

# Pilgrim Way Commentary on

## **1 Thessalonians**

**A Reference Commentary**

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## Introduction to 1 Thessalonians

The Pilgrim Way Commentary on 1 Thessalonians  
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## **Apology for This Work**

This commentary on the Epistles of John follows in a long line of other works by divines of the past as they have sought to study and expound 1 Thessalonians

This work grew out of over 25 years of both preaching through this epistle in three pastorates in Maryland, Delaware and North Carolina as well as teaching through them as an instructor at Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland. I needed my own notes and outlines as I taught and preached from 1 Thessalonians, so this fuller commentary flows from those notes and outlines. Thus, the layout of this commentary is a practical one, written by a preacher to be preached from in the pulpit or to be taught in a Sunday School. It was not written from an isolated study of a theologian who had little contact with people or practical ministerial experience. There are many such commentaries on the market and they tend to be someone dull and not very practical in their application. It is written as something of a theological reference manual to me, filled with quotes and outlines from various books in my library. The layout and format are designed to help me in my preaching, teaching and personal study of this book. I figured there may be others out there who may benefit from this work which is why I make it available, but the work is basically laid out in a selfish manner, for my benefit and assistance. You, as the reader, hopefully can find some profit in this.

This commentary cannot be easily classified into any single theological system. I believe that no single theological system is an accurate presentation of Scriptural truth in and of itself. When Charles Spurgeon once wrote "There is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless we preach what nowadays is called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else", he displayed a most unfortunate theological hubris. Calvinism is a human, flawed, limited and uninspired theological system, as any other human theological system. There is some truth there, as there is in any theological system, but it ranks no better than other competing systems, such as Arminianism (which is nothing more than a modified version of Calvin's teachings), dispensationalism, covenant theology, Lutheranism, Romanism, Orthodox theology, pre-wrath rapture, take your pick. All these systems are flawed as they are all the products of human attempts to understand and systematize Biblical presentations. They can all make contributions to our overall understandings of the truth but none may claim to be the only correct such presentation, at the expense of all others. Knowing the human impossibility for absolute neutrality and the human love for theological systems, I readily admit that I cannot be as dispassionate and uninfluenced by human teachings in these pages as I would like. No man can be. But I have made every attempt not to allow my own personal systems influence my understanding of what the clear teachings of Scripture is. I do identify with premillennialism and dispensationalism, but even my dispensationalism is used mainly as an interpretative tool.

I have freely consulted a wide variety of commentaries and sermons for insights and other views of various texts that I might have missed. As the old preacher once remarked "I milked a lot of cows but I churned my own butter." Direct quotes are attributed to their proper source to prevent that unpardonable sin of literary theft. But simply because I quoted a writer should not be viewed as an endorsement of all that he wrote or of his theological system. I selected the quote because I found it interesting and useful, not because I am in any degree of agreement regarding the rest of his teachings. In this sense, I have tried to follow the form of Charles Spurgeon's *Treasury of David*, where he quoted a wide variety of other writers. I consider his commentary on the Psalms to be the greatest commentary ever in reference to its format.

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This commentary is based on the text of our English Received Version, commonly referred to as the King James Version or the Authorized Version. I believe that this is the most preserved English translation available to us and that it is the superior translation in English. I can see no good reason to use or accept any of the modern versions, especially the current “flavor of the month” of the New Evangelicals and apostate fundamentalists, the corrupt and mis-named English Standard Version. When it comes to these modern, critical text versions, I reject them for a variety of reasons. One major reason is that they have not been proven on the field of battle. I have liver spots older than the English Standard Version, but I am expected to toss my English Received Text, over 400 years old, and take up this new translation, whose ink is still barely dry? How many battles has the ESV won? How many missionaries have done great exploits with an NIV? What revivals have been birth and nurtured with an NASB? We will stick with the translations and texts that our fathers have used and that God has blessed. We are also favorably inclined to the Geneva Bible, Tyndale Bible, Bishops Bible, and other “cousins” of our English text. The Greek text used is the underlying text of our English Received Text and its 1769 revision, which is the text most widely in use today by God’s remnant. This is the Greek text that forms the foundation for the King James Bible.

Each verse is commented upon, with the English text. The grammatical notes are limited to the tenses of the corresponding Greek verbs, as I believe the study of the verb tenses is the most important element of the usage of the Greek text, even moreso than word studies. Not every Greek word is commented upon, only unusual or important ones. I am guilty of “picking and choosing” my word studies instead of presenting complete word studies for every word. That system would simply be too unwieldy for my purposes.

I have also decided to do some textual studies, mainly comparing the King James readings with the English Standard Version. I also refer to the readings in the English translations that preceded the King James Bible for sake of comparison and to examine how the English Received Text readings developed from the Tyndale Bible, through the Coverdale Bible, the Geneva Bible and the Bishops Bible.

The presupposition of this commentary is that what the Bible says is so and that we will not change the text to suit our theological fancy. It says what it says and that is what we must accept, else we will be found unfaithful stewards of the Word of God, a judgment we fear. We will not amend our text but will take it as it is the best we can.

This commentary certainly is not perfect, nor is it the final presentation of my understanding and application of this epistle. A commentary over 25 years in the making can never truly said to be finished. As new insights are granted by the Holy Spirit and as my understanding of the epistle deepens, additional material will be added and sections will have to be re-written. One is never truly “finished” with any theological book. As one deepens and grows in his relation with the Lord, so does his theological understandings and that should be reflected in one’s writings.

This book was also written as a theological legacy to my four children. They will need to be mighty for God in their generation for their days will certainly be darker than the generation their father grew up in. This book is an expression not only of the heart of a preacher in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century but also of a Christian father for his children, so they may more fully understand what their father believed and preached during his ministry.

## Introduction to 1 Thessalonians

It is my sincere prayer that this unpretentious contribution to the body of Christian commentary literature will be a blessing to the remnant of God's saints in the earth as we approach the coming of our Lord.

## **1 Thessalonians Introduction**

**AUTHOR:** The apostle Paul, joined in his salutation by Silvanus and Timothy (1:1), and with specific mention of his name again later in the epistle (2:18). Early sources in church history that attribute this letter to Paul include: Clement of Alexandria (200 A.D.), Tertullian (200 A.D.), and Irenaeus (200 A.D.). Both external and internal evidence support the view that Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians. Paul's known characteristics are apparent in the letter (3:1–2,8–11 compared with Acts 15:36; 2 Corinthians 11:28). Historical allusions in the book fit Paul's life as recounted in Acts and in his own letters (2:14–16 compared with Acts 17:5–10; 3:6 compared with Acts 17:16). In the face of such evidence, few have ever rejected authorship by Paul.

**THE CITY OF THESSALONICA:** The city of Thessalonica, which was a Roman colony, enjoyed the advantages of a strategic location. It was located 100 miles west of Philippi and about 200 miles north of Athens. It was the chief city of Macedonia. The famous *Via Egnatia* (Egnatian Way), spanning Macedonia from east to west, passed through the walls of the city. This important Roman highway facilitated brisk travel and commerce and put Thessalonica into ready contact with the important inland districts on either side of it. It was the principal artery of communication between Rome and her eastern provinces. Due to its location, Thessalonica might well be called "the key to the whole of Macedonia." The dictum of Meletius concerning it was, "So long as nature does not change, Thessalonica will remain wealthy and fortunate." One of its native poets proudly called it the "mother of all Macedon."

Thessalonica was the largest city of Macedonia. It has been estimated that during Paul's time its population may have been as high as 200,000. The majority of the inhabitants were Greeks, but there was also a mixture of other ethnic groups, including Jews.

Morally, the Thessalonians were hardly any different from the citizens of any other large Greek city. Presumably, most were idolaters, though it is certain that some were seeking a different kind of religious experience than polytheism could provide; hence, they attached themselves (loosely) to the local synagogue.

Today, the city is known as Thessaloniki, or Salonica.

**THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA:** The establishment of the church is recorded in Acts 17:1-9. On his second missionary journey, Paul and his companions (Silas and Timothy) had just left Philippi and passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia to arrive at Thessalonica. As was his custom, Paul immediately located the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews for three Sabbaths concerning Jesus Christ. While some of them were persuaded, including a great number of devout Greeks and leading women, the unbelieving Jews became jealous and created an uproar in the city. Therefore it became necessary to send Paul and Silas away secretly by night to Berea.

Despite such ominous beginnings, a strong and mostly Gentile church was established in Thessalonica.

The church in Thessalonica was a model church. Paul cited it to the Corinthians as an example (see 1 Thessalonians 1:7; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5).

**TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING:** First Thessalonians is considered one of Paul's earliest epistles. From the letter itself (3:1-6), and the record of Paul's travels in Acts (Acts 17:10-18:11), it appears that Paul wrote this letter soon after arriving in Corinth on his second journey. This would put it somewhere around 50-52 A.D.

**PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE:** The abrupt departure from Thessalonica so soon after the beginning of the church naturally left Paul anxious about the condition of the young church. When Timothy joined Paul at Athens (cf. Acts 17:14-16), his concern prompted Paul to send Timothy at once back to Thessalonica to encourage and ground the new disciples in the faith, and to learn how they were enduring persecution (cf. 3:1-5).

When Timothy returned to Paul in Corinth (cf. Acts 18:5), the news was mostly encouraging (cf. 3:6-7). Despite persecution they had remained strong (2:13-16), and even proved themselves to be an example to others (1:6-8). As with any (young) church, they needed further instruction concerning holy living (cf. 4:1-12). They also needed to be reassured that their loved ones who died in Christ would not miss out on the blessings involving the coming of our Lord (cf. 4:13-18).

“The two epistles to Thessalonica are the most important Pauline epistles for a new convert to Christ to read. We often recommend the Gospel of John for its emphasis on the Deity of Christ and “believing”, but that was written primarily to convert a sinner (see John 20:31). First Thessalonians was written especially for brand new converts to Jesus Christ (see 1:2,5,6,9,10) (Peter Ruckman, *The Books of First and Second Thessalonians and Philemon*, page vii).”

#### **OUTLINES:**

Robert Boyd, *World's Bible Handbook*, page 584:

1. The Model Church 1
2. The Model Servant 2
3. The Model Life 3
4. The Model Faith 4
5. The Model Action 5

From J. Vernon McGee, two outlines, from notes from his “Thru the Bible” radio broadcast

- I. The Christian's ATTITUDE toward the return of Christ, Chapter 1 (to serve...to wait..., vv. 9, 10)
- II. The Christian's REWARD at the return of Christ, Chapter 2
- III. The Christian's LIFE and the return of Christ, Chapters 3:1- 4:12
- IV. The Christian's DEATH and the return of Christ, Chapter 4:13-18
- V. The Christian's ACTIONS in view of the return of Christ, Chapter 5

- I. Coming of Christ is an INSPIRING HOPE, Chapter 1
- II. Coming of Christ is a WORKING HOPE, Chapter 2
- III. Coming of Christ is a PURIFYING HOPE, Chapters 3:1- 4:12
- IV. Coming of Christ is a COMFORTING HOPE, Chapter 4:13-18



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### V. Coming of Christ is a ROUSING HOPE (leads to action), Chapter 5

- Chapter 1 - Paul's Entrance
- Chapter 2 - Paul's Example
- Chapter 3 - Paul's Encouragement
- Chapter 4 - Paul's Exhortation
- Chapter 5 - Paul's Entreaties

Outline from Harold Willmington, *The Outline Bible*, page 691:

1. It is an Energetic Church 1:1-3
2. It is an Elect Church 1:4
3. It is an Exemplary Church 1:5-7
4. It is an Evangelistic Church 1:8
5. It is an Expectant Church 1:9,10

#### **NAMES AND TITLES FOR THE LORD IN 1 THESSALONIANS**

1. Lord Jesus Christ 1:1; 5:9
2. Lord 1:6; 4:16
3. His Son 1:10a
4. Christ 2:6; 4:16
5. Jesus 1:10b; 4:14
6. Christ Jesus 2:14
7. Lord Jesus 2:15

#### **NAMES AND TITLES OF GOD IN 1 THESSALONIANS**

1. Father 1:1
2. Living and true God 1:9
3. God of Peace 5:23

#### **NAMES AND TITLES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN 1 THESSALONIANS**

1. Holy Ghost 1:5,6
2. His Spirit 4:8
3. The Spirit 5:19

### **Booklist on 1 and 2 Thessalonians**

! *An Annotated Bibliography of Reference Works and Commentaries on the Greek New Testament*, by Jon Weatherly, Cincinnati Bible College & Seminary, for Fall Semester, 2003.

@ *Commenting and Commentaries* by Charles Spurgeon

# *An Introduction to the New Testament Volume 2: The Pauline Epistles* by D. Edmond Hiebert

\$ *The Minister's Library* by Cyril Barber

% *New Testament Commentary Survey* by D. A. Carson

& Ligonier Ministries blog

\* by the author, John Cereghin

\$ Askwith, Edward Harrison, *An Introduction to the Thessalonian Epistles*, 1902. An effective vindication of the Pauline authorship of both letters with a treatise on 2 Thessalonians.

# Auberlin, C. A., and Riggerback, C. J., "The Two Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians," Lange's *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*. 1950. Valuable textual exegesis with an abundance of ethical, homiletical, and practical material added, much of which is definitely dated. A conservative Lutheran commentary. The additions by the translator add to the value of the work.

& Beale, G. K., *1-2 Thessalonians*, IVP New Testament Commentary, 2003. Beale has written what many consider to be a definitive commentary on the book of Revelation and now we have the results of his research into the Thessalonian epistles. Whether one agrees or disagrees with all of his conclusions, Beale always has interesting food for thought.

# Bailey, John W., and Clarke, James W., "The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians," *The Interpreter's Bible*. Volume 11, 1955. Uses the Authorized and Revised Standard versions texts, in keeping with the format of the series, the material is divided into two parts, exegetical and expository notes. The work of two capable American liberal scholars.

# Best, Ernest, "A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians", *Harper's New Testament Commentaries*, 1972. Based on the author's own translation. This verse-by-verse critical commentary, the work of a British liberal scholar, holds that both epistles were written by the same author "who was probably Paul but may have been Silvanus or Timothy." Seeks to view the letters in the light of the possible influence of Gnosticism and allied movements. Pays attention to grammatical, linguistic, and textual matters.

# Bicknell, E. J., "The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians." *Westminster Commentaries*, 1932. Uses the English Revised Version. The introduction supports the authenticity of both epistles as well as their present order. A careful paraphrase follows the biblical text section by section. The exegetical notes, verse by verse, are

## 1 Thessalonians 2

rather brief, with added excursuses at points of special importance. Anglican, with some liberal leanings.

\$ Of indifferent value.

! Bruce, F. F. *1 and 2 Thessalonians*. Word Biblical Commentary, volume 45, 1982. Rather fragmented in presentation, this commentary is not Bruce's best but still reflects considerable learning and mature reflection.

& Bruce's commentaries are always worth consulting and this commentary is no exception. Highly recommended.

\$ Demarest, Gary, "1 and 2 Thessalonians", *Communicator's Commentary Series*, 1984. A fairly strong entry in a weak series.

# Denney, James, "The Epistles to the Thessalonians," *The Expositor's Bible*. Volume VI, 1908, 1943 reprint. A vigorous and informative homiletical exposition by a noted Scottish theologian of the past generation.

\$ It is generally inferior to Milligan and cannot hope to compete with Hiebert's masterful study.

\$ Eadie, John, *A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians*, 1877. Characterized by Eadie's usual thoroughness. Readers may not always agree with his exegesis, but he does provide a helpful evaluation of all the different points of view with an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses. An essay on "The Man of Sin" is appended.

@ Edmunds, J., *Commentary on 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 1858. The author's notion of a Commentary, which he fully carries out, is contained in his preface. "My idea of the Middle-class Commentary is, that it should be in strict accordance with the doctrine and ritual of the Church, should illustrate her ritual, and should recommend her to the esteem and affection of her children, by proving her adherence to the Word of God."

\$ Elias, Jacob, "1 and 2 Thessalonians", *Believer's Bible Church Commentary*, 1995. Accessible but not penetrating.

# Ellicott, Charles John., *A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 1864. Greek text. First published in 1861, this noted, scholarly, highly technical treatment of these epistles is still of value for the advanced student. Places strong emphasis on grammatical matters.

# Erdman, Charles R., *The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians*, 1935. A brief yet quite thorough and easily read evangelical exposition by a noted Presbyterian professor and author.

# Findlay, George Gillanders., "The Epistles to the Thessalonians." *Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges*, 1904. Greek text. A careful exposition of the text of these epistles, giving attention to technical matters, together with practical insights.

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# Frame, James Everett, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians." *The International Critical Commentary*, 1912. Greek text. An important grammatical and exegetical study of these epistles. Weakest in its handling of doctrinal and eschatological matters.

! Green, Gene L. *The Letters to the Thessalonians*. Pillar New Testament Commentary, 2002. Very thorough treatment of Thessalonica as the setting of the letters, consistently close examination of the significance of Greek words in the letters.

& Because the epistles to the Thessalonians contain some of the most difficult and debated texts in the entire New Testament (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12), it is next to impossible to find a commentary with an interpretation of this text with which there are no unresolved problems. Green's outstanding commentary is not without its own problems on this text, but all things considered, this is probably the best commentary on these letters currently available. It contains much helpful background information and very helpful theological insight.

# Hendriksen, William, "Exposition of I and II Thessalonians." *New Testament Commentary*, 1955, 1964. An up-to-date, scholarly exposition of the Thessalonian epistles by a noted evangelical scholar in the Reformed tradition. Each chapter is concluded with a doctrinal summary of its contents.

\$ Amillennial.

# Hiebert, D. Edmond, *The Thessalonian Epistles. A Call to Readiness*, 1971. Uses the American Standard Version. A full exegetical treatment of these epistles on the basis of the original but suited to the English reader. Premillennial.

\* I've always found Hiebert to be okay but kind of dull, plodding and not very practical. They are very popular at Bob Jones University but I really don't see why.

# Hogg, C. F., and Vine, W. E., *The Epistles to the Thessalonians, with Notes Exegetical and Expository*, 1959 reprint. An analysis of the Greek text for the English student, with valuable word studies. A good combination of careful exegesis and warm devotional study. The work of two British Plymouth Brethren scholars, the volume sets forth a post-tribulational return of Christ.

# Horne, Charles M., "The Epistles to the Thessalonians. A Study Manual.", 1961. A brief, well-outlined study guide by an evangelical Bible teacher. The work is based on a study of the original but suited to the lay Bible student.

@ Jewel, John, *Expositions upon I & II Thessalonians*, 1583. Reprinted 1811 and 1841. Also in his *Works*. Hooker calls Jewel "the jewel of bishops." This work is in the usual style of the first Reformers, but rather more lively than most of them. Many of the topics touched upon were peculiar to the times in which the exposition was written. It will serve as a good specimen of the preaching of the Fathers of the English Church.

## 1 Thessalonians 2

# Kelcy, Raymond C., "The Letters of Paul to the Thessalonians." *The Living Word Commentary*, 1968. The Revised Standard Version is printed at the top of the page.

The work of a conservative scholar belonging to the Churches of Christ; the commentary brings out the force of the original for the common reader. Amillennial.

# Lenski, R. C. H., *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus, and to Philemon*, 1937. Prints the author's own quite literal translation as the basis for the exposition. A monumental exegetical study of these epistles by an accomplished conservative Lutheran scholar. Amillennial.

\$ Lineberry, John, *Vital Word Studies in I Thessalonians*, 1960. Elementary studies which, while based on the Greek text, are frequently unreliable

\$ Lineberry, John, *Vital Word Studies in II Thessalonians*, 1961. Similar to the writer's earlier studies on I Thessalonians. Emphasizes the meaning of New Testament words, but is full of inaccuracies.

# Lunemann, Gottlieb, "Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistles of St.. Paul to the Thessalonians." H. A. W. Meyer's *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 1884), Greek text. A thorough exposition of these epistles by a scholarly German professor of the past century. One of the justly celebrated older commentaries, with ample presentation of varying views on all important points. Dated but still of value for those familiar with the Greek or desiring the views of scholars of the past.

# MacDonald, William, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 1969. A detailed outline is given at the beginning of each of the sections into which the epistles are divided, followed by concise verse-by-verse comments. Suited to the lay Bible student. Premillennial, pre-tribulational viewpoint.

! Malherbe, Abraham. *The Letters to the Thessalonians*. Anchor Bible, volume 32B, 2000. The *magnum opus* of one of the leading scholars of Paul in his Greco-Roman social setting, this commentary is remarkably readable for so thorough and learned a work.

@ Manton, Thomas, *Eighteen Sermons on 2 Thessalonians II., concerning Antichrist*, 1679. Here Manton smites heavily at Popery. Richard Baxter wrote a commendatory preface to this valuable exposition.

! Marshall, I. Howard. *1 and 2 Thessalonians*. New Century Bible, 1983. Clearly written comments with balanced, informed conclusions.

\$ Martin, Michael, "1 and 2 Thessalonians", *New American Commentary*, 1995. Accessible but not penetrating.

## 1 Thessalonians 2

\$ Menken, Martin J. J., "1 and 2 Thessalonians", *The New Testament Readings Series*, 1994. Manages to be simultaneously short, eccentric and expensive.

# Milligan, George, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 1952 reprint. Greek text. A noted critical study by a pioneer authority in the papyri. Has much valuable material in the introduction and the added notes.

# Moore, Arthur L., "1 and 2 Thessalonians." *The Century Bible, New Series*, 1989. A concise verse-by-verse commentary by an evangelical British scholar. Makes frequent reference to the Greek, given in transliterated form.

\$ Far too brief to be of first choice.

! Morris, Leon. *1 and 2 Thessalonians*. TNTC, 1984. Like the one below, only shorter and cheaper.

! Morris, Leon. *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*. NTCNT, 1991. Morris has to be the writer of the clearest exegetical commentaries on the NT in the twentieth century. Informed, responsible comments expressed in crisp sentences.

# Neil, William, "The Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians." *The Moffatt New Testament Commentary*, 1950. Uses the Moffatt translation but is based on an independent study of the original. A stimulating work by a liberal British scholar. Weak in its handling of the eschatological passages.

\$ Palmer, Earl, "1 and 2 Thessalonians", *Good News Commentary*, 1985. A rather weak contribution.

@ Patterson, Alexander Simpson, *Commentaries on Thessalonians, James, and 1 John*, 1857. Notes of discourses, with much in them. Hints may be gleaned here in abundance by students who open their eyes

@ Phillips, J., *The Greek of Thessalonians explained*, 1751. Short, but not particularly sweet. Very scarce.

\*Phillips, John, *Exploring 1&2 Thessalonians*, The John Phillips Commentary Series, 2005, 233 pages. A very useful commentary. Premillennial, dispensational and based on the King James Version. His commentaries are worth the price of the book.

# Plummer, Alfred, *A Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians*, 1918. and *Commentary on St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians*, 1918. While not as full as the author's excellent work on the Gospel of Luke, these volumes provide a critical exegetical unfolding of these epistles. Greek words are often quoted but generally in parentheses, so that the non-Greek reader can readily profit from these volumes.

\$ Richard, Earl, "1 and 2 Thessalonians", *Sacra Pagina*, 1995. Clear and focused on philology. It adopts many interesting positions, some plausible, some implausible.

## 1 Thessalonians 2

Richard argues that 1 Thessalonians is earlier (mid-40s) than most people think...In line with much contemporary scholarship, he thinks that the literary, theological and sociological problems of 2 Thessalonians can be untangled only by subscribing to a theory of pseudonymity.

\* Ruckman, Peter, *The Bible Believer's Commentary on First and Second Thessalonians and Philemon*, 2005, 208 pages. Based on the King James Version and dispensational. Useful and practical, but with some peculiar spots that will require some discernment.

# Ryrie, Charles Caldwell, "First and Second Thessalonians." *Everyman's Bible Commentary*, 1959. A brief, well-outlined treatment of these epistles by a noted conservative seminary professor. Well adapted as a first volume for the study of these letters. Premillennial.

\$ Saunders, Ernest, "Thessalonians, Philippians and Philemon", *Knox Preaching Guides*, 1981, One of the better entries in the series, though clearly hampered by brevity.

@ Sclater, William, *Exposition upon 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 1627. Sclater is antique; but, in the usual Puritanic manner, he gives very instructive disquisitions upon a vast variety of topics suggested by the text.

