

what they have coming at the revelation of the Lord. (For more about this, see Special Studies II and IV on pages 242 and 247.

8. The Lord Jesus is to be revealed along with his mighty angels. Angels are indeed mighty; they even "excel in strength." Psalm 103:20. Numerous Scripture passages teach that the Lord will come with his angels, his holy ones (or saints). See Matthew 24:31; 25:31, and article IV in Appendix.

If one angel laid 185,000 Assyrians low in a single night, the coming of the angels should be terrifying to sinners. Isaiah 37:36.

Text (1:8)

8 rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus:

Translation and Paraphrase

8. (For He shall be revealed) in flaming fire, giving (and rendering) vengeance upon them who (have not known and) do not know God, and upon them who disobey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Notes (1:8)

1. Christ will be perfectly just in taking vengeance on them that know not God. For people are not innocently ignorant. The peoples of the world do not know God, because they refused to have God in their knowledge. Romans 1:28. The heathen truly live in ignorance of the gospel. But they also live in definite rebellion against what little they do know of God and morality. By such law as they have written in their own hearts, they are condemned. Rom. 2:14-15; 3:9-10.
2. Jeremiah 10:25: "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name." See also Psalm 79:6.
3. When Christ is revealed from heaven, it will be a time of vengeance. The day of grace will have ended. The opportunity to obey and be saved will be past and gone.
4. The words, "in flaming fire," can refer either to the way that Christ shall be manifested when He comes, or to the manner in which He shall take vengeance.

In our paraphrase we have connected them with the way Christ shall be revealed. We have done this mainly because we know that sinners will not be sent into the eternal fire prepared

for the devil and his angels until AFTER the judgment. See Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:15. This verse (and 1:7) does not so much refer to the events after the judgment as to the events connected with Christ's revelation in the clouds of heaven. This revelation will be with flaming fire. Of course, it will be followed by a fiery condemnation of sinners after the judgment.

5. Isaiah 66:15, 24: "For behold, the Lord will come with fire . . . neither shall their fire be quenched."
6. The presence of the Lord is often associated with fire and smoke. Thus at Mt. Sinai. Ex. 19:18. And at the burning bush. Ex. 3:2; And over the tabernacle. Numbers 9:15. See also Isa. 10:16-17; Nahum 1:5-6.
7. It is a fearful thing to face the fiery vengeance of the Lord. "There remaineth . . . a certain fearful looking for of judgment and *fiery* indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Hebrews 10:26-27.
8. This verse makes powerfully plain the necessity for OBEYING the gospel. Truly it is needful to *believe* the gospel. But the gospel not only has facts to be believed and promises to be received, but commands to be obeyed. For a list of the commands to be obeyed in order to be saved, see notes on I Thess. 1:4, par. 5.
9. The word "obey" (Gr., *hupakouo*) basically means to listen or hearken. Rotherham brings out this force of the word in his translation: "And them who decline to hearken unto the glad-message of our Lord Jesus."
10. Paul warns that there shall be indignation and wrath to them that "do not *obey* the truth." Rom. 2:8. Compare Rom. 1:8; 16:26. Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all that *obey* him. Heb. 5:9. "Hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." I John 2:3
11. The teaching of I Thess 1:7-9 about Jesus coming with his mighty angels, the flaming fire, etc., is frankly rejected by some theologians (or should we call them diabologians?). The *Interpreter's Bible* comments that the mighty angels, or angels of his power, the flaming fire, the glory of his might, all belong to the traditions of Judaism, and thus is a drapery of language. We accept these descriptions as the revelation of God, and not as some fictitious flight of words.

Text (1:9)

9 who shall suffer punishment, *even* eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

Translation and Paraphrase

9. (These) who (are disobedient) shall pay the penalty (which is) everlasting destruction (in a place far) from the presence of the Lord, and from his (majestic and) powerful glory.

Notes (1:9)

1. How terrible to be forever away from the presence of the Lord: Every good and perfect gift comes from the Lord. James 1:17. All men on earth, even those who do not serve God, enjoy His blessings—His rain, sunshine, the gift of life, godly friends and loved ones, etc. How fearful to be forever banished from the Lord, where none of these blessings can ever come!
2. The punishments of sinners is described as “everlasting destruction.” Because of this expression (and similar ones in other references), some have thought that the punishment will be an annihilation, a going out of existence, a being burned into nothingness. This is contrary to the meaning of the word “destruction,” and to Scriptural teaching in other references. See Rev. 14:9-11; Mark 9:43-48; Matt. 25:41, 46.
3. The word here translated “destruction is *olethros*. It is used elsewhere in the New Testament only in I Thess. 5:3, I Tim. 6:9, and I Cor. 5:5. Lidell and Scott’s definition of *olethros* is “Ruin, destruction, undoing.” The word indicates total ruin, but not necessarily an end of existence or annihilation.

In I Cor. 5:3, Paul speaks of delivering the incestuous man to Satan for the *destruction* of the flesh. In this life neither our literal flesh nor our fleshly instincts are ever totally annihilated. They are brought under control and subjugated, but not annihilated.

I Tim. 6:9 Paul speaks of hurtful lusts drowning (present tense) men in destruction and perdition. (The present tense indicates a continuous action.) Since the destruction of sinners is said to be presently in the process of being accomplished according to this verse, it would seem to be wrong to say that “destruction” is limited to one irrevocable burning up in the lake of fire.

4. To further illustrate the meaning of *olethros* (or destruction), R. C. Foster (in THE FINAL WEEK, page 118) tells how the word was used by the Greek dramatist Sophocles in his play, “Oedipus Rex.” Oedipus was a king who became enmeshed in the most hideous moral mess imaginable, and brought untold shame and misery upon himself. He even married his own mother. In the end of the play, Oedipus, instead of committing suicide, put

out his own eyes. Scholars agree that his tragedy was greater because he had to live on in the moral muck he had created than it would have been for him to have committed suicide and ended it all. Now quoting R. C. Foster:

- "In the light of our discussion of eternal punishment, it is of startling importance to find that Oedipus in his agony cries out, 'I am the great olethros (ton megan olethron):' In other words, Oedipus is not saying that he is the great annihilation, but that he is the supreme example of endless suffering. Out of the midst of one of the most famous of all Greek dramas comes powerful evidence as to the meaning which this word carried." (Op. cit., p. 118)
5. "Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" indicates that sinners are to be banished from the presence of the Lord forever. Goodspeed translates this verse as "eternal ruin and exclusion from the presence of the Lord." In Matt. 25:41, the doom of the wicked is to "Depart from me." The wicked are driven forever from His presence. On the other hand the saints are to be "ever with the Lord." I Thess. 4:17.
 6. The glory of the Lord's power is vividly described in Deut. 33:2 and I Tim. 6:16. God dwells in light unapproachable. But sinners will not share this light. They will be in outer darkness. Matt. 25:30.

Text (1:10)

10 when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed (because our testimony unto you was believed) in that day.

Translation and Paraphrase

10. (This penalty to the disobedient shall be carried out) at the time when He (Jesus) shall come in that (great) day to be glorified (before all creatures of the universe for what He has accomplished) in (the perfecting of) his saints, and to be marvelled at (by all creatures because of what He has accomplished) in all (of you) who have believed, because our testimony was believed by you.

