applying the Text:

1. 2 Thessalonians suggests that the suffering of Christians may serve to strengthen their faith and to make clear the faults of their persecutors. How do you understand human suffering and its relationship to God's love and providence? How does Paul's writing here influence your thinking?
2. What would you tell someone who doesn't trust the teachings of a disputed letter like 2 Thessalonians? What kinds of arguments would you make as an interpreter of this text?