@ Squire, John, *A Plaine Exposition on 2 Thessalonians II., 1-13, proving the Pope to be Antichrist*, 1630. Squire works out the point of the Pope's being Antichrist with very great cogency of reasoning. The exposition of the Epistle is lost in the point aimed at; but that point is of the utmost importance.

# Stevens, William Arnold, "Commentary on the Epistles to the Thessalonians" *An American Commentary*, 1890. Uses the King James and English Revised versions. A significant interpretation by a recognized Baptist New Testament scholar of the past century.

! Wanamaker, Charles A. *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. NIGTC, 1990. Best available commentary on the Greek text of the epistles, advocating the unusual notion that 2 Thessalonians was written first.

\$ The best all-around commentary on the Greek text.

& Wanamaker attempts to resolve some difficulties related to these letters by arguing that 2 Thessalonians was actually written before 1 Thessalonians...Like all commentaries in the NIGTC series, it is technical and requires some knowledge of Greek. A very useful work for those doing in-depth study.

# Ward, Ronald A., *A Commentary on First and Second Thessalonians*, 1973. Based on the Revised Standard Version, this verse-by-verse exposition seeks to bring out the message of these letters as well as to relate them to the life of the modern Church.

## 1 Thessalonians 2

Has sections on the theology of each epistle. The work of an evangelical Anglican scholar.

\$ Williams, David John, "1 and 2 Thessalonians", *New International Bible Commentary*, 1992. Too brief to be of first choice, but a sensible work within its limitations.

& Witherington, Ben, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 2006. Witherington has written a series of "socio-rhetorical" commentaries on a good number of New Testament books. Some are better than others and this volume is one of the better ones. The primary benefit of reading his commentaries is the wealth of contextual background information he provides.



## 1 Thessalonians 1

55 promises and 35 pericopes in 1 Thessalonians.

### 1. Introduction 1:1

**1:1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy,<sup>a</sup> unto the church<sup>b</sup> of the Thessalonians<sup>c</sup> *which is in God the Father<sup>d</sup> and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace,<sup>e</sup> from God our Father,<sup>d</sup> and the Lord Jesus Christ.*<sup>e-f</sup>**

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1a Paul's companions at the time of this writing were Silas and Timothy. He does not assert his apostolic authority as there was no need to in this instance. His apostleship, ministry or doctrine was not being attacked at Thessalonica. First and 2 Thessalonians are the only Pauline Epistles in which Paul did not elaborate on his name or the names of his fellow writers. This probably implies that his relationship with the Thessalonians was stable. The absence of any reference to Paul's apostleship in any of his preserved writings to the Macedonian churches, namely, those in Thessalonica and Philippi, is noteworthy. He mentioned his apostleship in all his other epistles and sometimes had to defend it vigorously (e.g., in 2 Corinthians). Evidently the Macedonian churches never questioned Paul's apostleship as did the churches elsewhere (e.g., in Galatia and Corinth).

1b "**church**" I never stopped to realize the probable structure of these primitive churches. We don't know the size of these churches but they may have numbered in the hundreds. Yet there were no centralized or dedicated church buildings where we meet today. How did they assemble? It must have been in the homes of members. Yet no one house would be large enough to house the entire church at once, especially on the Lord's Day. They met in the various homes and these house churches may have had a leader, or a pastor, who may have reported to a "city pastor", or the man who oversaw the teachings and the activities of these various house meetings. Thus, these churches would have multiple pastors (cf. Philippians 1:1 with the mention of the "bishops").

It is interesting that Paul calls it the "church of the Thessalonians", not "the church at Thessalonica". Similar language is used referring to the "church of the Laodiceans" in Revelation 3:14.

1c "**church of the Thessalonians**" What is the significance of this wording? It's interesting to see how Paul referred to the other churches in his epistles:

1. Romans 1:7 "to all that be in Rome"
2. 1 Corinthians 1:2 "the church of God which is at Corinth"
3. 2 Corinthians 1:1 "the church of God which is at Corinth"
4. Galatians 1:2 "the churches of Galatia"
5. Ephesians 1:1 "the saints which are at Ephesus"
6. Philippians 1:1 "the servants...and saints...which are at Philippi"
7. Colossians 1:2 "the saints and faithful brethren...which are at Colossae"
8. 1 Thessalonians 1:2 "unto the church of the Thessalonians"
9. 2 Thessalonians 1:1 "unto the church of the Thessalonians"

Now compare with the churches that John wrote to in Revelation 2-3:

1. Ephesus- Revelation 2:1 "the church of Ephesus"
2. Smyrna- Revelation 2:8 "the church in Smyrna"
3. Pergamos- Revelation 2:12 "the church in Pergamos"
4. Thyatira- Revelation 2:18 "the church in Thyatira"
5. Sardis- Revelation 3:1 "the church in Sardis"
6. Philadelphia- Revelation 3:7 "the church in Philadelphia"
7. Laodicea- Revelation 3:14 "the church of the Laodiceans"

**2. Paul's Thankfulness for the Thessalonians 1:2,3**

**1:2<sup>a</sup> We give thanks<sup>present</sup> to God always for you all, making<sup>present middle participle</sup> mention of you in our prayers;**

**1:3 Remembering<sup>present active participle</sup> without ceasing<sup>a</sup> your work of faith,<sup>b</sup> and labor<sup>2873</sup> of love,<sup>c</sup> and patience<sup>5281</sup> of hope<sup>d-e</sup> in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;<sup>f-9</sup>**

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1d God is called "Father" twice in this verse. The Epistles to the Thessalonians present the only instance where we find the expression, "in God the Father," used to indicate the position of a church. In the other epistles, in general, Paul says, "the church of God which is at Corinth," or "the saints which are at Ephesus," etc. It is probably because the Thessalonians were recently brought to the faith that Paul speaks of them in this way. Taking, so to speak, this church at its birth, he only sees it in its relationship to God.

The ESV omits the second reference of "God the Father".

1e "**grace and peace**" the twin blessings of salvation. "**Grace**," defined as the spontaneous and free favor of God displayed toward unworthy sinners for the sake of Christ, is the source and ground of salvation. "**Peace**," defined as spiritual wholeness and satisfaction, is the resultant state enjoyed by the sinner who has experienced God's grace.

1e Paul does not mention his apostleship in any of his writings to the Macedonian churches, those in Thessalonica and Philippi. He mentioned his apostleship in all his other epistles and sometimes had to defend it vigorously (as in 2 Corinthians). The Macedonian churches never questioned Paul's apostleship as did the churches elsewhere , as in Galatia and Corinth.

1f The ESV omits "**from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.**"

2a Paul had a very good relationship with the church and they didn't give him too many problems, unlike the churches in Galatia or Corinth. For that reason alone, even if for that reason alone, Paul had reason to be thankful! Any church that is not giving the preacher trouble is a church to be thankful for and encourage!

3a The ESV omits "**without ceasing**".

3a "**work of faith**" work and activity that is inspired and maintained by faith. You may not see the results or even the success but your faith in both motivates you onward in that work. Christian ministry is like this, as the full fruits of our ministry will not be seen here on earth but will be seen in eternity.

3b "**labor of love**" the toilsome, laborious work that is prompted and sustained by love when the difficulties mount. You work and labor for love' sake, love toward God and His love toward us. Working for the praise of man and to further your own name and reputation is a labor of love for yourself, as you can't work to glorify God and work to promote yourself at the same time.

"**labor**" is Strong's #2873 κοπος kopos; a beating, a beating of the breast with grief, sorrow, intense labor united with trouble and toil. This was an intense form of Christian service they were involved in. The more you love the Lord, the more labor you will invest in the Kingdom for Him.

3c "**patience of hope**" Why keep going on, when all around you seems discouraging, with little hope of success in sight? Hope is that motivator. It looks like the Church is going down and few sinners respond to the gospel, but we have the hope in prophecy and in the promises of God of our ultimate indication and success of the Kingdom of God. Without such a hope, we'd have no motivation to go on.

This "**hope**" is not "I hope I'm saved because I'm not sure if I am". The Christian can know of a certainty that he is saved. This "**hope**" is the blessed hope that the Christian will receive his glorified

**3. The Election of the Thessalonians 1:4**

**1:4 Knowing,**<sup>perfect active participle</sup> **brethren beloved,**<sup>perfect passive participle</sup> **your election<sup>a</sup> of God.** <sup>b-c-d-e</sup>

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body and finally be delivered from the sin and corruption of this present world and the body he now has. It is all tied up with the “glorious appearing” of Christ in Titus 2:13.

“**patience**” is Strong’s #5281 ὑπομονή *hupomonê*; steadfastness, constancy, endurance, the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings, a patient enduring, sustaining, perseverance. This is the mark of a man who will not quit in his service to God, regardless of how discouraging it may be or how difficult it may be.

3d The expectation was that in every life faith would work (Galatians 5:6; James 2:18), love would labor (Revelation 2:2, 4), and hope would endure (Romans 5:2-4; 8:24, 25).

Notice the famous triad “faith, hope and love” in this verse, in the order of “faith, love and hope”.

3e 1:3,4,5,10 In this chapter, we see the three-fold ministry of the Trinity to us:

1. The Father elected us- 1:3,4
2. The Son delivers us from the wrath to come- 1:10
3. The Spirit gives us assurance- 1:5

3g The ESV omits “**in the sight of God and our Father**”.

4a The ESV omits “election” and simply has “chosen”.

4b An elect person can know if he is elected. The perfect tense of the verb is used here, showing an absolute knowledge and an absolute statement, showing that one can know in an absolute sense if one is elect and if one is truly a child of God. What good is being elected if you can’t know that you are elect?

4c “**election**” Selection by God unto salvation. It is based both on the sovereignty of God and the foreknowledge of God (1 Peter 1:2). We must include both sides of this, else we will be guilty if ignoring one side of election to suit our theological fancy. This is not a honest way to study theology. But this reference is a general use of the term and it really cannot be used either for or against the Calvinistic doctrine of unconditional election.

There are various types of election presented in Scripture:

1. Election of the nation of Israel
2. Election for service (look at the callings of Jeremiah and Paul)
3. Election unto salvation

Election and predestination are not the same doctrine.

1. Election means a selecting of someone or something for something, such as salvation. In that context, only sinners are elected to salvation.
2. Predestination involves saints being predestinated to adoption (Ephesians 1:5). No sinner is predestinated to anything.

Biblical unfolding on election:

1. Election takes place “before the foundation of the world”
  1. **Ephesians 1:4** 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:
  2. **2 Thessalonians 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. The goal of election is that “we should be holy and without blame before him in love”.

**4. How The Gospel Comes 1:5**

**1:5<sup>a</sup> For our gospel<sup>b-c-aorist passive</sup> came not unto you in word only,<sup>d</sup> but also in power,<sup>e</sup> and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance;<sup>f</sup> as ye know<sup>g-perfect</sup> what manner of men<sup>h</sup> we were<sup>aorist passive</sup> among you for your sake.<sup>i-j</sup>**  
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1. **Ephesians 1:4** 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:
3. Election is necessary as the first step in salvation
  1. **John 6:44** No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.
4. Election is also based on the foreknowledge of God
  1. **1 Peter 1:2** Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

The Calvinistic term “unconditional election” is not a scriptural one, as there are reasons and “conditions” behind what God does and whom He chooses for salvation. He simply does not reveal all of these reasons to us, but that does not mean that such reasons do not exist. They are known to God and it is unlikely that we could understand His reasons, even if He chose to share them with us. But God never acts in an arbitrary manner. Also, the Scripture is clear that we do have a role to play in our election, so it is a paradox- God chooses us but we are responsible for our election. This is the balanced view and is the more Biblical view. Many Calvinists would accuse us who are Biblicists (neither Calvinistic nor Arminian) of being “Arminian” for insisting that 1 Peter 1:2 be considered in this discussion, but we dare not ignore this aspect of election for fear of being unbalanced. You must consider ALL relevant verses before drawing any theological conclusions.

4d “The great principles of Christianity - faith, hope, and love, which were in activity among the Thessalonians, gave evidence of their election. And this proof is the only practical proof of the election of the saints (J.N. Darby, *Collected Works*).”

4e Paul was in Thessalonica for only a short time, but in that time, he had instructed these new, Gentile converts in the doctrines of:

1. Election 1:4
2. The ministry of the Holy Spirit- 1:5,6; 4:8; 5:19
3. Assurance of salvation 1:5
4. The Trinity 1:1,5
5. Conversion 1:9
6. The Second Coming 1:10
7. The believer’s walk 2:12; 4:1
8. Sanctification 4:3; 5:23
9. The resurrection 4:14-17
10. The Day of the Lord 5:1-3
11. The tripartite nature of man 5:23

5a Paul is writing in a similar manner as he will in 2 Corinthians. His ministry was attacked and many of those attacks were personal, centering on Paul’s motivation and heart. But Paul reminds the Thessalonians, as he will the Corinthian church, “You know me. You watched me and heard me speak. You know how my party behaved around you, despite the charges and attacks from my enemies.”

5b “**our gospel**” The gospel Paul preached, the gospel of pure grace without works, as defined in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. This is the only gospel that can save the soul in this age. Any other “gospel” preached in this dispensation is a heresy. Our “gospel” is not the Sermon on the Mount, the Law, Matthew 24:13, Acts 2:38, nor is it found in the book of Hebrews or Revelation. It is in 1 Corinthians,

## 1 Thessalonians 2

Romans, Ephesians...in short, in Paul's epistles. It is not "our gospel" in the sense that Paul invented it but that he was put in stewardship of it.

5c Titles of the gospel in 1 Thessalonians:

1. Our gospel- 1:5
2. Gospel of God- 2:2,8,9
3. The gospel- 2:4
4. Gospel of Christ- 3:2

5d "At this point I may very solemnly ask whether it is not true of some who compose the present congregation that you know the truth only in word? There is a certain class of persons, and some of them are present this morning, who are professional sermon-hearers; you go one Sunday to hear Mr. A. and then another Sunday to hear Mr. B., and you carry with you our sacchraometers — instruments for measuring the quantity of sweetness in each sermon — and you take a gauge of the style and matter of the preacher; you estimate what blunders he makes, and wherein he could he improved, and you compare or contrast him with somebody else, as if you were tea-factos tasting Souchong and Bohea, or cheesemongers trying Cheddar and American Some individuals of this order are little better than spiritual vagabonds, without settled habitation or occupation; who go about from place to place, listening to this and to that, and getting no good whatever; while as to doing good, the thought never enters their brain. You cannot expect that the gospel will come to you in anything else but as a killing letter, for you go to hear it as merely words. You do not look for fruit: if you see leaves you are quite satisfied. You do not desire a blessing; if you did, you would receive it. It is at once one of the most wicked and one of the most foolish habits to waste our time in constantly criticizing God's Word and God's ministers. Well said George Herbert, "Judge not the preacher, he is thy judge." What hast thou to do to say of God's ambassador, that his words were not well mouthed? If God speak by him, God knows who is best to speak for him; and if his Master sent the man, beware lest thou illtreat him, lest thou suffer like them of old who illtreated the ambassadors of David, and drove him to proclaim war against them (Charles Spurgeon, "Degrees of Power Attending the Gospel" in *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, sermon 648)."

5e "**power**" This speaks of the power of a changed life. The Charismatic "signs, wonders and miracles" are not necessary here. Paul seldom emphasized his apostolic ability to produce signs and wonder, as he was able to do through the power of the Spirit. His emphasis was more on the power of a changed life through the grace of God. And it was not "in word only" as if it was done through Paul's oratory.

The "power" also has an idea of the preaching of the Gospel in the power of the Spirit, and not in the ability or in the wisdom of man.

If this is the very Word of God we are talking about, in what other way could it possibly come except in "power"? There is no weakness with God not are their any weaknesses or infirmities with anything associated with Him. It must come in "power" else it is not of God.

5f "**in much assurance**" One thing the Word of God gives when it comes to the heart is genuine assurance of salvation. Everything about the Word of God is "yea and amen" and there is no room for ambiguity with it. Once a sinner is saved, if he has been genuinely saved by the true Word of God is assurance of that salvation. Disbelief and questioning of the Scripture leads to doubt and questions regarding one's own salvation.

The ESV has "full conviction". This misses the idea of the assurance of salvation in the heart that accompanies the reception of the Gospel.

5g "**ye know**" is in the perfect tense, showing that the Thessalonians should have had an absolute knowledge of what kind of ministry Paul had among them and what kind of minister he was. This was very clear and apparent and the Thessalonians should have had no question or doubts about it.

5h "**what manner of men**" Paul and his company were honest men of character, men of genuine Christian culture.

**5. How The Gospel is Received 1:6**

**1:6 And ye became<sup>aorist passive</sup> followers of us,<sup>a-b</sup> and of the Lord,<sup>c</sup> having received<sup>aorist middle</sup> the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:<sup>d</sup>**

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5i **“for your sake”** Paul only had the spiritual welfare of the Thessalonians in mind during his time among them. Unlike the false teachers which infested the countryside in this day, Paul was not out to fleece the Thessalonians or to take advantage of them in any way.

5j How the Gospel should be preached:

1. In word- 1:5
2. In power- 1:5, in the power of the Holy Spirit, who will take that boldly and accurately preached Word and apply it to hearts, bring conviction of sin to the hearer.
3. With much assurance in that what you are preaching is true- 1:5
4. In the (power of the) Holy Ghost

6a Paul had a lot of success in Thessalonica. They became followers of Paul’s company, who were, in turn, following Christ. They patterned their lives after the lives and the testimony they saw in Paul and his co-workers.

6b **“followers”** is Strong’s #3402 μιμητης mimetes; an imitator. They literally became mimics of Paul and his company. It is okay to follow men as long as that man is following the Lord. The problem is when you are following the wrong man, for he will lead you to the pit. A group of “wrong men” would be Mohammad, Joseph Smith, Charles Taze Russell, L. Ron Hubbard, Oral Roberts, anyone with a program on TBN or any pope. Throw in Charles Darwin and Karl Marx for good measure for a group of men not to follow. To follow the vast majority of men is not safe, even in a Christian context. It is always safe to follow God and the Scripture. Everything and everyone else must be closely and carefully examined before we dare follow them.

Although the ESV’s use of “imitators” is technically correct, “followers” is better because not all imitations are necessarily good things. You can imitate something (or someone) outwardly yet not do so inwardly. Imitation coffee is not as good as the real thing. The same is true for imitation cheese, milk, meat, etc. Imitations tend to be cheap knock-offs, like cubic zirconium is an imitation of a diamond. We really don’t need imitation of the apostles, we need men who follow the apostolic example and teaching.

6c **“and of the Lord”**, which is more important than imitating Paul, or any other man. It is more important to be a Christian than a “Paulite”. This is the ultimate goal of the Christian life- Christ-likeness (Romans 8:29). But it’s always good to have some human examples to motivate us.

6d Two ways the Word is received:

1. **In much affliction.** This is the external manifestation. There was much persecution of the early Thessalonian church in Acts 17:5-8. Wherever the gospel advances, Satan is there to try to stop it. Suffering persecution and tribulation for the gospel’s sake without recanting your profession is a good “acid test” of salvation, for the mere professor will fall away at the first sign of trouble (see Matthew 13 and the parable of the sower for details).
2. **In joy of the Holy Ghost.** This is the internal manifestation and the Christian paradox. The more a Christian suffers for the gospel’s sake, the more spiritual joy it produces. That’s why so many martyrs could literally sing in the flames and why Paul and Silas could sing in a jail at midnight after a severe whipping. This is beyond the understanding of the world and the often marvel at it, drawing the only conclusion that is reasonable to them- that Christians are insane.

**6. The Testimony of the Thessalonians 1:7,8**

**1:7 So that ye were<sup>aorist middle infinitive</sup> ensamples<sup>5179-a</sup> to all that believe<sup>present active participle</sup> in Macedonia and Achaia.<sup>b</sup>**

**1:8 For from you sounded out<sup>1837-a-perfect passive</sup> the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia,<sup>b</sup> but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad;<sup>perfect</sup> so that we need not to speak<sup>present infinitive</sup> anything.<sup>c-d-e</sup>**  
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7a Through their witness and testimony, both individually as collectively as a church.

“ensamples” is an older form of “examples”. It is Strong’s # 5179 τυπος tupos; the mark of a stroke or blow, print, a figure formed by a blow or impression. But we also see “sample” in the word. The best way to example something would be to take a sample of it, like “taste and see that the Lord is good”. “It is an altered form of 'asample', from the French 'assample', a variation of 'essample'...An 'ensample' is a sample, pattern, model, precedent or example (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 124).”

The ESV expectedly updates this to “example” although all the pre-King James translations also use “ensample”.

7b What a commendation if this congregation by Paul! He says that the Thessalonians were so strong in their faith and that their conversion was so genuine, that other churches and believers in their area actually looked at the Thessalonian church as an example of “how to do it”. What a challenge for us individually and for our churches. Is there any reason why we should not also be “examples” to the brethren around us, that they could look at us and see how a Christian life ought to be lived? If we were following Christ as we should and living as we ought, then we automatically would be fulfilling such a ministry, even without realizing it. I’m sure the Thessalonian believers had no idea that they were being such a faithful witness until Paul told them what he had heard and seen in the area around Thessalonica. They were simply living in obedience to Paul’s teachings and to the leading of the Holy Spirit in their lives. They were simply exercising normal, Biblical Christianity and as a result, they were influencing others in Thessalonica and in that area for good.

8a Speaking of their evangelistic thrust and their public testimony among the lost in their area.

“sounded” as in blowing a trumpet. Strong’s #1837 εξηχεομαι execheomai; from εξ ex (Strong’s #1537), out, out from; ηχεω echeô (Strong’s #2278) a sounding; to sound forth, emit, sound, resound. Used only here in the New Testament. Sounding trumpets are difficult, if not impossible to ignore. So when a godly testimony sounds forth in a community, everyone in town will take notice of it, even if few heed the trumpet. But even if you ignore the call of the trumpet, you know that it sounded. You know the gospel call has been sounded, so there will be no excuse when that trumpet call to salvation is ignored.

8b “not only in Macedonia...” Due to its strategic location, the Thessalonian church was able to get the gospel out into all of its area thanks to the merchants that spread out of Thessalonica in all directions. This was not the result of some organized missionary or evangelistic program, as none is mentioned. It was through the life and testimony of the Thessalonians that this was sounded forth, in their ordinary, daily conversation as they went about their Christian lives. They lived genuine Christian lives in a pagan society and it had a major impact of all they came into contact with. This is the best kind of evangelism.

8c “so that we need not to speak anything” Paul could add nothing to the testimony and reputation of the Thessalonians, it was that good. It may have even been that their witness had been so effective that Paul saw no need to do any more pioneer missionary work in that area.

8d Nor was this all: the world was full of strange tidings and this beyond all Greece where the believers were impressed with the zeal and moral power of the Thessalonian assembly. "For from you hath

**7. The Test of Conversion 1:9**

**1:9 For they themselves show<sup>present</sup> of us what manner<sup>a</sup> of entering in we had<sup>present</sup> unto you, and how ye turned<sup>participle</sup> <sup>aorist</sup> to God<sup>b</sup> from idols<sup>c</sup> to serve<sup>present infinitive</sup> the living<sup>present active</sup> and true God;<sup>d-e-f</sup>**  
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sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith that is toward God hath gone out, so that we have no need to say anything." (ver. 8). Men were talking everywhere of the singular change and fact in that important entrepôt of trade which lay in the direct line between the West and the East. That a body of people should have abandoned their false gods, and be filled with the knowledge of the one true God in a joy which no sufferings could chill (as distinct from the Jews as from the heathen, and yet more distinguished in an all absorbing life of faith, love, hope, never so seen there before) could not but strike minds so acute, speculative, and communicative as the Greek. The sound of it rang out like a trumpet's in all directions, not about miracles or tongues, but their faith Godward: surely a fine, admirable, and gracious testimony had gone out in the midst of idolaters. For it was wholly in contrast with the hard proud legalism of the Jews, as decidedly as with the dark and indecent follies of the Gentile world. Indeed the effect was such that the apostle declares "we have no need to say anything." Why preach that which the very world in a certain way preached? Preaching has for its aim to make known the unknown God and His Son, to rouse the slumberers, to gain the ear of the careless for God's good news. Here men's lips were full of this truly new thing in Thessalonica; and from this active centre of commerce the report went out everywhere of a Macedonian assembly that renounced Zeus, Hera, Artemis, Apollo, and all the rest, without adopting circumcision or the institutions of Moses (William Kelly, *The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians*)."