Notes (1:10)

1. While sinners should fear the return of Christ as the time when they will face everlasting destruction, Christ and his brethren,

the Christians, (Heb. 2:12) look forward to that day as a time of glorification.

2. The Thessalonian Christians looked forward to the Lord's coming as a day of glory, because they had believed the message of Christ which Paul preached. We cannot pass into the temple of glory without first passing through the temple of faith. In ancient Athens there were two temples, a temple of Virtue, and a temple of Honor. No one could enter the temple of Honor, except by passing through the temple of Virtue. (Preacher's Homiletic Com.) So also we shall not share Christ's glory, unless we have first believed the divine testimony.
3. Two things are to happen to Christ when He comes:
 - (1) He is to be glorified in His saints.
 - (2) He is to be marvelled at in all that believe.("Marvelled" is a better translation than "admired.")
4. The expression, "to be glorified in his saints," may not seem very clear. It means (as we have given it in our translation and paraphrase) that Christ is to be glorified before all creatures of the universe (and by them) for what He has accomplished in the perfecting of His saints. When all creatures see the wonderful character which Christ has developed in His saints over the years, and see the glorious bodies in which He shall resurrect us, Christ will thus be glorified in His saints.

Similar statements about people being "glorified in" someone are Gal. 1:24: "They (the churches) glorified God in me (Paul);" also John 14:13: "The Father may be glorified in the Son." See also John 17:10; 13:31.
5. The parenthetical phrase, "because our testimony among you was believed," is added to identify the Thessalonians with the believers who shall share the glorification of Christ. Abstract facts are often not interesting to us, but if we are personally involved in them, they become very interesting and important to us.
6. "That day" mentioned at the end of the verse is the day when He shall come, the day the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven. In our translation we have placed the phrase, "in that (great) day," right after the words, "He shall come," to show that the day referred to is the day when He shall come.

Text (1:11-12)

11 To which end we also pray always for you, that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire of goodness and every work of faith, with power; **12** that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Translation and Paraphrase

11. (Desiring greatly that our Lord may truly be glorified in you,) we pray always unto that (end) concerning you, (asking) that our God may count you worthy of the calling (which we have described), and (that He may) fulfill every good pleasure of (his) goodness (in His dealings with you), and (fulfill every) work of faith with power.
12. (We ask for these things) in order that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in (the work and faith) you (show), and (that) you (in return shall be glorified) by (your fellowship with) Him, according to the (program of the) grace of our God and (our) Lord Jesus Christ.

Notes (1:11-12)

1. We call this prayer that closes chapter one a prayer for God's blessings. It has three petitions in it, and two purposes for the petitions:
 - (1) The petitions; 1:11
 - a. That God would count them worthy of the calling.
 - b. That God would fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness.
 - c. That God would fulfill the work of faith with power.
 - (2) The purposes; 1:12
 - a. That the name of Jesus may be glorified in you.
 - b. That you may be glorified in him.
2. Have you ever prayed as Paul prayed here, that God would count certain people worthy of His calling? Have you ever prayed that God would fulfill the good pleasure of His goodness in the activities of some church.
3. The "wherefore" beginning vs. 11 literally means, "Unto that end," and refers back to Paul's statement in 1:10 about how Jesus will be glorified in His saints. Paul prayed always that Jesus would truly be glorified in the character and labors of the Thessalonians. Have you ever prayed that such holy character might be developed in your brethren that they would bring glory to Jesus?

4. Paul prayed that God would count them *worthy* of the glorious calling we have as Christians (or, more particularly, the calling of glorifying Jesus). This verse brings up again the matter of being *worthy*, which we mentioned in the notes on II Thess. 1:5, par. 8. It is wrong to say that we can never be worthy. God will count us worthy if we strive to attain the goal. (For the meaning of "worthy," see notes on I Thess. 2:12, par. 4.)
5. Then Paul prayed that God would fulfill in them all the good pleasure of His goodness. Knowing that God's goodness is unlimited, this is a GREAT request. "May God accomplish in you all that goodness would desire, and that faith can effect." (Preacher's Homiletic Com.)
6. It is not enough that we have good intentions of goodness. We must *fulfill* them with God's help. Good intentions without fulfillment are insufficient.
7. Then Paul prayed that God would fulfill the work of faith with power. Oh, how we long to see the POWER of God displayed! When we read of how God displayed His power on Mt. Carmel as Elijah called down fire on the Lord's altar, we are tempted to pray, "Lord, do it again!" We are not anticipating miracles of the type God showed to Elijah, but we long to see heart-heating, soul-saving, saint-stirring power in our churches. Maybe modern churches lack this power because they have not asked for it as Paul did here.
8. The conjunction "that" at the beginning of verse twelve indicates the purpose or end desired. In our translation, we have rendered it "in order that."
9. The purposes Paul had in mind in his prayer were that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in us, and we be glorified in him. In the Bible a NAME is not merely a tag of identification, but it is descriptive of the person himself. Note Acts 4:12.
10. We cannot glorify the name of Jesus and be glorified ourselves by our own ability, but only according to the grace (or favor) of God. God supplies the ability and the grace.
11. Concerning how Jesus is to be glorified "in you," see notes on II Thess. 1:10, par. 4.
12. We shall be glorified by Jesus, because our association with Him gives us all the glories of holiness, obedience, immortality, and goodness which Jesus has. He is glorious. We shall be like Him. We are glorified by being in fellowship with Him.

1:11,12 THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

13. Note that Jesus and God are on an equality as being the source of grace that will result in our glorification. Compare notes on I Thess 3:11, par. 4.

STUDY SUGGESTION—See if you can now answer the “Did You Learn?” questions that follow immediately.

DID YOU LEARN?

(Questions over II Thessalonians, chapter 1)

1. What is the topic of chapter one?
2. What men sent the second Thessalonian letter? (1:1)
3. What two things concerning the Thessalonians did Paul feel bound to thank God for? (1:3)
4. What is the meaning of the expression, “*bound* to give thanks”? (1:3)
5. For what two things about the Thessalonians did Paul “glory” in other churches? (1:4)
6. What is patience? (1:4)
7. Had the persecutions which the Thessalonians suffered early in their Christian experience subsided when Paul wrote II Thessalonians? (1:4)
8. According to the notes, what is the “manifest token of the righteous judgment of God”? (1:5)
9. What causes us to be counted worthy of God’s kingdom? (1:5)
10. Is it Scriptural to speak of being *worthy*? (1:5)
11. Can God be righteous and yet repay tribulation to people? (1:6)
12. What will be recompensed to those who trouble us? (1:6)
13. What will God recompense to his children who are troubled? (1:7)
14. When shall God recompense these things? (1:7)
15. With whom will the Lord Jesus be revealed? (1:7)
16. To what do the words, “in flaming fire,” in 1:8 refer?
17. How can Christ be just, and then take vengeance on them that know not God? (1:8)
18. With what visible thing is the presence of the Lord often associated? (1:8)
19. On what two classes of people will Christ take vengeance? (1:8)
20. What does the word “destruction” mean, and what does it not mean? (1:9)
21. “From” what shall the disobedient be punished? (1:9)
22. When shall Christ be glorified in his saints? (1:10)

CHAPTER ONE

23. Explain how Christ shall be "glorified in his saints." (1:10)
24. Why does Paul insert the parenthetical phrase, "because our testimony among you was believed"? (1:10)
25. What is the prayer in 1:11-12 called in the outline?
26. What were Paul's three petitions in the prayer? (1:11)
27. What were the two purposes of the petitions? (1:12)
28. Recite, or write out, from memory II Thess. 1:6-9. Verse 6 begins, "Seeing it is——."

