

**THINKING THROUGH
THESSALONIANS**

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BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

A New

- Commentary
- Workbook
- Teaching Manual

Wilbur Fields

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Dedicated

To My Father

Whose holy life and hard work
will surely be remembered in heaven.

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Preface

HELP FOR YOU—FIVE LAYERS DEEP!

To help you to know and understand God's word, this book offers five layers of help.

(1) *"Thinking Through Thessalonians"*—At the beginning of the study of each chapter is a group of questions called "Thinking Through Thessalonians." These are designed to help the person who has little or no knowledge of the Bible text to get acquainted with it. All the blanks in these sections can be filled in with no help but a common King James Bible.

(2) *Outlines*—Outlines of both of the Thessalonian letters, and all of the chapters are given.

(3) *Translation and Paraphrase*—A translation from Nestle's Greek New Testament is given. This is as accurate and literal as we can make it. With the translation we have included a paraphrase, other words to make the meaning of the verses as clear and complete as possible. The words in parentheses are the paraphrase. Usually reading the translation and paraphrase alone will make Paul's thoughts quite clear.

(4) *Notes*—Notes on every verse are given. Most notes are practical comments on the message of the verses. Some notes are technical, but wherever possible, we have tried to make all of them understandable to the general reader.

(5) *"Did You Learn?"*—The study of each chapter concludes with a section of review questions entitled "Did You Learn?" (The Introductory Sections also have questions of this type.)

Besides these five layers of help, there are some useful Introductory Sections at the beginning of both epistles, and some special studies in the back of the book.

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THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

Introductory Section I

CAN YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?

1. What made the Thessalonian church a church to be thankful for? (I Thess. 1:2-7)
2. What will happen to the dead when Jesus comes back? (I Thess. 4:14-17)
3. The shortest verse in the Bible is actually in I Thessalonians. Where is it?
4. Would God actually cause anyone to believe a lie? (II Thess. 2:11-12)
5. Was Captain John Smith the first man to say, "If any man will not work, neither let him eat"?

These, and many other equally interesting questions, will be answered in your study of THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS.

Introductory Section II

A. CHAPTER TOPICS OF I THESSALONIANS

(By all means *memorize these chapter topics*. If you only remember these, you will have gained a fair idea of what is in every chapter of the whole epistle.)

Chapter 1—Paul's Thanks for the Thessalonians.

Chapter 2—Paul's good record among the Thessalonians.

Chapter 3—Paul's current dealings with the Thessalonians.

Chapter 4—(Two topics)

(1) The walk of the Christian.

(2) The dead in Christ and the Lord's coming.

Chapter 5—(Two topics)

(1) Times and seasons of the Lord's coming.

(2) Practical exhortations.

B. OUTLINE OF I THESSALONIANS

(You should memorize *now* the headings of Part One and Part Two of the outline, and the Scripture limitations of these parts. Notice also that both parts close with a prayer. You will not need to memorize the sub-points in each part now. These will be taken up as each chapter is studied. More complete outlines of each chapter are given at the beginning of the notes on each chapter.)
Greeting; 1:1

PART ONE—Paul's relations with the Thessalonians, past and present; Chapters 1,2,3.

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

- I. Paul's thanks for the Thessalonians; 1:2-10
 - A. When Paul expressed thanks; 1:2-3
 - B. Things for which Paul expressed thanks; 1:4-10
 - 1. Their election; 1:4-6
 - 2. Their ensample; 1:7-10
- II. Paul's good record among the Thessalonians; 2:1-16
 - A. Paul's work among them; 2:1-12
 - B. Thanks for the way they received the word; 2:13-16
- III. Paul's current dealings with the Thessalonians; 2:17-3:10
 - A. Paul's desire for personal visit hindered; 2:17-20
 - B. Timothy sent; 3:1-5
 - C. Joy upon Timothy's return; 3:6-10
- Concluding prayer; 3:11-13
- PART TWO—Exhortations and teachings; Chapters 4 and 5.
 - I. The walk of the Christians; 4:1-12
 - II. The Lord's coming; 4:13-5:11
 - A. The dead in Christ and the Lord's coming; 4:13-18.
 - B. Times and seasons of the Lord's coming; 5:1-11
 - 1. Comes as a thief; 5:1-3
 - 2. Will not come to Christians as a thief; 5:4-11
 - III. Practical exhortations; 5:12-22
- Concluding prayer, commands, and benediction; 5:23-28

Introductory Section III

THE LORD'S COMING IN THE THESSALONIAN EPISTLES

(Memorize the facts written in italics.)

- 1. The Lord's second coming is mentioned so many times in the Thessalonian epistles, that we can accurately say that *His second coming is the theme of both of the epistles*. It is mentioned in every chapter of both epistles.
- 2. *About one out of every eight verses in I Thessalonians refers to the Lord's coming*. I Thessalonians has a total of 89 verses. Eleven of these verses mention or refer to the Lord's coming. These verses are 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:1-4, 23.
- 3. *About three out of every eight verses in II Thessalonians refer to the Lord's coming*. II Thessalonians has a total of 47 verses. Eighteen of these refer to or mention the Lord's coming. Verses referring to His coming are 1:6-10; 2:1-12; 3:5.
- 4. "Often today we are told that the second advent is a doctrine with which generally Christians are not to be occupied. Many

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ministers never preach on it at all; many have no clear convictions regarding it. In the classrooms of theological seminaries this doctrine often becomes just a theme for academic discussion. But to Paul it was a tremendously important and exceedingly practical truth which needed emphasis because of its bearing on the hearts and lives of God's beloved people." (H. A. Ironside, *Addresses On the First and Second Epistles of Thessalonians*, p. 11)

5. What do the chapters of the Thessalonian epistles tell us about the Lord's coming?

First Thessalonians—

Chapter 1—We wait for His coming.

Chapter 2—The souls we have won will then be our crown.

Chapter 3—We shall be perfectly holy then.

Chapter 4—The dead in Christ will rise first, and then we shall all be caught up together to meet the Lord.

Chapter 5—The day of the Lord comes as a thief, but Christians will not be overtaken by that day.

Second Thessalonians—

Chapter 1—It will be a time of retribution.

Chapter 2—A falling away and the man of sin must come first.

Chapter 3—May the Lord direct your hearts into the patient waiting for Christ.

Introductory Section IV

FACTS ABOUT I THESSALONIANS

(Memorize all facts in italics.)

1. *It is the first and oldest epistle of Paul that we have preserved for us.* It may seem rather strange that the first epistle written by Paul should be placed near the end of the collection of Paul's epistles as they are arranged in the New Testament.
2. *It was written during Paul's second missionary journey. I and II Thessalonians are the only letters of Paul we have that were written during the second missionary trip.*
3. *It was written about 53 A.D.* Faucett's Bible Dictionary says it was written either in the autumn of 52 or the winter of 53, at the start of his one and a half year stay in Corinth.
4. *It was written from Corinth.* It was NOT written from Athens, as an unauthorized addition at the end of the King James says.

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Introductory Section V

DID PAUL REALLY WRITE I THESSALONIANS?

Yes, beyond question.

The epistle is referred to by Ignatius (about 110 A.D.), and by Polycarp (70-156 A.D.). It is quoted by Irenæus (130-190 A.D.), by Clement of Alexandria (about 195 A.D.), by Origen (about 225 A.D.), and others. Tertullian (about 200 A.D.) quotes it twenty times. These people were Christian writers in the early history of the church.

I Thessalonians is listed in the Muratorian Canon (after 150 A.D.), in that of Marcion (about 140 A.D.), and Laodicea (A.D. 364). These are ancient lists of the books that were accepted as being inspired and part of the New Testament Scriptures.

Even critics who do not fear to assert that Paul did not write Ephesians can find no question about I Thessalonians.

Introductory Section VI

THESSALONICA, THE PROUD CITY

(Thessalonica is pronounced Thess-uh-low-NYE-kuh.)

(We think all of the material in this section is interesting. We hope you will find it so also. But we confess that some of it is not of great importance in getting acquainted with the Thessalonian epistles of Paul. Therefore, we are printing in *italics* certain facts that *are* especially important. It is likely that questions will be asked about these facts in the "Did You Learn?" questions that follow section VII.)

1. Ancient Thessalonica reminds us of our modern cities like San Francisco or Los Angeles-seacoast cities, bustling, commercial, proud of their past and present.
2. *Thessalonica was located in the province of Macedonia, northern Greece.* Macedonia has no geographical boundaries on a modern map. Parts of ancient Macedonia lie in Greece, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia. But in the fourth century B.C. Macedonia was the ruling country of a great empire under Philip of Macedon and his son Alexander the Great.
3. *Thessalonica lies on the seacoast of the Thermaic Gulf (now called the Gulf of Salonika), a part of the Aegean Sea.* It rises from the end of the basin at the head of the gulf, climbs the slopes behind the gulf, and presents a striking appearance from the sea.

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4. The original name of Thessalonica was Therma, a Greek word meaning "hot places," being named for the warm mineral springs in the neighborhood. Cassander, one of the generals of Alexander the Great, changed its name to Thessalonica, the name of his wife, who was the daughter of Philip of Macedon and step-sister to Alexander.
5. After the battle of Pydna (164 B.C.), Thessalonica fell to Rome and was made capital of the second region of Macedonia. When the four regions of Macedonia were united into one province, Thessalonica became virtually THE metropolis of Macedonia. It was the capital of the entire province, and the residence of the provincial governor.
6. Augustus Caesar rewarded the loyalty of Thessalonica to him during the second civil war (42 A.D.) by making it a free city, with a popular assembly (Gr., ekklesia), and "rulers of the city" (called in Greek, "politarchs." This word is used in Acts 17:8). The political title "politarchs" is still to be read on an arch spanning the main street, from which we learn that there were seven politarchs.
7. In Paul's time Macedonia was not an imperial province requiring the presence of troops, but a senatorial province with the garrison removed. Perhaps this accounts for the fact that the people in Philippi and Thessalonica were so eager to declare that they were "Romans" and under "Caesar." See Acts 16:21; 17:7.
8. *The great Roman road called the Egnatian Road (Via Egnatia) ran through Thessalonica.* Indeed the main street of modern Thessalonica is the old Egnatian Road. This was the overland military highway from the city of Rome to the countries at the eastern end of the Mediterranean. From Thessalonica this road pass on through Apollonia, Amphipolis, Philippi, Neapolis, and on eastward. All of these places are mentioned in the book of Acts in telling about Paul's travels. It was about 100 miles from Philippi to Thessalonica on this road.
9. *Thessalonica was blessed with the best natural harbor in Macedonia.* The Romans established there a naval station and docks, and its importance as a seaport was thereby increased. The harbor of Thessalonica connected it commercially with Asia Minor and other more distant places.
10. *The excellent harbor and highway connections of Thessalonica made it ideal as a center from which the gospel could be sounded forth,* not only in Macedonia and Achaia (southern

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Greece), but in every place. (Achaia is pronounced A-KAY-yuh.)

11. *Thessalonica was home of some religions that practiced sexual orgies.* It was the home of two recognized mystery religions, the religion of Dionysius, the dying and rising God, and Orpheus, hero of a related and somewhat reformed Dionysiac cult. Both of them were fertility cults, expressing themselves in phallic symbols and sexual symbols, in wild orgies, and extravagant ecstasies. Along with these there was also a primitive cult of Cabiri (Kabeiroi), which was of similar character. Furthermore, at the time Paul lived, emperor worship was practiced in Macedonia. These facts explain why Paul wrote such commands as I Thess 4:3-6: "This is the will of God—that ye should abstain from fornication."
12. In Paul's time Thessalonica had a mixed population of Greeks, Romans, and Jews, the first being the most numerous. Perhaps the Jews were drawn to Thessalonica by the opportunities for commerce there. There was a synagogue in Thessalonica, whereas Paul found none in Philippi. As many as 10,000 Jews have dwelt in Thessalonica in modern times.
13. Thessalonica was the mainstay of Eastern Christianity during the Gothic invasion in the fourth century A.D. It was called the "Orthodox City." It continued to be a bulwark of the Christian faith in the East for centuries.
14. Thessalonica was taken by the Saracens (Mohammedans) in 904, by the Crusaders in 1185, and the Turks in 1430. They held it till 1913 when the treaty of Bucharest gave it to Greece.
15. Thessalonica is still a flourishing city. Its modern name is Salonika. It is one of the only two really large cities in Greece, and has grown rapidly in recent years. 1951 population, 217,049. 1961 population, 373,635. (The other large city is Athens, which, with its port of Piraeus, had a 1961 population of 1,852,709.) Thessalonica was severely damaged in World War II.
16. Modern Salonika is described as a "maze of crooked and cobbled alleys, flanked by the bare walls and stout doors of small houses. Spires of Christian churches (Greek Orthodox) and minarets of Mohammedan mosques rise against the sky. Everywhere one sees Turkish costumes, and the peasant dress of Greece, Albania, and Bulgaria." (From *Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia*, art. "Salonika". F. E. Compton & Co., Chicago, Ill., Copyright 1960).

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

Introductory Section VII

PAUL'S WORK AMONG THE THESSALONIANS

This is an important section. Paul's work among the Thessalonians forms the background of many verses in the Thessalonian epistles. You will not be able to understand the Thessalonian epistles without knowing this background, which is largely told in Acts chapter 17. We are again printing in *italics* certain facts which are especially important for you to learn. Anything in italics will almost certainly be found in the questions that follow this section.

1. Paul was scourged and *imprisoned at Philippi*. I Thess. 2:1-2; Acts 16:19-40.
2. *Paul went* with Silas and Timothy *from Philippi to Thessalonica* (about 100 miles). Acts 17:1. (See if you can find both Philippi and Thessalonica on the map inside the cover of this book.)
3. Paul was bold to speak in Thessalonica, even after his experiences in Philippi. I Thess. 2:2.
4. In Thessalonica *Paul labored* early and late *to support himself*. I Thess. 2:9; II Thess. 3:8. (However, Paul did receive some help from the Philippian church while he was in Thessalonica. See Phil. 4:6.)
5. *In Thessalonica Paul preached on three Sabbath days* (3 weeks) in the synagogue of the Jews. Acts 17:1-3.
6. Some Jews believed. Acts 17:4.
7. *A great multitude of devout Greeks* and chief women *believed*. Acts 17:4. Paul's remarks in the Thessalonian epistles make it evident that the Thessalonian church was predominantly Gentile. I Thess. 1:9.
8. The converts received the word with joy of the Holy Spirit. I Thess. 1:5.
9. It would appear that Paul remained in Thessalonica longer than the three weeks he preached in the synagogue. The reference to the large number of Gentile believers who turned from idols to serve the living God (I Thess. 1:9; Acts 17:4) suggests that some time elapsed between his last service in the synagogue and the riot stirred up by the Jews. Also the evidence of organization and leaders in the Thessalonian church suggests that Paul was in Thessalonica longer than three or four weeks. I Thess. 5:12-13. Ramsay thinks that the period

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must be extended seven or eight months. Others say only a few weeks. The time cannot be determined precisely. But it was not long enough to have solidly established the church.

10. In Thessalonica Paul evidently lodged in the house of Jason. Acts 17:5-7. Perhaps he held services there after quitting the synagogue. Jason may have been his kinsman. Romans 16:21.
11. Thessalonian Christians besides Jason (Acts 17:9) were Gaius (Acts 19:29), Aristarchus, and Secundus (Acts 20:4; 27:2), and possibly Demas (II Tim. 4:10). Aristarchus was his companion in travel, and shared his perils at Ephesus, and his shipwreck, and was his fellow-prisoner and fellow-laborer at Rome. (Acts 27:2; 19:29; Col. 4:10; Philemon 24).
12. *The Jews stirred up a riot against Paul* in Thessalonica. They apprehended Jason, but Paul escaped. Acts 17:5-9.