8e "In those days there was a good deal of practical atheism abroad, and therefore the wonder was not so much that men left their idols, as that they turned unto the living God. It became a matter of talk all over the city, and the Jews in their violence helped to make the matter more notorious; for the mobs in the street and the attack upon the house of Jason all stirred the thousand tongues of rumor. Everybody spoke of the sudden appearance of three poor Jews, of their remarkable teaching in the synagogue, and of the conversion of a great multitude of devout Greeks, and of the chief women not a few. It was no small thing that so many had come straight away from the worship of Jupiter and Mercury to worship the unknown God, who could not be seen, nor imaged; and to enter the kingdom of one Jesus who had been crucified. It set all Macedonia and Achaia wondering; and as with a trumpet blast it aroused all the dwellers in those regions. Every ship that sailed from Thessalonica carried the news of the strange ferment which was moving the City; men were caring for religion and were quitting old beliefs for a new and better faith. Thessalonica, situated on one of the great Roman roads, and center of a large trade, thus became a center for the gospel. Wherever there are true conversions there will be more or less of this kind of sounding forth of the gospel. It was especially so at Thessalonica; but it is truly so in every church where the Spirit of God is uplifting men from the dregs of evil, delivering them from drunkenness, and dishonesty, and uncleanness, and worldliness, and making them to become holy and earnest in the cause of the great Lord. There is sure to be a talk when grace triumphs (Charles Spurgeon, "A Summary of Experience and a Body of Divinity" preached October 26th, 1884.)

9a This was Paul's habitual practice and way of life.

9b The evidence of their conversion was the fact that they gave up the old life and the old idols. The worship of the true God precludes any worship of dead idols. This is an acid test of salvation- if one is willing to forsake the old life and the old gods to follow Christ alone in newness of life. This is another "acid test" of a genuine believer as opposed to the mere professor for the professor makes little, if any change, in his life after his "conversion".

9c The Tyndale and Coverdale both have "images".

9d "**living and true God**" as opposed to the dead gods that the Thessalonians had worshipped.



**8. Second Coming Truth #1 1:10**

**1:10 And to wait<sup>a-infinitive</sup> for his Son from heaven,<sup>b</sup> whom he raised<sup>aorist</sup> from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered<sup>present middle/passive participle</sup> us from the wrath to come.<sup>c-d-present middle/passive participle</sup>**

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9e Serving God or any god, was completely foreign to the Roman and Greek mind. The Christian idea of service to God by one's life was extremely radical.

9f "These Thessalonians turned from their idols. Do you tell me that you have no idols? Think again, and you will not be quite so sure. The streets of London are full of fetish worship, and almost every dwelling is a joss-house crammed with idols. Why, multitudes of men are worshipping not calves of gold, but gold in a more portable shape. Small circular idols of gold and silver are much sought after. They are very devoutly worshipped by some, and great things are said concerning their power. I have heard the epithet of "almighty" ascribed to an American form of these idols. Those who do not worship gold may yet worship rank, name, pleasure, or honor. Most worship self, and I do not know that there is a more degrading form of worship than for a man to put himself upon a pedestal and bow down thereto and worship it. You might just as well adore cats and crocodiles with the ancient Egyptians as pay your life's homage to yourselves. No wooden image set up by the most savage tribe can be more ugly or degrading than our idol when we adore ourselves. Men worship Bacchus still. Do not tell me they do not: why, there is a temple to him at every street corner. While every other trade is content with a shop or a warehouse, this fiend has his palaces, in which plentiful libations are poured forth in his honor. The gods of unchastity and vice are yet among us. It would be a shame even to speak of the things which are done of them in secret. The lusts of the flesh are served even by many who would not like to have it known. We have gods many and lords many in this land. God grant that we may see, through the preaching of the gospel, many turning from such idols. If you love anything better than God you are idolaters: if there is anything you would not give up for God it is your idol: if there is anything that you seek with greater fervor than is your idol, and conversion means a turning from every idol.

But then that is not enough, for some men turn from one idol to another. If they do not worship Bacchus they become teetotalers, and possibly they worship the golden calf, and become covetous. When men quit covetousness they sometimes turn to profligacy. A change of false gods is not the change that will save: we must turn unto God, to trust, love, and honor him, and him alone. (Charles Spurgeon, "A Summary of Experience and a Body of Divinity" preached October 26th, 1884.)

10a The Tyndale, Coverdale and Geneva all have "look", which is a good variation.

10b Another fruit of the Thessalonian's conversion is now they were waiting for and anticipating the Second Coming. The unsaved hate this doctrine as well as the backslider and carnal professor. These groups know that the Second Coming is a time of horrible judgment upon them so they either attack the doctrine or ignore it and marginalize it. But when a man is truly converted, he will come to love the doctrine, embrace it and make the Blessed Hope his own. But not only will he embrace it, but this doctrine will also change his life. The saint will live with the moment-by-moment hope of the Second Coming and this will motivate him to confess his sin, live right and draw closer to God. After all, if one really believes in the doctrine of the "any minute" return of the Lord in the rapture, it will have a powerful effect on his life. And that changed life will be on clear display for all to see.

To await the Second Coming is to live one's life in the light of that truth and to desire to be removed from this world rather than to continue to wallow in it. This is another sure sign of conversion. This believer is living in eternity more than he is in time. There is something dreadfully wrong with a professing Christian who is not eager for the Second Coming because he is enjoying the things of this world too much and he does not wish to have his earthly plans interrupted by something as inconvenient as the coming of the Lord! How many preachers might be of this mind, who are so involved in building their great works, church buildings and ministries, all supposedly "for the Lord" but in reality, they are really involved in building their own monuments, like Pharaoh building his pyramids?

"A man who waits is not living on the wages of today, but on the recompenses of a time which is yet to come; and this is the mark of the Christian, that his life is spent in eternity rather than in time, and

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his citizenship is not of earth but of heaven. He has received a believing expectancy which makes him both watch and wait. He expects that the Lord Jesus will come a second time, and that speedily. He has read of his going up into heaven, and he believes it; and he knows that he will so come in like manner as he went up into heaven. For the second advent he looks with calm hope: he does not know when it may be, but he keeps himself on the watch as a servant who waits his Lord's return. He hopes it may be today, he would not wonder if it were tomorrow, for he is always looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Son of God. The coming of the Lord is his expected reward. He does not expect to be rewarded by men, or even to be rewarded of God with temporal things in this life, for he has set his affection upon things yet to be revealed, things eternal and infinite. In the day when the Christ shall come, and the heavens which have received him shall restore him to our earth, he shall judge the world in righteousness, and his people with his truth, and then shall our day break and our shadows flee away. The true believer lives in this near future; his hopes are with Jesus on his throne, with Jesus crowned before an assembled universe. Charles Spurgeon, "A Summary of Experience and a Body of Divinity" preached October 26th, 1884.)

10c Every chapter of 1 Thessalonians ends with a Second Coming truth. Here, in the end of chapter 1, we see:

1. We are to wait for the Second Coming. We are not waiting for the Antichrist or the Revived Roman Empire of the Mark of the Beast. We are waiting for Christ to return in the rapture, which precedes all these things. We are not looking for any tribulation events since the Church will not be going through any of the Tribulation period, but will be raptured out ahead of time.
2. Jesus will return from heaven, where He returned to in Acts 1
3. The resurrection of Christ is asserted
4. Jesus will deliver us from the "wrath to come" or the tribulation, so this is a reference to the Rapture phase of the Second Coming, not the Advent phase. The Church is not to go through the Tribulation period but will be raptured before it begins.

10d "**which delivered us from the wrath to come**" Why the Church Will Not Go Through the Tribulation

**Defined-** the tribulation period is that yet-future 7-year period, from the rapture of the Church to the Second Coming, where God returns to Israel to complete His earthly plan for them, and to punish the Gentile nations for their rejection of Israel and the Gospel. It is the prelude to the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom. It is also during this period that the Antichrist is revealed, who attempts to destroy Israel and frustrate God's purposes for the Jews.

It is our position that the Church goes through no part of the tribulation period. Our reasons are as follows:

1. The tribulation is referred to as the time of Jacob's Trouble, not the "Church's Trouble".
  1. Jeremiah 30:7- *"Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."*
  2. Daniel 12:1- *"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."*
  3. If the tribulation is the "time of Jacob's Trouble" that is designed for Israel, then what would be the point of the Church (which is NOT Israel) to go through any part of it?
2. The Church is not mentioned from Revelation 4 to 19, when the tribulation is taking place, but the Church is mentioned in Revelation 1-3 and in and after Revelation 19. The reason why the Church is not mentioned in Revelation 4-19 is because the Church is not on earth during the tribulation period.
3. Promises to the Church of deliverance from the Tribulation
  1. 1 Thessalonians 1:10- *"And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."*
  2. 1 Thessalonians 5:9- *"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,"*
  3. Revelation 3:10- *"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."*

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4. The Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24 is clearly Jewish and tribulation in context, and there is no application of the Church in that chapter.

5. Some teach that the Church must go through the tribulation because they fail to distinguish the difference and distinctives between Israel and the Church. A failure to apply dispensational truth leads to this error.

6. Some teach that the Church must go through the tribulation in order to be purified because it is corrupt. While the modern institutional Church is indeed corrupt, the genuine Church is purified by the blood of Christ, not by enduring persecution.

7. Some have attacked the pretribulation Rapture doctrine, which teaches that the Church will not go through the tribulation, by claiming that it cannot be true because no church writer or Reformer ever taught this doctrine until it was introduced by John Nelson Darby, a Plymouth Brethren, in the 1830s. The only problem is that their assertion that no one in the early Church taught the pretribulation Rapture has been found to be incorrect.

Obviously the truth about the time of the Rapture can be found only in Scripture. The Protestant Reformation was based essentially on this return to the authority of the Bible and "salvation by grace without the works of the law".

And there have been references to the pretribulation rapture as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century and the 1700s, so it is not a new doctrine, nor can John Nelson Darby or the Plymouth Brethren be "charged" with creating this doctrine. The Plymouth Brethren were very instrumental in recovering, systematizing and promoting these doctrines but they did not originate them.

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### 9. Paul's Defense of His Ministry 2:1-12

**2:1<sup>a</sup> For yourselves, brethren, know<sup>perfect</sup> our entrance in unto you, that it was<sup>perfect</sup> not in vain:<sup>b</sup>**

**2:2 But even after that we had suffered before,<sup>a-aorist active participle</sup> and were shamefully entreated,<sup>b-aorist passive participle</sup> as ye know,<sup>perfect</sup> at Philippi, we were bold<sup>c-aorist middle</sup> in our God<sup>d</sup> to speak<sup>aorist infinitive</sup> unto you the gospel of God with much contention.<sup>e-f</sup>**

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1a In verses 1-12, Paul is defending his ministry against attacks and charges by his enemies that the Thessalonians must have certainly known about. No doubt the Jews were busy spreading lies and rumors about Paul and his ministry and he wanted to make sure that the Thessalonians understood exactly what kind of ministry he had among them. Timothy had returned from Thessalonica and told Paul of the rumors and slanders that were circulating in the area, so Paul must turn to a defense of his ministry and himself personally. The motivation of the attacks was obvious- attack Paul, bring doubt about him, and it would be hoped that the Thessalonians would forsake Paul as the Galatians had. And I'm sure Paul didn't want to waste ink and parchment in defending himself against such baseless attacks, but the ministry must be defended.

1b **"not in vain"** Compare with Paul's work in Galatia, where he feared that his work had been in vain. The Galatians rejected Paul's teaching and ministry when the Judaizers came in behind Paul and undermined his work. It seemed that all the progress that Paul had made was lost. The Thessalonians had not gone back on Paul as had the Galatian churches and their fruit was remaining.

Paul repeated this fear in 3:5. It was something that was always on his mind, and was a constant fear to him. What had happened in Galatia must have hurt him deeply.

The perfect tense of the verb showed that the Thessalonians had this full and complete knowledge of the manner and method of Paul's ministry among them and Paul didn't have to worry about them forgetting it or denying it or not appreciating it.

2a **"suffered before"** Referring to the rough treatment Paul received at Phillipi in Acts 16 (such as his unlawful whipping and imprisonment). and the harassment he received from the Jews while at Thessalonica in Acts 17.

2b **"shamefully entreated"** in Acts 16:22,23, which included the illegal whipping of Paul (who was a Roman citizen) and the imprisonment of both he and Silas. As usual, their only crime was preaching the gospel. This was probably more "intolerable" for Paul than the physical abuse he received because when you are personally assaulted by lies, slander and rumor, it can hurt more than a Roman scourging.

Strong's # 5195 ὑβριζω hubrizō; to be insolent, to behave insolently, wantonly, outrageously, of one who injures another by speaking evil of him

2c **"bold"** *Parresia*, "boldness," is the opposite of *kolakeia*, "flattering words" (2:5). Strong's #3955 παρρησιαζομαι parrhesiazomai; to use freedom in speaking, to speak freely, to grow confident, have boldness, show assurance, assume a bold bearing, speaking without reserve.

2d Not bold in ourselves or in human strength. Flesh-based boldness is seldom a good thing because it tends to be motivated by ego or pride or some other self-based emotion or motivation. God is the only source of strength for the Christian, not his own internal "holiness", not his theological system, where he went to school or how long he has been in the ministry. All that is flesh and it is as grass.

2:3<sup>a</sup> For our exhortation was not of deceit,<sup>b</sup> nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:<sup>c-d</sup>

2:4 But as we were allowed<sup>a-1381-perfect passive</sup> of God to be put in trust<sup>aorist passive infinitive</sup> with the gospel,<sup>b-c-d</sup> even so we speak;<sup>present</sup> not as pleasing<sup>present active participle</sup> men,<sup>e</sup> but God, which trieth<sup>present active participle</sup> our hearts.<sup>f</sup>

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2e “**much contention**” by the persecution of the Jews of the Thessalonian church. The stronger the contention, the greater the boldness on the part of the preacher. This is detailed in Acts 17:5-9,13. Paul always got more persecution and trouble from the Jews than he ever got from the Gentiles.

“**contention**” Strong’s # 73 αγων agôn, a place of assembly: especially an assembly met to see games, the place of contest, the arena or stadium, any struggle or contest, a battle, an action at law, trial. It was like an athletic or sporting contest between Paul and his opponents to see which one would prevail for the souls of the Thessalonians. The pre-King James translations have “striving”. The ESV uses “conflict”.

2f “Such men baffle Satan. Beat them to within an inch of their lives and they sing for pure joy because they have been counted worthy to suffer persecution for Christ. Lock them up in prison and they pray...Kill such men and you only promote them to glory (John Phillips, Exploring 1 & 2 Thessalonians, pages 44,45).”

3a Paul asserts that his exhortation did not originate from evil motives or intentions. The necessity for this declaration was based upon the many wandering charlatans who frequently traveled throughout the Greek world peddling their religious or philosophical nostrums, and living at the expense of their followers. Unlike these false prophets who sought to deceive and exploit for their gain, Paul spoke from integrity and holiness. Note how this is asserted negatively:

1. It was not from “**deceit**”—That is, Paul’s message was not one that wandered off course, away from the truth. He was never drawn off target, or otherwise seduced by evil desires. Strong’s # 4106 πλανη plane; a wandering, a straying about, error

2. It was not from “**uncleanness**”—This indicates that Paul had no immoral motives and was not like the false prophets and cultists who frequently indulged in sexual licentiousness or other moral transgressions. Many of the Eastern religions of this day included temple prostitution and other immoral acts in their “worship”. Strong’s # 167 ακαθαρσια akatharsia; uncleanness in a moral sense: the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living

3. It did not originate from “**guile**”—In other words, Paul did not manipulate his audience for selfish or evil purposes to get dishonest gain. The message that he declared to the Thessalonians was straightforward and he had no intention of leading them astray. Strong’s # 1388 δολος dolos, craft, deceit, guile

3b The Tyndale and Coverdale have this as the idea of “not to deceive you”.

3c How do we reconcile this with 2 Corinthians 12:16, where Paul mentions “catching them with guile”? Being a crook to gain converts is one thing, which is what Paul is mentioning here. This was the “standard operating procedure” of every false teacher in Paul’s day, as it is today. There are very few “honest” false teachers. Being wise, careful, considerate and “thinking ahead” to minister unto the saints is quite something else, which is what Paul is referring to in 2 Corinthians 12:16.

3d The ESV changes just about everything in this verse.

“**not of deceit**” to “does not spring from error”

“**uncleanness**” to “impurity”

“**guile**” to “attempt to deceive”.

None of these changes are really necessary and they complicate the reading.

4a “**allowed**” Strong’s #1381 δοκιμαζω dokimazō; to test, examine, prove, scrutinise (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as metals, to recognise as genuine after examination, to approve, deem

**2:5 For neither at any time used<sup>aorist passive</sup> we flattering words,<sup>a</sup> as ye know,<sup>b-perfect</sup> nor a cloke of covetousness;<sup>c</sup> God is witness:**

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worthy. "Just as Athenians were tested for their fitness before they were allowed to assume public office, so the missionaries were tested before they were commissioned as God's messengers (D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Thessalonian Epistles*, page 87)."

4b Paul repeats this trust he was committed with in 1 Timothy 1:11: "According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." Not only was Paul entrusted with it, but he would later tell Timothy to entrust it unto others (2 Timothy 2:2).

4c No man preaches the gospel of his own will, accord or authority, or at least, he shouldn't. Self-called men are disasters to their hearers and make themselves shipwreck. The call and resulting trust comes from God. God placed this gospel in trust with Paul, Silas and Timothy and any authority they had in connection with that trust came not from themselves but was of God. This reveals the awesome and dreadful responsibility and obligation to preach the Word of God clearly, accurately and truthfully, for full accounting will be given to God as to how we fulfilled this trust.

4d The Coverdale adds the idea of "to preach" this gospel that was committed to Paul's trust.

4e Few temptations assail the preacher more strongly than this one to please men, even if God is not pleased, though with the dim hope that God will after all condone or overlook. Nothing but experience will convince some preachers how fickle is popular favor and how often it is at the cost of failure to please God. No one in his right mind wants to be hated or upset people, but where truth is involved, you may often find yourself with no choice.

4f Only God can try the hearts as man does not know what is in the heart of another, or even what is in his own heart (Jeremiah 17:9). Here is the folly of judging after the flesh- we simply cannot have all the facts to judge righteously as he do not and can not know what is in the heart of the person we may be judging.

5a Paul was a "straight shooter". Flattery was a well-known and much despised practice in the ancient world. Men in Paul's day excelled in "speaking with a forked tongue", as the Indians would say.

Paul speaks in more specific terms in 5-8 as he depicts the nature of his conduct while serving among the Thessalonians. It is important to observe that Paul appeals to the personal experience and knowledge that the Thessalonians possessed concerning his missionary team—"you know." Yet, even more significant is the fact that Paul was keenly aware that God knew the truth concerning both his personal integrity and motivation—"God is witness." There are three negative facts, followed by two positive ones:

**2:5: Paul did not employ deceptive measures.** He never attempted to flatter anyone with slick words like the first century street-corner philosophers were fond of doing. Neither did he employ any covetousness, in that he did not conceal or cloak an ungodly lust for financial reward.

**2:5 Paul did not use flattering words.** "flattering" Strong's #2850 *κολακεια* kolakeia; from a derivative of kolax (a fawner); flattery. The word occurs only here in the New Testament. "Flattering words" would be insecure words, usually lies, designed to gain the favor of someone dishonestly. Your average television evangelist would qualify, as he preaches using "flattering words" so that you will send him a nice, fat "seed faith" gift. Faltery was widely practiced in Paul's day but much despised, much as it is today. For an example of flattery, read Tertullus "shoveling it higher and deeper" to Felix in Acts 24:2,3. When Paul spoke to Felix, he "cut to the chase" and simply stabbed him in his soul with the gospel blade.

**2:5 Paul did not use a "cloak of covetousness".** He had no ulterior motive, nor was he trying to fool or deceive anyone. False teachers do this all the time and the traveling philosophers and teachers of Paul's day excelled at this. Paul does all he can to distance himself from such men and methods. He was always straight up, up front and was a sharp shooter. He said exactly what he meant and never tried to sugar-coat anything.

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**2:6 Nor of men sought** <sup>present active participle</sup> **we glory,**<sup>a</sup> **neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might** <sup>present middle/passive participle</sup> **have been** <sup>present infinitive</sup> **burdensome,**<sup>b-922</sup> **as the apostles of Christ.**

**2:7 But we were gentle** <sup>aorist passive</sup> **among you, even as a nurse**<sup>a</sup> **cherisheth** <sup>b-2282-present</sup> **her children:**<sup>c</sup>

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**2:6a: Paul did not seek the praise of men.** He was not one who lived for the approval and applause of men. Rather than seeing himself as a celebrity in the spotlight, Paul maintained that he himself and his colleagues were but earthen vessels in which the treasure of the gospel was placed. He really had no concern what "the brethren" or some ecclesiastical "big shot" thought of him or his ministry.

**2:6b: Paul did not abuse his apostolic privileges.** Certainly, Paul could have flexed his apostolic muscles and demanded that the people accept his preaching at face value. He could have asserted his apostolic authority by insisting upon special treatment and amenities, or allowed himself to be exalted as a "holy man." However, Paul and his missionary friends refused such things, choosing rather to earn the respect of their brethren by means of their style of life among them.

**2:7: Paul displayed a very strong concern for the welfare of the Thessalonians.** Paul reminds the Thessalonians that his style of ministry, or philosophy of leadership, was gentle like that of a nursing mother. He viewed the Thessalonian converts as his very own children and devoted himself to tenderly caring for them. Babies and children (spiritually speaking) need this kind of care and attention to nurture them to spiritual maturity.

**2:8: Paul exemplified authentic Christian love.** Here, the apostle speaks of the fond affection or deep and abiding love, that he had for the people of the church. This love led him not only to impart the gospel message to them, but also to give them their very lives.

5b "**as ye know**" Perfect tense, as the Thessalonians perfectly and absolutely knew. They had no doubts about Paul's ministry in the context of his shunning the "flattering words".

5c The translations handle "cloak of covetousness" in various ways. The Coverdale has "ner wayted for oure owne profit". The Geneva has "colored covetousness". The ESV has "a pretext for greed". We like the King James rendering. The "cloak" is a covering meant to deceive the true motives of a false teacher, that of money. This is what some of Paul's enemies were accusing him of- attempting to hide, or cover, his true motivations for preaching- to gain a fast buck.

6a Paul was not looking for a "pat on the back" or for compliments from the Thessalonians in his preaching or ministry. That would be the same as trying to please men. Seeking the praise and glory of men is an empty thing anyway, as the tide of public opinion often turns very quickly. See in Acts 14:11-19. One minute, the people wanted to worship Paul as a god. The next, they were stoning him!

6b "**burdensome**" Strong's # 922 βαρος baros; heaviness, weight, burden, trouble. Paul did not want to be like a burdensome stone around the neck of the Thessalonian church, to be more of a burden than a blessing. This might be a reference to the idea that Paul did not want to be a financial burden on the Thessalonians, nor was he at any time, but it could also have a non-economic meaning. A visiting preacher, seeking glory and praise of men, might make himself intolerable to the people he is moving among by his constant attempts to curry favor, usually by constant use of flattering words and other dishonesty. The old saying rings true: "Two things stink after three days- a dead fish and a guest who won't leave."

The Tyndale, Coverdale and Geneva all use "chargeable". The Bishops (which pushes this phrase into verse 7) has "might have been in authority". The ESV has "made demands".

7a "**nurse**" could also apply to a mother in this context, like a nursing mother. In classical Greek, this can sometimes refer to a mother. You need a mother's love to care for newborn converts. Paul also

**2:8 So being affectionately desirous<sup>a-2442-present middle participle</sup> of you, we were willing<sup>imperfect</sup> to have imparted<sup>aorist infinitive</sup> unto you,<sup>b</sup> not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls,<sup>c</sup> because ye were dear<sup>perfect passive</sup> unto us.<sup>d</sup>**

**2:9 For ye remember,<sup>present middle/passive participle</sup> brethren, our labour<sup>a-2873</sup> and travail: for labouring<sup>a-2038-present</sup> night and day, because we would not be chargeable<sup>1912-aorist infinitive</sup> unto any of you,<sup>b</sup> we preached<sup>c-aorist</sup> unto you the gospel of God.**

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cared for them as a “father” in 2:11 since they were his spiritual children (also in 2:11). A mother’s love cherishes while a father’s love involved “charging” and strengthening.