II THESSALONIANS, CHAPTER TWO

Chapter Topic:

The Man of Sin



"There shall come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed." II Thess. 2:3

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

Chapter Topic: "The Man of Sin"

1. By (or concerning) what two things did Paul beseech the Thessalonians in chapter two? 2:1.

_____;
2. Paul lists three things by which they were not to be shaken or be troubled. 2:2. What were they?
_____; _____; "_____ as from us."
3. They were troubled, thinking "that the _____ of _____ was at hand." 2:2.
4. What two things must precede the day of Christ? 2:3. _____
_____;
5. The man of sin is called "the son of _____" 2:3.
6. The man of sin "_____ and _____ himself above all that is called _____ or that is worshipped." 2:4.
7. The man of sin sitteth in the _____ of God, showing himself that he is _____." 2:4.
8. True or false (circle which)—Paul mentioned the man of sin for the first time in this chapter. 2:5.
9. Concerning the man of sin, Paul says, "Now ye know what _____ that he might revealed in his time." 2:6.
10. What was already working in Paul's time? 2:7.

11. The man of sin would have appeared sooner, "only he who now letteth (that is, hinders) will let (hinder) until he _____ of the way." 2:7.
12. By what two means will the Lord destroy that Wicked one? 2:8. _____
_____;
13. The wicked one's coming is after the working of whom? 2:9.
_____.
14. He comes with all _____ and _____ and _____, 2:9

CHAPTER TWO

15. He comes with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that _____, 2:10
16. These people perish because they _____
_____ the _____ of the _____, 2:10
17. What does God send these people because of their attitude? 2:11. _____.
18. God sends these, "that they should _____ a _____," 2:11.
19. In what did these people who were deceived by the Man of sin take pleasure? 2:12. _____.
20. Paul was bound (obligated) to give thanks for the Thessalonians, "because God hath from the beginning _____ you to _____," 2:13
21. Through what two things had God chosen them to salvation? 2:13. _____
_____; _____
_____.
22. By what were the Thessalonians called? 2:14. _____.
23. To what had God called them? 2:14. _____

_____.
24. "Therefore, brethren, _____, and hold the _____ which ye have been taught." 2:15.
25. By what two means had they been taught? 2:15. _____;
26. Unto whom did Paul pray? 2:16. (2 answers) _____
_____; _____.
27. What has God given us through grace? 2:16. (2 answers)

_____;
28. Paul prayed that God would "_____ your _____, and _____ you in every good _____ and _____." 2:17.
29. Memorize II Thess. 2:3, 14.

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

II THESSALONIANS, CHAPTER TWO

Chapter Topic, "*The Man of Sin*"

Outline

- I. Paul's entreaty about the Lord's coming; 2:1-3a.
 1. Matters involved; 2:1
 - a. The coming of our Lord.
 - b. Our gathering together unto him.
 2. Be not shaken or troubled; 2:2
 - a. Things by which they might have been shaken;
 - (1) Spirit.
 - (2) Word.
 - (3) Letter as from us
 - b. The idea that left them shaken—Belief that the day of Christ had come.
 3. Certain events must precede the coming; 2:3a
 - a. A falling away.
 - b. Revelation of the man of sin.
- II. The Man of sin; 2:3b-12
 1. He is the son of perdition; 2:3b
 2. He opposes and exalts himself; 2:4
 3. He will sit in the temple of God; 2:4
 4. Paul had warned them about him; 2:5
 5. He was being withheld; 2:6-7
 - a. The mystery of iniquity was already working; 2:7
 - b. One now hindered his appearance; 2:7
 6. He shall be revealed; 2:8
 7. The Lord shall destroy him; 2:8
 8. His coming is after the working of Satan; 2:9-12
 - a. With all power, and signs, and wonders; 2:9
 - b. With all deceivableness; 2:10
 - c. He comes "in them that perish;" 2:10-12
 - (1) They received not the love of the truth; 2:10
 - (2) Gods sends them strong delusion; 2:10-11
 - (a) So that they should believe a lie; 2:11
 - (b) That they might be damned; 2:12
 - (3) They had pleasure in unrighteousness; 2:12
- III. Thanksgiving for God's choosing the Thessalonians; 2:13-15
 1. Chosen through sanctification of spirit; 2:13
 2. Chosen through belief of the truth; 2:13
 3. Called by the gospel; 2:14
 4. Therefore, stand fast; 2:15
- IV. Prayer that they be comforted and stablished; 2:16-17

Text (2:1-2)

1 Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him; 2 to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is just at hand;

Translation and Paraphrase

1. But (now) we (must) beseech you, brethren, concerning the (second) coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him (in the air).
2. (We beseech you) that you not (allow yourselves to) be quickly (blown about like waves and) shaken from your senses; neither (should you) be alarmed; (Do) not (be misled) by (anyone who says he has a revelation of the) Spirit, nor by (any) word (which you may have heard from us or anyone else), nor by (any) letter (which may be represented) as (coming) from us, (giving out the idea) as (if it were a fact) that the day of the Lord has already come.

Notes (2:1-2)

1. No Scriptural teaching has been more frequently abused than the teaching about the Lord's second coming. Men have spent enormous amounts of time trying to determine exactly when the Lord will return, even after the Lord has made it very plain that we have NOT been given that information. But when men have made predictions concerning exactly when the Lord is going to come, they have usually been successful in getting a group of deluded followers, who forsake the work they should be doing, and all of them go out to some isolated spot to meet the Lord, only to be disappointed when nothing happens.
2. The Thessalonians had likewise become greatly agitated about the Lord's coming. In fact some of them thought that the day of the Lord *had already come*. This certainly shows that they had a poor knowledge of what was going to happen at that time.
3. Our English text says that they were not to be shaken—"as that the day of Christ is *at hand*." We might assume from this that they only thought that Christ's coming was very near. Actually the phrase "at hand" means "has already come." This translation (or a similar one) is given in the New English Bible, Moffatt, Goodspeed, Rotherham, Amplified New Testament, Revised Standard, etc.

2:1,2 THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

(The Gr. verb is *enesteken*, a 3rd pers. sing. perf. ind. of *enistemi*. *Enistemi* occurs only seven times in the N.T. In six of those occurrences it is in some perf. form. A check of those references will show that *enistemi* in the perf. does not mean "near at hand," but it means "already present." See I Cor. 7:26; Heb. 9:9; Rom. 8:38; I Cor. 3:22; Gal. 1:4.)