The Jews accused Paul and the Christians of doing things contrary to the decrees of Caesar, and of saying that there was another king, Jesus. Acts 17:7. Paul had indeed preached about the "kingdom" of God. I Thess 2:12. The Jews perverted his words about the kingdom so as to have an accusation against him. It is an "undesigned coincidence" between the story in Acts and this epistle that the very charges against Paul and Jason (which are told in Acts) concerned this very matter of the kingdom (which is mentioned in the epistle).

13. *Paul and Silas fled by night to Berea.* Acts 17:10. Timothy must have joined them there afterwards. Acts 17:14.
14. After Paul left Thessalonica, the Thessalonians became missionaries themselves, and spread abroad the word of the Lord. Their experiences with the gospel become known in Macedonia and Achaia and every place. I Thess. 1:8.
15. Paul taught in Berea, but soon had to flee from there because of the Jews who came from Thessalonica. Acts 17:10-14; I Thess. 2:15-16.
16. *Paul went on from Berea to Athens.* Silas and Timothy remained at Berea, but Paul sent for them. *Timothy came on to him at Athens.* Acts 17:15; I Thess. 3:1-2.
17. Paul attempted twice, at either Berea or Athens, to get back to Thessalonica, but he was prevented from doing so. His anxiety over the young converts became very great. I Thess. 2:18; 3:10.
18. Not being able to return himself, *Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica from Athens* to see how the Thessalonian Christians were getting along. I Thess. 3:1-2.

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19. After *Paul* sent Timothy to Thessalonica, he *left Athens and went on to Corinth*. Acts 18:1.
20. We cannot tell exactly where Silas stayed after the time Paul left Berea. He may have remained in that vicinity. But when Paul sent Timothy to Thessalonica, Silas rejoined Timothy somewhere, and *both Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia to Paul in Corinth*. Acts 18:5.
21. *Timothy brought Paul good news* of the faith and love of the Thessalonians, and that they had good remembrance of him. I Thess. 3:6.
22. However *Timothy* also seems to have *had a report of some defects still among the Thessalonians*:
 - (1) *They had not forsaken wholly the sensuality that characterized them as pagans.*
 - (2) *They had not forsaken the idleness* of some of their heathen countrymen. Some were not working to support themselves. I Thess. 4:3-5, 11.
 - (3) Also, because of a misunderstanding about the Lord's second coming, some of them were sorrowing. Paul had taught them to wait for the Lord Jesus from heaven. I Thess. 1:10. But as time passed and some of their number died, *they became grieved*, apparently *fearing that these dead would not share the blessings of the Lord's return*. I Thess. 4:13-18.
23. As we read the epistle, we get the impression that either by a verbal inquiry through Timothy, or in a note which the Thessalonians had written, that they had asked Paul about certain matters:
 - (1) Concerning brotherly love. I Thess. 4:9.
 - (2) Concerning the dead Christians. I Thess. 4:13.
 - (3) Concerning the times and seasons of the Lord's coming. I Thess. 5:1.
24. *It also appears that some accusations had been made in Thessalonica against Paul* after his departure. In First Thessalonians (especially in the second chapter) Paul defends his record among the Thessalonians quite vigorously. He defends himself against charges of flattery, mercenary motives, and impurity. He calls both the Thessalonians and God himself to witness that their lives were above reproach. I Thess. 2:3-10. It would have been surprising if the Jews had not made all manner of accusations against Paul after he left Thessalonica.
25. *Paul wrote and sent the first epistle to the Thessalonians im-*

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mediately upon the return of Timothy to him with the report about the Thessalonians. I Thess. 3:6.

26. We can more or less sum up the first epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians as including the following:
 - (1) Thanksgiving for their fidelity.
 - (2) A defense of Paul's record among them.
 - (3) Instructions on matters about which they were ignorant, especially the Lord's second coming.
 - (4) Warnings about sinful attitudes still in some of them.
27. Paul visited Thessalonica later on his third missionary trip. Acts 20:1-2.
28. Paul probably visited Thessalonica when he came through Macedonia after his first imprisonment in Rome, in accordance with his hope to visit the Philippians (also in Macedonia). I Tim. 1:3; Phil. 2:24.

DID YOU LEARN?

(Questions over the Introductory Sections)

(No questions over Section I)

(Questions over Section II, CHAPTER TOPICS AND OUTLINE)

1. Write out from memory all the chapter topics of I Thessalonians. Check your answers with the list given.
2. What is the title of Part One of I Thessalonians?
3. What chapters are in Part One?
4. What is the title of Part Two of I Thessalonians?
5. What chapters are in Part Two?
6. With what does each part of I Thessalonians close?

(Questions over Section III, THE LORD'S COMING IN THE THESSALONIAN EPISTLES)

1. What could we say was the theme of both the Thessalonian epistles? Why?
2. Approximately what portion of the verses in I Thessalonians is devoted to this topic?
3. Approximately what portion of the verses in II Thessalonians is devoted to this topic?

(Questions over Section IV, FACTS ABOUT I THESSALONIANS)

1. Who is the author of I Thessalonians?
2. What is the first and oldest epistle of Paul that we have?

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3. During what missionary trip was I Thessalonians written?
4. What other letters were written by Paul during the same missionary trip?
5. In what year was I Thessalonians written?
6. From what city was I Thessalonians written?

(No questions over Section V)

(Questions over Section VI, THESSALONICA, THE PROUD CITY)

1. In what modern country was Thessalonica located?
2. What was the name of the ancient province where Thessalonica was located?
3. Does Thessalonica lie on the plains, seacoast, or the hill country?
4. What famous road ran through Thessalonica?
5. What natural feature made Thessalonica a great seaport?
6. What made Thessalonica an ideal center from which the gospel could be sounded forth?
7. What was the character of some of the mystery religions practiced in Thessalonica?

(Questions over Section VII, PAUL'S WORK AMONG THE THESSALONIANS)

1. In what city was Paul imprisoned before he came to Thessalonica?
2. How was Paul supported in Thessalonica?
3. On how many Sabbath days did Paul speak in the synagogue in Thessalonica?
4. How did the Greeks receive Paul's preaching?
5. What happened that caused Paul to leave Thessalonica?
6. Where did Paul go from Thessalonica?
7. Where did he go after that?
8. Whom did Paul send to Thessalonica when he could not return himself?
9. After Paul sent (whom?) _____ to Thessalonica, Paul left (what city?) _____, and went to (what city?) _____.
10. In what city did Silas and the man Paul sent to Thessalonica rejoin Paul?
11. Was the report about the Thessalonians good or bad?

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

12. What were two defects in the Thessalonian Christians?
13. What misunderstanding about the Lord's coming grieved some of the Thessalonians?
14. What does Paul's defense of his record among the Thessalonians make it appear had happened in Thessalonica after he left?
15. How long was it after Paul received the report about the Thessalonians before he sent the first epistle to the Thessalonians?

MEMORY WORK

The following passages should be committed to memory. But you can learn the verses suggested from each chapter as you study that chapter. The verses to be committed to memory are also given in the "Thinking Through Thessalonians" questions at the start of each chapter.

I Thess.—1:9-10; 2:13; 3:12-13; 4:13-17; 5:1-2, 23.

II Thess.—1:6-9; 2:3, 13; 3:1,3,10.

I THESSALONIANS, CHAPTER ONE

Chapter Topic:

Paul's Thanks for the Thessalonians



"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers." I Thess. 1:2

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

I THESSALONIANS, CHAPTER ONE

(Use your King James Bible to fill out these questions.)

1. What three men joined in sending the first epistle to the Thessalonians? 1:1
_____ ; _____ ; _____
2. The church of the Thessalonians is said to be "in" two people. Who are they? 1:1
_____ ; _____
3. What two things does Paul request to "be unto" the Thessalonians? 1:1
_____ ; _____
4. How often did Paul give thanks for the Thessalonians? 1:2

5. In what did Paul make mention of the Thessalonians? 1:2

6. What three things did Paul remember about the Thessalonians? 1:3
_____ ; _____
_____ ; _____
7. In whose sight did the Thessalonians work and labor? 1:3

8. By what title did Paul address the Thessalonians? 1:4 _____

9. What did Paul know about the Thessalonians? 1:4 _____

10. What had come unto the Thessalonians? 1:5 _____

11. In what four ways had the gospel come unto the Thessalonians? 1:5 _____ ; _____ ; _____
_____ ; _____
12. The Thessalonians knew that the gospel had come to them in much assurance, because they knew "what _____ of _____" Paul and his helpers had been while they were among them." 1:5.

13. For whose sake had Paul behaved as he did among the Thessalonians? 1:5 _____.
14. Paul said that the Thessalonians had become "followers of _____ and of the _____." 1:6
15. In what had the Thessalonians received the word? 1:6 _____.
16. Do you think that the afflictions experienced by the Thessalonian Christians were an exceptional experience for Christians? (Compare Acts 14:22). Yes or No. (Circle which).
17. What brought joy to the Thessalonians? 1:6 _____.
18. What had the Thessalonians been to other believers? 1:7 _____.
19. In what two places had the Thessalonians become ensamples? 1:7 _____; _____.
20. What had sounded forth from the Thessalonians? 1:8 _____.
21. Not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in _____, the faith of the Thessalonians had been spread abroad. 1:8
22. Because the Thessalonians had spread abroad their faith, what did Paul not need to do? 1:8 _____.
23. How did Paul feel about the Thessalonians spreading abroad their faith so greatly? 1:8,2-3. _____.
24. Fill in these blanks from 1:9: "For they (the people) shew (or report) of us _____ of _____ we had unto you."
25. To whom did the Thessalonians turn? 1:9. _____.
26. From what did the Thessalonians turn? 1:10. _____.
27. How did Paul describe God? 1:9. _____.
28. What two things did the Thessalonians turn to God to do? _____.
_____. 1:9 _____.
_____. 1:10
29. Did the Thessalonians expect Christ to come again? 1:10. Yes or No. (Circle which)
30. Who is the Son, for whom the Thessalonians were waiting? 1:10. _____.
31. What has God done for the Son? 1:10. _____.
32. What is coming on the world? 1:10. _____.
33. Who delivers us from this? 1:10. _____.
34. Memorize I Thess. 1:9-10.

I THESSALONIANS, CHAPTER ONE

Chapter Topic, "*Paul's Thanks for the Thessalonians*"

Outline

Greeting; 1:1

1. From Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.
2. Grace and peace to them.

A. When Paul expressed thanks; 1:2-3

1. Always; 1:2a
2. In prayer; 1:2b-3
 - a. Remembering their work of faith.
 - b. Remembering their labor of love.
 - c. Remembering their patience of hope.

B. Things for which Paul expressed thanks; 1:4-10

1. *Their election*; 1:4-6

- a. Their election known by Paul; 1:4
- b. How their election was known by Paul; 1:5-6
 - (1) By the way the gospel came to them; 1:5
 - (a) Not in word only.
 - (b) In power.
 - (c) In the Holy Ghost.
 - (d) In much assurance—This demonstrated by Paul's manner among them.
 - (2) By the way they received the gospel; 1:6
 - (a) They became followers of Paul and the Lord.
 - (b) In much affliction.
 - (c) With joy of the Holy Ghost.

2. *Their ensample*; 1:7-10

- a. They became ensamples to all believers; 1:7
- b. They sounded forth the word; 1:8-10
 - (1) Where? Macedonia, Achaia, and every place. 1:8
 - (2) Result—Paul needed not to speak anything;
- c. What others reported about the Thessalonians; 1:9-10
 - (1) What manner of entering in Paul had among them; 1:9
 - (2) How they turned from idols; 1:9-10
 - (a) To serve God; 1:9
 - (b) To wait for Jesus from heaven; 1:10

THOUGHTS FROM THE OUTLINE

Of I Thessalonians, chapter one

There were two things in the Christian experience of the Thessalonians that made Paul thankful—their election and their ensample. These same two things in every Christian's experience ought to cause every gospel preacher to give thanks.

But sad to say, these words mean very little to the average church member.

"Election" means "choice." So the *election* of the Thessalonians was the way God chose them to be His children. Or, to express it in another way, it was the way they became Christians and were saved.

Any time a person is saved, he will have a thrilling story to tell. Many half-converted church members of modern times cannot give a thrilling testimony of their election, because they are not "elect."

"*Ensample*" means "example" or "pattern." Not only should our conversion (or election) be a thrilling story, but our service for Christ after conversion should also be an inspiration and a challenge to all who know about it. It was such in the case of the Thessalonians.

Text (1:1)

I Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; Grace to you and peace.

Translation and Paraphrase

1. Paul, and Silvanus (who is also called Silas), and Timothy (send greetings) to the congregation of Thessalonians (who are) in God (our) Father, (in his family, favor, and fellowship,) and (in) the Lord Jesus, the anointed one. (May the favor (of God) and peace (come) to you.

Notes (1:1)

1. While three men, Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, sent this epistle (or letter), it is plain that Paul is the main writer. This is evident by such verses as I Thess. 3:1, 5, 6.
2. The very names of Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy stir up mental pictures of heroic courage and hard service. These men had the faith, the determination, and the vision of victory that we need. They did the Lord's will, not fearing the consequences, even as we must do it in our generation.

3. Paul does not assert his apostleship at the beginning of this letter, as he does in some of his later ones. See Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; I Cor. 1:1; etc. The Thessalonians had no question about the genuineness of Paul's apostleship, and the false brethren who tried to force the Gentiles to keep the law of Moses had not, at that time, done so much to undermine Paul's authority as they later did.
4. All three of these men (Paul, Silvanus, Timothy) had been in Thessalonica together, and were well known there. It is worthy of note that although Paul had greater gifts and knowledge than Silvanus or Timothy, he had no feelings of superiority and assumes no titles of preeminence. He places their names on an equal with his own at the beginning of this letter.
5. Silvanus is the man who is uniformly called Silas in the book of Acts. In the epistles he is always called Silvanus. He was a Jew by race. Acts 16:20. He was a Roman citizen. Acts 16:37. He was a prophet. Acts 15:32. Silas and Judas bore the letter from the conference in Jerusalem to the churches in Syria and Cilicia. Acts 15:22-23, 27. Paul chose Silas as his helper on his second missionary trip after the dispute with Barnabas. Acts 15:37-40. References to Silas during Paul's second missionary trip are Acts 16:19, 25, 29; 17:4, 10, 14, 15. Silas was with Paul in Corinth at the time when Paul sent this first letter to the Thessalonians. Acts 18:5. He was also with Paul there when Paul sent the second Thessalonian letter a few months later. II Thess. 1:1. Most interpreters think that the Silvanus mentioned in I Peter 5:12 is the same Silvanus who was with Paul on his second missionary trip.
6. Timotheus is the same man who is usually called Timothy. Timotheus is just the Latin spelling of his name. Timothy grew up in Lystra. He joined Paul and Silas there during the early part of Paul's second missionary trip. Acts 16:1-4. He continued with Paul during his third trip, and in Rome, and afterwards. He was a loyal constant, beloved, and effective helper to Paul.
7. The long title, "church of the Thessalonians *which is* in God the Father and *in* the Lord Jesus Christ," is not a name for the church, but rather a description of it. The term *church* (Gr., *ekklesia*) simply means "a called-out assembly," and the Thessalonians were familiar with the term. (See Introductory Section Vi, paragraph 6.) But the "assembly" to which Paul was writing was not a civil or political or earthly assembly, but the assembly which was "in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." The fact that they were in God the Father made them

separate from the idolatrous Gentiles. The fact that they were in the Lord Jesus Christ separated them from the unbelieving Jews.