7b “**cherisheth**” Strong’s # 2282 θαλπω thalpo; to warm, keep warm, to cherish with tender love, to foster with tender care. Used only here.

7c Paul’s tenderness with this young church was likened to a nurse caring for an infant child. Preachers tend to be too harsh, especially with young churches and young converts, oftentimes expecting them to be more mature and advanced than they have had time to become. Preachers, like parents, need to know when to be gentle and when to demonstrate “tough love” and firmness.

Instead of stressing and using his apostolic authority and the fact that the Lord had appeared to him and given him visions and revelations that Christ had never given to any other man, Paul did not “beat” the Thessalonians over the head with all of this. Instead, Paul used love and concern to move the Thessalonians to obedience. A mother does not yell and scream and stress her parental authority to get her children to obey, but she uses her motherly love and influence.

The Lord is also as gentle with His people, as seen in Isaiah 40:11 “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom, *and* shall gently lead those that are with young.” There is also a meekness and gentleness to Christ, as seen in 2 Corinthians 10:1 “Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence *am* base among you, but being absent *am* bold toward you.”

8a “**affectionately desirous**” Strong’s # 2442 ἠμετρομαί himeitromai or ὀμετρομαί homeitromai; to desire, long for, especially the longing of love. Used only here in the New Testament. A very rare and obscure verb. It denotes a very warm and tender affection.

8b The Tyndale, Coverdale, Geneva and Bishops all use “dealt...” for “imparted”. The ESV has the weaker “share”.

8c Not just gave them the gospel, but literally gave themselves and were willing to have given more if it had been needed. Preachers need a whole-hearted love and dedication to the people they minister unto to (as opposed to a mercenary heart or just being in it for the money), and need to be willing to invest their entire lives to these people. This is why, if possible and practice and if it be within the will of God, pastors should intend to stay in their congregations for the rest of their lives. Besides, it takes a minimum of 30 years to really start a church or to settle fully into a pastorate.

The Coverdale has “lives” while the ESV uses “our own selves” which is not a good reading.

8d “**ye were dear to us**” is in the perfect tense, showing that Paul couldn’t think any higher of the Thessalonians than he already was, and the Thessalonians couldn’t have been any more dear to Paul than they already were.

9a “**labor**” and “**laboring**” are two different Greek words:

1. “**labor**” is Strong’s # 2873 κοπος kopos; a beating of the breast with grief, sorrow, labour, trouble, intense labour united with trouble and toil. Paul’s first “labor” among them was with concerns, anxieties and tears that they would accept his ministry and message. Paul may still



**2:10<sup>a</sup> Ye<sup>b</sup> are witnesses, and God also, how holily<sup>c</sup> and justly<sup>d</sup> and unblameably we behaved<sup>aorist passive</sup> ourselves among you that believe.<sup>e-present active participle</sup>**

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have been sensitive as to what happened to him in Galatia when those churches turned on him and that fear of it happening again probably haunted Paul for the rest of his life.

2. **“laboring”** is Strong’s # 2038 εργαζομαι ergazomai; to work, labour, do work, to trade, to make gains by trading, “do business”, exercise, perform, commit, earn by working, to acquire. This is a good description of the work of the ministry.

9b This deals with ministerial self-support. Paul worked his vocational job so as not to be a financial strain on a young church. Paul wanted to place no financial demands upon the new converts at Thessalonica. Therefore, he found employment outside the ministry, probably as a leather worker who specialized in making tents (Acts 18:3), while experiencing labor and hardship among them. Paul was the typical artisan who worked from dawn to dusk, often for little more than enough money to survive on, and had very little social status. Paul could thus easily identify with the bulk of the Thessalonian believers who did the same kind of work. And it is no dishonor for a modern preacher to work outside the church to earn his living, for he then can also identify with the working people in his own congregation. The working pastor is right out there in the world with his people, dealing with the same issues that they do daily. He can better understand his people and what they go through when the preacher has to work on the outside at a secular job, just like they do. Paul earnestly desired to be different than the other traveling preachers who depended upon such maintenance for their ministries. However, once Paul had departed from a city in which he had established a church, he did accept financial support as see in Philippians 4:16.

“Paul was sensitive on this matter of remaining financially independent. It allowed him not only to maintain a dignified independence as a preacher of the gospel but also to refute any suspicion of mercenary motives for preaching (D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Thessalonian Epistles* page 100).” Thus Paul could easily deflect any charge that his ministry and message were motivated by money, as the traveling false prophets were guilty of. If Paul was a crook, why did he resort to tent making when the finances got low instead of demanding money from his hearers?

**“chargeable”** Strong’s # 1912 επιβαρεω epibareō; from επι επι (Strong’s #1909) an intensifier; and βαρεω bareō (Strong’s #916); to burden, weigh down, depress; to put a burden upon, to load, to be burdensome. The Tyndale as “grievous” while the Coverdale, Geneva and Bishops all use “chargeable”. The ESV has “be a burden”.

9c The ESV changes “preached” to “proclaimed”. We like “preached” better because we love preachers and preaching!

10a Paul describes his ministry and personal behavior, to which the Thessalonians were witnesses of, and which they could and would testify to, by means of three special terms:

1. **“holily”**—This adverb indicates one’s duty to God. That is, Paul and his companions acted responsibly before God in terms of service, worship, and devotion.
2. **“justly”**—This word has to do with horizontal relations among men. Thus, Paul conducted himself properly among the Thessalonians, giving no legitimate foundation for attacks upon the gospel or his personal integrity.
3. **“unblameably”**—This term summarizes Paul’s whole ministry. He and his helpers behaved in such a way that neither God nor the Thessalonians could reproach their conduct.

10b Emphatic.

10c “Holy” can describe our conduct toward God, “righteous” can describe our conduct toward men and “blameless” describes our attitudes toward all.

10d The ESV has “righteous”.

10e It is obvious that Paul and his company not only “believed” the gospel but also “behaved” it. Right belief in the right God and in the right gospel will translate into right behavior.

**10. Paul's Conduct Among the Thessalonians 2:11,12**

**2:11 As ye know<sup>a-perfect participle</sup> how we exhorted<sup>b-present active participle</sup> and comforted<sup>present middle/passive</sup> and charged<sup>c-present middle participle</sup> every one of you, as a father doth his children,**

**2:12 That ye would walk<sup>a-3931-aorist infinitive</sup> worthy of God, who hath called<sup>present active participle</sup> you unto his kingdom and glory.<sup>b-c</sup>**

**11. How the Thessalonians Received the Gospel 2:13,14**

**2:13 For this cause also thank<sup>present</sup> we God without ceasing, because, when ye received<sup>aorist active participle</sup> the word of God which ye heard of us,<sup>a</sup> ye received<sup>aorist middle</sup> it not as the word of men, but as it is<sup>present</sup> in truth, the word of God,<sup>b</sup> which effectually worketh<sup>present middle</sup> also in you that believe.<sup>c</sup>**  
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11a “**know**” Paul is using a lot of perfect tense verbs in this chapter because he had the full confidence that the Thessalonians knew these things that he was reminding them of.

11b Three terms are employed to depict how Paul gave the Thessalonians such personal spiritual leadership and encouragement in verses 11 and 12. While each of the three are to some degree synonymous, they are combined in order to communicate a sense of urgency:

1. “**exhorting**”—Paul continually offered consolation and appropriate encouragement to each of the Thessalonians. This “exhortation” is an urging upon the hearers to do a certain thing. The old Methodists used to have exhorters who would either encourage the saints or exhort the sinner to be saved. They were usually not on the same “level” with the pastors or evangelists as many of them were laymen.
2. “**comforted**”—Like the term above, this word speaks of Paul’s ministry of personal and persistent comfort to the suffering believers of Thessalonica.
3. “**charged**”—This is perhaps a stronger term than the two above. It may indicate that Paul and his companions, acting with divine authority, lovingly insisted upon a certain standard of behavior from their converts.

11c The Pre-King James translations have “besought”. The ESV places the last part of this verse into verse 12 and has “encouraged you”.

12a “**walk**” is usually used in the New Testament to denote moral conduct. Strong’s # 4043 περιπατεω peripateô; from περι peri (Strong’s #4012) around, and πατεω pateô (Strong’s # 3931) to trample, crush with the feet. to advance by setting foot upon, tread upon: to tread under foot, trample on, i.e. to treat with insult and contempt: to desecrate the holy city by devastation and outrage; to walk, to regulate one’s life, to conduct one’s self, to pass one’s life.

12b Make your life and worldly testimony fitting to the gospel and the God that you claim. Nothing is as powerful a testimony as a genuine Christian life and attitude among the unsaved.

12c God has not called us unto uncleanness but to obtain this salvation, in the form of the millennial kingdom and the glory of God.

13a The Tyndale and Coverdale both add the idea of preaching here.

**2:14 For ye,<sup>a</sup> brethren, became<sup>aorist passive</sup> followers<sup>b</sup> of the churches of God which in Judaea<sup>b</sup> are<sup>present participle</sup> in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered<sup>aorist</sup> like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:<sup>c-d</sup>**

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13b Paul was not preaching his own doctrines or the doctrines that he picked up from some other man or denominational system, but he was preaching that which he directly received from God. It was truly not the word of man or the word of Paul but the word of God. Yet how little of this do we see today. Most preachers do indeed preach the word of man. They preach Calvinism, Arminianism, certain eschatological systems, Charismatic doctrines, Lutheranism, Methodism, "Baptistism" (maybe that is not a word but it should be!), what Spurgeon or Moody or John R. Rice or Jack Hyles taught...it's all the word of man! It's all fallible and uninspired, as the inspired word of God was filtered through the teachings of these fallible and uninspired men! We are called to preach the word of God in its purity, unpolluted by human theological systems.

13c Doctrine always has a practical outworking in the hearts of the hearers. If you expose yourself to error on a continual basis, the working of that false doctrine will begin to affect your conduct and attitude for the worse. But if you subject yourself to true doctrine then that will begin to work itself out in good spiritual fruit in the life. One cannot listen to doctrine, true or false, and it not have some effect on the life.

14a Emphatic.

14b The ESV uses "imitators". The Greek might suggest this but it is not as good a word in the English. Imitators can be cheap knock-offs, usually not rising to the level of the original and may be of an inferior quality. We seriously doubt Paul would have used this word with that derogatory definition of the Thessalonian believers in mind. "Followers" (as in "disciples") is the better term, that all the traditional text manuscripts use.

14c The Tyndale and Coverdale use the broader geographical term "Jewry".

14d The Thessalonians' persecution lasted a long time, and so did their steadfastness. Some six years later Paul can still speak of the churches of Macedonia (not least, the church of Thessalonica) as enduring 'a severe test of affliction' and continuing to give evidence of the reality of their faith in that 'their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of liberality' (2 Corinthians 8:1, 2).

14e This was a religious persecution, as much persecution is. The world and the atheist will not molest the believer nearly as much as the religious-but-lost person who hates the truth and those who live it and promote it. Political Rome never bothered the Thessalonians nearly as much as the dead-orthodox Jews.

The majority of Paul's problems came not from the world or from the Romans but from the unbelieving Jews. They were jealous over Paul's success in dealing with the Gentiles, and were determined to stop the spread the "heresy" of this new doctrine any way they could. Most of the time, they resorted to outward persecution and stirring up trouble and public opinion against Paul. The Jews were upset with Paul because he, like the Jews, were seeking to win Gentile converts. But Paul was doing it by not having the converts become Jews. Paul was bypassing the law and the traditions of the Jews by leading his converts straight into Christianity without going through Judaism. Add to this the envy and jealousy of the Jews regarding Paul's success in working among the Gentiles and you have the motivations for Jewish opposition to Paul's ministry.

The Jews were jealous of Paul, which is why they persecuted him. The truth of God had been the exclusive property of Israel for centuries. If God had anything to say, He would say it in Hebrew. If a Gentile wanted the truth, he had to go to a Jew. But Pentecost changed all that. God had offered the truth to the Gentile as well as the Jew. They were now both on equal footing. And God now shifted to Greek, the universal language of the Roman Empire. The Jew rejected the Gospel but in his hatred and jealousy, he did not want the Gentiles to have it, either. God was bypassing the rabbis, the traditions, the synagogues and the Gentiles were responding to the message that this former (apostate!) rabbi was teaching. God was obviously moving but without the use or the blessing of the dead-orthodox Jew.

**12. The Guilt of the Jews 2:15,16**

**2:15<sup>a</sup> Who both killed<sup>aorist active participle</sup> the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted<sup>aorist active participle</sup> us;<sup>b</sup> and they please<sup>present active participle</sup> not God, and are contrary to all men:<sup>c</sup>**

**2:16 Forbidding<sup>present active participle</sup> us to speak<sup>aorist infinitive</sup> to the Gentiles that they might be saved,<sup>aorist active subjunctive</sup> to fill up<sup>aorist infinitive</sup> their sins<sup>a-b</sup> always: for the wrath is come<sup>aorist</sup> upon them to the uttermost.<sup>c-d</sup>**

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Misery loves company, so the Jew tried to make the Gentile as spiritually miserable as he was in his religious deadness.

15a Sins of the Jews:

1. They killed the Lord
2. They killed their own prophets. Which of the prophets had they not persecuted (Acts 7:52)?
3. They persecuted Paul's group, probably referencing how the Jews ran Paul out of Thessalonica in Acts 17:5-14.
4. They pleased not God. No doubt the Jews were thinking they doing God a service in persecuting what they considered to be an apostate sect, but in reality, they were angering God by their continual rejection of Christ and His teachings. They even rejected the Hebrew Scriptures and the teachings of the prophets to follow their own traditions.
5. They were contrary to all men. They had no friends in the world, nor did they want any. They despised the Gentiles and the Gentiles returned the favor.
6. They forbid Paul from preaching to the Gentiles
7. They impeded Gentile missions. The Jew did not want the Gospel, but they did not want the Gentiles to have it, either.

15b The ESV has "drove us out". "Persecuted" is stronger and better.

15c This is the only place in his writings where Paul directly charges the Jews of killing Jesus. They were not only guilty of killing the prophets but also of killing their Messiah. He offered them the Kingdom and did nothing but among them and Israel responded by murdering Him.

16a "**fill up their sins**" God is longsuffering with the sins of the unregenerate and even of Israel, but even that patience has a limit. Man sins, God warns, man ignores the warning. Eventually, the sinner will reach a point where God will forgive no more and judgment will follow. The Jews were very close to that limit of God's patience, which would be poured out on Israel in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the scattering of the Jews among all the nations.

16b Accounts of Jewish persecution of the Church in the book of Acts: 4:1-23; 5:17-40; 6:9-8:3; 9:1,2,23-25; 11:19; 13:45-50;14:2-5,19; 17:5-9,13; 18:6,12,13; 19:9; 20:3; 21:28-22:23; 22:30-23:24; 24:5

16c .A summary of the Jews:

1. They are blinded to the truth- Romans 11:8-10
2. They have been temporarily set aside- Romans 11:11-13
3. All unsaved Jews, as individuals, go to hell, just like unsaved Gentiles- Matthew 8:11,12; Luke 16:23,24
4. Israel, in the Dispersion, is "not pleasing to God"- 1Thessalonians 2:15,16
5. They are not pleasing to the Gentiles- 1 Thessalonians 2:15,16
6. The wrath of God is upon them as a nation- 1 Thessalonians 2:15,16

But, on the other side:

### 13. Paul's Desire Toward the Thessalonians 2:17

2:17 But we,<sup>a</sup> brethren, being <sup>taken</sup>aorist passive participle from you for a short time in presence,<sup>b</sup> not in heart, endeavoured<sup>aorist</sup> the more abundantly to see<sup>aorist infinitive</sup> your face<sup>c</sup> with great desire.<sup>d</sup>

### 14. The Opposition of Satan 2:18

2:18 Wherefore we would<sup>aorist</sup> have come<sup>aorist infinitive</sup> unto you, even I Paul, once and again;<sup>a</sup> but Satan<sup>b</sup> hindered<sup>1465-aorist</sup> us.<sup>c</sup>

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1. They are beloved for the Father's sake, even though they are the enemies of the Gospel- Romans 11:28
2. We are to pray for their peace- Psalm 122:6
3. We are to revere them as a nation since they are God's chosen people- Deuteronomy 4:33-38; 7:6; 14:2; 26:18,19
4. No Moslem or Catholic or Protestant has replaced them. This is a very important observation as Reformed Theology wrongly teaches that the Church has replaced Israel, which is what the Roman Catholic Church and Islam also teaches. To hold to any sort of "replacement theology" regarding Israel is to hold to a heresy of the deepest dye.
5. Salvation is of the Jews- John 4:22.

16d The Thessalonians' persecution lasted a long time, and so did their steadfastness. At least six years later Paul still spoke of the churches of Macedonia (including the church of Thessalonica) as enduring severe tests of affliction and continuing to give evidence of the reality of their faith in that 'their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of liberality' (2 Corinthians 8:1, 2).

17a Emphatic.

17b Paul was very sensitive to the fact that he had to leave Thessalonica on very short notice and had to, in a sense, abandon the young church. This grieved Paul, as he felt like a father whose children had been taken from him, or like a child forcibly removed from his family. He felt as if he had been "orphaned" from the Thessalonians.

17c This has the idea of "seeing you personally" or "seeing you face to face".

17d "**desire**" This is one of the few occurrences of the word translated "desire," typically rendered "lust," where it is used in a positive light.

18a The intense love and concern that Paul had for the Thessalonians fueled Paul's determination to return in order to personally minister to them again. However, despite his intentions, the apostle declared that "Satan hindered us." This statement indicates that, in some unspecified manner, Satan prevented Paul and his companions from fulfilling their intentions to visit the city and the church once again. The verb "hindered" was a military term employed outside of Scripture to describe the destruction or fragmentation of a roadway in order to make it impassible for invading troops. Here the idea seems to be that of hindering or impeding the progress of Paul's missionary endeavors. We do not know the exact nature of this Satanic activity. If this is the case, the apparent significance of this statement is that Paul regarded Satan as the ultimate power behind such violent and determined opposition to the gospel.

18b "**Satan**" Paul, the highly educated man that he was, believed in a real, personal devil named Satan who is involved with attempting to frustrate the plan, program and people of God in any way he can. He is the adversary of all that pertains to God. Paul had no problem identifying the source of the sin and evil in his day and was not embarrassed in the least to acknowledge his belief in a personal "adversary".

## 15. Second Coming Truth #2 2:19

**2:19<sup>a</sup> For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?<sup>b-c-d</sup> Are not even ye<sup>e</sup> in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?**

**2:20<sup>a</sup> For ye<sup>b</sup> are<sup>present</sup> our glory and joy.<sup>c</sup>**

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18c “**hindered**” This verb was a military term employed outside of Scripture to describe the destruction or fragmentation of a roadway in order to make it impassible for invading troops.

Strong’s # 1465 εγκοπτω egkoptô; from εν en (Strong’s #1722) in; and κοπτω koptô (Strong’s #2875) to cut, strike, smite, to beat one’s breast for grief; to cut into, to impede one’s course by cutting off his way, hinder. The Tyndale and Coverdale both use “withstood”.

19a The second Second coming truth found in this epistle.

19b Paul used three terms to describe his joy and fatherly pride in his Thessalonian “children”. They were his:

1. “**hope**” Paul and his companions had confidence that the work begun in and among them would increase to maturity. They would remain faithful to Christ and the gospel. Again, this has nothing to do with an attitude of “I hope they are saved” for Paul had that assurance, as did they. This “hope” was centered around their steadfastness in the face of persecution.
2. “**joy**” The authenticity of their faith, as evidenced by the Christian graces present among them (1:3), as well as their determination to follow Christ even in the face of severe persecution, brought great delight to Paul.
3. “**crown of rejoicing**” The Thessalonian believers served as Paul’s trophy, much like that awarded to the winning athlete or triumphant general. The apostle took pleasure in the fact that he could point to the Thessalonian converts as the evidence, fruit, and proof of his service to Christ. In the end, when Christ appears, he will present his converts to the Lord who commissioned him as evidence of the manner in which he has discharged his commission faithfully.

19c The ESV blunders by rendering this “crown of boasting”. Paul was not a boaster and was about to do any boasting regarding his ministry or results or converts. “Rejoicing” is the proper reading here.

19d BELIEVERS' CROWNS

Title	Reason	Reference
An Imperishable Crown	For leading a disciplined life	1 Cor. 9:25
A Crown of Rejoicing	For evangelism and discipleship	1 The 2:19
A Crown of Righteousness	For loving the Lord's appearing	2 Tim. 4:8
A Crown of Life	For enduring trials	James 1:12; Rev. 2:10
A Crown of Glory	For shepherding God's flock faithfully	1 Peter 5:4

19e Emphatic.

20a The pre-King James translations all add the affirmation here that are not in the King James or ESV.

20b Emphatic.

20c Paul’s joy were the people he saw saved and who were continuing on with God. It wasn’t in the money or the fame or the following of the “large church that he built”. It was the people. The ministry is people first and foremost. As a proud father, Paul was gratified at the conduct of these converts, many of them he had won to Christ and disciplined.

## 1 Thessalonians 3

There is a lot of personal material by Paul in the chapter.

### 16. Paul's Concern for the Thessalonians 3:1-5

**3:1 Wherefore when we could no longer forbear,** <sup>a-present active participle</sup> **we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;**

**3:2 And sent** <sup>aorist</sup> **Timotheus,** <sup>a-b</sup> **our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlaborer** <sup>c</sup> **in the gospel of Christ, to establish** <sup>aorist infinitive</sup> **you, and to comfort** <sup>aorist infinitive</sup> **you concerning your faith:** <sup>d</sup>

**3:3 That no man should be moved** <sup>a- present passive infinitive</sup> **by these afflictions:** <sup>b</sup> **for yourselves know** <sup>c-perfect</sup> **that we are appointed** <sup>d-present middle subjunctive</sup> **thereunto.** <sup>e</sup>

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1a “**we could no longer forbear**” repeated in 3:5. Paul just couldn’t stand it any longer. He was so concerned over the welfare and the spiritual state of the Thessalonians and how they were faring, that he sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to see how they were doing and to report back to him. Timothy was Paul’s “right-hand man” and would give an accurate report concerning the church, as well as do what he could to be a blessing and an assistance to them.

2a Timothy is called three things:

1. A brother, and a very dear one at that
2. A minister of God, a high and noble title
3. A fellowlaborer in the gospel, alongside of Paul and the Thessalonian believers.

2b One reason why Paul chose to send Timothy was that he was half-Greek and that he probably looked Greek. Timothy would not have attracted any special attention in a Greek city whereas Paul would have been recognized as a Jew.

2c The Coverdale only has “helper”. The ESV has Timothy as “God’s co-worker” instead of Paul’s “fellow-laborer”.

2d Timothy’s purpose in going to Thessalonica:

1. To establish them in the faith
2. To comfort them in their tribulations, as well as to encourage them to remain faithful and steadfast

3a “**moved**” Discouraged or caused to quit or apostatize on account of what he may be suffering. We cannot be like one of the hearts in the Lord’s parable in Matthew 13:21, where that man is offended when persecution and tribulation come. Troubles are trials are often used by Satan to discourage young Christians from going on with God. Today, many young professors got “saved” watching some Charismatic or Prosperity preacher on TBN who promised them that if they got saved, then God would give them a raise or a promotion at work, healing for the body, and lots of money. But when the troubles that accompany the gospel arrived instead of the promised prosperity, they are offended and forsake their profession. Or they may be a more established believer who fell under the lie told by this same Prosperity preacher that all suffering was of the Devil, and that if they had enough faith, they would not have to suffer. They then attributed their difficulties to their perceived lack of faith, got discouraged and quit on God. Paul was very concerned that the Thessalonians would not suffer such a fate.