4. This second chapter of II Thessalonians was written to remove misapprehensions on the subject of the Lord's coming. It reveals that the Lord is not to come until certain events have taken place first. These are:
 - (1) A falling away (or apostasy) from the truth; 2:3
 - (2) The removal of some power which hindered the manifestation of the man of sin; 2:6-7
 - (3) The manifestation of the man of sin; 2:8
5. Note that in the outline chapter two is entitled, "The man of sin." By remembering that topic you will be able to recall what is in the chapter.
6. Notice that Paul entreated us "BY" the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and BY our gathering together unto him. (King James version). The word *by* in this verse is a very poor translation. The Greek word (*huper*) means "concerning" or "in behalf of." Paul besought the Thessalonians *concerning* the coming of the Lord, not *by* it.

The reader who compares "beseech by" in II Thess. 2:1 with that in Rom. 12:1 (where the word is *dia*, not *huper*) will be led astray.

7. Notice carefully the two things about which Paul besought us:
 - (1) The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (2) Our gathering together unto him.
 Observe that he associates these two things with the "day of Christ" (or the "day of the Lord," as it is given in the best manuscripts).

Notice further that the Lord's coming and our gathering together unto Him are not to occur until there has been a falling away and the man of sin has been revealed. II Thess. 2:3.

All of this leads us to say that the idea that the man of sin is to appear AFTER the church has been gathered out of the world cannot be true. Strangely this is a rather popular idea. But please observe carefully that our gathering together unto the Lord, etc. is not to happen until the falling away and the revelation of the man of sin have occurred FIRST.

8. Concerning the manner in which we shall be gathered unto the Lord, see notes on I Thess. 4:17. Also Matt. 24:31 and Mark 13:27.
9. It is quite evident from Paul's words in II Thess. 2:2 that the Thessalonians (or at least some of them) were highly wrought up about this matter of the Lord's coming. Paul urges them not to be "shaken" or "troubled." These are strong words. "Shaken" (*saleuo*) sometimes refers to the motion of winds, storms, waves. It is used in Acts 16:26 to tell how the prison was shaken. "Troubled" (*threo*) is also a strong word, meaning "to frighten, alarm, trouble." (Thayer). It is the same word as the Lord used in Matt. 24:6, warning the disciples not to be troubled about wars and rumors of wars.
10. Paul mentions three possible sources of this wrong teaching that the day of the Lord had already come:
 - (1) Spirit—This probably refers to some person who claimed to have a revelation of the Spirit. There were men with spiritual gifts such as prophecy in the Thessalonian church. I Thess 5:19-20. Compare I John 4:1.
 - (2) Word—This could refer to many things, such as a misinterpretation of something Christ Himself or Paul had said.
 - (3) Letter as from us—Some suppose that this refers to a forged letter represented as coming from Paul. Some think it refers to a misunderstanding of what Paul had said in his earlier letter.

The fact that Paul closes this letter (3:17) with the notation, "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write," rather hints that there may have been a false letter pretending to have come from Paul.

However, McGarvey thinks that the "letter as from us" was only a misapplication of what Paul said in his first epistle. He argues that it is unlikely that Paul would have failed to rebuke such a forgery if one existed. Paul even scolded them for forgetting what he had said before. II Thess. 2:5. How much more would he have exposed a forgery.

Probably the truth of the matter is that Paul himself was not sure what was the source of this idea that the

day of the Lord was already come. If he were not certain about the source of this idea, how can we be?

11. Some interpreters try to make a distinction between "the day of Christ" (as some ancient manuscripts word this verse) and the "day of the Lord" (as others give it). Surely this is a distinction without a difference, since Christ himself is the Lord. (For more concerning "the day of the Lord," see notes on I Thess. 5:2, par. 5.)

Text (2:3)

3 let no man beguile you in any wise; for *it will not be*, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition,

Translation and Paraphrase

3. Let no one deceive you (about this) by any method, because (that day shall not come) except (or until) the apostasy (a departure from the faith) come first, and the man of lawlessness be revealed, (he who is) the son of perdition (the man devoted to eternal misery).

Notes (2:3)

1. Have these two things—the falling away, and the man of sin—yet happened? If they have not, then the Lord cannot come until they do. If they have already appeared, then we can look for the Lord at any time. We believe that these two things have long ago appeared.
2. Paul's teaching in this verse does NOT indicate that he had changed his mind about the Lord's coming from views he had once held. Some allege that Paul had earlier said that Christ's coming was near, but that he had changed his mind by the time he wrote this to think that the second coming was far off. In II Thess. 2:5 Paul reminds them that even when he was with them he had told them the same things that he here writes about. Paul had not changed his teachings. The Thessalonians had simply forgotten what he said, or perhaps it never penetrated their minds in the first place.
3. This "falling away" (Gr., *apostasia*) refers undoubtedly to a religious falling away. Another word for "falling away" is "apostasy." *Apostasia* is always used in the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) in the sense of a religious falling away. See Josh.

22:22. II Chronicles 29:19; 33:19; Jer. 2:19. Thayer defines *apostasia* as a "falling away, defection, apostasy." The word is found elsewhere in the N.T. only in Acts 21:21, where it might be rendered "apostasy from Moses." All of this causes us to think that the "falling away" predicted by Paul is a falling away from the faith as taught by Christ and the apostles.

4. This verse speaks not of *a* falling away, but of *the* falling away. It is a particular apostasy which Paul has in mind.

Matthew 24:10-12 tells of a falling away which was to precede the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. See Matt. 24:15-16. But it is not the same apostasy to which Paul refers in II Thess. 2:3. We mention Matt. 24, because when some people read that chapter, they fail to observe carefully when Jesus spoke about the destruction of Jerusalem and when he talked about the end of the world. Because of this careless interpretation, they often take passages that clearly pertained to the destruction of Jerusalem (such as 24:6-12) and apply them to the conditions at the end of the world.

5. The identification of the man of sin is probably as controversial a matter as anything in the Bible. Paul had given the Thessalonians teaching about the man of sin which we have not heard, and the matter may have been much clearer to them than to us.
6. We prefer to call the man of sin "the man of lawlessness," in accordance with the reading of the Greek text of both Nestle and Westcott and Hort. Both of these have *anomia* (lawlessness) in the text and *hamartia* (sin) in the margin.

The name, "man of lawlessness," matches up with the phrase, "mystery of lawlessness," in II Thess. 2:7. The "man of lawlessness" (Gr., *anomia*) is obviously the crowning height of the "mystery of lawlessness" (or "mystery of iniquity" as the King James text gives it).

7. A "man of lawlessness" would be a man who was not subject to any law. The American Standard version of I John 3:4 says, "Sin is lawlessness." This well describes the mind of the sinner. He refuses to be subject to any law, human or divine. Thus "the man of lawlessness" will be that person who, above all others, is not subject to the law of God, but obeys only his own desires.
8. The expression, "son of perdition," means (according to Thayer) "a man doomed to eternal misery." This same description is ap-

plied to Judas in John 17:12. "Perdition" (*apoleia*) means "destruction" or "waste" (as in Mark 14:4). Like the word *olethros* used in II Thess. 1:9, it does not imply annihilation.