8. The words in *italics* in the Bible text throughout the Bible in the King James and American Standard versions do NOT indicate that these words are to be specially emphasized. Rather, the italics indicate that these words are not in the Greek New Testament (and you know that the New Testament was written in Greek), but have been supplied into the English translation to make it smoother and more readable. Sometimes these words in italics are helpful, and sometimes they are not. This verse would be just as clear without them.

9. The Thessalonian church was "in God—and in the Lord Jesus Christ." This description of the church in Thessalonica emphasizes the new relationships of the Thessalonian disciples. A similar description is given of the churches in Judea. Gal. 1:22.

The fact that Paul speaks about God being *our Father* in this verse shows the kinship which Paul felt with the Thessalonian Christians. We are all brothers in Christ, because God is our common father.

10. The phrase "in the Lord Jesus Christ," used in this verse, is a favorite of Paul. The phrase "in Christ," and similar ones, often is found in his writings. Note II Cor. 5:17: If any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creature." See also Rom. 16:7, and others. To be "in Christ," is to be in his church, in his favor, in his fellowship, and actually in his very person. See Ephesians 5:30.

Note—The term "LORD" from Acts 2:36 onward refers to Jesus. God is the Father. Jesus is Lord. Acts 10:36.

11. The word "Christ" means "the anointed one." We have rendered it that way in our translation. The Greek word *Christ* means the same as the Hebrew word *Messiah*, and in English, both mean "the anointed one." In the Old Testament times kings, priests, etc., were installed into their offices by "anointing," that is, by pouring sweet oil upon their heads. See I Sam. 16:13. Jesus, our anointed one (or Christ), was anointed with the Holy Spirit. See Acts 10:38; Heb. 1:9; Matt. 3:16.
12. This letter, like every one of Paul's epistles except Hebrews, begins with a request for "grace" to be with them. See Rom. 1:7; I Cor. 1:3; etc. "Grace" means "favor," especially "unmerited favor." Christians are saved by grace. Ephesians 2:8. They need God's grace to sustain them after they are saved. Hebrews 4:16.

1:1,2 THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

The word "Grace" was often used by the Greeks as a form of greeting. But they could not use it with the rich connotation of God's favor that Christians do.

13. Paul's request that they might have "Peace" is a Hebrew greeting. ("Shalom!") See Luke 10:5. This was a meaningful request to these brethren who were suffering persecutions. I Thess. 1:6; II Thess. 1:4-6.
14. The words "from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ" are omitted by the American Stan. Version, Nestle's Gr. N.T., Westcott and Hort's Gr. N.T., the Latin version, and others. They are found in the Sinaitic and Alexandrian manuscripts of the N.T. and some later ones. But it is probably correct to omit them, and we have done so in our translation.

Text (1:2)

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

Translation and Paraphrase

2. We are giving thanks unto God always for all of you (Thessalonians), making mention (of you) in our prayers (for you are that dear unto us).

Notes (1:2)

1. Here in I Thessalonians, as in almost all his letters, Paul begins with a giving of thanks. Compare Romans 1:8; I Cor. 1:4; etc. Even when he had to scold people in his epistles, Paul usually began with an expression of thanks. We ought to imitate this way of thinking and speaking when we deal with our brethren. We so often scold publicly, but seldom praise publicly. What other institution so greatly deserves public thanks as the church?
2. Paul says, "We give thanks," because Silas and Timothy joined with him in the greeting. But, of course, Paul was the main author of the epistle.
3. "Give thanks" is in the present tense, which indicates continuous action. Therefore we have rendered it "giving thanks" in our translation. Paul considered giving thanks a privilege and duty that needed to be repeated often.

4. The word "mention" (Gr. *mneia*) can also mean "remembrance" or "memory." Like Paul, we should not forget our brethren when we go away from them. God hears our prayers for them at a distance, as well as near. Paul prayed for them, mentioning them by name before God.
5. Paul often spoke about bearing people up in prayer. He was busy teaching and writing. But he devoted much time to prayer, praying for people by name. See Romans 1:9; Phil. 1:3-4; etc. This was essential for Paul. It is also essential for us. Paul even prayed for the Colossians and Laodiceans whom he had never seen face to face. Col. 2:1.

Text (1:3)

3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;

Translation and Paraphrase

3. (In our prayers it is our practice to be) recalling unceasingly the work (that you have done because) of (your) faith, and the toil (that is a fruit) of (your) love, and the steadfastness of the hope (that you have held) in our Lord Jesus Christ (that He will save us, establish us, and return for us. These things you have done, being conscious of the fact that even here in this life we are) in the presence of God (who is) even our Father.

Notes (1:3)

1. Faith, hope, and love are the three great virtues that abide with us always. I Cor. 13:13. But these virtues, to be genuine, must be backed up by works. The thing that made Paul so thankful about the Thessalonians was that their faith, hope, and love had indeed been put to work.

J. B. Phillips translation of this verse is very much to the point: "Your faith has meant solid achievement, your love has meant hard work, and the hope that you have in the Lord Jesus Christ means sheer dogged endurance in the life that you live—"

The man of faith, hope, and love is not a sentimentalist who lounges about, but one who works and labors for what he believes in, hopes for, and loves. Our faith must work. Faith without works is dead. James 2:26. Faith worketh by love. Gal. 5:6.

1:3,4 THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

2. The word "labour" (Gr., *kopos*) means fatiguing toil, intense labor united with trouble. It is a very strong word. Only love could lead us to labor willingly in such a manner. Love leads us to attempt labor from which we would ordinarily shrink in dismay. Love leads us to do good without having any feeling of superiority because we have done it, or resentment because it has been imposed upon us.
3. The word "patience" in the New Testament usually means "steadfastness," or "endurance," or "constancy." Thus "patience of hope," means hope which is held steadfastly. The person who clings to his hope in the Lord when storm after storm and battle after battle sweeps over him, leaving him empty-handed and hurt, has shown "patience of hope."

As Christians we need such "patience of hope." For often by our standards of counting time, God seems to be in no hurry, and we can become impatient when our hope is delayed in coming. James 5:7. God promised Abraham a son, but it was twenty-five years before a son was born. God promised Abraham a homeland. But Abraham's life on earth ended before he received his home. Hebrews 11:8-10. Let us have the same patience of hope that Abraham had.

4. The hope of the Thessalonians was primarily a hope in the return of Christ. They had been taught to await the return of Christ, and we also should have the same glorious hope. I Thess. 1:10. It is utter foolishness to set our hopes upon making this world a perfect place, and a place where we can have satisfaction. We are to set our hope perfectly upon the grace that is to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. I Peter 1:13. Our hope extends beyond death, and the end of the world. Our hearts should not be gloomy with regret and disillusionment, but eager with the expectation of the coming Christ. Do you share that hope?

Text (1:4)

4 knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election,

Translation and Paraphrase

4. (Furthermore, our thankfulness comes in) knowing, my brethren beloved by God, that God has chosen you (as His very own because you have received His Son Jesus).

Notes (1:4)

1. Paul was thankful for the *election* of the Thessalonians. What does *election* mean? It means a *choosing* or a *choice*. It means that God had chosen them as His people.
2. How did God make this choice? Upon what basis did He make it? Did He make it by whim, or partiality, or "sovereign grace"? To ask that question is almost to answer it. Of course not. God does not desire that any person should perish. I Tim. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9. Therefore God certainly does not arbitrarily select some to be saved and some to be damned.
3. God has chosen us *in Christ*. Ephesians 1:4. God has now chosen Christians as His people, because they have chosen Christ, God's Son. The grounds of the choice lie in Christ and His merits, and not in our own merits or God's partiality. All Christians are "elect." I Pet. 2:9: "Ye are a chosen nation." The American Standard Version renders this: "Ye are an *elect* race."
4. Paul asserts that he KNEW that the Thessalonians were chosen of God. How could Paul have known that they were elect, if "election" were the result of some arbitrary choice in the mind of God? He could not have done so, for no man can read God's mind. But since election does not rest upon an arbitrary choice by God, Paul could know that they were elect, and he tells in verses 5 and 6 how he knew it.

He knew their election because of these two reasons: (1) The way the gospel came to them; (2) The way they received the gospel. (Review the outline of chapter 1 for more details.)

5. The Thessalonians became Christians and were chosen (or elected) by God in the same way that you and I are saved and become Christians. These are the steps that they followed, and which we must also follow:
 - (1) They *believed* on the Lord Jesus. Acts 16:31.
 - (2) They *repented*. Acts 17:30. To repent means to change the mind, and decide to serve Christ, instead of doing as we ourselves prefer.
 - (3) They made a *confession*. We must confess with our mouths that we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:36-37.
 - (4) They were *baptized*. Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16. We are baptized in water. Acts 10:47. We are buried with Christ in baptism. Romans 6:4. This is pictured in the act, as we are completely covered, buried, immersed, in the water.

By doing these things we take Jesus as our Lord and savior. We become God's elect (chosen), even as the Thessalonians became the elect of God.

6. God's election (or choosing) is never independent of man's response. In olden times the nation of Israel was chosen. But it was later cast off for unbelief. Matthew 8:11-12; Rom. 11:20. Of course, those who believed were not cast off.

Even so, we who have been chosen by God are urged to give diligence to make our calling and election sure. II Peter 1:10. Without faith, we shall be cut off like unbelieving Israel. Rom. 11:21.

7. Paul addressed the Thessalonians as "brethren." We should use this word when speaking to, or about, our fellow Christians.
8. In the Greek New Testament, the phrase, "of God," follows "brethren beloved," and not "election." So the correct translation of this verse would be, "Knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election." This is the rendering given in the American Standard version and in our translation. The title, "brethren beloved of the Lord," is also found in II Thess. 2:13.

Text (1:5)

5 how that our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance; even as ye know what manner of men we showed ourselves toward you for your sake.

Translation and Paraphrase

5. (We have assurance of your election) because our gospel (the good news which we preached) came not unto you as a spoken message only, but also with (miracle-working) power, and with the (evident presence of the) Holy Spirit, and with much full assurance (such as can exist only when men know they speak a true and powerful message. We preached unto you with assurance like that,) even as ye know what sort of men we were (while we were) among you (laboring as we did) for your sakes.

Notes (1:5)

1. Paul declares that the gospel which he preached came to the Thessalonians in four different ways:
 - (1) In word, but not in word only.
 - (2) In power.
 - (3) In the Holy Spirit.
 - (4) In much assurance.
2. The way the gospel had come to the Thessalonians, and the

way they received it, are set forth by Paul as proofs of their election. Sometimes people wonder if they are truly saved and accepted by God. If they have heard the gospel proclaimed truly, and have received it, they can know that their "election" is a reality.

3. The word "gospel" means "good news." Rotherham renders the phrase, "our gospel," as "our glad-message."

The gospel concerns the facts of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, with all the blessings brought by these events. I Cor. 15:1-4. You should by all means remember that the gospel concerns these three things.

The gospel has commands that must be obeyed. This is indicated by the fact that men must "obey" the gospel. II Thess. 1:8.

4. While Paul calls his message "our gospel," it is the same message as is elsewhere called "the gospel of God" (I Thess. 2:2), and "the gospel of Christ" (I Thess. 3:2). Paul calls it "our gospel" because he believed it, was saved by it, and preached it. But it did not originate in his mind. It was revealed to him by God. Gal. 1:11-12.
5. The gospel which Paul preached is the ONLY gospel that can save us from our sins. We must strive for THE faith of the gospel. (Phil. 1:27). For there is only one faith. (Eph. 4:5). We preach not "a" faith, but *the* faith. The gospel is by its very nature intolerant. It is kind, but intolerant. We must recognize it as THE truth of God, and preach it with full assurance, as Paul did. We cannot yield an inch when it comes to standing for the gospel.
6. Paul's preaching in Thessalonica went forth to them "in word," that is, as a spoken message. Paul in Thessalonica, reasoned with the Jews out of the Scriptures. He opened the Scriptures and alleged from them that the Christ had to suffer and rise again, and that Jesus was the Christ. Acts 17:2-3.

In our generation we cannot deliver God's message without using God's words. Modern attempts to deny that the message of God can be communicated in words are foolishness. If every man has to discover for himself what the will of God for him is, then we shall all live and die in uncertainty.

7. The gospel also came to the Thessalonians in "power." This probably refers to miracles which Paul worked in Thessalonica. Compare Hebrews 2:4. It is true that the account in Acts 17:1-9 of Paul's work in Thessalonica does not mention him doing any miracles. However, Romans 15:19 says, "Through

many signs and wonders, by the *power* of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." See also I Cor. 2:4. It is very probable that Paul demonstrated "power" by doing miracles in Thessalonica as he did elsewhere.

8. Also the gospel came to them "in the Holy Spirit." This probably refers to the fact that Paul had supernatural guidance by the Holy Spirit in his preaching in Thessalonica.

Can we claim to preach "in the Holy Spirit"? We certainly do not claim direct guidance by the Holy Spirit as Paul experienced it. Nonetheless, what gospel preacher even today has not at times digressed from his prepared messages, and made extemporaneous remarks that he had not planned to make, and found afterwards that the unplanned remarks were exactly what some person present needed to hear? Surely the Holy Spirit must have guided the preacher to say these words, and brought them to his remembrance at the proper time.

Also we could stand up and say religious words to people forever without bringing conviction to them. Only as the Holy Spirit takes the words which we preach and uses them to bring conviction to people's hearts, will we be able to win them. See John 17:8. So in a very real manner we still preach "in the Holy Spirit."

9. Finally, Paul preached "in much assurance." May God help us to have the same assurance. The assurance we have inwardly will be exhibited outwardly by every word we say and every deed we do. Weak convictions produce weak actions. Assurance produces ardent actions.

On the other hand, we might have inward assurance, but because we were too reserved or formal or naturally hesitant, we might speak in a very conversational, and apparently unconcerned manner, which would give people the impression that we did not have real assurance. God help us to preach fervently, and to lift up our voice with strength, and cry aloud. Paul says that his manner of life proved that his gospel had come to the Thessalonians "with much assurance." Let us have the same urgency in our speech and actions that Paul had, so that men will know we preach the gospel "with much assurance."

Text (1:6)

6 And ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit;

Translation and Paraphrase

6. And you (having become the chosen people of God because you received the word,) became imitators of us (who preached unto you) and of the Lord (Jesus himself. For even as we, and the Lord himself, have suffered joyfully because of the word which was given to us to deliver, you also) having received the word with much affliction (from the Jews, and yet) with (the) joy that comes from the Holy Spirit (have shared our experiences.):

Notes (1:6)

1. The Thessalonians had become "imitators" of Paul and of the Lord. "Imitators" is a better translation than "followers" in this verse.
2. The Lord Jesus, Paul, and the Thessalonians had all shared these three experiences:
 - (1) Each received the word of God.
 - (2) Each experienced much affliction.
 - (3) Each had joy in their affliction.
3. The Lord Jesus received the *word* from his Father to deliver to the world, John 7:16; 8:28. For doing this he endured *affliction*. And yet for the *joy* set before him, he endured the cross despising the shame. Heb. 12:2.
4. Likewise Paul the apostle received the *gospel* by revelation from Jesus Christ. Gal. 1:11-12. When Paul declared this message, he encountered *suffering* in every place. Yet he *rejoiced* in his sufferings. Col. 1:24.
5. Thus also the Thessalonians received the *word* from Paul. They soon found themselves in much *affliction*. But they endured with *joy*. Thus they became imitators of Paul and of the Lord himself. Some of the afflictions of the Thessalonians are described in Acts 17:5-9.
6. The word *affliction* (Gr., *thlipsis*) means "a pressing, a pressing together, pressure, oppression, affliction, distress, straits." (Thayer)
7. "Joy of the Holy Spirit," I take (as an ablative of source) to mean "joy that comes from the Holy Spirit." See Gal. 5:22; Acts 13:52; Acts 8:8, 39. All Christians have experienced this joy when they were first saved. Alas, some have permitted the joy to fade away afterwards.
8. There was a quality in Paul's life which inspired people to follow and imitate him. Paul could boldly say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." I Cor. 11:1. People just

1:6,7,8 THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

could not ignore him. They were either warmly for him, or violently against him. We should pray that we shall be people like Paul, who will inspire others to imitate us in their struggle for perfection.