**3:4 For verily, when we were** <sup>a-imperfect</sup> **with you, we told you before** <sup>a-imperfect</sup> **that we**  
<sup>present</sup> **should** <sup>present passive infinitive</sup> **suffer tribulation;** <sup>b-aorist</sup> **even as it came to pass,**  
<sup>middle</sup> **and ye know.** <sup>c-d- perfect</sup>

**3:5 For this cause, when I** <sup>a</sup> **could no longer forbear,** <sup>b-present active participle</sup> **I sent** <sup>aorist</sup>  
<sup>aorist infinitive</sup> **to know** <sup>c</sup> **your faith,** <sup>d-present active participle</sup> **lest by some means the tempter**  
<sup>imperfect</sup> **have tempted** <sup>aorist middle deponent subjunctive</sup> **you, and our labour be** **in vain.**

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3b The Coverdale uses “troubles” where the other translations all use “afflictions”, which is the stronger word.

3c “**know**” Perfect tense. They knew that they were appointed unto these troubles in an absolute sense and they had no doubt about it, nor was there any doubt in their mind about it.

3d I don’t like the ESV’s “destined” for “appointed”, as it weakens the idea that these afflictions were directly determined by God.

3e “**we are appointed thereunto**” God has ordained this and it is of Him. That the Thessalonian church would undergo trials and persecution was part of God’s plan for them. Christians are often called to suffer, for suffering builds faith and character. It is no sin to suffer, nor is it caused by any “lack of faith” or “lack of blessing”. God often calls His highest saints to suffering.

4a Paul uses two imperfect tense for “**were with you**” and “**told you before**”. This shows that Paul did not consider his ministry in Thessalonica to be finished but that there was still work for him to do there.

4b “**it came to pass**” Middle voice, “it came to pass on us...” This prophecy was fulfilled. It is generally safe to prophesy suffering for any church.

4c The Thessalonians should certainly not be surprised that they were suffering. Paul warned them it was coming before! Too many preachers leave out the “unpleasant” details of the gospel while dealing with potential converts, so as not to spoil any chance they have to get that person saved. But the soulwinner should always make it a habit to provide “full disclosure” to the sinner before trying to win him to the Lord. To do otherwise is simply dishonest.

4d “**know**” Perfect tense. They knew that they were appointed unto these troubles in an absolute sense and they had no doubt about it, nor was there any doubt in their mind about it.

5a Emphatic.

5b “**we could no longer forbear**” see 3:1.

5c Paul couldn’t stand the suspense any more so he sent Timothy to Thessalonica to report back regarding their status. Paul was also very concerned that they had not fallen away or abandoned their call as a result of the persecutions they were going through. If they had, then Paul would have feared that his work in Thessalonica would have been in vain, as it had been in the churches in Galatia.

5d “**the tempter**” Satan again, who not only is hindering Paul (1 Thessalonians 2:18) but is also tempting the saints to abandon their profession and the gospel that Paul brought to them. The Thessalonians were undergoing severe persecutions for the sake of the gospel, and Satan tempted them with “Is it really worth it? Who go through all this garbage? Just give up on this Christianity thing and go back to the world and your persecutions will end!” He whispers that temptation to many a tried saint, and, unfortunately, some will heed the temptation and abandon any profession they may have made for a little



## 17. Timothy's Good Report 3:6-10

**3:6 But now when Timotheus came** <sup>aorist active participle</sup> **from you unto us, and brought us good tidings** <sup>a-aorist middle participle</sup> **of your faith and charity,** <sup>b</sup> **and that ye have** <sup>present</sup> **good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly** <sup>present active participle</sup> **to see** <sup>aorist infinitive</sup> **us, as we** <sup>c</sup> **also to see you:**

**3:7 Therefore, brethren, we were comforted** <sup>aorist passive</sup> **over you** <sup>a</sup> **in all our affliction and distress** <sup>b-c-318</sup> **by your faith:**

**3:8 For now we live,** <sup>a-present</sup> **if ye** <sup>b</sup> **stand fast** <sup>c-4739-present subjunctive</sup> **in the Lord.**

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bit of peace and security. This is one reason why 1 Thessalonians is a good book for the new convert, as many young saints go through some degree of opposition and persecution in the early days of their walk with God and the example of the young Thessalonian church would be a good encouragement and example for them.

6a Timothy had brought back a good report, that the Thessalonians were doing well under their tribulations and that probably, they were actually thriving and the church was growing, as it usually happens during seasons of persecution. This was a great relief and encouragement to Paul, who was worrying over the welfare of the Thessalonian church and no doubt made it a matter of constant prayer.

6b “**charity**” Love put into action, the verbal part of “love”. It is not just “love” but a higher expression of it. Some people get upset at the King James translators for using “charity” instead of “love” but they knew exactly what they were doing and used “charity” for a reason.

6c Emphatic.

7a There was good news from Thessalonica about their faithfulness in tribulation was a great comfort and relief to Paul, in that they had not fallen away in their persecutions and that his work among them had not been in vain.

7b “**distress**” Strong’s #318 ἀναγκη anagkê; from ἀνα ana (Strong’s #303) among, in the midst of, ἀγκαλη agkalê (Strong’s #43), the arm; necessity, imposed either by the circumstances, or by law of duty regarding to one’s advantage, custom, argument, calamity, distress, straits.

7c Tyndale has “adversity and distress”. Coverdale has “trouble and necessity”. Geneva has “affliction and necessity”. Bishops has “adversity and necessity”. ESV has “distress and affliction”. Everyone has something different!

8a If the Thessalonians had fallen away, it would have broken Paul’s heart and would have just about killed him. But as long as they were okay, Paul was okay. In a sense, Paul would share their fate. As long as they lived spiritually, he would live. If they went the way of the Galatians and fell away, Paul would never have gotten over it.

8b Emphatic.

8c “**stand fast**” Strong’s # 4739 στηκω stekô; to stand firm, to persevere, to persist, to keep one’s standing. This is one of Paul’s favorite phrases, as he uses it in 1 Corinthians 16:13; Galatians 5:1; Philipians 1:27; 4:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:15. Paul was constantly exhorting his readers to stand fast in the Lord regardless and to let nothing move you away from Christ. Be stubborn, inflexible, narrow-minded, intolerant and pig headed when it comes to standing fast for the things of God!

**3:9 For what thanks can we** <sup>present middle subjunctive</sup> **render to God again** <sup>aorist infinitive</sup> **for you, for all the joy** <sup>a-5479</sup> **wherewith we joy** <sup>a-5463-present</sup> **for your sakes before our God;**

**3:10 Night and day** <sup>a</sup> **praying** <sup>present middle/passive participle</sup> **exceedingly** <sup>b</sup> **that we might see** <sup>aorist infinitive</sup> **your face,** <sup>c</sup> **and might perfect** <sup>d-aorist infinitive</sup> **that which is lacking** <sup>e-5303</sup> **in your faith?**

### **18. Paul's Prayer Request for the Thessalonians 3:11-13**

**3:11<sup>a</sup> Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ,** <sup>b</sup> **direct** <sup>aorist active optative</sup> **our way unto you.**

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9a **“joy”** Two different Greek words are used in this verse:

1. First use- Strong's #5479 *χαρά* chara; joy, gladness. Used as a noun.
2. Second use- Strong's #5463 *χαίρω* chairō; to rejoice, be glad, to rejoice exceedingly, to be well, thrive, in salutations, hail!, at the beginning of letters: to give one greeting, salute. Used more often as a verb.

10a **“Night and day”** Continually, every time Paul went to prayer.

10b **“praying exceedingly”** With great fervor and intensity. Paul was putting all of his energy into these prayers.

10c **“we might see your face”** Paul had this great desire to return to Thessalonica to finish the work he had started but that had been interrupted by his abrupt need to depart. He wasn't finished so he wanted to **perfect** (bring to a completion) those areas in their faith that had not yet been developed or that were under-developed.

Tyndale and Coverdale have “see you presently”.

10d The use of **perfect** shows again that the word never is used to describe any sort of sinless perfection, but is used to describe something that is finished and complete.

**“perfect”** Strong's #2675 *καταρτιζω* katartizō, from *κατα* kata (Strong's #2596) according to, and *αρτιος* artios (Strong's #739), fitted, complete; to render, to fit, sound, complete, to mend (what has been broken or rent), to repair, to fit out, equip, put in order, arrange, adjust

10e **“lacking”** Strong's # 5303 *ὑστερημα* husterēma; deficiency, that which is lacking, in reference to property and resources, poverty, want, destitution. The Thessalonians were not yet perfect and still had much to learn and far to grow, as we all do.

11a The elements of this “prayer list” in verses 11-13 are:

1. Paul's desire to return to Thessalonica 11. Paul is praying for God to make it possible for them to return to Thessalonica.
2. That God would allow the Thessalonians to increase and abound in love 12
3. That God would establish their hearts unblameable in holiness 13

11b **“God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ”** The structure of this verse equates Jesus Christ with god the Father, thus again showing that Jesus is equal to the Father and that Jesus is God, just as the Father is. We see two people in this verse, God himself and our Father” and “our Lord Jesus Christ”.

The ESV omits “Christ”

**3:12 And the Lord make you to increase<sup>aorist active optative</sup> and abound<sup>aorist active optative</sup> in love<sup>a</sup> one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:<sup>b</sup>**

**3:13 To the end he may stablish<sup>aorist infinitive</sup> your hearts unblameable<sup>a</sup> in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ<sup>b</sup> with all his saints.<sup>c</sup>**

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12a the Tyndale and Coverdale have the idea of “overflowing in love”.

12b Paul desires that they would continue in their love toward all men and then that they would grow and increase in that love. And it takes a lot of divine aid to love “all men” and the brethren, as most of them (including the brethren!) can be very difficult to love at times! Sinners can be just as difficult to love but God gives us that special kind of divine love that makes it possible for us to fulfill this verse.

13a “**stablish your hearts unblameable**” The heart of the believer must be established, settled and matured by the grace of God, especially in these days in which we live. They are difficult days, with apostasy and compromise rampant, and sin on the increase. Unless we are spiritually grounded and fixed on the truth, we have little defense from being carried away by the age. This is especially in the light of the second coming, mentioned in this verse. The Lord’s coming is sooner than we think, which means the bema judgment may be right around the corner. Are we ready to stand before God to give account of our lives and ministries?

“**unblameable**” Strong’s # 273 ἀμεμπτος amemptos; from α a (Strong’s #1) a negative particle; μεμφομαι memphomai (Strong’s #3201), to blame, find fault, blameless, deserving no censure, free from fault or defect. This moral and spiritual state is to be the goal of all believers (1 John 2:1). Also compare 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Philippians 2:15

13b The ESV omits “Christ”.

13c “**at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.**” Here is the second-coming truth for the end of chapter 3. The obvious question here is how do the saints get to be with the Lord at the second coming in order to come back with Christ? The saints get there through the rapture/first resurrection. Then seven years later, they come back with the Lord in the Second Coming.

## 1 Thessalonians 4

### 19. The Will of God- Our Sanctification 4:1-8

**4:1 Furthermore then we beseech<sup>present</sup> you,<sup>a</sup> brethren, and exhort<sup>present</sup> you by the Lord Jesus,<sup>b</sup> that as ye have received<sup>aorist</sup> of us how ye ought<sup>present</sup> to walk and to please<sup>present middle/passive participle</sup> God, so ye would abound<sup>present subjunctive</sup> more and more.<sup>c</sup>**

**4:2 For ye know<sup>perfect</sup> what commandments we gave<sup>aorist</sup> you by the Lord Jesus.<sup>a</sup>**

**4:3 For this is<sup>present</sup> the will of God, even your sanctification,<sup>a-b-c-d</sup> that ye should abstain<sup>present middle infinitive</sup> from fornication:<sup>e-f-g-4202</sup>**  
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1a Just as Paul cannot use his apostolic authority to command the believer to make his life a burnt offering (Romans 12:1), nor can he command the believer to engage on a quest for a holy life and a Christian walk. He can plead and urge, but how could he command it? Who can “force” us to pursue after holiness and sanctification but the Lord?

1b Paul urges:

1. The believer to walk with God
2. To please God
3. To abound more and more

1c Some practical manifestations that come from a practical application of the “sanctification” in 4:3:

1. Walking in a way that pleases God 4:1
2. “Abounding more and more” 4:1. This probably refers to a deepening of practical sanctification in the life, which will result in a higher quality of practical Christianity, as Paul describes in this chapter.
3. Abstaining from fornication 4:3
4. Possessing your “vessel” in sanctification and honor 4:4,5
5. Not defrauding the brethren 4:6

2a We do not know specifically what these commandments were, but we may assume they all led into developing a Christian walk and would have furthered the sanctification of the Thessalonians.

3a This is the will of God for every believer- his sanctification. The present tense of the verb shows that it is God’s will for us “right now”. God’s ultimate will for us is not “success” or “building a great work” or “being a great soulwinner”. It is our holiness, growth in grace and knowledge of the truth and our continuing developing Christlikeness in our lives. God’s will for us is not to pastor large churches, enjoy worldly success, make money, achieve fame or fortune or baptize 300 every year. His desire for us is our sanctification. God desires us to be holy, to be separated, and to be in a right relationship with Him. Timothy may have reported to Paul that some of the Thessalonians were having trouble maintaining their purity and this exhortation by Paul was designed to encourage them to go on in this matter and not to compromise. Fornication was so common and widespread in Paul’s day that the Christians had to take special care to keep themselves from it, just like today. The heathen of that day did not think it a sin, just as modern heathen don’t. In Paul’s day, much of this immorality was religion-based, as many of the rituals of the pagan temples included some types of fornication. This is what Paul is burdened about and what he is warning against. It is amazing what kinds of sins men will justify in the name of their religion! What distinguishes a Christian is that he understands how it is a sin and something to be avoided.

3b “**Sanctification**” is the process of making someone holy. It starts with an unholy sinner at salvation. At the moment of salvation, the sinner is made positionally holy in Christ. Positionally, that new saint will never be any holier in Christ than he is at that time. But then, the process of practical sanctification begins, where that positional holiness is worked out and manifested in a practical and visible way in the life of the saint. And the goal of the truth of God is not wisdom, as in Greek or worldly philosophies, but holiness.

The Tyndale has “be holy” and the Bishops has “your holiness”

### 3c **A Survey of Sanctification, an unfolding in Biblical Theology**

1. First use- Exodus 13:2, where the firstborn of Israel, of both man and beast, were sanctified to God. He had a special claim on the firstborn.

1. Exodus 13:2 Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine.

2. Israel was to be sanctified. To that end, they “washed their clothes”, showing that sanctification has an idea of the washing of filth, dirt, and, by extension, sin.

1. Exodus 19:10 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes,

2. Ephesians 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

3. The priests must be sanctified

1. Exodus 19:22 And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them.

2. Exodus 28:41 And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.

4. Things that are roped off or marked off are said to be sanctified

1. Exodus 19:23 And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it.

5. Partaking of the offerings and sacrifices led to sanctification

1. Exodus 29:33 And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy.

6. To anoint something, or someone, was to sanctify it

1. Exodus 29:36 And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin offering for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it.

7. God does the work of sanctification

1. Exodus 29:44 And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office.

2. Exodus 31:13 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you.

3. Leviticus 20:8 And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you.

4. Leviticus 21:8 Thou shalt sanctify him therefore; for he offereth the bread of thy God: he shall be holy unto thee: for I the LORD, which sanctify you, am holy.

5. Ezekiel 20:12 Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them.

8. Man does some work of sanctification

1. Exodus 30:29 And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy.

9. We are to sanctify ourselves

1. Leviticus 11:44 For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

2. Leviticus 20:7 Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God.

3. Numbers 11:18 And say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow, and ye shall eat flesh: for ye have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt: therefore the LORD will give you flesh, and ye shall eat.

4. Joshua 3:5 And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.
5. 2 Chronicles 29:5 And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place.
10. We are to sanctify God publicly
1. Numbers 20:12 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.
  2. Isaiah 29:23 But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.
11. Israel was to sanctify the Sabbath
1. Deuteronomy 5:12 Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee.
  2. Nehemiah 13:22 And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.
12. The house of God is to be sanctified
1. 2 Chronicles 29:5 And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place.
  2. 2 Chronicles 29:17 Now they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of the LORD: so they sanctified the house of the LORD in eight days; and in the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end.
13. God's name is to be sanctified
1. Ezekiel 36:23 And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.
14. God sanctifies Israel
1. Ezekiel 37:28 And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.
15. Sanctification through the Word of God
1. John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.
16. Sanctification through the truth
1. John 17:19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.
17. Whole, or entire sanctification (not to be confused with sinless perfection)
1. 1 Thessalonians 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
18. Sanctification by Christ
1. 1 Corinthians 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:
  2. Hebrews 13:12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.
19. We are to sanctify the Lord personally
1. 1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:
20. God's will for us is our sanctification
1. 1 Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:
21. Salvation through sanctification
1. 2 Thessalonians 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:

3d "The biblical doctrine of sanctification is both the most neglected and the most misunderstood doctrine of the Christian life...If it is neglected then the Christian convert is left marooned on the island of *evangelism*; if it is misunderstood then it will hinder the hope of *revival* among the saints. No doctrine has suffered more at the hands of the believers identified with Christianity in spite of the fact that this necessary and precious teaching must become the experimental doctrine of the church, having presupposed the appropriation by faith, of the fundamentals of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. The King James Version uses both the word "sanctification" and "holiness" from the singular Greek word *hagios*. In the former word, the passages speak more of the entrance, crisis, and appropriation of sanctification; in the latter word, the passages speak more of the process, quest, and fruition of holiness in the life of the Christian believer. Of course, both of these are the results of a Divine Depositum placed in access for the believer at the time of the new birth or regeneration. Everything follows only as the biblical teaching of redemption is received by the Christian believer. In our time, the charismatics have substantially isolated and/or a separated neo-pentecostal teaching of "the baptism of the Holy Spirit" away from the new birth. This is confirmed by their fellowship with the Roman Catholic charismatics who relate their neo-pentecostal teaching of "the baptism of the Holy Spirit" and the glossolalia with the sacrament of "infant baptism" by the church.<sup>2</sup> In reality, The new birth is sanctification or cleansing begun, and the subsequent process of sanctification perfects (bringing to maturity) the work of holiness in the Christian life. The Romanist then proceeds to refer to this "baptism of the Holy Spirit" and *glossolalia* as merely a *renewing* of that which was begun in the former sacrament of baptism.

The neglect of the doctrine of sanctification will lead to the *libertinism* of the flesh; the misinterpretation of this doctrine will lead to the *legalism* of the flesh. In either direction, the flesh survives and has dominion over the Christian life; whereas in the understanding and appropriation of biblical holiness, through the grace of the Lord Jesus, the war of the flesh ceases in its *dominion* (lordship of the flesh) over our lives, and the believer begins his "walk" in the Spirit with the Savior. To do nothing with the doctrine of sanctification will lead to the undoing of the Christian life itself and carnality and backsliding will result.

In the last half of the twentieth century, evangelism has been overdone to the neglect of the Christian life itself, of which holiness is most needed. This deficit in this doctrine has opened up the doors of scandal, fornication, abortion, euthanasia, immodesty, and a host of other detriments to the testimony and victory of the church. We must no longer divorce ecclesiastical separation from personal separation or else we will truncate orthodoxy away from orthopraxy. Also, we must be sure that in our presentation of this doctrine of holiness that we do not overemphasize the *subjective* aspect of sanctification away from the *objective* holiness of Almighty God Himself. We have for too long pushed American *evangelism* as the priority, and now we have come to a time of a great need of *revival*. Evangelism is for the saving of the sinner; revivalism is for the sanctifying of the church. We must also remember that genuine evangelism is a result of the spirituality of the church, not the mere product of the pragmatic salesmanship of the public relations officer of an overzealous administrative church board. Thus, the past agenda of a failing pulpit and church has demanded a biblical agenda in the urgency of the holy presence of God manifested in a revival of holiness among God's people.

No minister is worthy of his calling in every sense of the word. Every preacher is vulnerable to the charge of hypocrisy. In fact, the more faithful a preacher is to the Word of God in his preaching and his life, the more liable he is to the charge of hypocrisy. Why? Because the more faithful a man is to the Word of God the higher the message is that he will preach. The higher the message the further he will be called to see the need of a holier life. The more he becomes accountable to God, through His word, the more he will see the need of the holiness of God, and the unholiness of himself. Of course, in turn, these principles become embedded in the congregation of saints who worship near such a preaching pulpit, and therefore all of God's people are urged to the likeness of their Holy God. He, and He alone, is the source of holiness; this is revealed through His Word.

It is a mere self-righteousness to assume that because a person is drawn to holiness, as his quest in life, in study, in meditation, and prayer, that he is thereby a holy man. The source of that deep hunger and quest is only because the source of the holiness lies in God and He alone maketh His people holy through the atoning sacrifice of His dear Son, the Lord Jesus.

Before we further the definition of sanctification, we must further the practical observations and preliminary scene. There can be no biblical sanctification merely applicable to either the negative or the positive side of the biblical principle of holiness. The motive of militancy must not be the end and goal of our Christian testimony. Militancy is only one ingredient of our Christian life. The Christian life, itself, is

much larger, and sanctification is a provision in the atonement which includes much more than a fight. "Holiness is also the honoring of Christ; the battle is only a means to that end. It is that end of exalting and honoring Christ that dictates the means to that end."<sup>9</sup> Militancy is only one means or channel to the glory of Christ. Sanctification must

The most important English words in the Holy Scriptures which deal with the teaching of sanctification, in our King James Version, are: **holiness, sanctification, hallowedness, cleansing, and purity**. Of course, we may include separation under other Hebrew and Greek word studies, but in reality, "separation" should be thought of as only one aspect of the larger doctrine of sanctification and holiness. "Separation," with its cognates, is used about 84 times in the Old Testament, and 12 times in the New Testament.

The more prominent words are: **sanctification, holiness, and purity**. In each of these three words there is a divine consistency between the Old Testament Hebrew word *qodesh*, and the New Testament Greek word *hagios*. Here again, with all of the cognates, the former is mentioned about 721 times in the Old Testament; and the latter, with all of its Greek cognates, mentioned in the New Testament about 225 times.

*Qodesh*, in the word study, is clearly seen in the following definition. The Semitic languages have two separate original forms of the root. The one signifies 'pure' and 'devote,' as in Akkadian *qadistu* and in the Hebrew *gades*, 'holy.' The word describes something or someone. The other signifies 'holiness' as a situation or as an abstract, as in Arabic *al-gaddus*, or 'the most holy or most pure.' In Hebrew the verb *gades* combine both elements: the descriptive and the static. The traditional understanding of 'separated' is only a derived meaning, and not the primary.

On the other hand, *hagios*, as it is revealed through the Greek word in the New Testament, has been made more friendly and acceptable by the heart of the Christian. Of course, the incarnation and virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, into a time, space, history of human events brought the holiness of God now imputed and imparted to believers through the satisfaction of the righteousness of the Father in accepting the Sacrifice of His Son on the Cross of Calvary. We should expect this revelation of *hagios*, because of redemption, to bring this to pass to the glory of God. *Hagios* is the Greek word that was selected, in the Septuagint, for the Hebrew word *qodesh*.

*Hagios*, in the word study, is defined as signifying (a) separation to God (I Corinthians 1:30; etc.), (b) the resultant state, the conduct befitting those so separated (I Thessalonians 4:3,4,7),... 'Sanctification' is thus the state predetermined by God for believers, into which in grace He calls them, and in which they begin their Christian course and so pursue it. Hence they are called 'saints.'

*Hagios* is a word of rarest use in Attic Greek...Its fundamental idea is separation, and consecration and devotion to the service of Deity. But the thought lies very near, that what is set apart from the world and to God, should separate itself from the world's defilements, and should share in God's purity; and in this way 'hagios' speedily acquires a moral significance.

William Barclay, in his *The Daily Study Bible* commenting on First Peter, 1:4-16, defines *hagios* with "the root meaning is *different*. That which is different from ordinary things." He furthers his definition setting forth that "the Temple, the Sabbath, and the Christian are all *different* from all other buildings, other days, and other men."

God has given His people impressive words in *qodesh* and *hagios*, both used 946 times, translated in the KJV as holiness, sanctification, purity, including the various cognates. Thus, we see about 1,000 times holiness is actually mentioned in the Bible.