9. When we speak of the "man of lawlessness," our minds frequently connect him with "antichrist" mentioned in I John 2:18, 22; 4:3; II John 7. However, the Bible does not specifically connect them, and any connection that we might make between the two would have to be regarded as only speculation. We hear lots of preaching about THE antichrist. But John makes it rather clear that antichrist is not one supremely evil person, but that anyone who denies that Jesus is the Christ or that He came in the flesh is antichrist. There were antichrists even in John's time. Many modernist preachers and scholars who deny our Lord's deity should rightfully be called antichrist. But we stand on very shaky support when we teach that there will be some one particularly terrible ANTICHRIST in the future.
10. There are several general schools of interpretation concerning what the "falling away," "the man of sin," and "that which hinders" are.
 - a. Some just frankly disregard the whole business. In the *Interpreter's Bible*, in the exposition of this section, the view is given that as dwellers in the twentieth century, with its deliverance from much theological ignorance and medieval superstition, we feel superior to any such conception of antichrist as possessed Paul and the Thessalonians. Those who believe that Paul was an inspired apostle of Christ can not, of course, have any such opinions as this.
 - b. Some think the man of sin is the papacy.
 - c. Some think the man of sin is the Roman emperor and the mystery of lawlessness is the Roman empire. It is a fact that some of the Roman emperors demanded worship and exalted themselves just as the man of sin was to do. II Thess. 2:4. Caligula in 39 or 40 A.D. tried to set up his statue in the temple in Jerusalem as an object of worship. But none of the Roman emperors perfectly fulfilled Paul's description of the man of sin. Hence, this interpretation does not seem to be the right one.
 - d. Some think that the mystery of lawlessness is Judaism,

and that the man of sin is some leader in that faith. By this view that which hinders would be the Roman empire.

- e. Some think that the man of sin is Antichrist, a future world dictator who will rule during a brief period between the taking of the saints out of the world and the thousand years of Rev. 20:3-4. We shall discuss this view more fully in the notes that follow.
 - f. Some say he is (or was) Hitler, Stalin, Khrushchev, or some other person.
11. The two interpretations held by most Bible-believers are the futurist (or pre-millennial) view and the historical view. We want to discuss these interpretations more fully.

I. THE FUTURIST (or pre-millennial) view.

(This view is held by many devout Christians in our times.)

A. View summarized.

1. The *falling away* refers to the ungodly conditions to exist in the world shortly before the Lord returns. Many people consider that present world conditions are the fulfillment of this prophecy of the "falling away."
2. The *man of sin* is the Antichrist, one individual, who is to be a world dictator and rule AFTER Christ has taken the church out of the world at the "rapture." He will be almost an incarnation of Satan. Some think he will be a Jew (basing this idea on Daniel 11:37, although the meaning of that verse is far from certain). He will supposedly rule the world during the great tribulation to last seven years after Christ had taken the church to himself.
3. *That which hinders* the appearance of the man of sin is the Holy Spirit. It is argued that the Holy Spirit is he who restrains evil in this world, and that when Christ takes the church out of the world at the rapture that the Holy Spirit will no longer be in the world in the degree in which He is during the church age, and that evil will run almost unrestrained, and incredible suffering will result to mankind.

B. Arguments for this view

1. "The fathers of the early church, for at least three centuries after the apostolic age, while differing on some minor details, seemed unanimous in understanding that the *man of sin* was not a system of deceit and wickedness, or a succession of individuals at the head of such a system, but some one man, the living personal Antichrist, the incarnation of Satan craft and energy, who should put forth his power to weaken and destroy the church." (Preacher's Homiletic Com.)
2. We certainly are living in perilous times, a time when men have fallen away from the old-fashioned faith and virtues, a time like those described by Paul in II Tim. 3:-5 where he describes the "last days." In our times atheistic communism is laboring to the utmost to rule the world, by force if possible, and by subversion, infiltration, and propaganda if force cannot be used. As this book is written Communist governments rule nearly half of the world's population, and no country on earth has escaped the poison of Communist influence.

Religiously the world is also in a desperate state. Men have religions of every kind, but deny the power of true faith. Churchmen seem more interested in federating denominations than in the faith. They are more interested in this present life than in men's eternal salvation. The World Council of churches seems to be working toward forming a powerful super-church to include everyone who is religious, regardless of what he believes. Some think that this religious monster will join forces with Antichrist. Old-fashioned Bible believers are mocked in many churches and theological seminaries. But I am still proud to be one.

Christians must keep themselves informed about these things that are going on. Only if Christians *know* what is going on and *stand up* for Christ and his kingdom will our country, or even civilization, endure. Christians, God shall bruise Satan *under your feet* shortly. But if you don't know anything about

Satan's activities, and don't stand for anything, God won't be able to use you to bruise Satan. Romans 16:20.

C. This view is not absolutely the only possible one.

1. What we have said about world conditions is only a speck of the mountain of dirt that we could sweep up about our times. But it is still hotly debatable that conditions in our times are worse than they were in the early centuries of Christianity. Moral conditions were as bad then, or worse, than now. (See our notes on I Thess. 4:1-3, and Introductory Section VI, par. 11.). Christianity was persecuted as much or more in the early centuries as it is now.
2. Also the ungodly conditions which Paul said would exist in the "last days" (II Tim. 3:1-5) have existed ever since Paul wrote those words. For we have been living in the "last days," or last dispensation, ever since the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:17.)
3. Also it is not necessary to interpret the "man of sin" and the "falling away" as being events which are limited to a short period immediately before (and after) Christ returns. Certain Scriptures and facts almost compel me to think that the "falling away" and the "man of sin" have both been with us for a long time already.

II. THE HISTORICAL view.

(This view is the one favored by the author of this book.)

A. View summarized.

1. The *falling away* refers to that corruption of the apostles' teaching by heathenism which occurred during the early centuries of the church and resulted in the development of the Roman Catholic religion. This apostasy is still in progress, as Rome is still adding new doctrines to its creed. And the false doctrines developed during the falling away have been adopted by many Protestants, as well as by the Roman church.
2. The *man of sin* probably refers to the papacy, the visible, personal head of the "falling away."
3. "*That which hinders*" the appearance of the man of sin (II Thess. 2:6-7) probably was the Roman gov-

ernment. For several centuries the Roman government held in check the attempts of power-hungry Roman bishops to take control of both the spiritual affairs of men and the political authority as well.

We do not expect you to accept our opinions about these matters just because we have stated them bluntly. But we do ask you to study seriously the reasons for holding these views.

B. Arguments for this view.

1. The "mystery of lawlessness" (2:7) which resulted in the falling away and the appearance of the man of sin, was *already at work* in Paul's time.

That being so, surely then Paul could not have been referring to things that would not happen until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when he spoke of the "falling away."

There are numerous references in the New Testament which show that false doctrines, unauthorized power grabs, etc. were already developing. See Jude 4, III John 9, Acts 20:29-30, II Pet. 2:1, Col. 2:8. These seem to be a part of the developing "mystery of lawlessness."