Text (1:7)

7 so that ye became an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia.

Translation and Paraphrase

7. (But your sufferings with joy have resulted in much good, so much so) that you have become an example to all (of those) who believe (both) in Macedonia (northern Greece) and in Achaia (southern Greece).

Notes (1:7)

1. Much good resulted from the troubles of the Thessalonians. Soon Christians from all over Greece were looking to the Thessalonians as an example.
2. The word "ensample" is an obsolete word in modern English. It means practically the same thing as "example." This is well indicated by the fact that there are two Greek words that are translated "ensample" (*tupos* and *hupodeigma*), but that these same words are also translated "example" in other references. The word used here is *tupos*. (We get our word "type" from this word.) Technically, it means a pattern in conformity to which a thing must be made. The image left on a coin by stamping it is called a "type." Children are said to be "types" of their parents. So these Thessalonians were clearly stamped and typed as children of God.
3. For information as to the location of Macedonia, see the map inside the cover, and Introductory Section VI, par. 2.
4. Achaia was the great Roman province in southern Greece, of which Corinth was capital. Athens was also in Achaia.
5. Probably travellers going in and out of Corinth (where Paul was) from Macedonia reported to Paul how they had heard about the Thessalonian Christians.

Text (1:8)

8 For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth; so that we need not to speak anything.

Translation and Paraphrase

8. (You have become an example,) for from you has sounded forth the message of the Lord, not just in Macedonia and Achaia, but into every place (where we have come, the report of) your faith has (already) gone out, so that we have no need to tell (people) anything (about it. They tell us what they have heard from you).

Notes (1:8)

1. Here was a preacher's dream come true! His converts had picked up the work where he had to leave it, and had spread abroad the word of the Lord so effectively that he had no need to say anything more in that area.

However, we must note in all frankness that these zealous converts were not perfect in their understanding or manner of life. I Thess. 3:10. But they had done an outstanding job. They are an ensample to us.

2. The Thessalonians were like the Romans, of whom Paul said, "Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." Rom. 1:8. The reputation of any church, however big or small, good or bad, soon becomes known far and wide. People will know us for what we are and do. How wonderful it is for a church to be known for its faith, evangelistic zeal, and missionary efforts!
3. Paul says that the faith of the Thessalonians had been spread abroad in "every place." Probably we need to understand this as referring to the provinces and countries near to Macedonia.
4. The Thessalonian church—A Church to Be Thankful For.
- (1) Thankful for their conversion experience; 1:4, 6.
 - (2) Thankful for their steadfastness; 1:3.
 - (3) Thankful for their work; 1:3.
 - (4) Thankful for their testimony; 1:8-9.
 - (5) Thankful for their hope; 1:10.

Text (1:9)

9 For they themselves report concerning us what manner of entering in we had unto you; and how ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God,

Translation and Paraphrase

9. For they themselves (the people in every place) report (to us when we talk to them,) concerning us (telling us about) what (a wonderful) sort of entering in we had unto you (when we came to Thessalonica to preach), and how that you (so completely) turned to God from idols, (determined) to serve (yes, even be slaves of) a living and true God.

Notes (1:9)

1. News about a genuine conversion is quickly known far and wide. Paul found himself hearing reports from many people about how the Thessalonians had turned to God. As travellers came into Corinth from various places, many of them told how they had heard about the Thessalonians, and how Paul had had such a successful entry into Thessalonica, and how that so many of them had turned from idols to the true and living God. The Thessalonians had really placed their light on a candlestick for all to see. Matthew 5:1. They were a church to be thankful for.
2. The discussion of the manner of Paul's entering in unto the Thessalonians is taken up in detail beginning at 2:1. The word translated *entrance* in 2:1 (*eisodos*) is the same word translated here as "entering in."
3. Acts 14:15 gives an example of how Paul urged the Gentiles to turn from idols: "We . . . preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God." It will not do to put up a picture of Christ on an idol shelf along with the statue of Buddha. People must turn FROM idols to serve God acceptably.
4. The verb "turned" is in the aorist tense, indicating completed, punctiliar, point action. They did not half turn. They turned once for all from idols.
5. They turned from idols "to serve" the living God. The verb translated "serve" (*douleuo*) means "to be slaves (or bondservants) of." Paul frequently referred to himself as the "servant" or "slave" of Christ. See Romans 1:1. The unavoidable truth is that ALL people are going to be bondservants of someone, either of sin, or of the Lord. Romans 6:16; John 8:34. However, sin is so deceptive that men can be slaves to it, and think they are completely free and emancipated. This is the devil's method of enslaving people.
6. The expression, "living and true God," is a Hebrew way of describing God, and is gloriously correct. Jesus himself spoke of His Father in a similar manner when He said, "That they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent." John 17:3.
7. The fact that the Thessalonians had so generally turned from idols shows that it was predominantly a Gentile church, as Acts 17:4 also indicates.

8. It is a fact that a person becomes like what he worships. The idol worshippers reflect on their faces the likeness (often the sadness) of their gods. The worshippers of the living God show by radiant joy that their God is REAL. "They looked unto him, and were radiant; and their faces shall never be confounded." Ps. 34:5; American Standard Ver.

Text (1:10)

10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come.

Translation and Paraphrase

10. And (how you turned from idols with a new hope, that has caused you) to look confidently for his (God's) son (to come) from heaven, (the very son) whom He raised up from the dead, (even) Jesus, who is delivering us from the wrath (of God's judgment) that is coming (upon this whole world).

Notes (1:10)

1. The Thessalonians turned to God to do two things:
 - (1) To serve the living and true God; 1:9.
 - (2) To wait for Jesus to come from heaven; 1:10.
2. The verb "wait" indeed means "to wait," but has the added sense of patience and trust. We should thus be waiting for the return of our Lord Jesus. Our Lord has promised most definitely that He will return. He cautioned us to be watching always. The apostles always taught their converts to watch for His return. Matthew 24:44; Titus 2:13. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."
3. Some interpreters have said that Paul taught the people of his generation to expect the Lord to come within their lifetime. Then in the course of time, as the Lord delayed His coming, Paul changed his doctrine. If that were true, it would prove that Paul was NOT giving inspired teachings when he first told the people to wait for the Lord's return. We reject any such interpretation of Paul's teachings. Paul himself has given us abundant proof that he spoke by revelation of Jesus Christ, and not from men. See Paul's defense of his ministry in Galatians 1:11-2:9. We believe that when correctly understood Paul's teachings about the Lord's return (and any other matter) are true and beyond challenge.

4. Even while Paul was with the Thessalonians, he told them that some things would have to happen first before the Lord's coming. See II Thess. 2:5. Paul taught the same thing that Jesus himself taught, namely that the Lord MIGHT come at any time. Paul never said that Christ would definitely come within anyone's lifetime, including his own. We challenge anyone to produce a verse from Paul's writings that indicates that Paul said that Christ was going to come within his lifetime. Even today the teaching that Christ will surely come some time, and may come any time, is the true teaching. We must be watching always for the Lord's coming. The Lord says that He will come just when we think He is not coming. Matthew 24:44.
5. We are sometimes told that waiting on the second coming tends to throttle Christian service. Supposedly, people become dreamers. But just the opposite is true. Those who believe the Lord is coming, and maybe very soon, are out winning souls, going to new foreign mission fields, translating the Scriptures into new languages that have never had the word of God, and broadcasting on the radio. They may not be in Washington, D.C., lobbying for a socialistic system of government and economics, but they will be doing what the Lord told them to do—preaching, baptizing, teaching. The socialistic schemers are not doing anything but running the country into bankruptcy and making its money worthless, even when they are doing it in the name of religion. Those who believe the Lord is coming again will be working to turn men to righteousness.
6. The fact that God raised Jesus from the dead guarantees that Christ will return, and that there will be a judgment. Acts 17:31; I Cor. 15:12; I Thess. 4:14.
7. The word "delivered" is actually a present tense, indicating continuous action (and we have indicated this in our translation). Jesus *is delivering* us. Some interpreters feel that this present tense form is timeless, and refers to a single act of deliverance which Jesus will do for us at a given time in the future. We prefer to think of our deliverance as continual. For Jesus delivers us from evil every day. Matt. 6:13. What we are now doing determines whether or not we shall escape in the day of God's wrath. I am thankful that Jesus is now delivering us from the sins that would cause God's wrath to fall upon us in the day of wrath. Romans 5:9: "Much more, then, being now

justified by his blood, we shall be saved from *wrath* through him." We are being delivered now from the future wrath that would come upon us for our present sins.

8. The *wrath to come* is not a popular subject, but it is coming, regardless of men's unwillingness to face it. John the baptist said, "Who hath warned you to flee from the *wrath* to come?" Matt. 3:7. Rev. 6:17 tells you of a fearful time when even kings will try to hide themselves, "For the great day of his *wrath* is come, and who shall be able to stand?" God's wrath is described as a winepress, with the earth cast into it, and the earth, like grapes in a winepress, was stomped down, and blood came out of the winepress. Rev. 14:19-20. God has seven great vials (or bowls) of wrath to pour out on the earth. Rev. 15:7. Compare Rom. 2:5.

Some people speculate that the wrath of God will be poured out during a period of tribulation after Christ has once come and taken the Christians out of the earth, leaving the sinners behind. It seems more probable to us that the wrath of God is to be poured out upon the nations in a series of wars and disasters before Christ comes, and then the terrors of the judgment and hell will consummate His righteous wrath against those who have flouted His laws and despised His mercy. (See Special Study II on page 242, "A Secret Rapture Considered.") But however the wrath may come, the sure thing is that it IS coming, and that Jesus is delivering the saints from it.

9. The wrath to come. (I Thess. 1:10).
- (1) A sure thing. John 3:36; Rom. 1:18; Eph. 5:6.
 - (2) A sure thing. Rom. 2:5-6; 9:22; I Thess. 2:16; II Thess. 2:10, 12.
 - (3) A terrible thing. Rev. 14:10, 11, 19, 20.
 - (4) An escapable thing. I Thess. 1:10; 5-9; Rom. 5:9.

DID YOU LEARN?

(Questions over I Thessalonians, chapter one)

(These questions are over the outline and the notes on chapter one. The Scripture references direct you to the notes on particular verses where the answer to each question is given. Try to answer these questions without consulting your Bible or the notes.)

1. What is the topic of chapter one?
2. For what two things in the experience of the Thessalonians was Paul thankful? (See outline)

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

3. What three men joined in sending I Thessalonians? (1:1)
4. Who was the main writer of I Thessalonians? (1:1)
5. What is Silvanus called in the book of Acts? (1:1)
6. Why does Paul not assert his apostleship at the start of I Thessalonians as he does in other letters? (1:1)
7. What does the word "church" mean? (1:1)
8. The Thessalonian church was "in" what two people? (1:1)
9. Why are some words in your Bible printed in italics? (1:1)
10. What does Paul request for his readers at the beginning of all his epistles (except one)? (1:1)
11. What does the word "Christ" mean? (1:1)
12. With what does Paul begin most of his letters, including I Thessalonians? (1:2)
13. What three things did Paul remember in prayer about the Thessalonians? (1:3)
14. What does "patience" mean in the phrase "patience of hope"? (1:3)
15. In what did the Thessalonians primarily hope? (1:3, 10)
16. What does "election" mean? (1:4)
17. By what two means did Paul know their election had actually taken place? (1:4-5)
18. What are the four things we must do to be saved (and "elected")? (1:4)
19. Whom has God now chosen as His people? (1:4)
20. Why does Paul call the gospel "our gospel"? (1:5)
21. Did the gospel come to the Thessalonians in word only? (1:5)
22. What did Paul mean when he said that his gospel came to the Thessalonians in "power"? (1:5)
23. How did Paul's gospel come "in the Holy Spirit"? (1:5)
24. What was it that proved that the gospel came to the Thessalonians "in much assurance"? (1:5)
25. What is a better translation of the word "followers"? (1:6)
26. Of what two people had the Thessalonians become followers? (1:6)
27. What three experiences had the Thessalonians shared with those of whom they were followers? (1:6)
28. What does the phrase "joy of the Holy Ghost" mean? (1:6)
29. What does "ensample" mean? (1:7)
30. To whom were the Thessalonians ensamples? (1:7)
31. Where was Macedonia? (Introductory Section IV)
32. Where was Achaia? (1:7)

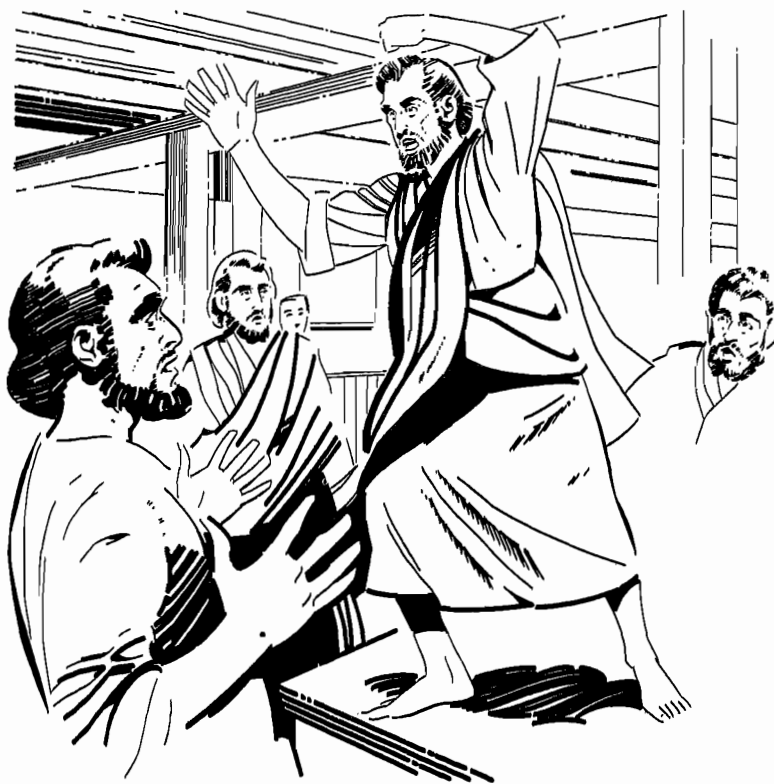
CHAPTER ONE

33. In what three places (or areas) had the word of the Lord sounded forth from the Thessalonians? (1:8)
34. What effect had the words spoken by the Thessalonians had on what Paul needed to do? (1:8)
35. Concerning what did Paul get reports from people in every place? (1:9)
36. Where does Paul take up in detail the discussion of his "entering in" unto the Thessalonians? (1:9)
37. Was the Thessalonian church primarily Jewish or Gentile? Give a reason for your answer. (1:9)
38. What does "serve" mean in the phrase "to serve the living and true God"? (1:9)
39. What two things had the Thessalonians turned to God to do? (1:10)
40. What is the correct tense and form of the word "delivered"? (1:10)
41. From what does Jesus deliver us? (1:10)
42. Write out from memory I Thess. 1:9-10. Verse 9 begins, "For they themselves shew . . ."