### **Seven Steps of Sanctification**

The spiritual and theological path from the dead sinner to the walking saint, and on into heaven, is marked by at least seven progressive steps in the doctrine of sanctification. They are:

1. Potential sanctification (John 17:17)
2. Positional sanctification (I Corinthians 1:2)
3. Experiential (crisis) sanctification (Romans 6:1-14)
4. Expansional (growth) sanctification (Romans 8:1-5)
5. Perfectional (maturity) sanctification (I Thessalonians 5:23)
6. Glorificational (in heaven) sanctification (Revelation 22:11)
7. Eternal sanctification throughout the Eternal Golden Age (Revelation 4:8).



Unless Almighty God gives us a mighty revival, a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our personal lives, we will see and hear of more fornicators in our pulpits, as well as more divorces among the leaderships of our churches. The lack of personal sanctification and the reverence and worship involving the holiness of God is evident to a wholesale proportion. Another evidence is marked by our love for and mishandling of the Lord's monies. Stewardship is waning among us; integrity and ethics are rarely seen. Sanctification includes these, too.

More and more ministers believe that personal failure, in morals and ethics, does not mean the failure of their ministry. There is no ministry without a sanctified messenger. There is a false, unsanctified assumption that the sins of fornication and embezzlement are *natural* instead of *sinful*, and that the Lord expects our ministries to survive no matter what the Pastoral Epistles say about the character, principles, and sanctification of the leadership. The Holy Bible, revealed by our Holy God, still retains the same principles of godliness and sanctification, and the sanctification of church leaders is more exacting for them than any other persons involved in the Christian life. We look for the least grace in the least saint, but the most grace in the Christian leader.

Some argue that King David was allowed to continue as king after his adultery with Bathsheba and the bloodguiltiness of Uriah the Hittite. But the fact of the matter remains that what a king did do, a New Testament prophet and church leader may not do. How often have we heard it said in the words of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "If God calls you to be a prophet and preacher, do not stoop to be a king." So, being a king is not our only model.

The charismatics have falsely emphasized that the gifts and callings of their leaderships are without repentance and discontinuance even if they fornicate or embezzle the so-called Lord's monies. Of course, this assumption presumes to abandon the holiness of God in personal separation and sanctification.

Our fundamental view of sanctification must reach its conclusion in the nobility of our view of holiness. We believe it was correctly rendered in the resolutions of our World Congresses of Fundamentalism to include the separatist position. It is biblical; it is needed. Whether or not every historical fundamentalist since the end of the nineteenth century actually formulated a written statement of separation or not, does not change the fact that they did indeed practice separation. The separation of their sanctification remains on record. It has been our testimony. Some were "defrocked" from the Princeton Presbyterian Seminary. That was a *forced separation* set forth by the apostate system. Others suffered a *voluntary separation*, such as many of the Baptists. Both of these groups suffered separation as *puritans* in growing apostate systems. Still others, as *pilgrims* to the growing apostasy, simply commenced independent churches and Bible colleges and seminaries, and suffered *historic separation* as children of those who witnessed the sorrow of their parents who had been *puritans* in the decaying apostate condition in the earlier part of the generation. But all were separatists, practicing separatists; and thus, the doctrine of separation was established. And that practice and proclamation must still remain among us. Some have defected, but the practice and proclamation still remain among us. May God preserve this noble truth among us until the end.

The Christian life is like a sacred art, always dedicated to law, order, design, purpose, beauty, and spiritual decor; constantly setting forth a heart desiring godliness, piety, dignity, character, and ethics. It is measured not from the gutter of the world, and contemporary mood, but rather from the top of heaven and the glory of Christ.

There is no art without nobility. We must measure our orthodoxy from the bottom foundation of the Rock of Ages; but we must measure our ethics from the top of the glory of Christ. Unfortunately, we live in a time of slob-culture, slob-conversations, slob-art forms, and even some slob-conversions to Christ. Unfortunately, this has been seen among both practicing sinners and professing saints.

We must never measure all individuals in the Body of Christ according to our own limited understanding of a certain manner, method, or dogmatism of stand for fundamentalism. The Body of Christ is too versatile; the capacity of our own individual vessel, too small. Otherwise holiness is violated and self survives in the pride of place, face, and estranged grace, misplaced by too great a personal confidence in self. (O. Talmadge Spence, "The Biblical Doctrine of Separation, Parts 1,2,3." *Straightway*, June, July, August 1997)."

3e Sanctification involves abstaining from fornication. This has a two-fold application:

1. Sins of the flesh.
2. Spiritual, as in avoiding error and apostasy

**4:4 That every one of you<sup>a</sup> should know<sup>perfect active infinitive</sup> how to possess<sup>b- present</sup> his vessel<sup>c</sup> in sanctification<sup>d</sup> and honour;<sup>e</sup>**  
middle/passive infinitive

**4:5<sup>a</sup> Not in the lust<sup>b-3806</sup> of concupiscence,<sup>c-1939</sup> even as the Gentiles which know perfect active participle not God:<sup>d</sup>**  
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3f Abstaining from fornication has two applications:

1. Literal fornication, sexual sins with the body
2. Spiritual fornication:
  1. **Apostasy**. This involves the Christian leaving his “spiritual husband” and taking up with a doctrinal “strange woman” (I know, the genders are mixed here, but you get the idea!). The Galatian churches were guilty of this sin.
  2. **Compromise**. This is related to apostasy. When you embrace an apostate system, you first do so by compromising the truth in order to embrace the error.
  3. **Apathy**. Who cares about the apostasy and compromise? Who cares about anything at all? Can't we all just get along? None of this is important enough to be fighting over!

3g “**fornication**” Strong’s #4202 πορνεία porneia; illicit sexual intercourse, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals, sexual intercourse with close relatives; the worship of idols.

Pagan religions demanded no sort of sexual purity from its followers and many of them freely used “temple prostitutes” as a for of “engaging in worship” as well as a means of raising funds to support the temple and the activities of the cult in that city.

The ESV has “sexual immorality” which is not a necessary change, for everyone knows what “fornication” is. The Coverdale uses “whoredom”

4a “**every one of you**” shows that these moral standards apply to all believers equally and not to one group more than another.

4b The ESV uses “control” instead of “possess”.

4c Our “**vessel**” is our body, so Paul is making the primary application of physical sins, that destroy whatever level of sanctification we may have attained to. “Possessing” our body is to do so in honor in holiness, where we possess it and it does not possess or control us. This will involve the struggle every Christian engages in to master his own body and passions. This involves spiritual maturity, self-discipline and progressive sanctification.

4d All the other translations use “holiness”

4e The believer is to possess his vessel/body:

1. **In sanctification**, or in holiness, separated unto God and from the world
2. **In honor**, which is the opposite from possessing it in sin and lusts

5a Gentiles act like this, with no restraint or self-discipline in matters of the flesh. This is because they do not know God. Christians, indwelt with the Holy Spirit and who have access to the Word of God and the power of God, should be able to resist those sins that so enslave the Gentiles.

5b “**lust**” Strong’s #3806 παθος pathos; whatever befalls one, whether it be sad or joyous, an affliction of the mind, emotion, passion, in the New Testament in a bad sense, depraved passion, vile passions

5c “**concupiscence**” Strong’s #1939 επιθυμία epithymia; desire, craving, longing, desire for what is forbidden, lust. The English word comes from a Latin *concupiscentia*, from the present participle of Latin *concupiscere*, “to desire eagerly,” from *com-*, intensive prefix + *cupere*, “to desire.” The adjective form is

**4:6<sup>a</sup> That no man go beyond<sup>b</sup> present middle/passive participle and defraud<sup>c-4122-present</sup> middle/passive participle his brother in any matter:<sup>d</sup> because that the Lord is the avenger<sup>e-</sup> 1558 of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. aorist middle**

**4:7<sup>a</sup> For God hath not called<sup>aorist</sup> us<sup>b</sup> unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.**

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*concupiscent.* The name of the ancient Roman god of love, *Cupid*, comes from the same root. It would have the idea of intensive desire or lust, usually sexual in nature, a very passionate lust.

5d The Gentile gods, morally, were no better than the men who worshipped them. Look at the Greek gods and you wonder what it was in them that so caught the attention of the Greeks. They were horrible role models or objects of worship. The Gentile gods were all like this and this produced immorality in their worshippers. After all, if my God was petty, vengeful, self-centered and lustful, then why shouldn't I be? But when the revelation of the one true God of Israel came to the Thessaonians, then their lives should have reflected the infinitely holy God they were worshipping. Ultimately you adopt the character of the God you worship.

6a Sanctification has a practical side as well, as all Bible doctrines do. It is not just some abstract theological doctrine. It is a vital, living truth that transforms the life. One way this is seen is in our relationships with the brethren. A sanctified man will not defraud his brother, cheat his brother or in any way mistreat or take advantage of his brother (or even an unsaved man for that matter). We have many professing Christians who will steal the shirt from off your back if and when they have the chance. There are far too many pastors who regularly use and abuse the sheep in their flock. This is not sanctification but is rather carnality and are signs of a man walking in his flesh instead of in the Spirit.

6b “**go beyond**” cross the line of what is lawful and what is immoral.

6c “**defraud**” Strong's #4122 *πλεονεκτεω* *pleonekteō*; to have more, or a greater part or share, to be superior, excel, surpass, have an advantage over, to gain or take advantage of another, to overreach

6d Man may think he can get away with defrauding his brother but the Lord is the avenger of the wounded brother and He will hear the cry of the oppressed. God will severely judge a Christian for such sins because he is supposed to know better and not to commit them. The unsaved man is almost expected to do these things but not a man who claims to be saved and have the Spirit indwelling, This involves the horizontal relations of Christians. Sanctification is just not moral purity and self-discipline but also treating you brother properly in all areas and compartments of life. Sanctification must be taken out of the church and prayer closet and out into the streets and market places. We should treat unbelievers with similar respect and honor, for it is a good testimony to do so, especially in a day when cheating, double-dealing and back-stabbing are common practices, both in Paul's day and in ours.

6e “**The Lord is avenger**” it is He who settles the books on wrongs, injustices and the like. Oftentimes, the victim cannot defend himself or strike back at the one who wronged him so in this matter, so he must rightly commit this unto the Lord.

1. Proverbs 22:23 For the LORD will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.

2. Romans 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

“**avenger**” Strong's #1558 *εκδικος* *ekdikos*; from *εκ* *ek* (Strong's #1537) out of; and *δικη* *dikē* (Strong's #1349) law, judgment; without law and justice, exacting penalty from one, an avenger, punisher

7a A sharp contrast is given here. God has called us to leave the life and practice of uncleanness and sin and to go unto a life of holiness and sanctification. This change starts at salvation and he progresses as a quest for Christian purity for the rest of our Christian lives. It was this that Paul was urging upon the Thessaonians.

**4:8 He therefore that despiseth,** <sup>a-114- present active participle</sup> **despiseth** <sup>a-114- present</sup> **not**  
**man, but God,** <sup>b</sup> **who hath also given** <sup>aorist active participle</sup> **unto us** <sup>c</sup> **his holy Spirit.** <sup>d</sup>

**20. Brotherly Love 4:9,10**

**4:9 But as touching brotherly love** <sup>a-5360</sup> **ye need** <sup>present</sup> **not that I write** <sup>present</sup>  
<sup>middle/passive participle</sup> **unto you:** <sup>b</sup> **for ye** <sup>c</sup> **yourselves are** <sup>present</sup> **taught of God to love** <sup>a-25-</sup>  
<sup>present middle/passive participle</sup> **one another.**

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7b Two calls:

1. To uncleanness, by the world
2. To holiness, by God

Every unsaved man hears and heeds the call to uncleanness. He cannot hear the call to holiness until he is saved. He first hears the call to salvation. Once that is heard and heeded, then comes the call to leave uncleanness and follow after holiness.

8a “**despiseth**” (both usages) Strong’s #114 αθετεω *atheteō*; from α *a* (Strong’s #1) a negative particle; and τιθημι *tithēmia* (Strong’s #5087) to set, place; to do away with, to set aside, disregard, to thwart the efficacy of anything, nullify, make void, frustrate, to reject, to refuse, to slight.

The ESV uses the weaker “disregards” instead of “despises”.

8b This is because these commandments are from God, not man. To refuse them is to refuse not the messenger but the one who gave the commandments.

8c All the other translations have the Holy Spirit given “to you” not “us”.

8d “**who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.**” At salvation, as all believers are indwelt by the Spirit of God, Whom we receive at salvation. God has given the Holy Spirit to all of us, not just a chosen few who somehow “earned Him” through some second blessing experience.

9a Two words for “**love**” are used here:

1. First use- Strong’s #5360 φιλαδελφια *philadelphia*; love of brothers or sisters, brotherly love. This is human, or “horizontal” love, that we have for the brethren. This human love is based on some human emotion or need, in that we find someone attractive or we are related to someone of we love someone because of some great thing they did for us. We basically love for selfish reasons and for self-interest. This isn’t necessarily wrong, it’s just the way human love is. We cannot naturally love the same way God loves.
2. Second use- Strong’s #25 αγαπαω *agapāō*; to love, to feel and exhibit esteem and goodwill to a person, to prize and delight in a thing. From its supposed etymology αγαπαω is commonly understood properly to denote love based on esteem (διλιγο), as distinct from that expressed by φιλεω (*amō*), spontaneous natural affection, emotional and unreasoning. If this distinction holds, αγαπαω is fitly used in New Testament of Christians love to God and man, the spiritual affection which follows the direction of the will, and which, therefore, unlike that feeling which is instinctively and unreasoning, can be commended as a duty. This is the divine love, or “vertical” love toward God. It is this kind of love that the Thessalonians were “taught of God”. The “brotherly” love comes more natural, as it is a human love. But we need to be taught of God as to how to love with the divine love, for this kind of love is not natural with man and no unsaved man can love in this manner.

9b This is one problem the Thessalonian church did not have. They were unified and were treating each other well. There were no splits or divisions as there were in Corinth or Philippi. They were manifesting brotherly love toward each other, so Paul didn’t have to deal with this issue, but he does compliment them on it.

**4:10 And indeed ye do<sup>present</sup> it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech<sup>present</sup> you, brethren, that ye increase<sup>present middle/passive participle</sup> more and more;<sup>a</sup>**

**21. Practical Exhortations 4:11,12**

**4:11<sup>a</sup> And that ye study<sup>present middle/passive infinitive</sup> to be quiet,<sup>present middle/passive participle</sup> and to do<sup>present middle/passive participle</sup> your own business, and to work with<sup>present middle/passive infinitive</sup> your own hands, as we commanded<sup>aorist</sup> you;**

**4:12 That ye may walk<sup>present subjunctive</sup> honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have<sup>present subjunctive</sup> lack of nothing.**

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9c Emphatic.

10a Paul commends them on the love that they manifested, but he then encourages them not to quit but to continue to develop this love, deepen it and strengthen it! Keep developing it!

11a Some practical commands that flow from sanctification:

1. **Study to be quiet.** Learn how not to be a trouble-maker but keep quiet, both in the church and outside. Strong's #2270 ησυχάζω êsuchazô; to keep quiet, to rest, cease from labor, to lead a quiet life, said of those who are not running hither and thither, but stay at home and mind their business, to be silent, to say nothing, hold one's peace
2. **Do your own business.** We might re-phrase this "mind your own business". Don't be a gossip or a busy-body, always sticking your nose into the affairs of other people that does not concern you. The Geneva Bible is stronger here, using the word "meddle" as in "meddle in your own business" instead of meddling with someone else's.
3. **Work with your own hands.** If you keep busy with your own business, you won't have time to meddle with other people's business. This is a problem with gossips- too much time on their hands.
4. **Walk honestly toward them that are without.** Those "without" are Gentiles. Maintain a good testimony before the unsaved in all of your affairs.

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**22. The Rapture 4:13-18**

These verses are a major section dealing with the doctrine of the Rapture. Defined, it is the secret coming of Jesus in the clouds to remove the Church from the earth before the start of the tribulation period. This section should be studied along with 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 and Revelation 4:1,2.

From David Cloud, *The Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible and Christianity*, pages 485-486: **RAPTURE.** The term commonly used for the catching away of the saints described in 1 Th. 4:13-18. This Rapture is (1) a resurrection of the dead in Christ (v. 14-16), (2) a catching up and translation of the living N.T. saints (v. 17). The term "caught up" in 1 Th. 4:17 is also translated "pluck" (Jn. 10:28), "pulling [out of the fire]" (Jude 23), and "take by force" (Ac. 23:10). It refers to a forceful seizing and a snatching away. It is used of the devil snatching the word of God from the heart of the foolish (Mt. 13:19) and of the Spirit of God snatching away Philip after the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch (Ac. 8:39). This is exactly what Christ will do to the N.T. believers before the onslaught of the Great Tribulation.

This event is also described in 1 Co. 15:51-58. Here we see that the translation of the N.T. saints will involve an instantaneous change from morality to immortality. Those believers living at that hour will never see death (v. 51).

In both of these key passages the translation of the church-age saints is said to be a source of great comfort and encouragement (1 Th. 4:18; 1 Co. 15:58). If this translation did not occur until the end of the torments of the Great Tribulation, it certainly would not produce solace for the Christian standing on this side of the Tribulation! Among those who believe in a literal Rapture of the church-age saints, there are basically three positions regarding the time of the Rapture. All of these pertain to the timing of the Rapture in relation to the Great Tribulation. The three views are Pre-tribulational, Midtribulational (also called Pre-wrath Rapture), and Posttribulational. The evidence for the Pre-tribulation Rapture. For the following reasons we are convinced the Bible teaches a Pre-tribulational Rapture. In the following study we are using the term "church" in a general, institutional sense:

**1. Church-age believers are promised salvation from wrath** (1 Th. 1:9-10; 5:1-9; Ro. 5:9; Re. 3:10). The Great Tribulation is expressly called the day of God's wrath. Today the Lord is withholding His anger; He is seated upon a throne of grace, but the day approaches when He will take the seat of judgment. Then "the day of his wrath" will be upon all the world (Ps. 110:5; Re. 6:17; Is. 13:6-13). It is true that in every century the churches have been subjected to persecution, but this is quite different from the Great Tribulation. The general persecutions of the saints are caused by the wrath of wicked men and the devil, whereas the seven-year Tribulation is a period especially pertaining to God's wrath (Is. 13; Re. 6:16,17; 14:16). Some feel that the church will not be saved out from the time of great wrath, but will be saved through this wrath. This cannot be true, since the Bible clearly reveals that those who are on earth during the Great Tribulation will not be delivered from wrath but will be overcome (Re. 13:7). The Scriptures which promise church-age believers deliverance from wrath must refer to salvation out from the very presence of the wrath. Concerning the Great Tribulation, we are told that "as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth" (Lk. 21:35). Therefore, the church-age believers must either be physically removed from the earth, or they will be involved in the day of wrath. God promises removal. "... I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Re. 3:10).

**2. The Holy Spirit is to be removed before the tribulation** (2 Th. 2:1-8). In other passages of the Bible, the Holy Spirit is said to be the restrainer of sin (Ge. 6:3; Is. 59:19). The Holy Spirit came into the world in His present special dispensation at Pentecost (Ac. 2), when He came to empower the church for the Great Commission (Ac. 1:8). He will remove the church-age believers prior to the time of God's great wrath.

**3. In the book of Revelation, the church is not seen on earth after chapter three until chapter nineteen, when she is seen returning to earth with Christ.** The churches are repeatedly mentioned in Revelation one through three, then disappears until the end of the book, but the true church is not the focus on the Great Tribulation recorded in Re. 4-18.

**4. The church-age believers are promised mansions in heaven** (Jn. 14:1-3). When the Lord Jesus returns to the earth at the end of the Tribulation, He sets up His

Messianic kingdom. If the Rapture occurred at the end of the Tribulation, the promise to church-age believers pertaining to Heaven would not be fulfilled. Church-age believers are a heavenly people with a heavenly hope (Ep. 1; Ph. 3:20; Col. 3:1-3).

**5. *The translation of church-age saints is said to be imminent*** (it could happen any moment), whereas the Second Coming is said to be preceded by specific signs (1Th. 1:9,10; Tit. 2:12,13; Mt. 24:42-44; Jam. 5:8,9; 1 Jn. 2:28; Re. 1:3). The Apostle Paul instructed the church at Thessalonica that they did not need to heed signs and times, because the N.T. believer has been promised redemption from the “day of darkness” which shall overcome the whole world (1 Th. 5:1-9). The church is waiting, not for the appearing of the Antichrist, but for the redemption of the Son of God.

**6. *The church is a mystery unrevealed in the O.T.*** (Ep. 3:1-11). The N.T. church has no part in the chronology of events foretold by the O.T. prophets. They clearly foretold the first coming of Christ, His miraculous birth, life, death, and resurrection. The same prophets described Christ’s Second Coming in glory, preceded by a time of unprecedented worldwide tribulation, followed by the glorious Messianic kingdom centered in Jerusalem. These prophets did not see the present church age—”which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.” Between the first coming of Christ and the Second Coming there is a time gap which was unrevealed in the O.T. times. This gap is the time of the creation and removal of the church. For centuries God has revealed big plans for the nation Israel. O.T. prophecy pictures Israel at the heart of a worldwide kingdom with Israel’s divine Messiah as the sovereign ruler. This kingdom, when established, will be eternal, yet Israel today has been temporarily set aside; these O.T. prophecies have never been fulfilled. Rather, today God is doing something different from anything which was spoken of in O.T. times. He is calling out from among all nations a special body of people. When He has accomplished this present purpose, when the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, God will restart Israel’s prophetic clock and will wholly fulfill all O.T. prophecies in relation to His ancient chosen nation. “... blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (Ro. 11:25). The Great Tribulation deals with Israel, not with the church-age believers. This present mystery period will end with the removal of the church-age believers from the earth; and the Lord will then take up His plan for the nation Israel as He fulfills the O.T. prophecies of the time of Jacob’s trouble, the coming of Messiah in glory, and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom.

**7. *The church cannot be overcome, but the saints of the tribulation will be*** (compare Mt. 16:18 with Re. 13:7).

**8. *There are events intervening between the translation and resurrection of the church and the second advent.*** According to 1 Co. 15:51, EVERY saved person will be translated at the Rapture. Yet Mt. 25:31-46 shows that when Jesus returns to the earth at the Second Advent He will find many true believers in their natural bodies. There must, then, be a period of time between the Rapture of the church-age saints and the Second Coming to allow for these folk to be saved. It is reasonable to believe that this period of time is the seven years of the Great Tribulation.

**9. *The book of Revelation reveals that the church is not on earth during the tribulation.***

(1) The church is not seen on earth in chapters 4-18.

- (2) The 24 elders seem to represent the church.
- (3) The witness for God in the earth during the Tribulation is Israel, not the church (Re. 7).
- (4) The prayers of the saints in Re. 8 are prayers for judgment. Only Israel prayed such prayers. The church-age saints are instructed to pray for her enemies, not against them. These prayers of Revelation are those of the Psalms and are based on God's promise to Abraham to curse those who cursed Israel.
- (5) The scorpion-like creatures of Re. 9 are given freedom to hurt all earth-dwellers except those Jews who were sealed by the angel of Re. 7; if church believers were on earth, they would be subject to this horrible judgment of God.
- (6) Re. 10 identifies the events of Re. 4-18 with those foretold by O.T. prophets—the days of the Great Tribulation, the “day of the Lord.” The church age was never in the view of these O.T. prophecies; it was an unrevealed mystery. The church has a different purpose and program than national Israel. It is Israel that is in view in O.T. prophecy and in Revelation 4-18.
- (7) The ministry of the two witnesses of Re. 11 identifies them with national Israel and with O.T. prophecies of the “day of the Lord.” The two witnesses minister from Jerusalem, Israel's capital. The churches have no such capital, her hope being heavenly, not earthly (Col. 3; Ph. 2). The two witnesses are clothed in sackcloth, typical of O.T. Israel, not N.T. believers. Nowhere are the churches seen in sackcloth. They are told, rather, to “rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice” (Ph. 4:4). The church-age believer's judgment is forever past, and he is to keep his mind centered in the heavenlies where, in position, he is seated eternally victorious with Christ (Ep. 2:5-10). Re. 11:4 identifies the two witnesses with O.T. prophecy. Zec. 4:3,11,14 is a prophecy of Israel, not the church. Further, the two witnesses call down judgment upon their enemies in Re. 10:5,6. Jesus rebuked his disciples for desiring to do just this and instructed the church-age believer to pray for the well-being of his enemies, not for their destruction (Lk. 9:54-56; Ro. 12:14,17-21).
- (8) The devil persecutes Israel, not the church, during the Tribulation (Re. 12). There can be no doubt that the woman is identified as national Israel. Verse 5 shows the woman bringing forth Christ; it is obvious that Jesus was brought forth by Israel, not by the churches (Is. 9:6,7; Ro. 9:5). Also, the symbols of Re. 12:1,2 recall familiar O.T. typology of Israel. She is referred to as a woman (Is. 54:5-7). The sun and moon and the 12 stars of v. 2 remind us of Joseph's dream regarding Israel (Ge. 37:9). The words of Re. 12:2 are almost an exact quote from Mi. 5:3, again referencing Israel's delivery of the Messiah. These symbols are not used in the N.T. of the churches.