2. In I Tim. 4:1-3 Paul told how some would depart from the faith. They would forbid to marry, and command to abstain from meats, etc. This is a clear prophecy of such things as the Roman church practices when it forbids its priests and nuns to marry and forbids its members to eat meat at certain times.

In describing this departure from the faith, Paul used the verb form *apostesontai*. This is a form very similar to the word *apostasia*, the word translated "falling away" in II Thess. 2:3. This similarity of language causes us to associate the "falling away" with Romanism and not with twentieth century Communism or other evils of our times.

3. In Daniel chapter two, Daniel prophesied about four great world empires—the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman. After those empires the God of heaven would set up a kingdom (which we understand

to be the church. See Special Study V.) Gods kingdom would never be destroyed, nor should the sovereignty of it be left to another people. (Dan. 2:44 R.V.)

It appears to us that if some Antichrist is going to rule the world, that Daniel's prophecy would have to be wrong in indicating that there would only be four empires before God's kingdom should prevail and fill the earth. (Dan. 2:35)

4. Note that the "falling away" and the "man of sin" are associated with the "*mystery* of iniquity" in 2:7. The use of this term *mystery* suggests that there may be a connection with Rev. 17:5, where the great harlot is given the name "MYSTERY." This mystery woman in Revelation is ROME. For she is identified as that city that sits on seven mountains (or hills) and rules over the kings of the earth. Rev. 17:9, 18). Rome is the only city on earth that fulfills those descriptions.
5. The "falling away" which occurred over the years and produced the Roman Catholic religion is the greatest "falling away" of all ages. We list here a *few* of the many departures from the New Testament faith, which, when all taken together, surely must be THE falling away:
 - (1) Bishops take authority over elders (Presbyters) Second century.
 - (2) Infant "baptism" first mentioned—About 150 A.D.
 - (3) Many heathen rituals—candles, incense, robes, etc.—added to Christian worship—third century.
 - (4) First human creed (Nicene)—325 A.D.
 - (5) Christianity made the sole state religion—394 A.D.
 - (6) Mary entitled "Mother of God"—431 A.D.
 - (7) Confession of sins to a human priest—About 457 A.D. Made compulsory in 1215 A.D.
 - (8) Lord's supper became a mass (sacrifice) and masses for the dead became frequent—Sixth century.
 - (9) The pope gains universal authority—About 606 A.D.

- (10) Transubstantiation—1215 A.D.
 - (11) Indulgences—About 1164 A.D.
 - (12) Adoration of images legalized—About 800 A.D.
 - (13) Tradition made equal to the Scriptures—About 1545 A.D.
 - (14) Apocryphal books added to Bible—1546 A.D.
 - (15) Purgatory—Originated in the tenth century. Made official 1438.
 - (16) People deprived of the cup in communion—About 1414.
 - (17) Celibacy promoted (405 A.D.) and enforced (1123 A.D.)
 - (18) Sprinkling authorized—1311.
 - (19) Immaculate conception of Mary—1854.
 - (20) Infallibility of the pope—1870.
 - (21) Assumption of Mary into heaven—1950.
6. The papacy fulfills the descriptions of the man of sin. He sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. The papacy consists of one official man. He came into power as a result of the falling away from the New Testament faith. (For more about how the papacy fulfills the description of the man of sin, see notes on the verses that follow, II Thess. 2:4-7.)

Text (2:4)

4 he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God.

Translation and Paraphrase

4. (The man of lawlessness will be a man) who (both) opposes and exalts himself above all that is called divine or that is religiously honored, so that he (shall) sit in the temple of God, exhibiting himself (as if it were true) that he is God.

Notes (2:4)

(For the general discussion of the falling away and the man of sin, see notes on 2:3.)

1. Here is a summary of the descriptions of the man of sin:
- (1) He opposes all that is called God.
 - (2) He exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped.

- (3) He is to sit in the temple of God.
 - (4) He exhibits himself as if he were God.
 - (5) His appearance was hindered by some force that already existed in Paul's time. 2:6-7.
 - (6) The mystery of iniquity, which led to his appearance, was already working in Paul's time. 2:7.
 - (7) He will continue in existence till the Lord Jesus comes. 2:8.
 - (8) The Lord shall destroy him with the brightness of his coming. 2:8.
 - (9) He shows power, signs, and lying wonders (false miracles). 2:9.
 - (10) He comes with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. 2:10.
2. Both of the verbs—"opposeth" and "exalteth"—have as their object "all that is called God, or that is worshipped." The man of sin opposes the true God and His Christ, and exalts himself above them.
 3. "All that is called God" refers to anything, or anyone, who is divine and is of God—to heaven, to God Himself, to the Lord Jesus, to the word of God, the Holy Spirit, etc.
 4. The expression, "that is worshipped," comes from the Greek *sebasma*. From this word came Sebastus, or Augustus (the Worshipful), which was the title of the Roman emperors. "A man of that age could hardly see this word in such a connection without thinking that Paul meant to convey the idea that the antichrist would arrogate to himself all the reverence then claimed by the great civil lords of the earth such as emperors, kings, etc." (McGarvey). Today men bow down before the pope in the same manner that men used to bow down before kings.
 5. What is the *temple* of God in which the man of sin is to sit? Some say that this refers to the temple of God which was in Jerusalem. However, no such great pretender as the "man of sin" ever sat in the temple in Jerusalem before it was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.

It seems to us that the temple of God to which Paul refers must be the church. The term *temple* is a favorite name of Paul's for the church. Notice I Cor. 3:17; II Cor. 6:16; Ephesians 2:12.

If the temple of God is the church, then the Roman popes very fully fulfill the description of the man of sin. For they sit in the church and are religious lords.

It is hard to see how the man of sin could be an atheistic communist, and still sit in the temple of God and represent himself as God.

6. Numerous men in the history of the world have taken to themselves the honor of being as great as God.

The heart of the prince of Tyre was lifted up, and he said, "I am a God; I sit in the seat of God." Ezekiel 28:2.

King Herod (Agrippa) set himself forth and accepted acclamation of being God. Acts 12:22.

The popes have called themselves by titles as great (or greater) than those of God. Note this title which has been used: "Our Lord God the Pope, another God on earth—doeth whatsoever he listeth, even things unlawful, and is more than God."

Text (2:5)

5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

Translation and Paraphrase

5. Don't you remember (how) that when I was still with you, I kept telling you these (very) things?

Notes (2:5)

1. This little verse has surely been included in the sacred Scriptures to blast forever out of existence any idea that Paul at one time said that the Lord was going to come very quickly, and then that he later decided that the Lord was not going to come for a long time.
2. It is a serious thing to charge that Paul changed his mind and wrote one teaching in one place in his letters and another teaching in another place. If Paul changed his mind, he could not have been writing a message that God revealed to him. For God does not change. Malachi 3:6. If Paul did not write the message that Christ revealed to him, then much of our Christian faith rests on nothing but the quicksand of human wisdom. For much of our Christian doctrine rests on the writings of Paul.
3. While Paul had been with the Thessalonians, he "kept telling" them these very things about the coming of the man of sin and the falling away. (The imperfect tense here indicates repeated action in the past.)

Text (2:6-7)

6 And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only *there is* one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way.