I THESSALONIANS, CHAPTER TWO

Chapter Topic:

Paul's Good Record Among The Thessalonians



"We were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God."
I Thess. 2:2

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

I Thessalonians, chapter two (2:1-16)

Chapter Topic—"Paul's Good Record Among the Thessalonians"

1. Paul's entrance in unto the Thessalonians to preach was not _____ 2:1
2. In what city had Paul suffered before coming to Thessalonica? 2:2. _____
3. In spite of past sufferings, Paul was _____ in God to speak the gospel in Thessalonica. 2:2.
4. In Thessalonica, Paul spoke the gospel of God with much _____ 2:2.
5. Paul's preaching and exhortation was not based on three things. What were these? 2:3. _____;
_____;
6. With what was Paul allowed to be put in trust? 2:4.
_____.
7. Whom did Paul seek to please? 2:4. _____.
8. What does God do to our hearts? 2:4. _____.
9. What two things did Paul NOT use in his ministry at Thessalonica? 2:5.

_____;
10. Who was witness that Paul did not use a cloke over covetousness? 2:5. _____.
11. What did Paul NOT seek from the Thessalonians? 2:6.
_____.
12. What did Paul have authority, as an apostle of Christ, to be? 2:6. _____.
13. Among the Thessalonians, Paul had been _____. 2:7.
14. To the Thessalonians Paul had been like a _____ cherishing her own children. 2:7.
15. What two things was Paul willing to have imparted to the Thessalonians? 2:8. _____;
_____.
16. Paul was willing to do this, because the Thessalonians were _____ unto him. 2:8.
17. What two things could the Thessalonians remember about Paul? 2:9. _____; _____.
18. What did Paul do day and night in Thessalonica? 2:9.
_____.

CHAPTER TWO

19. Paul labored, because he would not be _____ unto any of the people. 2:9.
20. What two peoples were witnesses to Paul's conduct among the Thessalonians? 2:10. _____;
21. In what three ways had Paul behaved among the Thessalonians? 2:10. _____; _____;
22. Paul had _____, and _____ and _____, as a _____ doth his own _____, 2:11.
23. For what purpose had Paul thus exhorted them? 2:12.

24. Unto what has God called us? 2:12.

25. The Thessalonians received the word of God, "not as the _____ of _____, but as the _____ of _____, 2:13.
26. Paul says, "The word of God (which) _____
_____ in you that believe." 2:13.
27. The Thessalonians became followers of the _____ of _____ which (were) in _____, 2:14.
28. The churches of God in Judea were "in" whom? 2:14.

29. Of whom had the Thessalonians suffered things? 2:14.

30. Of whom had the churches of God in Judea suffered? 2:14.

31. What did the Jews do to the Lord Jesus? 2:15.

32. What did the Jews do to the prophets? 2:15.

33. What had the Jews done to Paul? 2:15.

34. Did the Jews please God? Yes or No. (Circle which)
35. The Jews "are _____ to all men." 2:15.
36. What did the Jews forbid Paul to do? 2:16.

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

37. What did the Jews fill up? 2:16. _____
38. What was come upon the Jews? 2:16. _____.
39. Memorize I Thess. 2:13.

(The remaining "Thinking Through Thessalonians" questions on chapter two are treated as part of chapter three.)

I THESSALONIANS, CHAPTER TWO (2:1-16)*

Chapter Topic: *"Paul's Good Record Among the Thessalonians"* Outline

II. Paul's good record among the Thessalonians; 2:1-16.

A. Paul's work among them; 2:1-12.

1. Not in vain; 2:1.
2. Bold; 2:2.
3. Sincere; 2:3.
 - a. Not of deceit.
 - b. Not of uncleanness.
 - c. Not of guile.
4. Only what God allowed; 2:4.
5. Used *no* flattering words; 2:5.
6. Used no cloke of covetousness.
7. Sought no glory; 2:6.
8. Gentle; 2:7.
9. Self-supporting; 2:8-9.
 - a. Why; 2:8.
 - b. How; 2:9.
10. Backed up by a holy life; 2:10.
11. An exhorting ministry; 2:11-12.
 - a. As a father does his children; 2:11.
 - b. That they would walk worthy of God; 2:12.

B. Thanks for the way they received the word; 2:13-16.

1. As the word of God; 2:13.
2. They became followers of the churches in Judea; 2:14-16.
 - a. Thessalonians suffered of their countrymen; 2:14a
 - b. Judeans suffered of the Jews; 2:14b-16.
 - (1) The Jews killed Jesus; 2:15.
 - (2) The Jews killed the prophets.
 - (3) The Jews persecuted Paul.

* We have placed 2:17-20 with chapter three.

- (4) The Jews please not God.
- (5) The Jews are contrary to all men.
- (6) The Jews forbade Paul to speak to the Gentiles; 2:16.
 - (a) They fill up their sins always.
 - (b) Wrath is come upon them.

THOUGHTS FROM THE OUTLINE

Of I Thessalonians, chapter two

Paul's work among the Thessalonians should be a pattern for every preacher or other Christian worker. We should ask ourselves, "Has our work been like Paul's—not in vain, bold, sincere? Have we used flattering words, covetousness, or sought glory of men?"

Then the way the Thessalonians received the word which Paul preached is a pattern to every one who hears the word. They (1) received the word as the word of God, not the word of men, and (2) they became followers (or imitators) of the Judean churches which had suffered for their faith. The Thessalonians did not shun the full consequences of obeying the gospel. Can we in this generation assume that we are privileged to receive the blessings of Christ without sacrifice or suffering, when Christians in other ages and places have endured so much?

Text (2:1)

1 For yourselves, brethren, know our entering in unto you, that it hath not been found vain:

Translation and Paraphrase

1. For you yourselves, brethren, (saw and) know that our entering in unto you (when we came to Thessalonica to preach) was not fruitless (or useless).

Notes (2:1)

1. Letting in a fresh breeze of truth will usually soon blow out a room full of poisonous lies. After Paul left Thessalonica, some people, most likely Jews, had apparently accused him of being a flatterer, a deceiver, immoral, and money hungry. I Thess. 2:3, 5.
2. Therefore in this second chapter Paul takes up the matter of his good record among the Thessalonians. (This is the chapter topic.) Paul thoroughly demolishes all the insinuations against him. This really was not very hard to do. For, as he reminds the Thessalonians, they themselves knew all about what he had done among them.

2:1,2 THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

3. The type of "entrance" which Paul had unto the Thessalonians was a vindication of Paul himself and all he stood for. His record of accomplishment and conduct was good enough to silence any malicious accusers.
4. In our outline, we have called the section 2:1-12 "Paul's work Among Them." It seems to be an elaboration of Paul's statement in 1:5, "Ye know what manner of men we were among you."
5. In 2:1, Paul picks up the thought of 1:9, where he had mentioned what "matter of *entering in* we had unto you." The word translated *entrance* here in 2:1 is the same word that is translated *entering in* in 1:9.
6. Paul's visit to the Thessalonians had most certainly NOT been "in vain." "In vain" (Gr., *kenos*) means "empty, vain, devoid of truth, fruitless, without effect." (Thayer) The fact that Paul left a flourishing church there was proof that his visit was not in vain. The Thessalonians themselves could vouch for that fact.

Text (2:2)

2 but having suffered before and been shamefully treated, as ye know, at Philippi, we waxed bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God in much conflict.

Translation and Paraphrase

2. On the contrary, even though we had suffered previously (in many places), and had been treated insultingly at Philippi (just before we came to Thessalonica), as you know, we were bold (and free) in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God (even though we did so) in much anguish of mind.

Notes (2:2)

1. This verse emphasizes that Paul's work among the Thessalonians was BOLD. Boldness is the first great need of Christian workers. It takes much boldness to go knock on a stranger's door, seeking an opportunity to talk about Christ. It takes boldness to teach God's word in a place where people do not want what you are teaching. If a person has already endured opposition in other places, the boldness is doubly tested, because of fears created by past difficulties. The early Christians prayed for boldness. Acts 4:29. Paul asked for prayer that he might speak boldly. Ephesians 6:19-20; Philippians 1:20. Did you ever pray that God would give you boldness? Some people are bold to practice evil, but we need to be bold to declare the whole counsel of God.

2. Before Paul ever came to Thessalonica, he had been rejected at several towns during his first missionary trip. See Acts, chapters 13 and 14. He had been stoned at Lystra. Acts 14:19. Truly he had "suffered before."
3. Then at Philippi, the city he visited immediately before preaching in Thessalonica, he was treated most shamefully. The expression "shamefully entreated" (Gr., *hybridzo*) means "to treat one insolently and shamefully," emphasizing the attitude of the abusers. This accurately describes the treatment Paul received at Philippi. There he was (1) arrested illegally after healing a girl; (2) put through a mock trial; (3) scourged unlawfully; (4) severely imprisoned. Read Acts 16:11-40 for details.
4. In the light of Paul's previous experiences, it would have been understandable if he had been fearful and hesitant in Thessalonica. His work might have been "in vain" (or fruitless) because of fears generated by past experiences. BUT that was not the case. (The word *but* used in this verse (Gr., *alla*) indicates a strong contrast between the possibility of his work being in vain, and what it actually was.) Paul's boldness in preaching in Thessalonica is described in Acts 17:1-5.
5. Paul was bold "in our God" to speak. If it had not been for the help and fellowship of God, Paul could never have done what he did. It was only by God's help that Paul went in triumph from place to place. II Cor. 2:14. It is likewise only by God's help that we can do His work.
6. The phrase "the gospel of God," is frequently used by Paul and other writers in the N.T. See I Thess. 2:8, 9; Rom. 1:1; 15:16; II Cor. 11:7; Mark 1:14; I Pet. 4:17. The phrase, "gospel of Christ," is also quite common. See I Thess. 3:2; Phil. 1:27.
7. Paul may have been bold in preaching in Thessalonica, but he was far from insensible to the mental anguish, and the possible physical pain also. He declares that he spoke the gospel "with much contention." The word translated "contention" (*agonia*) is the word from which we get our English word "agony." It refers to severe mental struggles and emotions, agony, anguish. Any sincere preacher often preaches in agony, fearing he will not say the words he ought to say, or fearing he will say things he should not say, and sometimes fearing how people will receive what he says. The acute suffering in Paul's mind shows how far he was from being a Stoic. Suffering is real. But, thank God, it has its rewards, both in the development of our personalities, and in heaven.

Text (2:3)

3 For our exhortation is not of error, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

Translation and Paraphrase

3. For (you see) the message which we urge you to accept is not (something that springs) from misleading error (which we hold), nor from (any sexual) uncleanness (such as the Gentile religions often practice), nor from (any) hidden scheme (by which we seek to trap you).

Notes (2:3)

1. When a man knows he is telling the truth, he will speak confidently, and have a ring of reliability in his tone. Paul was willing to endure all the troubles he experienced in Thessalonica, because he knew that his message was true, pure, and without concealed secrets.
2. The word "exhortation" (Gr., *paraklesis*, from *parakaleo*) has a double significance. It includes the idea of rousing the slothful, and also of comforting the sorrowful. (McGarvey)
3. Paul's exhortation was not "of deceit." "Deceit" means "error" or "wandering," or "straying about." It refers to error that is not merely the result of ignorance, but of evil intentions. The false brethren who taught the Gentile Christians to keep the law of Moses were guilty of such deceit as this.
4. "Uncleanness" refers to sexual indulgence and impurity. Note I Thess. 4:4, 7; Rom. 1:24; Colossians 3:5. The prophetess Jezebel taught people to commit fornication. Rev. 2:20. But Paul neither practiced nor taught such things. Some of the mystery religions in Thessalonica practiced moral uncleanness. See Introductory Section VI, par. 11.) Paul's exhortation was not of that species.
5. "Guile" comes from a Greek word, *dolos*, meaning "bait," hence a lure or snare. The word therefore indicates craft or deceit by which people may be trapped. It refers to any hidden purposes or motives, especially bad ones. The minister of Christ must not have any secret motives or requirements that he plans to spring on his disciples.
6. "The ministerial work must be managed purely for God and the salvation of the people, and not for any private ends of our own. This is our sincerity in it. A wrong end makes all the work bad from us, however good in itself." (Richard Baxter)

Text (2:4)

4 but even as we have been approved of God to be intrusted with the gospel, so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God who proveth our hearts.

Translation and Paraphrase

4. Instead (of our message being rooted in such wicked motives as we have just mentioned, we govern ourselves by this standard, namely that) just as we have been tested (and approved) by God to be entrusted with the good news, in (just) that manner we speak, not as (those who are) seeking to please men, but (seeking to please) God, who (constantly) tests our hearts (to see if we are sincere).

Notes (2:4)

1. To put this verse briefly, it says, "We did and said only what God approved us to say." Paul did not preach anything motivated by deceit, uncleanness, or guile (2:3), but only what God approved him to say.
2. God told Jonah the prophet to preach unto Nineveh "the preaching *that I bid thee*," (Jonah 3:2) God approved Jonah to preach only a certain message. Likewise God gave Paul a certain message to deliver. Paul delivered what he was supposed to, and nothing else. It is always a temptation to inject our own feelings, opinions, and hobbies into our preaching. We do well in our preaching not to go beyond what is written. (I Cor. 4:6; American Stan. Vers.). Speak where the Scriptures speak, and leave our own opinions out.
3. The word translated "allowed" actually means "approved," particularly that which is approved by testing. People test metals like gold by melting them over fire. If no impurities come to the top, then the gold is said to be "tested" or "approved," or "tried by fire." God likewise tests and approves us. No greater honor could come to us than to be approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel.
 "To be put in trust with the gospel is the highest conceivable responsibility; the sense of it is enough to exclude every base motive and deceitful practice." (Findlay)
4. There are two words in this verse that are translations of the same word. The King James version does not make this apparent. (Our translation indicates it.) The words are "allowed" and "trieth."

(1) "Allowed" (Gr., *dedokimasmetha*) means "tested" or "approved."

(2) "Trieth" (*dokimadzonti*) means "tests."

God tests us for our ability and sincerity. If we measure up to His requirements, we are declared to be "tested" and "approved" to do whatever God sees fit.

5. Many Scriptures teach us that God tests and tries human hearts, so as to know their innermost secrets. "The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold, but Jehovah trieth the hearts." (Prov. 17:3; Amer. Stan. vers.) See also Jeremiah 11:20; I Cor. 4:5; Rom. 2:16.
6. God's testing of our hearts is a continual thing. The verb "trieth" is in the present tense, indicating continuous action. God must continually test our hearts, for sin can creep into them at any time and change them from good to evil.
7. It was always a joy to Paul to think that he had not only been forgiven for his fierce unbelieving past, but even entrusted with preaching the gospel he had once opposed. I Tim. 1:12: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." See also I Tim. 1:11; Eph. 3:2-3, 7-8.
8. Since God had given Paul the gospel, Paul tried to please *God*, rather than men. There is much in the gospel that is distasteful to the natural man—its humiliating exposure of our sin and helplessness, its demands for our acceptance of God's will, the fact that it claims to be the only unchangeable truth, and the severity of its judgments upon those who reject. A preacher can become popular by saying only what the people want to hear. See Isa. 30:9-10; II Tim. 4:3-4. Paul would not do this, and we dare not do it either. Remember, God is testing our hearts continually!
9. In one way, however, Paul did seek to please men. See I Cor. 9:19-22, especially 22b: "I am become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." If Paul could gain the good will of people without compromising God's message, he certainly did so, even if that meant extra effort and discomfort to him. When he was among Jews, he ate Jewish food and lived like a Jew insofar as doing so did not violate the gospel. Thus also he did among Gentiles. By doing this, he was able to win more people.

Text (2:5)

5 For neither at any time were we found using words of flattery, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness, God is witness;

Translation and Paraphrase

5. (We avoided other wrong doings besides men-pleasing while we were with you;) for neither were we at any time found using flattering speech, as you (well) know; neither (did we use any) pretext (to cover a motive) of covetousness, God is (our) witness (that we are telling the truth about that).