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4:13 But I would not have <sup>present</sup> you to be ignorant, <sup>a-present middle/passive participle</sup> brethren, concerning them which are asleep, <sup>b-perfect passive participle</sup> that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. <sup>c-d</sup>

4:14 For if we believe <sup>present</sup> that Jesus died <sup>aoorist</sup> and rose again, <sup>aoorist</sup> even so them also which sleep <sup>aoorist passive participle</sup> in Jesus will God bring <sup>future</sup> with him. <sup>a-b</sup>

4:15 For this we say <sup>present</sup> unto you by the word of the Lord, <sup>a</sup> that we which are alive <sup>present active participle</sup> and remain <sup>present passive participle</sup> unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent <sup>b- aorist active subjunctive</sup> them which are asleep. <sup>c-d-aorist passive participle</sup>

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13a “**ignorant**” Some were ignorant of this mystery, although Paul had taught on it during his stay in Thessalonica. Either some had not heard Paul’s teaching, did not understand it or just plain rejected it. Timothy may have reported these doctrinal problem and questions that the Thessalonians had, so Paul felt the need to go back and review the material. But some people have just never heard of the doctrine of the rapture, probably through no real fault of their own. I was saved 7 years before I ever heard it even mentioned, much less expounded. It took me so long to hear it because I spent 5 of those 7 years in the Roman Catholic Church (where they did not believe it) and the other 2 years looking for a church. Thankfully, God directed me to a church that believed this and preached it!

13b “**asleep**” Dead saints. They are “asleep” since they will awake again unto life eternal. But this is no sort of proof text for the heresy of “soul sleep” as many other references clearly show that the soul is awake and conscious after death, either in heaven or hell. Only the physical body is “asleep”. The soul and spirit are very much alive after dead, in either heaven or hell.

13c “**sorrow not even as others which have no hope**” We all sorrow over dead lost ones, but Christians have the hope that we will see them again, while the unsaved have no such hope. We don’t weep and wail like the heathen, who have no light and no hope about what lies after death. We sorrow because of sorrow, not hopelessness.

13d “**no hope**” The pagan philosophies concerning death were dark and hopeless and gave no light or hope. Theocritus, a Greek poet of the third century B.C., wrote: “Hopes are among the living, the dead are without hope.” Moschus, his contemporary, speaking of the plants that perish in the garden: “Alas! alas!...these live and spring again in another year; but we...when we die, deaf to all sound in the hollow earth, sleep a long, long endless sleep that knows no waking (J. Vernon McGee).” Only the Gospel can give the light regarding life after death and this will, in turn, produce hope.

14a If we believe in Christ’s resurrection, then we ought to believe in our resurrection and the resurrection of our loved ones who died in Christ.

14b It is important to note that it is Jesus who is coming back, not Allah. Mohammad, the Buddah, or any other pretender to the deity and glory that is Christ’s alone. Christ is the one Who paid for our salvation and it will be Christ Who will return to consummate it.

15a “**by the word of the Lord**” Paul is not giving his own opinions or notions here but is speaking with full apostolic authority as it was derived from the Word of God, so what is to follow is entirely reliable.

The ESV has a very odd reading “by a word from the Lord” instead “by the word of the Lord”. The ESV is weakening the divine authority that Paul is claiming in giving this revelation and mystery.

15b Those who are alive at the rapture will not prevent, go before or interfere with the dead saints in Christ. Their “order of resurrection” will not affect that of the living saingts.

“**prevent**” Old English word for “precede”.

**4:16 For the Lord himself<sup>a</sup> shall descend<sup>a-future middle</sup> from heaven with a shout,<sup>c-d-2752</sup> with the voice of the archangel,<sup>e</sup> and with the trump<sup>f</sup> of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise<sup>future middle</sup> first:<sup>g</sup>**

**4:17 Then we<sup>a</sup> which are alive<sup>b-present active participle</sup> and remain<sup>present active participle</sup> shall be caught up<sup>726- c-future passive</sup> together with them in the clouds,<sup>d</sup> to meet the Lord in the air:<sup>16d</sup> and so shall we ever be<sup>future</sup> with the Lord.<sup>e</sup>**

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15c There are then two classes of Christians at the rapture:

1. The dead, who have died in faith
2. The living saints

15d **“asleep”** “Early Christians called the burying place for bodies a cemetery, derived from the Greek *koimeterion*, which means *rest house for strangers; sleeping place*. We call such a place a hotel or motel where we spend the night and rise up in the morning to continue our journey (J. Vernon McGee).”

16a “This same Jesus “ (Acts 1:11) will return, not Allah, Mohammad, or any false “Christ”, or even an angel.

16b **“descend from heaven”** Christ does not touch on the earth at the rapture. He will at the second coming.

16c This **“shout”** will be “Come up hither!” as seen in Revelation 4:1. The ESV has a “cry of command” instead of a “shout”.

Strong’s #2752 *κελευσμα* *keleuma*; an order, command, spec. a stimulating cry, either that by which animals are roused and urged on by man, as horses by charioteers, hounds by hunters, etc., or that by which a signal is given to men, e.g. to rowers by the master of a ship, to soldiers by a commander (with a loud summons, a trumpet call). Used only here.

16d The Lord does not touch the earth in the rapture. He will in the Second Coming.

16e The **“archangel”** here will be Michael, as he is the only one identified as such in Scripture.

16f **“trump”** Trumpet. No doubt only believers will hear it. To the saints, the rapture will be a noisy event. To the world, it will be a silent one as they will not know anything has happened until after the fact.

16g **“the dead in Christ shall rise first”** The old preacher said “Because the dead have 6 feet further to go than we do!” But the dead in Christ participate in the rapture just as much as the living saints do.

17a Emphatic.

17b **“we which are alive”** There will be a generation of Christians that will escape the grave, as Enoch did, and will go directly to heaven, translated instantly from the earth and their mortal life.

17c **“caught up”** Seized or snatched, with some degree of violence and force. When the Lord does return in the rapture, He must go through Satan’s territory (as the Prince of the Power of the Air). Satan will certainly not stand idly by while his domain is invaded and the Church removed, although he will certainly not be able to stop it.

Strong’s # 726 *ἁρπαζω* *harpazô*; to seize, carry off by force, to seize on, claim for one’s self eagerly, to snatch out or away, usually by force.

17d **“in the clouds”** Clouds were associated with Christ in His ascension in Acts 1:9. He left in clouds and will return with clouds. This gathering will take place in the earthly atmosphere, right in the middle of Satan’s domain, to demonstrate how powerless he is to prevent it.

**4:18 Wherefore comfort<sup>a-present imperative</sup> one another with these words.<sup>b-c</sup>**

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17e **“so shall we ever be with the Lord”** Never to be physically separated from Him again, as we are here on earth.

18a The ESV has “encourage”.

18b This doctrine is one that should comfort the saints. We might be part of that generation that will cheat the grave. It is a great comfort knowing that God has a new, glorified body that will never sin again and that will be immortal waiting for us at the rapture. And we shall see our departed loved ones in the Lord as well. If that won't bring comfort at a funeral, what will?

18c Some thoughts on the Rapture:

1. The rapture is a mystery, not revealed until after Pentecost by Paul. The truth of the Second Coming or the resurrection are not mysteries for both are clearly mentioned in the Old Testament.
2. The mainline, professing Church is lukewarm at the time of the rapture.
3. Christ does not touch the earth at the rapture as He will at the Second Coming. He comes in the air at the rapture and we meet Him in the air.
4. Satan's position and situation do not change at the rapture as it will at the Second Coming.
5. No Jew or unsaved person is judged at the rapture. The bema seat judgment for the Christian takes place immediately after the rapture.
6. It is not the same event as the Second Coming. The Second Coming and the rapture are two totally separate events.

## 1 Thessalonians 5

### 23. The Day of the Lord 5:1-5

**5:1 But of the times and the seasons,<sup>a-b</sup> brethren, ye have<sup>present</sup> no need that I write<sup>present passive infinitive</sup> unto you.<sup>c</sup>**

**5:2 For yourselves know<sup>perfect</sup> perfectly that the day of the Lord<sup>a</sup> so cometh<sup>present</sup> middle subjunctive as a thief in the night.<sup>b</sup>**

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1a “**times and seasons**” This phrase only appears elsewhere in Acts 1:7. The Thessalonians were like the men of Issachar, “who had understanding of the times” (2 Chronicles 12:32). We must also understand our generation and God’s program if we wish to avoid the rebuke the Lord gave in Matthew 16:2,3.

1b “**times (χρονων) and seasons (καιρων)**” *Chronos* is rather an extended period and *kairos* a definite space of time (A.T. Robertson, *Robertson’s Word Pictures*).

1c The Lord had to rebuke the Jews because of their inability to discern the “signs of the times” in Matthew 16:3. But the Thessalonians had a better understanding of the signs of their generation and Paul had no need to go over “current events”. It is also very important for us to be as up-to-date on what the current world situation is so that we will know how to confront our age and how to deal with it. We cannot deal with our age if we are ignorant of it. Plus, our understanding of current events is critical to our understanding of prophecy.

2a “**Day of the Lord**” Biblical unfolding of this term:

1. Isaiah 2:12 For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:

1. It is aimed at the proud and lofty.

2. Isaiah 13:6 Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.

1. It is something to howl about

2. It comes as a destruction from God

3. Isaiah 13:9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

1. It is cruel with wrath and fierce anger

2. It will lay the land desolate

3. It will destroy the sinners in the land

4. Isaiah 34:8 For it is the day of the LORD’S vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.

1. It is the day of the Lord’s vengeance

2. It is a year of recompense over the controversy of Zion

5. Jeremiah 46:10 For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.

1. It is a day of vengeance

2. The sword will devour

3. A sacrifice takes place “in the north country” by the Euphrates River.

6. Ezekiel 13:5 Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD.

1. It is a day of battle

7. Ezekiel 30:3 For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.

1. It is a cloudy day
2. It is a time of the heathen
8. Joel 1:15 Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.
  1. It comes as a destruction from the Almighty
9. Joel 2:1 Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;
  1. It is a cause for alarm
10. Joel 2:11 And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?
  1. It is great and very terrible
  2. No one can abide it
11. Joel 2:31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.
  1. Before that day, the sun will be darkened and the moon will take on the color of blood
12. Joel 3:14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.
  1. The day involves multitudes
  2. A "valley of decision" is associated with the day
13. Amos 5:18 Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light.
  1. Some people actually look forward to the day and desire it. But they do so in ignorance of just how horrible it will be
14. Amos 5:20 Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?
  1. It is a dark day with no light
15. Obadiah 15 For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head.
  1. It is upon the heathen
16. Zephaniah 1:7 Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests.
  1. A sacrifice is involved, with "guests"
17. Zephaniah 1:14 The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.
  1. It is called a "great day".
  2. It will cause the mighty men to cry bitterly
18. Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:
  1. Elijah will return before that day
  2. It is called "great and dreadful"
19. Acts 2:20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:
  1. Quoting from Joel 2:31
20. 1 Corinthians 5:5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.
  1. "Day of the Lord Jesus" is a reference to the Bema Seat judgment
21. 1 Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.
  1. It comes as a thief in the night
22. 2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.
  1. It comes as a thief in the night

**5:3 For when they shall say,** <sup>present subjunctive</sup> **Peace and safety;** <sup>a-b</sup> **then sudden destruction cometh upon** <sup>present middle indicative</sup> **them, as travail upon a woman with child;** <sup>c- present active participle</sup> **and they shall not escape.** <sup>d-aorist active subjunctive</sup>

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2. The heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements will burn and the earth shall be burned up.

1. We usually place this at the end of the Millennium. If so, the Day of the Lord may also refer to events in Revelation 20:7-15, at the final defeat of Satan after he is released from his prison at the end of the Millennium

The “**Day of the Lord**” then refers mainly to the events leading up to Armageddon. Although those events may be 3 ½ years in the making, when “the big one” hits, and the Lord returns to take His vengeance on the Antichrist, it will happen suddenly and without warning. The Second Coming may be a long time in coming, but when it does arrive, it comes in full force and fury. It is important to realize that this is not referring to the Rapture or the Bema Seat. The Bema judgment is the “Day of the Lord Jesus Christ” and is a different event.

2b While there are signs for the Second Coming (and plenty of them!), there are no apparent signs for the rapture. But we can certainly observe the “signs of the times” that point to the Second Coming and back-date seven years to see just how close we are.

The “Day of the Lord” comes as a “thief in the night”, suddenly and without warning. The start of the events leading up to the Tribulation and Second Coming will hit with a force and a suddenness because they begin after the rapture, which has no warning. The rapture hits suddenly, then begins the events associated with and leading up to the “Day of the Lord.”

3a Despite all the tribulation activity and ascent of the Antichrist, the Battle of Armageddon and the Second Coming will still come as something of a surprise to those involved. The start of these events, with the rapture, comes unexpectedly. The other events of the tribulation, although prophesied far in advanced, come suddenly when their time arrives for fulfillment. Maybe the leaders involved think that the Lord will not return or that they will be able to avoid the conflict with the 200 million man army of the East in the plains of Megiddo. But the participants have no choice. God will gather all nations to the appointed place at the appointed time and He will pour out His judgments upon the Gentile world powers.

3b “**peace and safety**” The world under the Antichrist may think it is finally entering into a “millennium” when in reality, the worst of the tribulation lies yet ahead. The Antichrist will no doubt be promising great peace and prosperity, as well as eventual victory over God, if the peoples of the earth will just continue to follow him and support him. But these promises will turn out to be hollow as the Lord will rain down all manner of judgments and destructions that destroy the promised peace and prosperity of the Antichrist’s government.

We certainly hear a lot of blather about “peace and safety” today, with the United Nations, World Court, International Socialism (and Capitalism, too!), every political system and politician out there and every governmental official from every country constantly harping about how they want to bring in “peace on earth”. But it will never happen as long as fallen man and the Gentile world powers are running the show. There will be no “peace on earth and good will toward men” until the Prince of Peace sits on David’s throne in Jerusalem after the Second Coming.

The Coverdale rendering includes an idea of skepticism on the part of those who say “peace and safety” that any catastrophe could possibly overtake them, especially in a Biblical and prophetic sense.

3c “**as travail upon a woman with child**” The expectant mother knows she is going to deliver at some general time, although she does not know the exact time. But when the labor pains start, they usually do suddenly and without warning.

3d None of the Gentile world powers shall escape or be exempt from the judgments of the tribulation period. Israel also will not escape their time of “Jacob’s Trouble”.

5:4 But ye,<sup>a</sup> brethren, are<sup>present</sup> not in darkness, that that day should overtake<sup>ao</sup> you as a thief.<sup>b-c-d</sup>

5:5 Ye<sup>a</sup> are<sup>present</sup> all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are<sup>present</sup> not of the night, nor of darkness.<sup>b</sup>

**24. Exhortation to Wakefulness 5:6-10**

5:6 Therefore let us not sleep,<sup>a-present subjunctive</sup> as do others;<sup>b</sup> but let us watch<sup>present</sup> and be sober.<sup>c-d-present subjunctive</sup>

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4a Emphatic.

4b It's odd that Paul would comfort the Thessalonians that they were not in ignorance concerning the Day of the Lord and thus, were in no danger that the events of that day would overtake them. Since the Church does not go through the Tribulation and will not be on earth when the Day of the Lord comes, why this language? Unless Paul is simply comforting them that they had nothing to worry about concerning the Day of the Lord since it would not directly concern them.

4c The Jews had a tradition that when the Messiah returned, he would judge the Gentiles at night, while they were asleep in their sin, but that he would judge the Jews in the day, while they were busy working and keeping the law.

4d "Even they who are watching for Christ's coming may be to some extent surprised at his appearing, as the most watchful person may be when the thief at last comes; but we shall not be taken altogether unawares (Charles Spurgeon)."

5a Emphatic.

5b Don't worry. We who believe on Christ are in the day, have the light and are not the targets of the wrath of God as those in darkness are. This is a further comfort by Paul to the Thessalonians that they will not see the Day of the Lord and that their dead loved ones will not miss the rapture and that all is well for both the living and dead saints.

6a "sleep" is not just physical slumber but also spiritual slumber. When one is asleep, several things are noted:

1. You are unaware of your surroundings and events. Christians who are unaware of the signs of the times, of God's plans, of current events or even of their own spiritual condition are said to be asleep as they are insensible to these things that they ought to be aware of.
2. You are defenseless. It can be dangerous business to be asleep as you do not know that a danger may be present, not can you react or defend yourself. Satan has little trouble attacking sleeping saints as they are unable to put up any defense, until it is too late. Christians who are taken captive of cults and false religious systems were probably asleep when they are seized.

6b "as do others" The unsaved are spiritually asleep, naturally. But many Christians are sleeping through the age, oblivious to the hour or the apostasy.

6c "let us watch and be sober" This is absolutely necessary today, lest we be taken captive or be destroyed by the enemy in our sleep. This will involve some effort on our part. We must exert ourselves in this watchful sobriety but keeping up-to-date on men and movements as well as world news and events, so we will not be ignorant or insensible to the dangers around us. The Christian is on 24/7 duty- is always to be awake and alert.

**5:7 For they that sleep<sup>present active participle</sup> sleep<sup>present</sup> in the night;<sup>a-b</sup> and they that be drunken<sup>present passive participle</sup> are drunken<sup>present</sup> in the night.<sup>c</sup>**

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6d "A man who expects soon to see the Son of God coming to judgment, ought to be a sober man. No one would wish to be summoned from a scene of dissipation to his bar. And who would wish to be called there from the ball-room; from the theater; from the scene of brilliant worldly amusement? The most frivolous votary of the world; the most accomplished and flattered and joyous patron of the ball-room; the most richly-dressed and admired daughter of vanity, would tremble at the thought of being summoned from those brilliant halls, where pleasure is now found, to the judgment bar. They would wish to have at least a little time that they might prepare for so solemn a scene. But if so, as this event may at any moment occur, why should they not be habitually sober-minded? Why should they not aim to be always in that state of mind which they know would be appropriate to meet him? Especially should Christians live with such vigilance and soberness as to be always prepared to meet the Son of God. What Christian can think it appropriate for him to go up to meet his Saviour from the theater, the ballroom, or the brilliant worldly party? A Christian ought always so to live that the coming of the Son of God in the clouds of heaven would not excite the least alarm (Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament*)."

7a We are in a night season so it is only natural to sleep. It is going to take some effort to stay awake in the night. The disciples in Gethsemane couldn't stay awake even one hour in a crises and were rebuked for their sleepiness. We are in a night season and the world is wallowing in the sins of such a time. But the saints are to be all the more alert in such times as the dangers of sin are greater and the pressures of sin are stronger and more Christians could be carried away by the powers of the night seasons.

7b Two things are going on in the night:

1. **Sleep.** Most sleep takes place at night unless you have a job that keeps you up all night.
2. **Drunkness.** These kinds of sin are usually done at night. The bars, brothels, gambling joints are always busy at night, not in the day. They like the night since they are better hide their sin under a cloak of darkness.

7c A Biblical presentation of the "night":

1. The first thing God did was to divide the day from the night at the creation
  1. Genesis 1:5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.
2. The moon is the "lesser light" that rules the night
  1. Genesis 1:16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.
    1. This includes the stars
      1. Psalm 136:9 The moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy endureth for ever.
3. God comes to men in dreams by night
  1. Abimelech- Genesis 20:3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife.
  2. Isaac- Genesis 26:24 And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake.
  3. Jacob's dream
    1. Genesis 28:11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.
    2. Genesis 46:2 And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I.
  4. Laban- Genesis 31:24 And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.
  5. The Egyptian butler and baker- Genesis 40:5; 41:11



6. Samuel- 1 Samuel 15:16 Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.
7. Nathan- 2 Samuel 7:4 And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying, (1 Chronicles 17:3)
8. Solomon
  1. 1 Kings 3:5 In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. (2 Chronicles 1:7)
  2. 2 Chronicles 7:12 And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice.
9. Job- Job 33:15 In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed;
10. The psalmist- Psalm 17:3 Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.
11. Daniel
  1. Daniel 2:19 Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.
  2. Daniel 7:2 Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.
  3. Daniel 7:7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.
  4. Daniel 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.
12. Zechariah- Zechariah 1:8 I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white.
13. Paul
  1. Acts 16:9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.
  2. Acts 18:9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:
  3. Acts 23:11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.
  4. Acts 27:23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,
4. Jacob wrestled with God all night- Genesis 32
5. The Passover was eaten at night
  1. Exodus 12:8 And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.
6. God slew the firstborn in Egypt by night
  1. Exodus 12:12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.
7. The burnt offering was to burn all night
  1. Leviticus 6:9 Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt offering: It is the burnt offering, because of the burning upon the altar all night unto the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be burning in it.
8. The manna fell by night
  1. Numbers 11:9 And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it.
9. God killed the 185,000 Assyrian soldiers by night
  1. 2 Kings 19:35 And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

10. God gives songs in the night
  1. Job 35:10 But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night;
  2. Psalm 42:8 Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.
  3. Psalm 77:6 I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.
11. We should not desire the night
  1. Job 36:20 Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place.
12. Night seasons
  1. Instruction in night seasons
    1. Psalm 16:7 I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.
  2. Meditations in the night watches
    1. Psalm 63:6 When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.
13. The night belongs to God
  1. Psalm 74:16 The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun.
14. Meditation and communion in the night
  1. Psalm 63:6 When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.
  2. Psalm 77:6 I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.
  3. Psalm 119:148 Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word.
  4. Song 1:13 A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.
  5. Song 3:1 By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.
  6. Song 5:2 I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.
15. The terror by night
  1. Psalm 91:5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;
  2. Song 3:8 They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night.
16. God shows His faithfulness every night
  1. Psalm 92:2 To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,
17. Remembering God in the night
  1. Psalm 119:55 I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept thy law.
18. Mentions of the priests who stand by night in the house of the LORD
  1. Psalm 134:1 A Song of degrees. Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the house of the LORD.
19. The adulteress is active in the night
  1. Proverbs 7:9 In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night:
20. The virtuous woman is active in the night
  1. Proverbs 31:15 She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.
  2. Proverbs 31:18 She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.
21. Woe to the drunkards in the night
  1. Isaiah 5:11 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!
22. The cry is always "What of the night?"
  1. Isaiah 21:11,12 The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come.
23. Desiring God in the night

**5:8 But let us, who are <sup>present participle</sup> of the day,<sup>a</sup> be sober, <sup>present subjunctive</sup> putting on <sup>b-aorist middle participle</sup> the breastplate<sup>c</sup> of faith and love; and for an helmet,<sup>d</sup> the hope<sup>e</sup> of salvation.**

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1. Isaiah 26:9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

24. All night prayer

1. Luke 6:12 And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

25. Nicodemus came to Jesus by night

1. John 3:2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

2. John 7:50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)

3. John 19:39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.

26. The night is coming when no man can work

1. John 9:4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

27. Judas "went out" in the night

1. John 13:30 He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

28. Peter was delivered in the night

1. Acts 5:19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

2. Acts 12:6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

29. The Lord's Supper was instituted in the night

1. 1 Corinthians 11:23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

30. The day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

2. 2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

31. Sleeping and sins in the night

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

32. There shall be no night in glory

1. Revelation 22:5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

8a These spiritual sleepy-heads and drunken louts are of the night. They are in the darkness of sin and ignorance. Yet there is no excuse for a Christian to be in this condition. We have the indwelling Holy Spirit, the Word of God and access to the Light to guide us, sanctify us and keep us alert and sober. Since we in the Light and not in darkness, we are to arm ourselves with the Christian armor (compare Ephesians 6) to do battle and to resist the expected attacks from the enemy.

8b The Tyndale and Coverdale have the stronger idea of being "armed" rather than just "putting on" these things.