Translation and Paraphrase

6. And now you (Thessalonians) know what it is that is hindering (the appearance of the man of lawlessness, and is causing things to work out) so that he may be revealed in his own (divinely appointed) time.
7. (It should be obvious to you that such a man of lawlessness is coming) for the hidden scheme (and program) of lawlessness is already at work. Only, he who alone is now hindering (the appearance of the man of lawlessness will continue to hinder) until he be (gone) out of the midst (of us).

Notes (2:6-7)

1. There was some force in existence in Paul's time which was hindering the appearance of the man of sin. Phillips translation puts it this way: "You will probably also remember how I used to talk about a 'restraining power' which would operate until the time should come for emergence of this man."
2. The word "withholdeth" in 2:6 is the same Greek word which is translated "let" in 2:7. This is a bad rendering for modern readers. The words in both instances mean "to hinder, hold back, restrain." (Note our translation and paraphrase for this meaning.)
3. The Thessalonians probably knew a lot more clearly that we do what was "withholding" the appearance of the man of sin. Paul had told them more clearly than it has been told to us. But while we do not have the information they had, we do have much history behind us, by which we can often see the manner of God's dealings.
4. If something in Paul's time was withholding the coming of the man of sin, surely the man of sin could not be some twentieth century individual.
5. It is noteworthy that in verse six the restraining power is described as *neuter*. But in verse seven, it is *masculine*, "*he* who alone is now hindering."

This probably indicates that the restraining power is *both* an abstract force and a personal figure. The restraining authority would be *neuter*, but the personal force *masculine*, indicating two aspects of the same power and authority.

6. Note that God had a specific time designated on His divine calendar of events in which He would permit the appearance of the man of sin. Nothing happens by accident in this world. God may let some men run pretty wild, but He still holds the reins, and no one can get so far out of hand as to defeat His program.

7. The "mystery of iniquity" (or "mystery of lawlessness") refers to the hidden programs and scheme of the devil and lawless men. This mystery of iniquity was already at work in Paul's time. Many New Testament references indicate that a falling away from the truth was already developing in apostolic times. See I John 4:1,3; Jude 3; I John 2:18-19; II John 7, etc.
8. The "mystery of lawlessness" in 2:7 is evidently a part of the same ungodly system that produced the "man of lawlessness," mentioned in 2:3. The mystery of lawlessness seems to be the antithesis of God's saving mystery in Christ. Eph. 3:3,9.
9. The King James version says, "Until he be *taken* out of the way." The word *taken* is not actually in the Greek text. It is probably better to render it as in our paraphrase, "Until he be (gone) out of the midst (of us)." The Scripture does not say that God himself was going to *take* out the restraining power, but that eventually it would be out by some means or other.
10. What is this force that restrained the appearance of the man of sin. For some ideas about this, see notes on 2:3, par. 10.

Some interpreters feel that the Holy Spirit is He who hinders the appearance of the man of sin. Isa. 59:19 is quoted to support this view. However, it is pure speculation to say that the influence of the Holy Spirit is to be withdrawn out of the earth as long as it shall stand. No Scripture actually says this. Also we wonder why the Holy Spirit should restrain this particular evil, that is, the appearance of the man of sin. Evil in many forms is rampant now, and certainly needs to be hindered.

11. We prefer the view (as stated in our notes on 2:3) that the restraining power was the *Roman empire*.

During the first three hundred years of the history of Christianity it was a persecuted illegal religion. This fact hindered any power-hungry "Christian" bishop from assuming a lot of authority.

In the years that followed the adoption of Christianity as the state religion (325 A.D.), emperors like Constantine and Theodosius considered themselves not only to be head of the state, but head of the church as well. For example, Constantine called the council of Nicea to settle the dispute about the nature of Christ.

In the fourth century as the barbarians began to invade the Roman empire, it became weaker and weaker, and its emperors became less and less strong.

In those times many of the bishops of Rome were strong-willed, capable men. Gradually the Roman bishops came to have more power and the emperors less. The Roman bishops were further strengthened when the capital of the Roman empire was transferred to Constantinople in the East.

Leo the Great, bishop of Rome 440-461 A.D., greatly strengthened the authority of his office. On two occasions he saved Rome from being sacked, first by Atilla the Hun, and secondly by Genseric the Vandal. In return for such services the Roman emperor gave Leo authority over the bishops and churches in every province.

The Western Roman Empire fell in 476 A.D., and this gave the Roman bishops almost a free hand in Europe.

Bishop Gelasius (492-496) contended that although the king rules over men in the world, yet he is duty bound in spiritual things to submit to his religious prelates.

Later Roman bishops, such as Gregory the Great (590-604) formed alliances with civil rulers in the West, as well as emperors in the East.

While some strong emperors occasionally resisted the popes for many centuries, the popes became so strong that kings (such as Charlemagne) received their crowns from the hands of popes, and the popes sometimes commanded people in various countries to disobey their kings when the kings would not submit to the authority of the Roman church.

12. Maybe we are wrong, but all of this history which we have mentioned, and a lot more like it, sounds to us like a description of what Paul was talking about when he prophesied about the appearance of the man of sin after the power that hindered him had gone.
13. McGarvey lists nine ways in which the papacy fulfills the prophecy about the falling away and the appearance of the man of sin:
 - (1) It has one official man at its head, and the arrogance of its claims are centered in him.
 - (2) That man came with, and out of, an apostasy, the very kind of an apostasy such as Paul describes elsewhere. II Tim. 3:1-9; I Tim. 4:1-3.
 - (3) The spiritual pride, lawlessness, and desire for power which worked in Paul's day was curbed by the Roman civil government which dominated and persecuted.

2:7,8 THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

- (4) When the bishop of Rome began to assert power, he was in conflict with the civil government.
- (5) When the Roman empire collapsed, the Roman church became all-powerful.
- (6) The same apostasy has been preserved carefully. The line of popes has been preserved, and will apparently be continued until Christ returns.
- (7) The papacy exalts itself against God and Christ, taking unto itself titles which God alone has the right to wear.
- (8) The popes sit in the temple of God.
- (9) The papacy proves its claims by fraudulent miracles, signs, and wonders, cures effected by relics and shrines. See notes on II Thess. 2:9, par. 3.

Text (2:8)

8 And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of his coming;

Translation and Paraphrase

8. And then the lawless one shall be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall take away by the spirit (or blast) of his mouth, and do away with by the (shining) appearance of his coming.

Notes (2:8)

1. The man of sin will suffer a complete ruin at the coming of the Lord. With all the evil and false religion that there is in this world, Christians would be very disheartened if it were not for their confidence in the Lord's return.
2. The Wicked one (or man of sin) was to be revealed when the one that had been hindering his appearance was taken out of the way. See the notes on II Thess. 2:6-7.
3. The Lord Jesus will destroy the Wicked one with the spirit of his mouth. The expression, "spirit (or breath, or blast) of his mouth," refers to the power of the presence of Jesus. It does not mean that Jesus shall destroy the man of sin by converting his followers. The word "breath" does not signify God's truth or instruction, but the execution of his judgment. (See Special Study VI, question 3.)