Notes (2:5)

1. God had preserved for us in this verse (and paragraph) a record of how an inspired apostle went about preaching in a city where the gospel had never before been heard. We must imitate his methods and motives.
2. "As to his *outward* conduct (that it was without flattery) Paul calls the Thessalonians to witness; as to his *inward* desires (that they were without covetousness) he calls God to witness." (McGarvey)
3. Flattering words are often very powerful, and can bring about some spectacular results. Such words will win the favor of the majority of people. Absalom stole the hearts of the people of Israel by flattery. II Samuel 15:2-6. But flattery is dangerous to use, and its effects are not lasting. It should be avoided. Good-will gained through flattery will not stand the tests that brotherly love produced by conversion will stand. "He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favor than he that flattereth with his tongue." Prov. 28:23. See also Prov. 29:5; 26:28; 6:24.
4. The word "cloke" means "a pretext," or "pretense," or "show." Jesus said that the scribes "for a pretense (cloke) make long prayers." Mark 12:40. Their long prayers covered up their desire for the praise of men.

Thus a "cloke of covetousness" would be a pretended manner such as a person would use to cover up the fact that he wanted money. Covetous men have often used such a pretense. "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." II Peter 2:3. Paul did not put a cloke over covetousness, for he had none to hide.

5. Paul did not use his ministry as a pretext for making money. Acts 20:33. "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel." The world of the Greeks was full of teachers and philos-

ophers who travelled about lecturing and disputing, seeking to live by their wits. Notice Acts 13:6-12; 19:13-20. Paul was that kind of a man, and he was careful to conduct himself so that he could not possibly be accused of being one. Preachers must be supported, according to God's command, but if money becomes their motive, they have missed the path altogether.

6. It might almost appear that Paul used an oath when he called upon God to witness that he had not been covetous among the Thessalonians. However, inasmuch as Paul was an inspired man, it would be presumptuous of us to judge him. See I Cor. 2:15. Paul had the mind of Christ perfectly. I Cor. 2:16. What he said here was, therefore, befitting before God.

But for ourselves, we should avoid saying, "By God," that anything is true or not true. Let your "Yes" mean "Yes," and your "No" mean "No." Whatsoever is more than these cometh of the evil one. Matt. 4:37. Paul's words were acceptable by God. But we cannot know with the certainty of Paul when such a statement would be an oath, and when we would be stating a harmless fact. Therefore, "Swear not at all." Matt. 5:34.

Text (2:6)

6 nor seeking glory of men, neither from you nor from others, when we might have claimed authority as apostles of Christ.

Translation and Paraphrase

6. Neither (were we ever found) seeking glory from men, neither from you, nor from (any) others, though we have authority to be burdensome (and demand that you support us) as apostles of Christ.

Notes (2:6)

1. How hard men will strain to get glory and honor in this world! They will lie to get it. They will embezzle money so they can appear greater than they truly are. They will run down other people so that they themselves can appear better by contrast. But Paul did not even seek glory when he could have legitimately claimed it.
2. What is this *glory* which Paul did not seek? The word naturally suggests honor and praise. Paul did not seek that type of glory. In this verse he denies the motive of ambition, as he denied the motive of covetousness in verse five.

Jesus said that He did not receive "glory" from men. John 5:41. But those who opposed Jesus sought honor (glory) one of another. John 5:44. "He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." John 7:18. Paul was that type of a man. He sought no glory from men, only from God.

3. However, the word "glory" has another meaning, which is suggested by the context. (By "context" we mean the verses that go immediately before and after this verse.) The context suggests that the glory which Paul shunned was the *financial gain* that he might have obtained from his office and work.
4. Thus the two meanings of "glory" are:
 - (1) Honor and praise.
 - (2) Financial rewards and support.
5. Paul had every right to demand financial support from his converts, even if that required making himself burdensome to them. I Cor. 9:6-14. But Paul supported himself by his own labors, and did not collect support from them. This he did to impress upon them the sincerity of his intentions and message.
6. There are three negatives (in verses 5 and 6), each introduced by the Gr. conjunction *oute*, which we should notice:
 - (1) "Neither . . . used we flattering words."
 - (2) "Nor a cloke of covetousness."
 - (3) "Nor . . . sought we glory."

Can you make these same emphatic denials in describing your service to Christ?

Text (2:7)

7 But we were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children:

Translation and Paraphrase

7. But (instead of seeking glory) we were gentle (while we were) in the midst of you. (Indeed we treated you so) that it was as if a nurse were cherishing her own children.

Notes (2:7)

1. A man seeking his own glory would have been domineering and demanding. But Paul was gentle among the Thessalonians.
2. He treated them as a nurse would cherish and protect her own children. The word *own* should be in the translation before the

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word *children*. A nurse, even a devoted one, would probably be more loving and attentive to her own children, than to the children of strangers. Paul considered the Thessalonians to be as dear and close to him as a nurse's own children would be to her.

3. Gentleness is never weak. Gentleness is the strong self-sacrificing spirit which makes heroes and martyrs. Abraham Lincoln was gentle. Jesus was gentle. But how strong He was! The Lord's servant must be gentle and not strive. II Timothy 2:24. The real power of a man is seen not in how violent he can get, but in what he can endure with gentleness.
4. There is some uncertainty about one word in this verse. Some New Testament manuscripts have "gentle" (Gr., *epioi*), as our common King James version has, and some have "babes" (*nepioi*). By dropping the first letter of the word for "babes" we get the word for "gentle." The American Standard Version margin says, "Most of the ancient authorities read 'babes.'" (That seems an overly strong statement to us.) Westcott and Hort's Greek N.T. has "babes" in the text. Nestle's Greek N.T. (which we are following) has "gentle" in the text, and "babes" in the margin.

To us it seems that the word "babes" would make little sense in this verse. (Why should Paul say, "We were babes among you"?) Furthermore, it does not have overwhelming manuscript support. Its chief support is the Latin text and the Vatican manuscript. We feel that the King James version is correct in adopting the reading, "gentle."

Text (2:8)

8 even so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were well pleased to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were become very dear to us.

Translation and Paraphrase

9. Even so (in the same manner as the nurse cherishing her own children, we,) yearning after you (greatly as we did,) were well-pleased to impart unto you not only the good news of God, but even our own lives, because ye were (that) beloved unto us.

Notes (2:8)

1. Paul's feelings toward the Thessalonians overflowed with love so deep and genuine that it led him to make many great sacrifices for them. He worked day and night to support himself while with them.

The true minister of Christ does not count the cost to him of helping people to know Christ. Anything he can give he will give.

2. Paul was like Jesus, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, Matt. 20:28.
3. II Cor. 12:15—"And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved."
4. Concerning the "gospel of God," see notes on I Thess. 2:2, paragraph 6.
5. Paul's self-sacrificing sincerity is also seen in Romans 9:1-3, where Paul says that he could wish himself accursed from Christ for the sake of his brethren in the flesh, the Israelites, if that would help save them.

Text (2:9)

9 For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

Translation and Paraphrase

9. For you remember, brethren, our toil and hard labor, (how that by) working night and day so that we would not be burdensome to any of you, we preached unto you the good news of God (without charging you a cent).

Notes (2:9)

1. This information about Paul's manual labor in Thessalonica is not given in the book of Acts. But Acts records how Paul worked similarly in Corinth. See Acts 18:3; II Cor. 11:9; I Cor. 4:12. See also notes on I Thess. 2:6, paragraphs 5 and 6.
2. Paul's laboring in Thessalonica (2:9) set an example for the "labor of love" by the Thessalonians. I Thess. 1:3.
3. Paul's labor in Thessalonica also set an example for those who were inclined to be idle. See II Thess. 3:8-9.
4. What are the literal meanings of the words translated "labour" and "travail"?
 - (1) "Labour" (Gr., *kopos*) means "intense labor, united with trouble, toil. It gives prominence to the fatigue involved." (Thayer)
 - (2) "Travail" (Gr., *mochthos*) means hard and difficult labor, and it gives prominence to the hardship involved. It does not mean birth-pains. This is another word. See I Thess. 5:3.

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5. We probably should understand the phrase, "labouring night and day," to mean that Paul began work even before daylight and worked on after dark in the evening.
6. Can we honestly say that we have the sincerity and dedication of Paul? May God help us to have the earnestness and the spirit of joyful self-sacrificing that possessed him. If we had more of his disposition, we might have more of his results.
7. Regarding the expression, "gospel of God," see notes on I Thess. 2:2, par. 6.

Text (2:10)

10 Ye are witnesses, and God *also*, how holily and righteously and unblamably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe:

Translation and Paraphrase

10. You (yourselves are) witnesses, and God (also), how holily (toward God), and righteousnessly (toward men), and unblameably (toward all) we behaved (ourselves) toward (you,) the believing ones.

Notes (2:10)

1. Paul saw in his hard physical labor a sacredness. The holy man sees in life's duties a sacredness, and in life's sacred acts a duty.
2. Paul's insistence upon the righteousness of his conduct almost compels us to think that he was answering some accusations and criticisms that had been thrown at him.
3. "Holily" means "undefiled by sin, pure." It expresses a relationship between our activities and God.
4. "Justly" means "in a just or righteous manner; in harmony with what is right." It expresses a relationship between our activities and men.
5. "Unblameably" (Gr., *amemptos*) means "deserving no criticism, not subject to blame." The same Greek word is used in I Thess. 5:23, where it is translated "blameless."

Text (2:11-12)

11 as ye know how we *dealt with* each one of you, as a father with his own children, exhorting you, and encouraging *you*, and testifying, 12 to the end that ye should walk worthily of God, who calleth you into his own kingdom and glory.

Translation and Paraphrase

11. (We truly behaved unblameably toward you,) even as ye know how that (we dealt with) each one of you as a father (would

deal with) his own children, exhorting you, and encouraging, and testifying (to you).

12. That you would be walking (that is, conducting yourselves) worthily of God, who calls you into his kingdom and (his) glory.

Notes (2:11-12)

1. During the short time Paul was with the Thessalonians, he exhorted "every one" of them, meaning each one individually. This in itself is an astounding accomplishment. (How did he ever have time to do manual labor in addition to all of this personal exhorting?) Concerning the meaning of the word "exhort" or "exhortation," see notes on I Thess. 2:3, paragraph 2.
2. Paul not only "exhorted" them, but also "comforted" them. The ministry of comforting and consoling people is most needful. This world has an abundance of things that cause grief, fear, and sorrow, and a scarcity of comforting. Real comforting means very much to people.
3. Paul had behaved toward them as a father would behave toward his own children. (The word *own* is important, and should be in the translation, as also in 2:7.) Any father worthy of his position would instruct his children in the right way to live, and urge them to do it. Paul had done that very thing to the Thessalonian disciples.

Paul did not have the Thessalonians addressing him as "Father Paul," in the fashion of the Roman Catholic clergy. (Remember, Jesus said, "Call no *man* your father upon the earth." Matthew 23:9.) But even so, Paul was a spiritual father to the Thessalonians in every sense that a man can be. I Corinthians 4:15: "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet ye have not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."

4. Paul urged them that they walk *worthy of God*. The word, "worthy," means "of equal weight." We must imagine a set of balances, with God in one side. On the other side of the balances, we must place our "walk" (or manner of life), and it must be "worthy" (of equal weight) of God. This may seem impossible. Whether it is impossible or not, it is certainly difficult. Paul had to exhort and testify repeatedly to the Thessalonians to get them to do this.

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Probably we ought not to say that it would be impossible to be *worthy* of God, since Paul taught us to walk *worthy* of God not only here, but in other places as well. Vol. 1:10: "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord." See also Ephesians 4:1; Phil. 1:27 (in American Standard version); II Thess. 1:5. (Also see notes on II Thess. 1:11, paragraph 4.)

5. For specific instructions about how we "ought to walk" (or live), see I Thess. 4:1-12, the section entitled, "The walk of the Christian."
6. How sublime and dignified a Christian's character may become! It is actually possible to walk *worthy* of God. Paul's good record among the Thessalonians was crowned by his efforts to stimulate his converts to the noblest possible way of living.
7. Notice that we are called unto (or into) God's *kingdom* and glory. The kingdom of God is "visible as the church on earth." (B. W. Johnson.) There are many Scripture verses that indicate that the kingdom of Christ has already been established on earth, and is practically synonymous with the church. Here are a few:

Col. 1:13—"God hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."

Matt. 16:18-19—"I will build my church . . . and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

Rev. 1:9—"I John . . . am your brother, and companion . . . in the kingdom . . . of Jesus Christ."

Hebrews 12:28—"Ye are come . . . to the general assembly and church . . . Wherefore having received a kingdom that cannot be shaken . . ."

(See also the *Special Study* on page 250, "The Throne of His Father David.")

8. Of course the kingdom of God will extend into the future life in a more glorious form. II Tim. 4:18; II Pet. 1:11.
9. The glory of God which we share includes such future promises as the resurrection of the dead, transformed bodies, the new heaven and earth, and other glories.

STUDY SUGGESTIONS

1. At this point in your study of I Thessalonians, we urge you to turn back to the outline of chapter two, and review the points in this section, 2:1-12, which is called "Paul's work among them."

2. Also it would be well for you at this time to turn ahead to the "Did You Learn?" questions, following the notes on 2:16. You should now be able to answer questions 1 to 29.

Text (2:13)

13 And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, *even the word of God*, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe.

Translation and Paraphrase

13. And we also thank God unceasingly for this (cause, namely) that when ye received (the) message which ye heard from us, (even the message) of God, you (welcomed and) received it not as a message from men, but as (what) it truly is, (the) message of God, which (is not just another dead philosophy, but is a living word that) also works actively in you that believe (it).

Notes (2:13)

1. Any man who has a burning conviction that the apostles of Christ taught the words of Almighty God would rejoice to see people receive the apostles' teachings as the word of God.
2. Paul was so pleased that the Thessalonians had received his message as the word of God, that he thanked God for this "without ceasing."
3. Paul knew perfectly well where his gospel came from, "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not after men." Galations 1:11. When the Thessalonians received his gospel as coming from God, as he KNEW it had come, he was most thankful.
4. This verse should forever establish the fact that we cannot have a faith like the apostles had, and then deny the miracles and prophecies and other things which the apostles taught.

Modern interpreters try to make the Bible acceptable to unbelievers by "demythologizing" it. Thus they reject such things as miracles and prophecies as being myths. Let us say right now that we do not believe that the Bible has myths in it. It is a combination of God's actual words, with the true history of His dealings with men.

We accept the testimony of the honest men who penned the Bible, that Jesus actually was born of a virgin, and actually walked on the water, and actually died for our sins, and rose

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bodily from the tomb, and is coming again. A believer has no part with an unbeliever. See II Cor. 6:15; II John 9-11.

5. This verse (2:13) begins the second section of chapter two, a section giving Paul's thanks for the way they received the word. The section covers 2:13-16. See outline of chapter two. The section is somewhat of an elaboration of Paul's statement in 1:6: "Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction."
6. To "receive" the word, of God as the Thessalonians received it, carries the idea of welcoming it as well as just taking it. (The Gr. verb *dechomai* has that connotation.) The teachable attitude of the Thessalonian Christians was in sharp contrast to that of the Jews, who not only refused to be taught themselves, but would not let Paul teach anyone else.
7. As if it were not a sufficient privilege for the Thessalonians to have received the word of God for its own sake, Paul adds further food to heaven's table of blessings, by saying that "the word of God is *working* within you."

The word of God is not some dead philosophy or speculation, but is living ("quick") and active. Hebrews 4:12. It is like good seed which springs up when it is planted. Luke 8:11. The word of God does not return void (and fruitless) unto God; but it is like rain that comes down from heaven and causes grass and flowers to grow out of the ground. The word of God accomplishes whatever God sends it forth to do. Isaiah 55:10-11.