8c This **breastplate** protects the heart and other vital organs of the chest. It is called the "breastplate" of faith and love here, as compared to the "breastplate of righteousness" in Ephesians 6:14. Thus, righteousness, faith and love are the three alloys that make up the shield that protects the Christian life.

**5:9 For God hath not appointed<sup>aorist middle</sup> us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>a-b</sup>**  
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8d The “**helmet**” protects the head, the most vital part of the body. If the head is wounded, the battle is lost. You can heal up an arrow to the chest or an arm wound, but a head wound is usually fatal.

8e “**faith...love...hope**” The three main Christian graces (1 Corinthians 13:13; 1 Thessalonians 1:3)

9a The Church is not appointed to the wrath of the Tribulation period, but rather, to obtain the promised salvation which includes deliverance from that wrath of God to come. This is not to say that the Church will not be judged as we will at the Bema Seat, which takes place immediately after the rapture (Revelation 4:1-3). But we will not be judged or condemned with the world and the unrighteous during the Time of Jacob’s trouble.

The Church has no reason to go through the Tribulation period. People insist that the Church is corrupt and apostate and to a large degree, she is. But all of that will be ironed out at the Bema Judgment, not during the Tribulation period.

**9b REASONS WHY THE CHURCH WILL NOT GO THROUGH THE TRIBULATION**

1. The tribulation is referred to as the time of Jacob’s Trouble, not the “Church’s Trouble”.
  1. Jeremiah 30:7- *“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.”*
  2. Daniel 12:1- *“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”*
  3. If the tribulation is the “time of Jacob’s Trouble” that is designed for Israel, then what would be the point of the Church (which is NOT Israel) to go through any part of it?
2. The Church is not mentioned from Revelation 4 to 19, when the tribulation is taking place, but the Church is mentioned in Revelation 1-3 and in and after Revelation 19. The reason why the Church is not mentioned in Revelation 4-19 is because the Church is not on earth during the tribulation period.
3. Promises to the Church of deliverance from the Tribulation
  1. 1 Thessalonians 1:10- *“And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”*
  2. 1 Thessalonians 5:9- *“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,”*
  3. Revelation 3:10- *“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”*
4. The Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24 is clearly Jewish and tribulation in context, and there is no application of the Church in that chapter.
5. Some teach that the Church must go through the tribulation because they fail to distinguish the difference and distinctives between Israel and the Church. A failure to understand dispensational truth leads to this error.
6. Some teach that the Church must go through the tribulation in order to be purified because it is corrupt. While the modern institutional Church is indeed corrupt, the genuine Church is purified by the blood of Christ, not by enduring persecution.
7. Some have attacked the pretribulation Rapture doctrine, which teaches that the Church will not go through the tribulation, by claiming that it cannot be true because no church writer or Reformer ever taught this doctrine until it was introduced by John Nelson Darby, a Plymouth Brethren, in the 1830s. The only problem is that their assertion that no one in the early Church taught the pretribulation Rapture has been found to be incorrect.
8. We are the children of light, and not of darkness (see 1 Thessalonians 5:5), why would we have to go through the tribulation judgments alongside of the children of darkness?
9. If the Church was on earth during the tribulation, then why would God have to call the 144,000 (Revelation 7) and the Two Witnesses (Revelation 11)? If the Church was still on earth and was still

5:10 Who<sup>a</sup> died<sup>aorist active participle</sup> for us,<sup>b</sup> that, whether we wake<sup>present subjunctive</sup> or sleep,<sup>present subjunctive</sup> we should live<sup>aorist active subjunctive</sup> together with him.<sup>c</sup>

**25. Esteem For Christian Workers 5:11-13**

5:11<sup>a</sup> Wherefore comfort<sup>present imperative</sup> yourselves together, and edify<sup>present imperative</sup> one another, even as also ye do.<sup>present</sup>

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preaching and evangelizing, then why the needs for these groups? God calls them because the Church has been removed in the rapture, and since God does not leave Himself without witness, He needs groups to preach during these days. The same could be said regarding the angel flying through the heavens with the everlasting gospel in Revelation 14:6. Angels don't preach but this one does, since the Two Witnesses have been killed and have ascended to heaven by this time (Revelation 11:11,12). The 144,000 were all killed before this (see Revelation 14). Seeing there are no organized human witnesses on earth (the Church has been raptured, the 144,000 and Two Witnesses all killed), God resorts to this angel to preach up to the Second Coming.

10. The promise of Revelation 3:10- "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

Obviously the truth about the time of the Rapture can be found only in Scripture. The Protestant Reformation was based essentially on this return to the authority of the Bible and "salvation by grace without the works of the law". The Reformers (Luther, Calvin, et al) did not do very much work regarding prophecy and so they are not safe nor reliable guides to follow in this area. It would not be until the 1800s and the start of the so-called "Plymouth Brethren" movement when prophetic truths began to be opened up. We may not agree with everything John Nelson Darby or William Kelly wrote with regards to dispensationalism and pre-tribulation understanding of prophecy, but there is no arguing how much of a debt we owe these men. There have been references to the pretribulation rapture as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century and the 1700s, so it is not a new doctrine, nor can John Nelson Darby or the Plymouth Brethren be "charged" with creating this doctrine. The Plymouth Brethren were very instrumental in recovering, systematizing and promoting these doctrines but they did not originate them.

10a The pre-King James translations all use the impersonal pronoun "which" for Christ. The ESV reads as the King James.

10b "Who died for us" If 1 Thessalonians was Paul's first letter, this may be the earliest written mention of the substitutionary atonement of Christ.

10c It makes no difference whether we are alive or dead at the time of the rapture. We will live with the Lord and go to be with Him in the clouds.

11a Two exhortations for the Thessalonians in the light of these rapture/second coming truths:

1. "Comfort yourselves". These doctrines are designed to comfort the heart of the believer who may be in the midst of intense persecution (as the Thessalonians were) or who is fighting against the world, the flesh and the devil and who may be despairing of that fight (who among us doesn't at times?) or the heart of the saint who is just tired of it all and wants to go home. But if the Church was destined to go through the Tribulation and do battle against the Antichrist and endure all the Tribulation judgments, what comfort could be drawn from that?
2. "Edify each other". These doctrines should also lead to right (or better) living among the saints, knowing the Lord could return at any time. Thus, we must be ready at all times, so that we are not caught sleeping, unawares or off guard.

**5:12 And we beseech** <sup>present</sup> **you, brethren, to know** <sup>perfect active infinitive</sup> **them** <sup>a</sup> **which labor** <sup>present active participle</sup> **among you,** <sup>b</sup> **and are over** <sup>present middle participle</sup> **you** <sup>c</sup> **in the Lord,** <sup>d</sup> **and admonish** <sup>present active participle</sup> **you,** <sup>e-f</sup>

**5:13 And to esteem** <sup>present middle/passive infinitive</sup> **them very highly in love for their work's sake.** <sup>a</sup> **And be at peace** <sup>present imperative</sup> **among yourselves.** <sup>b-c</sup>

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12a **“know them...”** Respect them and honor them. Know what they are going through! Familiarize yourself with the trials and tribulations that accompany spiritual leadership. The average church member has little idea what the pastor and elders in his church go through or with what issues they are dealing with. They don't know about having to deal with the State, other churches, “the brethren”, the church members. They don't know about fretting if there is sufficient money to meet the next church payroll, to pay the electric bills, to repair that bus. They don't know how the pastor has to deal with spiritual issues in and out of the church. They do not know all the situations in and out of the church that the pastor is having to deal with. And they are probably unaware of the personal spiritual battles that the pastor is facing. If you knew your leadership better and all the problems and trials they have to face, you may not be so quick to criticize them. The same could be said for your boss at work!

12b **“which labor among you”** The Christian workers at Thessalonica, from the pastor(s) to the deacons to the “lay workers”. All of them are vital in providing the leadership to the local church.

This is a good description of the work of pastors:

1. The labor among their people in the Word and doctrine.
2. They have spiritual authority (to some degree) over the Lord's flock as an undershepherd.
3. They admonish God's people when it is necessary.

12c **“and are over you”** Who have the spiritual authority over you. But even this “authority” is that of an undershepherd and the sheep (1 Peter 5:3) so it is limited and exercised in a humble fashion. This authority is not as it is exhibited by the pope or by bishops in episcopal denominations. We like to talk about “servant-leadership”, demonstrated by the Lord Who said that although He was Lord, He was among them as one Who served (Luke 22:27).

12d **“in the Lord”** That's the key. Such authority and leadership must be led, and tempered by, the Holy Spirit.

12e **“and admonish you”** Which is necessary sometimes, when church members step out of line or engage in questionable or even stupid activity. An admonishment or even a rebuke is necessary. But when the rebuke and admonishment come, it should be taken as from the Lord for the benefit of the person involved, and not be taken personally or reacted to badly.

12f The Tyndale and Coverdale push the last part of 5:12 into verse 13.

13a **“for their work's sake”** The reason to esteem these who are “over” us “in the Lord” is not because of their own personal holiness or righteousness or attainments, but because of the kind of work and service they provide to the Body of Christ. They are working for the Lord and on that basis, they should be honored and respected.

13b **“Be at peace among yourselves”** Was there a hint of trouble in Thessalonica? Was some division brewing, maybe concerning the leadership in the church?

13c The Tyndale and Coverdale have “be at peace with them”, as in the spiritual leadership mentioned earlier in verses 12 and 13?

## 26. Practical Exhortations 5:14-22

**5:14<sup>a</sup> Now we exhort<sup>b-present</sup> you, brethren, warn<sup>present imperative</sup> them that are unruly,<sup>c-d</sup> comfort<sup>present middle/passive imperative</sup> the feebleminded,<sup>e-f</sup> support<sup>present middle/passive imperative</sup> the weak,<sup>g</sup> be patient<sup>present imperative</sup> toward all men.<sup>h</sup>**

**5:15 See<sup>present imperative</sup> that none render<sup>aoist active subjunctive</sup> evil for evil unto any man;<sup>a</sup> but ever follow<sup>present imperative</sup> that which is good,<sup>b</sup> both among yourselves, and to all men.<sup>c</sup>**

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14a Paul closes out the epistle on a very practical note with these exhortations, which we will examine verse-by-verse. Similar lists of practical instructions by Paul also appear in Romans 12:8-21 and Ephesians 4:22,23.

14b The Tyndale, Coverdale and Geneva all use “we desire...” instead of “we exhort”.

14c The ESV has “idle”.

14d Even within the Church there are many who are not living well, who are rebellious or stubborn against the will of God. What do we warn them about? The consequences of such a spiritual attitude and the impending judgment of that Christian at the Bema Seat judgment, where such unruliness will be dealt with by Christ.

14e Strong’s #3642 ολιγοψυχος oligopsuchos; from ολιγος oligos (Strong’s #3641) few, little; and ψυχη psuchê (Strong’s #5590) soul; fainthearted. Literally, these are people who are “little-souled”, who don’t have much confidence or strength. They may be overly fearful have little faith. Instead of being brow-beaten and condemned, they need to be strengthened and encouraged.

14f The ESV has “fainthearted”.

14g Many are weak in the Church. They are spiritually weak, intellectually weak, emotionally weak, financially weak, physically weak. Not all Christians are Samsons. These brethren need the help, aid and support of the Church to help them through their difficulties and to strengthen them for the days that lie ahead.

14h This can be difficult for all men, especially professing Christians, can be very trying. I can remember trying to participate on certain internet discussion boards and being totally frustrated at the blindness of many professing Christians. Even some professing fundamentalists were defending the English Standard Version or Joel Osteen’s “motivational Christianity” or John Piper’s compromises and they just could not be reasoned with from the Scripture. I simply didn’t have the patience to deal with these people so I quit such boards as being a waste of time and effort. But when dealing with people face-to-face, we need to ask the Holy Spirit to give us a divine measure of patience that goes beyond human standards of patience.

15a This should be obvious. This would forbid revenge, avenging yourself or attacking anyone, whether he be saint or sinner. This does not forbid attacking a man over false doctrine, false practice or sin. But even when we do that, we must make sure that our attacks are not personal, but based on doctrine or practice.

15b Really, this shouldn’t have to be said, that a Christian should follow the good and refuse the evil. But it is amazing how many professing Christians are either so ignorant or so backslidden that they must be reminded of this.

**5:16<sup>a</sup> Rejoice** <sup>present imperative</sup> **evermore.** <sup>b-c</sup>

**5: 17 Pray** <sup>present middle/passive imperative</sup> **without ceasing.** <sup>a-b</sup>

**5:18<sup>a</sup> In every thing<sup>b</sup> give thanks;** <sup>c- present imperative</sup> **for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.**

**5:19 Quench** <sup>present imperative</sup> **not the Spirit.** <sup>a</sup>

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15c Don't start trouble. If there is trouble brewing, don't be the one responsible for starting it. This may involve biting your tongue and taking a wrong or "second best" to keep the peace in the Church, but it is worth it. It is better to have peace (if so sin or compromise is involved) than "having your own way."

16a In the Greek, this is the shortest verse in the New Testament, shorter than John 11:35.

16b The ESV is weaker with "rejoice always". What is wrong with using an idea of "forever"?

16c No matter what your situation or circumstances are, **rejoice!** Lose your job? Rejoice. Your house burned down? Rejoice. Get thrown out of your church? Rejoice. Getting crucified? Rejoice, for all things are part of the will of God for you and will work out to His glory and your good (Romans 8:28). This is not natural. Human nature is to whine and complain over the slightest inconvenience. But it is spiritual to sing in the fire and to submit to God even while you are sitting at the city dump (as in the case of Job). If Christianity is worth anything, in a practical sense, it should help us to meet the disasters in our life better than an unsaved man would, and it should help us to sing while in the fire.

17a This time, the ESV agrees with the King James and shares the stronger reading as compared to the pre-King James translations that use "continually".

17b In order to "**pray without ceasing**", you first have to start. Once you start, don't stop! Don't quit! Don't get discouraged when the answer is slow in coming! Men ought always to pray and not to faint. Praying "without ceasing" would be like a man with a chronic cough. He just can't stop coughing, as this Christian should be unable to stop praying.

18a Verses 16-18 give three characteristics of a genuine Church:

1. They are always rejoicing
2. They are always praying
3. They are always giving thanks

18b The ESV uses "circumstances" which is a longer, bulkier word when a shorter phrase, like "all things" would have been better.

18c Similar to 5:16, but not "for" everything but "**in**" everything. If your circumstances are part of the overall will of God for your life, then you should rejoice in it for it will all work out for the best in the end (Romans 8:28).

19a Similar to Ephesians 4:30, where we are told to "grieve not" the Spirit. "Quenching" Him is stifling His leading and influence in the life, almost like pouring cold water on Him to extinguish the flame. In some ways, quenching the Spirit is more dangerous than grieving Him. If you grieve Him, a confession and repentance can restore fellowship. But when you quench something, you put it out, like pouring a gallon of water on a campfire, then burying it. Under those conditions, it will be very difficult to re-ignite that fire. And quenching the Spirit will make it a long and difficult process to restore His power and influence in the life.

Some ways in which we can quench the Holy Spirit:

1. By unholy talk (Ephesians 4:29,31)



**5:20 Despise**<sup>a-1848-present imperative</sup> **not prophesyings.**<sup>b-c-4394</sup>

**5:21 Prove**<sup>a-present imperative</sup> **all things;**<sup>b</sup> **hold fast**<sup>present imperative</sup> **that which is good.**<sup>c</sup>

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- a. Corrupt communication- Ephesians 4:29
- b. Evil speaking- Ephesians 4:31
2. Rejecting His teaching- Isaiah 63:10, where Israel “vexed His Holy Spirit”.
3. By not being filled with the Spirit
4. By sin and carnality
5. By apathy towards His indwelling presence

20a “**despise**” Strong’s #1848 εξουθενεω exoutheneō; to make of no account, despise utterly

20b “**prophesyings**” Strong’s #4394 προφητεια prophêteia; prophecy, a discourse emanating from divine inspiration and declaring the purposes of God, whether by reproving and admonishing the wicked, or comforting the afflicted, or revealing things hidden; esp. by foretelling future events, of the endowment and speech of the Christian teachers called prophets, the gifts and utterances of these prophets, esp. of the predictions of the works of which, set apart to teach the gospel, will accomplish for the kingdom of Christ

20c “**Prophesyings**” here has more of a general idea of “preaching” in general, rather than foretelling future events, although that office was still active (although to an lessening degree) in Paul’s day. Since this was an early epistle and no New Testament was yet in written form, the prophetic and revelatory office was still active. Paul is commanding the Thessalonians to not shun, despise or think little of the teaching and preaching of the Word of God. This is the channel by which God gives revelation, information and guidance to His people. This is why it is so vital to be in attendance to the services of the local church, including Sunday School (if offered) and Bible studies. One will not grow unless he is frequently under the ministry of the Word. To shun these services and these spiritual opportunities to show “despite” to prophesyings.

21a The translations are all over the place with “prove”. Tyndale and Bishops have “examine”. The Geneva has “try” and the ESV uses “test”. The Coverdale reads as the King James.

21b Don’t so naïve as to believe everything you hear. You may hear such things as:

1. “The universe was created 15 billion years ago by the big bang.”
2. “Man is descended from apes via evolution”.
3. “Creationism is not science”.
4. “The King James Bible is full of errors”.
5. “The NIV is a fine translation”.
6. “Dispensationalism is a heresy and is of the devil.”
7. “The pre-millennial rapture was hatched by a demon-possessed Scottish girl”.

“The simple believe every word (Proverbs 14:15).” But the wise man will search out all things, because he knows men lie and are often wrong. This requires a great deal of spiritual discernment and the ability to read, discern and analyze. But with the help of the Holy Spirit, any Christian can do it, and even an uneducated saint can call down a Ph.D. Prove everything you hear, either from your pulpit or from a false teacher. Don’t take anything at face value. Simply because a “great scholar” or a “nationally known television preacher” said it does not necessarily mean that it is true. It is amazing how many people accept a teaching simply because John Calvin taught it or because it is in the Scofield Reference Bible notes. It is as if they were intimidated or impressed by some “big name” and are afraid to seek the matter out. If you are saved and have the Holy Spirit and believe The Book, then you are qualified to “search out” and question every preacher, Bible teacher, theological system or commentary out there, including the one you are reading now.

**5:22 Abstain** <sup>present middle imperative</sup> **from all appearance of evil.** <sup>a-b</sup>

**27. A Parting Prayer for Their Sanctification 5:23,24**

**5:23 And the very God of peace** <sup>a</sup> **sanctify** <sup>aoist active optative</sup> **you wholly;** <sup>b</sup> **and I pray**  
**God your whole spirit and soul and body** <sup>c</sup> **be preserved** <sup>aoist passive optative</sup>  
**blameless** <sup>d</sup> **unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

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21c This shouldn't have to be said, that a Christian should follow the good and refuse the evil. But it is amazing how many professing Christians are either so ignorant or so backslidden that they must be reminded of this. No nation does this today, including the United States. We have no love or desire for "good". Americans worship money, sex, power and leisure. The worship the NFL, Super Bowls, "Final Four" and "BCS Championship Games", Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson, vacations, gambling, pornography, Oprah and Ellen, homosexuals, perversion, Republicans and Democrats, "getting something for nothing", Southern Gospel, Christian Rock, TBN and Joel Osteen. They hate true preachers, the English hymn, missions, the King James Bible and Bible-believing churches. No Christian has any business singing "God Bless America" since America has no desire to bless God. We will go down as hard and as fast as the Soviet Union did as we are no better than the old Communists were.

22a The Tyndale and Coverdale has "suspicious things". The ESV uses "every form of evil". The Geneva and Bishops rightly retain the idea of avoiding even the "appearance" of evil.

22b Not just evil, but even the very appearance of evil. If it looks bad, or would but you, your church or the Lord in a bad light (even if the act itself was not evil), then it should be avoided. It may not be wrong in itself but even if it LOOKS wrong or if it could be misunderstood or misinterpreted, then avoid it.

23a "**God of peace**" a title for God, showing that He is the author of peace and all peace comes from Him

God is called "*God of Peace*, in the Pauline sense, is not mere calm or tranquility. It is always conceived as based upon reconciliation with God. God is the God of peace only to those who have ceased to be at war with him, and are at one with him. God's peace is not sentimental but moral (M. R. Vincent, *Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament*)."

1. God of patience in Romans 15:5
2. God of hope in Romans 15:13
3. God of peace in Romans 15:33; 16:20; 1 Corinthians 14:33; Philippians 4:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 3:16; Hebrews 13:20
4. God of all grace in 1 Peter 5:10

23b "**sanctify you wholly**" Not entire sanctification, which teaches that there is a second blessing where the sin nature is eradicated. There is no such state in Scripture in this life and the Bible teaches no such thing. Instead, Paul is desiring that God would have free reign in all compartments of the life. The "spiritual" and "secular" areas of your life should all be under the control of the Holy Spirit and we should dedicate all that are are and have to God.

The optative moods here shows this is a desire and wish of Paul on behalf on the Thessalonians.

23c "**spirit and soul and body**" This clearly shows the three part of man:

1. Man has a spirit. This is the part of man that responds to God and to spiritual things. This is what separates man from the animals as animals do not have a spirit in the same sense as men do. This is not to say that animals have absolutely no God-consciousness, but what they do possess is not on the same level as man's.
2. Man is a soul. This is the center of personality, will and intellect. That is what we really are. Animals also have souls as they have a personality, will and some degree of intellect or instinct.
3. Man has a physical body. This is obvious, that allows us to have contact and interaction with the physical world. But you are not the body. The body only houses the soul and spirit.

5:24<sup>a</sup> Faithful is he that calleth<sup>present active participle</sup> you, who also will do<sup>future</sup> it.<sup>b</sup>

**28. Closing Words 5:25-28**

5:25<sup>a</sup> Brethren, pray for us.

5:26<sup>a</sup> Greet<sup>aorist middle imperative</sup> all the brethren with an holy kiss.

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Each one of these separate divisions can be individually sanctified:

1. The body can be kept from sinful acts.
2. The soul can be kept from sinful thoughts.
3. The spirit can be kept from idolatry and apostasy.

This corresponds to the trinity of Godhead, as man is also a trinity:

1. God has a soul. This corresponds to the Father.
2. God has a body. This is Jesus Christ.
3. God has a Spirit, which is the Holy Spirit.

Man is unable to separate his three parts into individual entities. We cannot separate our soul and spirit so that they act independently. But God evidently can and does. One God, made up of three parts (body, soul, spirit) that can function independently, yet still be a unified being.

23d It is Paul's desire that all three of these parts of man be **preserved blameless** until Christ returns. This is not "preserved sinless" for none are sinless. We cannot live sinless but we can live blameless, so

that there is no open scandal in our lives and where we do not give Satan any excuse to speak reproachfully against us. Job would be a good example of a blameless life, as would Daniel.

24a God never gave a command that we could never fulfill. And if He promised to do something for us, He will follow through on that promise. If God called us to a blameless life than we can live a blameless life through the power of the Holy Spirit.

24b The ESV has the weakest reading with "he will surely do it". Well, the Lord certainly will, but the other translations just read more confidently about it.

25a This was a constant prayer request by Paul, as it should be by anyone. Paul understood how desperately he needed the prayers of God's people if the gospel was going to continue to spread.

26a There is the Church of Christ sect that claims to be the only true New Testament Church that does everything the New Testament tells them to do, and that they "speak where the Scriptures speak and are silent when the Scriptures are silent." Well, Paul is saying "kiss each other" to the Thessalonian church. This means for the men to kiss each other (like the French do) and for the women to kiss each other (in the historical context of the verse). Yet there probably isn't a single "Campbellite" church that literally practices this verse, which undermines their pretensions regarding just how scriptural their sect really is, for they do not literally obey this clear command. Bible believers would naturally understand this to be like a handshake today, or even a hug each other. We don't literally practice this either, but then again, we don't make stupid claims for our church like the Church of Christ or the Church of Rome do. At least Roman Catholics will kiss the pope's toe, although this isn't what Paul had in mind.

**5:27<sup>a</sup> I charge<sup>present</sup> you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.<sup>b</sup>**

**5:28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.**

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27a Probably not only in Thessalonica but in the neighboring churches as well. This was not an epistle for the church leadership only, but for all the saints.

27b The Geneva add "saints", probably because of the use of "holy" here.

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