The word of God, because it is living and working, causes sinners to be born again and saved. We are "born again," not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God." I Peter 1:23.

Then, after being born again, the word of God continues to work within us. (The middle voice of the verb *energeo* indicates that the word of God is self-operative, and self-sustaining.) God is at work within Christians, working through His word and His Spirit, causing them both to will (or desire) and to work (accomplish) His good pleasure. Philippians 2:13. We have power from heaven energizing within us:

8. Something is working in YOU:
 - (1) Is it the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience? Ephesians 2:2.
 - (2) Or is it the word of God? I Thess. 2:13.

Text (2:14)

14 For ye, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judaea in Christ Jesus: for ye also suffered the same things of your own countrymen, even as they did of the Jews;

Translation and Paraphrase

14. (It is obvious that you truly received the gospel as the word of God,) for you became imitators, brethren, of the churches of God which are in (the land of) Judea in Christ Jesus, because you also suffered the same things from your own people as they also (did) from the Jews.

Notes (2:14)

1. There is no more painful hurt that a person can endure than for his own friends and relatives to turn against him because he has received Jesus Christ as his Lord. The unkindest cut of all is one from the sword of our own people, those with whom we have pleasant memories and blood kinship.
2. The Thessalonians endured such anguish when the Jews set their whole city on an uproar against the Christians. Acts 17:5-9.
3. But this very experience, and others like it that followed, marked them as truly one with the children of God everywhere. For by their sufferings, they became followers (or, more accurately, "imitators," as in I Thess. 1:6) of the Christians in Judea.
4. Judea was the main homeland of the Jews, with Jerusalem being its capital. It was there that the church of Christ was started. Churches were soon in existence in many of the villages of Judea. Paul calls these churches, "the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus." Note that you cannot be "of God" and not be also "in Christ Jesus." (These churches were also called the "churches of Judaea which were in Christ." Gal. 1:22.)
5. The churches in Judea soon suffered persecution. Stephen was killed. Acts 7:59-60. A great persecution followed his death. Acts 8:1, 3. Many of the Hebrew Christians lost their homes and property. Hebrews 10:32-34. The unbelieving Jews tried to exterminate the followers of Christ, just as they had sought to kill Christ himself.
6. Paul could well have written the same words to the Thessalonians that he wrote to the Philippians: "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Phil. 1:29.

Text (2:15-16)

15 who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove out us, and please not God, and are contrary to all men; **16** forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved; to fill up their sins always; but the wrath is come upon them to the uppermost.

Translation and Paraphrase

15. (These Jews are the people) who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and have persecuted (and pursued) us, and (they) please not God, and are antagonistic to all men.
16. preventing us (if they possibly can) from speaking to the Gentiles so that they could be saved. (All of this wickedness is working) unto the (result, that they, like the Amorites of old, are) filling full their (cup of) sins always. But (God has not overlooked this wickedness any more than He overlooked the iniquity of the Amorites.) Rather, the wrath (of God) has come upon them to the (bitter) end.

Notes (2:15-16)

1. Facts about the Jews.
 - (1) They killed the Lord Jesus.
 - (2) They killed the prophets.
 - (3) They persecuted and pursued Paul.
 - (4) They please not God.
 - (5) They are contrary to all men.
 - (6) They forbade Paul to speak to the Gentiles.
2. This list of charges which Paul lays upon the Jews would be enough in modern times to raise screams of "Anti-Semitism!" from coast to coast. Nonetheless, everything which Paul said about them was true.
3. They killed the Lord Jesus. We have observed in recent times a lot of propaganda trying to get people to stop blaming the Jews for killing Jesus. But the fact remains that Pilate, the Roman governor who sentenced Jesus to die, did not want to do so. See John 19:6, 12. Only the mob pressure from the Jews prevailed upon him to do it.

The Jews had tried to kill Jesus several times previously, before He finally was crucified. See John 8:59; 10:31; Luke 4:29.

Just fifty days after Jesus died, right in Jerusalem where He was killed, the apostle Peter said publicly to the Jews, "YOU

have taken (Jesus) and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Acts 2:23. No Jew there could deny that Peter spoke the truth about their deed.

4. The Jews killed their prophets. Jesus himself laid this charge upon them. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee." Matt. 23:37. See also Matt. 23:29-35; Acts 7:52.

The Jews during their history had turned against Moses. They persecuted Jeremiah. Amos was told to leave and prophesy no more. Amos 7:12. Micaiah was imprisoned. I Kings 22:24-28. Hanani imprisoned. II Chron. 16:7-10. Zechariah slain. II Chronicles 24:20-22. This list could go on and on.

5. The Jews had persecuted Paul, almost from the moment he had become a Christian. To list all the places where Paul had been hounded and persecuted by the Jews would be to list every place he ever visited—Damascus, Jerusalem, Antioch of Pisidia, Lystra, etc. Shortly before this letter was written, Paul had had to leave Berea, because Jews had come all the way from Thessalonica to run Paul out of town. See Acts 17:10-13.

This was such an unreasonable thing for them to do, sort of a "dog in the manger" attitude. But, "there is no limit to what religious prejudice will really do when men's eyes become blinded." (Ironside, ADDRESSES, p. 28.)

6. The Jews please not God. Probably of all the charges made by Paul against the Jews, this one would be the most hotly disputed. But as proof that Paul was right when he said, "The Jews please not God," let us remind you that God's prophets which He sent to the Jews confirm Paul's judgment:

- (1) John the baptist called them a "generation of vipers." Matt. 3:7.
- (2) Isaiah called them a "sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters." Isa. 1:4.
- (3) Jeremiah said that they were all grievous revolters, walking with slanders. Jer. 6:28.
- (4) Malachi declared God's judgment, that "from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances." Malachi 3:7.

Jesus said to his apostles, "Whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service to God." John 16:2. The mistaken zeal of men like Saul of Tarsus led them even to commit murder in God's name. This certainly did NOT please God.

2:15,16 THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

Now we must, in all fairness interject, that there have always been many devout, gracious, open-hearted Jews, men like their father Abraham. Paul himself acknowledged this, for he himself was a Jew. Romans 11:5. Many Jews honestly considered what Jesus said and did, and many became Christians. But many closed their minds, and became violent against Christ and His followers. In doing that, they did NOT please God.

7. The Jews are contrary to all men. "Contrary" (Gr., *enantios*) means "opposite, antagonistic, etc."

The Jews of Paul's time delighted in hatching all manner of sedition, private conspiracy, and rebellion. Tacitus, the Roman historian, brands them as "the enemies of all men." The great Jewish doctor of the law, Gamaliel, himself tells of two violent rebellions of the Jews. Acts 5:36-37.

The Jews despised the Gentiles as unclean. They would not enter the house of Pilate the Roman governor. John 18:29. The apostle Peter said to Cornelius, "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation." Acts 10:28.

We admit that it is plain evident history that Gentiles (and even professed Christians) have been cruel to the Jews throughout the centuries. But the Jews have themselves been guilty of everything that they have suffered from others. Gentiles and Jews alike are guilty before God.

8. The Jews forbade Paul to speak to the Gentiles. Nothing roused the Jews to more fury than for Paul to go to the Gentiles with the gospel of Christ.

Paul, in telling about his conversation and life before the Jews in Jerusalem, said, "And He (Jesus) said unto me, Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. And they gave him audience *unto this word*, and then lifted up their voice, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air. . . ." Acts 22:21-23.

It was always the same story wherever Paul went. The Jews tried to prevent him from teaching the Gentiles. In Lystra the Jews from Antioch and Iconium persuaded the people (Gentiles) to stone Paul. Acts 14:19; 17:13.

9. The result of all these wicked acts by the Jews, was that "they fill up their sins always." This expression appears to be a reference to what God had long before said about the wicked Am-

orites in the land of Canaan: "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." Gen. 15:16. At a later date God indicated that their iniquity was full, and that their own land would vomit them out. Lev. 18:24-28.

To say that the Jews resembled the heathen Amorites, whom they conquered in the time of Joshua, was perhaps a crowning insult, but not an exaggeration.

10. As a result of the iniquity of the Jews, wrath was come upon them to the uttermost, or "unto the end." This does not mean that wrath would continue upon them to the end of the world. For Paul himself prophesied that the Israelites would return to God before that time. Romans 11:25-26. Rather, "wrath unto the uttermost" means wrath that fully expends itself.

God's wrath against the Jews was particularly demonstrated at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Already at the time when Paul wrote this epistle, the great rebellion of the Jews against the Romans was taking form. When the rebellion finally came in 66 A.D., it led to a bloody war, in which the walls, temple, and much of the rest of Jerusalem were demolished and burned down. 97,000 people were carried away captive into slavery, and eleven hundred thousand (1,100,000) perished, many by starvation and killing one another. Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us about this in *Wars of the Jews*, VI, ix, 4.

Paul was certainly correct when he said that wrath was come upon them to the uttermost.

11. This statement about "wrath upon them to the uttermost" leaves some overly sensitive people shuddering with dislike and unbelief. Some interpreters even assert that this statement must be a "later interpolation" into the text. (So Moffatt, Interpreter's Bible, etc.) There is no proof whatsoever of such an opinion. It is just the reaction of the "natural mind" of man to God's judgment. Naturally, men do not like to accept what God says about such things as hell, the blood of Jesus, God's wrath, and the judgment. See I Cor. 2:14. But surely we must accept anything that God says. The Thessalonians did. I Thess. 2:13.

STUDY SUGGESTIONS

1. You have now come to the closing verses of the second part of chapter two. We urge you to review the outline of chapter 2.

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

2. Also you should now try to answer the remaining questions in the section that follows. Questions over the second section of chapter two are questions 30 to 45.

DID YOU LEARN?

(Questions over I Thessalonians, chapter two)

1. What is the topic of chapter two (2:1-16)?
2. What is the first main point of the outline of this chapter? (Point A)
3. What are its Scripture limitations?
4. What did the Thessalonians themselves know about Paul's entrance unto them? (2:1)
5. What Scripture verse and word does the "entrance" of 2:1 refer back to?
6. Where had Paul suffered immediately before he came to Thessalonica? (2:2)
7. In spite of Paul's previous sufferings, how did he speak in Thessalonica? (2:2)
8. What are the two ideas (or the double significance) in the word "exhortation"? (2:3)
9. Paul denies that his exhortation was prompted by three things. What were they? (2:3)
10. To what does "uncleanness" refer? (2:3)
11. What does the word "guile" mean? (2:3)
12. Paul spoke the gospel, as he was allowed by whom? (2:4)
13. What does the word "allowed" in 2:4 actually mean?
14. What two words in 2:4 are translations of the same word?
15. Whom did Paul seek to please, and whom did he not seek to please? (2:4)
16. What does God do to our hearts? (2:4)
17. What type of words did Paul not use? (2:5)
18. Who was witness of that fact? (2:5)
19. Over what did Paul not put a "cloke"? (2:5)
20. Who was witness of that fact? (2:5)
21. What two meanings are given for the word "glory"? (2:6)
22. As apostles of Christ, what could Paul have demanded? (2:6)
23. Paul was gentle among the Thessalonians, like a what? (2:7)
24. What two things was Paul willing to have imparted to the Thessalonians? (2:8)
25. When did Paul labor while he was among them? (2:9)

CHAPTER TWO

26. In what three ways had Paul behaved himself toward them that believe? (2:10)
27. Paul had exhorted them as a _____ would do, (2:11)
28. How did Paul exhort them to walk? (2:12)
29. Into what does God call us? (2:12)
30. What is the second main point in the outline of chapter two? (Point B)
31. What are its Scripture limitations?
32. As what did the Thessalonians receive the message which Paul preached? (2:13)
33. What did the way the Thessalonians received his words make Paul do? (2:13)
34. What did the word of God do in the Thessalonians? (2:13)
35. Of whom had the Thessalonians become followers because of their sufferings? (2:14)
36. Of whom had the Thessalonians suffered? (2:14)
37. What had the Jews done to Jesus? (2:15)
38. What had the Jews done to their prophets? (2:15)
39. What had the Jews done to Paul? (2:15)
40. What proof is given in the notes that Paul was correct when he said, "The Jews please not God"?
41. What attitude did the Jews have toward all men? (2:15)
42. What did the Jews try to keep Paul from doing? (2:16)
43. Whom did the Jews resemble in that they "filled up their sins always"? (2:16)
44. How far was God's wrath come upon the Jews? (2:16)
45. At what event was God's wrath upon the Jews especially demonstrated? (2:16)
46. Write out from memory (or recite) I Thess. 2:13. It begins, "For this cause also thank we . . ."

I THESSALONIANS, CHAPTER THREE
(2:17—3:13)

Chapter Topic:

**Paul's Current Dealings
with The Thessalonians**



"When I could no longer forbear, I sent Timothy unto you." 1
Thess. 3:1-2

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

CHAPTER THREE BEGINS AT 2:17

Perhaps it looks as if we have a lot of nerve to say that chapter three should begin at 2:17. But if we regard the chapters as being rather complete and unified discussions of one particular topic, then we should by all means include 2:17-20 along with the material in chapter three. 2:17-20 is plainly a part of the same subject matter that Paul writes more about in chapter three.

Notice in the outline of chapter three how that the material in 2:17-3:10 all flows together into one discussion of "Paul's Current Dealings With The Thessalonians":

III. Paul's current dealings with the Thessalonians; 2:17-3:10

1. Paul's desire for personal visit hindered; 2:17-3:10
2. Timothy sent; 3:1-5
3. Joy upon Timothy's return; 3:6-10.

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

I. Thessalonians, chapter three (2:17—3:13)

Chapter Topic—"Paul's Current Dealings With the Thessalonians"

1. Paul had been taken from the Thessalonians for a short time in _____ but not in _____. 2:17
2. What had Paul endeavored to do? 2:17

3. Who prevented Paul from coming unto them? 2:18.

4. The Thessalonians were Paul's _____, and _____, and _____ of rejoicing. 2:19
5. The Thessalonians were Paul's hope, etc., "in the _____ of our Lord Jesus at his _____." 2:19
6. The Thessalonians were Paul's _____ and _____ 2:20.
7. Where was Paul when he decided it would be good to be left alone? 3:1. _____.
8. Whom did Paul send back to Thessalonica to establish them? 3:2. _____.
9. Paul desired that they would not be moved from their faith by these _____. 3:3
10. Unto what are we appointed? 3:3
_____.
11. When Paul was with them, what had he told them would happen? 3:4.

CHAPTER THREE

12. When Paul could no longer forbear his fears for the Thessalonians, he _____ to know (about) their _____, 3:5
13. By whom did Paul fear that they might have been tempted? 3:5. _____.
14. If they had yielded to temptations, Paul's labors could have been _____, 3:5
15. Were the tidings from the Thessalonians good or bad? (Circle which,) 3:6
16. Timothy brought back tidings of their _____ and _____, 3:6
17. True or false (circle which)—The Thessalonians wanted to see Paul again, just as he wanted to see them. 3:6
18. True or false (circle which)—Timothy's report from Thessalonica distressed Paul. 3:7
19. True or false (circle which)—When Paul wrote this letter, he was in pleasant circumstances. 3:7
20. In 3:8, Paul said, "Now we _____ if ye _____ in the Lord."
21. Was Paul able to express his thankfulness for the Thessalonians? 3:9. Yes or no. (Circle which)
22. What was Paul praying that he might get to do? 3:10. (2 answers)
 _____;

23. True or false (circle which)—Paul considered the faith of the Thessalonians to be complete. 3:10
24. To whom did Paul address his prayer? 3:11. (Two answers)
 _____;

25. Paul prayed that the Lord would "direct _____ unto you." 3:11
26. Paul prayed that God would make to increase and abound in what? 3:12. _____.
27. The end (or object) of Paul's prayer was that the Lord "may _____ your _____ unblameable in _____ before God." 3:13
28. At what time are we to be before God, even our Father? 3:13.

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

29. Who will be with Jesus when He comes? 3:13

30. Memorize I Thess. 3:12-13.

I THESSALONIANS, CHAPTER THREE (2:17—3:13)

Chapter Topic, *"Paul's Current Dealings With the Thessalonians"*

Outline

- I. Paul's current dealings with the Thessalonians; 2:17-3:10
 - A. Paul's desire for personal visit hindered; 2:17-20
 - 1. Paul's desire to see them; 2:17
 - 2. His efforts hindered; 2:18
 - 3. How much the Thessalonians meant to Paul; 2:19-20
 - B. Timothy sent; 3:1-5
 - 1. Paul remained at Athens alone; 3:1
 - 2. Timothy sent to establish and comfort them; 3:2-5
 - a. So that no man would be moved by afflictions; 3:2-4
 - (1) We are appointed unto afflictions; 3:3
 - (2) Paul had warned them of afflictions; 3:4
 - (3) They knew afflictions had occurred.
 - b. So that Paul could know of their faith; 3:5
 - (1) Lest the tempter had tempted them.
 - (2) Lest his labor had been in vain.
 - C. Joy upon Timothy's return; 3:6-10
 - 1. What Timothy reported; 3:6
 - a. Their faith and charity.
 - b. They had good remembrance of Paul always.
 - c. They desired greatly to see Paul again.
 - 2. Paul's reaction to Timothy's report; 3:7-10
 - a. Comforted; 3:7
 - b. Caused to live; 3:8
 - c. Too thankful to express his joy; 3:9
 - d. Praying to see them again; 3:10
- Conclusion; The apostle's prayer for the Thessalonians; 3:11-13
 - 1. That God would direct his way unto them; 3:11
 - 2. That their love would increase and abound; 3:12-13
 - a. Toward one another and all men; 3:12
 - b. Abound as Paul's love abounded toward them; 3:12
 - c. Purpose of this petition—that their hearts would be established unblameable; 3:13

You should NOW memorize the topic of this chapter, and the three main points (A, B, and C) under it, and their Scripture limitations.

THOUGHTS FROM THE OUTLINE

Of I Thessalonians, chapter three

Paul's dealings with the Thessalonians AFTER he left Thessalonica show the feelings of a true man of God toward his converts after he has departed from them. They never cease to be upon his heart. He will do anything possible to help them remain true to the Lord, and he has no greater joy than to hear news of their continued faithfulness and spiritual growth.

Christians should realize that it is a great grief to a minister whom they may love, if they do not remain true to Christ when he has gone away from them.

Text (2:17)

17 But we, brethren, being bereaved of you for a short season, in presence not in heart, endeavored the more exceedingly to see your face with great desire:

Translation and Paraphrase

17. But we, brethren, being bereaved (by our separation) from you, (like a father is grieved when he has lost his children, even though it has been but) for a (short) time (such as the passing) of an hour, (and we have been separated from you only) in presence, not in heart, we, (because of our grief) have hurried (about, seeking) more abundantly (than you can imagine) to see your face with great desire.

Notes (2:17)

1. Can you imagine how a father in a Communistic country would feel to see his children taken out of his house by the police, and sent away to state schools, while he himself was sent off to a slave labor camp? Paul's feelings when he was driven away from the Thessalonians were equally intense.

Paul uses the word *aporphanidzo* (the root of which gives us our word "orphan") to describe his feelings. The word means "to bereave, as one separated from parent or child."

We love the churches where we have served. But probably most preachers do not have the intensity of love and yearning for them that Paul had.

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2. Paul had not been separated from the Thessalonians very long when he wrote this letter. He says it was "a short time, such as the time of an hour." McGarvey says that "this short time" was about six months. But though the time had not been long, the pain of being separated was not any less keen.
3. Christian people have many farewells to say in this life. Thank God, we shall not have these in the world to come. But even in this life, Christians are not separated in heart nor affection, merely in presence. Thus Paul was separated from the Thessalonians only in presence, not in heart. Paul wrote a similar thought to the Colossians. Col. 2:5.
4. We do not know just what all Paul had done to try to get back to Thessalonica. But he had earnestly endeavoured (literally, "hastened" or "hurried" about) to get back to see them.
5. Not only did Paul desire to get back to see the Thessalonians, but he also desired to see his brethren in other places. He wrote to the Romans, "I long to see you." Rom. 1:11, 13. Paul's heart was big enough to love all of his brethren with all of him. Like a parent with a dozen children, he did not love any of them the less, just because there were so many to love.

Text (2:18)

18 because we would fain have come unto you, I Paul once and again; and Satan hindered us.

Translation and Paraphrase

18. Wherefore, we were resolved to come to you, even I Paul (myself), once and twice (once and again), and (then) Satan cut us off (so we could not come).

Notes (2:18)

1. Paul could not get back to Thessalonica because Satan hindered him. Satan has always tried to interfere with the work of Christian teachers. It was Satan who tried to break up the church in Jerusalem by forbidding the apostles to preach, and persecuting its members so that they were scattered.
2. The word "hindered" (Gr., *egkopto*) is a military term, and indicates the obstruction of an enemy's progress by breaking up the road, destroying bridges, etc. Did you ever think of Satan as a "road-breaker"? This surely explains why missionaries sometimes have so much trouble getting to various places. Paul used the same term, "hindered," in writing to the Romans. Rom. 15:22.

3. We do not know exactly what means Satan used to block Paul so he could not get back to Thessalonica. But Satan has many means—sickness, poverty, persecution, etc. Perhaps Satan hindered Paul by the “distress and affliction,” mentioned in I Thess. 3:5.
4. Paul had an unhesitating belief in the reality and personal activity of Satan. See Ephesians 2:2; 4:27; II Cor. 4:4; 12:17; Acts 26:18; I Timothy 5:15. We must believe that the devil is real, if we claim to have an apostolic faith.

Text (2:19-20)

19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at his coming? 20 For ye are our glory and our joy.

Translation and Paraphrase

19. (We have desired so greatly to see you,) for what is our hope, or joy, or crown in which we rejoice (like an athlete rejoices in his laurel of victory)? Are not even you (Thessalonians our hope, joy, and crown)? (Indeed you are those very things to us, and you will be our crown when we stand) before our Lord Jesus at his coming.
20. For ye are our glory and joy.

Notes (2:19-20)

1. To a gospel preacher like Paul, his converts are his . . .
 - (1) Hope
 - (2) Joy
 - (3) Crown of rejoicing
 - (4) Glory; 2:20
2. When we stand before Christ at His coming, the souls that we have won, and the work that we have done for Christ, will be our hope, and joy, and glory, and crown. Let us therefore win souls while we have opportunity.
3. Numerous references in the New Testament teach us that Christians shall be rewarded according to their works. We did not say *saved* by their works, but rewarded according to their works. I Cor. 3:14: “If any man’s work shall abide . . . he shall receive a reward.”

This fact partly explains why Paul was so uneasy when he thought that the Thessalonians might have forsaken the faith. If they stood fast for Christ, he would have a reward. If they

shrunk back from the Lord, he would suffer loss. I Cor. 3:15. (Of course Paul's concern for them was prompted more by love for them than by self-interest.)

4. Victorious athletes in Paul's time often received garland crowns as symbols of their victories. They could point to the crowns as objects of pride and proof of victory. Likewise Paul could point to the churches he had established as emblems of victory and tokens of his joy. Philippians 4:1: "Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord."

In the absence of his king, Paul had won a crown, the Thessalonians. When he met the king, he would lay his crown before the king's feet.

5. The fact that the Thessalonians would be Paul's joy and crown in heaven should make it plain once for all that we shall know one another in the future life. Otherwise how could Paul glory in them before Christ at His coming?
6. To explain how the souls we win will be our *glory*, we can do no better than to quote Daniel 12:3: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."
7. This verse mentions the "coming" of our Lord Jesus. The Greek word translated *coming* is *parousia*. It is used here for the first time in the Thessalonian epistles. You should get to know this word as you will often find it in books, even those all written in English.

Parousia literally means "a being alongside," and is usually translated "coming" or "presence." It is frequently used in Greek literature to refer to the visit (or coming) of some official or prominent personage. It refers in the New Testament to the "coming" or arrival of men, such as Stephanas (I Cor. 16:17) and Titus (2 Cor. 7:6-7). It is applied seventeen times to the second coming of Jesus.

Parousia is used twenty-four times in the New Testament. In the King James version it is translated "coming" twenty-two times and "presence" twice. It is found in Matt. 24:3; 24:27, 37, 39; I Cor. 15:23; 16:17; II Cor. 7:6, 7; 10:10; Phil. 1:26; 2:12; I Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; II Thess. 2:1, 8, 9; James 5:7, 8; II Peter 1:16; 3:4, 12; I John 2:28.

We have given all these detailed facts, so that when we come to this word, *parousia*, in future verses, you will already know its meaning and uses.

STUDY SUGGESTION

Turn to the "Did You Learn?" questions following chapter 3, and see if you can answer questions 1 through 9. These deal with the section, 2:17-20.

(We started the study of chapter three at 2:17. For our reasons for doing this, the outline of chapter three, and the "Thinking Through Thessalonians" questions over chapter three, turn back to the pages following notes on 2:16.)

Text (3:1)

1 Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left behind at Athens alone;

Translation and Paraphrase

1. Wherefore (on account of your being so dear to us, and the fact that I could not personally return to you), when we could no longer conceal (and endure the pain of being separated from you), we thought it (would be) good to be left behind at Athens alone (rather than to continue suffering anxiety over you).

Notes (3:1)

1. Christians frequently discover that things do not work out as they sincerely believe they should. God often leads us in paths not of our own choosing, and not according to the way we understand things. Of course, God knows best and can foresee the future, and always works things out for the best. Romans 8:28.

Paul probably thought very sincerely that it was the will of God that he return to Thessalonica. But God did not open up the way (and when Satan blocks us, only God can open the way). Meanwhile his fears about the young Thessalonian Christians were heaping up day after day.

2. Finally Paul could stand the anxiety no more, and decided that it would be better for him to remain at Athens alone, than to enjoy the assistance of Timothy and continue worrying about the Thessalonians. So Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica from Athens. For further details about the moves of Paul, Timothy, and Silas at this time, see Introductory Section VI, paragraphs 16 to 20.
3. When Paul says that *we* could no longer forbear, it is certain that he was speaking only of himself. He could not have been left *alone* if Silas or other helpers had been with him. Writers

3:1,2 THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

often refer to themselves as “we” (an editorial “we”). It does not sound as boastful to say, “We did something,” as to say, “I did it.”

4. The word translated “forbear” (Gr., *stego*) means “cover, cover up with silence, bear up against, endure, bear, forbear.” (Thayer) Paul finally reached the point where he could not cover up his fears about the Thessalonians. He had to do something.
5. Although Paul sent Timothy to Thessalonica from Athens, he wrote this epistle from Corinth later.

Text (3:2)

2 and sent Timothy, our brother, and God’s minister in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and comfort you concerning your faith;

Translation and Paraphrase

2. And (so) we sent Timothy, our brother (in the Lord, and minister of God), and fellow-worker with God in the (work of spreading the) good news of Christ, so that he might establish you (in the right beliefs and practices) and exhort you concerning your faith.

Notes (3:2)

1. While the anger of the Jews was directed at the whole church and the gospel itself, their anger was focused on Paul. So Paul sent Timothy to Thessalonica. Timothy apparently encountered no trouble in making the trip. Paul would certainly have had trouble.
2. Paul calls Timothy:
 - (1) Our brother.
 - (2) Minister of God.
 - (3) Fellowlabourer in the gospel. Compare I Cor. 3:9.
(The title “minister” is omitted in the American Standard Version, Nestle’s Greek text, etc. It has only limited support in the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament.)
3. Preachers of the gospel should revel in the way Paul speaks of his fellow-workers. Compare Phil. 4:2. Paul calls them “brothers,” “fellow-workers,” etc. Paul had no jealousy. Whenever anyone did anything for Christ, Paul was glad.
4. Timothy had two things to do for the Thessalonians:
 - (1) *Establish* them. This means to make them stable, and set them fast in the faith.

- (2) *Comfort* them. This is the term also translated "exhort." For the meaning of "exhort" and "exhortation," see notes on I Thess. 2:3, par. 2.

Establishing and comforting are two things necessary for every young Christian, and many older ones also.

Text (3:3-4)

3 that no man be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that hereunto we are appointed. 4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we are to suffer affliction; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

Translation and Paraphrase

3. (I sent Timothy unto you) so that none (of you) would be shaken about (and distressed) by these troubles (which you are having). For you yourselves know that (in God's arrangement of things) we are appointed unto this (very) thing (affliction).
4. For (you surely remember that) even while we were (still) with you, (that) we kept telling you before (anything had yet happened), that we (as Christians) were certain to be pressed (with afflictions), just as it (soon) came to pass, and (as) you know (very well how) it has happened. (Therefore, do not be disturbed by this turn of events.)

Notes (3:3-4)

1. Often when people become Christians and discover that they experience trouble and sorrow afterwards, they wonder if they have made a mistake. They wonder if they are actually saved, thinking that their sufferings are an indication of God's judgment upon them.
2. But notice that Paul says in these verses that we are actually appointed in God's arrangement of things to suffer tribulation. The "we" refers to all Christians. Let them all hear it.

The words "tribulation" and "affliction" come from the Greek *thlipsis* and mean "a pressing, pressing together, pressure, oppression, affliction, distress, etc." (Thayer) Tribulation is our lot as Christians.

John 16:33—"In the world we shall have tribulation."

Acts 14:22—"We enter into the kingdom of God through much tribulation. See also John 15:18-19; Mark 10:30.

3. But let us remember that God is not the instigator of all our troubles. God did not bring the sufferings of Job upon him. The

3:4,5 THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

devil did it. (See Job, chapters 1 and 2.) If Job had accused God of hurting him, Job would have accused God foolishly. Job 1:22. Christians are appointed to suffer, probably because the evil world cannot stand the contrast of sanctified lives to its wickedness. God permits this evil to exist, but the time is coming when God will punish those who afflict us, and give rest to those who are afflicted. II Thess. 1:6-7.

4. We are happy to report that Paul's hope that the Thessalonians had not been moved by affliction was found to be a fact. II Thess. 1:4. They did continue to bear their tribulations without giving up the faith. It is possible for suffering people to be victorious over persecutions, so that "no man should be moved (or shaken) by these afflictions."
5. Paul seems to have had to jog the memory of the Thessalonians several times. In this verse he asks, "Don't you remember how that while I was with you I told you that we would have suffering?" Compare II Thess. 2:5; 3:10. Such verses as Acts 14:22 indicate that Paul did indeed warn his converts of tribulation to come.

Text (3:5)

5 For this cause I also, when I could no longer forbear, sent that I might know your faith, lest by any means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor should be in vain.

Translation and Paraphrase

5. Because of this (tribulation which I knew would befall you), I also, when I could no longer conceal (and endure) (my fears about what might have happened to you) sent (Timothy unto you), so that I could know (how) your faith (had held out), lest by any means the tempter (Satan) had (successfully) tempted you, and our toil (among you) had become in vain (because you had fallen away from the faith).

Notes (3:5)

1. The fears of a true minister that Satan may have destroyed the faith of his converts can be an overpowering burden to him. Paul's fears about the Thessalonians were so intense that he could not even preach in Corinth, until Timothy and Silas arrived with the reassuring news from Thessalonica. Acts 18:5; I Thess. 3:6-7.