Numerous references in the Bible contain the expression, "breath of his mouth," or similar phrases. Isa. 11:4: "With the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." See also Job 4:9; II Sam. 22:16; Isa. 30:27-28, 33. They all describe the execution of God's judgment.

4. The word "Jesus" in our translation of 2:8 is included on quite

strong evidence in the ancient manuscripts. Nestle's Greek and numerous English versions include it.

5. Apparently the Wicked one will continue to exist until the Lord comes, for the Lord shall destroy him with the brightness of his coming. Chapter eighteen of Revelation tells how the great city Babylon (or Rome) will be destroyed. While we do not long to see men perish, nor do we long for vengeance on anyone, we do long to see God's truth be victorious.
6. This verse speaks of the "brightness of his (the Lord's) coming." Rotherham translates this phrase, "the forthshining of his Presence."

Certainly, since the Lord is going to be revealed from heaven in flaming fire (II Thess. 1:7-8), and in great glory (Matt. 24:30), His coming will be bright and overpowering.

The same word which is translated "brightness" here (*epiphaneia*), is translated "glorious appearing" in Titus 2:13: "looking for . . . the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ." See also I Tim. 6:14.

7. Again in this verse we have the word *parousia*. (See notes on I Thess. 2:19, par. 7 for its meaning.) Here the Lord's *parousia* (presence or coming) is connected with the destruction of the man of sin. In I Thess. 4:15 the *parousia* is connected with the resurrection and taking up of the saints.

All of this leads us to repeat once more that the Thessalonian epistles rule out the idea that Christ is coming one time to take his church out of the world, and then will come again (a third time) with his church to punish sinners, and set up His kingdom. There is only one *parousia* of the Lord, and at the *parousia* the saints will be resurrected and caught up and the man of sin will be destroyed.

Text (2:9)

9 even he, whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

Translation and Paraphrase

9. (This one whom the Lord Jesus shall do away with is he) whose coming corresponds to the activity of Satan (who does his work) with every (kind of) power, and signs, and false miracles (wonders of deceit).

Notes (2:9)

1. There is nothing more plainly taught in all the Bible than that Satan does miracles. Miracles in themselves do not prove that the miracle-worker is doing God's will.

2:8,9 THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

- a. The magicians in Egypt did miracles and changed their rods into serpents. Exodus 7:11-12; II Tim. 3:8. Undoubtedly these were miracles of Satan.
 - b. Deut. 13:1,3: "If there arise among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign of a wonder . . . thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet."
 - c. Matt. 24:24: "For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."
 - d. Matt. 7:22: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not . . . in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - e. See also Rev. 18:23; 13:13; 19:20.
2. Think of all the religions that try to prove they are of God by the miracles they claim to do—Roman Catholic, Christian Science, Pentecostal, etc. They teach doctrines that contradict one another, but all try to prove they are of God by working (or claiming to work) miracles. But the miracles in themselves just do NOT prove that they are of the truth.
 3. Since we have set forth the view that the falling away and the man of sin (mentioned in 2:3) are connected with the Roman Catholic religion, it is interesting to note how the Roman church is almost built on claims of miracles. Every time a dead man is proclaimed a "saint," there must be evidence (?) brought forth that he (or she) did at least two miracles. The shrines of Romanism (such as the one at Lourdes, France) attract thousands of pilgrims, many of whom go away saying they are healed. We read about Catholics who have spontaneously bleeding wounds (stigmata) in the places where Christ was wounded on the cross. We are told that the bread and wine miraculously change into the very flesh and blood of Christ during the mass. But why say more? Remember the apostle of Jesus Christ, Paul, warned us about "power and signs and lying wonders."
 4. Of course the miracles of Christ and his apostles were genuine, even if Satan works false miracles. Acts 2:22; II Cor. 12:12.
 5. There is little difference in meaning between the words, "signs" and "wonders." The term "wonders" (Gr., *teras*) is always in the plural in the N.T. and always joined with the word "sign."

6. Both the American Standard Version and the King James correctly assume that the "coming" referred to in 2:9 is the coming of the Wicked one, and not the same as the "coming" mentioned in 2:8, which is Christ's coming.

7. It is Satan's delight to counterfeit the things of God. Thus the man of sin is a counterfeit of Christ. They have several points of resemblance and contrast.

JESUS

1. Has a "coming." I Thess. 2:19
2. Did miracles. Acts 2:22
3. Is God. Heb. 1:8
4. Is over the house (or temple) of God. Heb. 3:6
5. Shall be glorified. II Thess. 1:10

THE MAN OF SIN

1. Has a "coming." II Thess. 2:9
2. Does miracles. II Thess. 2:9
3. Sets himself forth as God. II Thess. 2:4
4. Sits in the temple of God (as a usurper). II Thess. 2:4
5. Shall be destroyed. II Thess. 2:8

Text (2:10)

10 and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

Translation and Paraphrase

10. And (his manner of coming is just what you might expect. It is in keeping) with every (form of) deceit (that is within the ability) of unrighteousness. (He comes particularly) to the lost, because they have not (welcomed nor) received the love of the truth so that they might be saved (and therefore they are easily deceived by the doctrines of the man of sin).

Notes (2:10)

1. Two things are stated about the "coming" of the Wicked one, the man of sin:
 - (1) He comes with all power, and signs, and lying wonders. 2:9.
 - (2) He comes with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. 2:10.
2. We have talked to numerous people who have gone off into some cult or strange doctrine. Many of these people have told us, "I had been a member of several churches, and I tried to understand the Bible, but I just never was satisfied until I went into my present belief."
3. Perhaps the reason that they were not satisfied was that they

had been fed on denominational teaching, rather than actually on what the Bible says. Such doctrines as (1) that we are saved by faith *alone*, or (2) that "one church is just as good as another," or (3) that "everybody is going to heaven; we are just going there by different routes," are enough to make anybody dissatisfied if he has studied the Scriptures with understanding.

A person will surely be more than satisfied with his faith, if he will do these things:

- (1) Believe in Jesus as God's son and your only Lord and savior.
 - (2) Take the Bible as your only authority.
 - (3) Repent and be baptized (immersed) for the remission of sins, as the Holy Spirit commanded. Acts 2:38.
 - (4) Call yourself a Christian, or a disciple of Christ, but don't wear any denominational names invented by men.
 - (5) Consider yourself a member of ONLY that divine church to which the Lord adds all saved people. Acts 2:47. If Paul and the early Christians could be members of the Lord's church without belonging to any denomination, we also can do it and should.
 - (6) Be faithful in worship, telling others about your faith, giving your money, prayer, and the study of God's word.
4. Still there are people who have known the truth, but are restless and desire to know things that God has not revealed. They are always looking for something novel and spectacular, something that will make them feel that they are superior to their brethren. They long to be the "enlightened ones," the gnostics. This is a dangerous attitude of mind, and often causes them to accept some outlandish doctrine.

We should have an attitude such as David had when he said, "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me." Psalm 131:1.

5. The "deceivableness of unrighteousness" means "the deceit which unrighteousness uses." Unrighteousness will use any trick to win followers. Unrighteousness uses half-truths, the pressure of business and friends, appeals to pride, brainwashing, and any other method that will obtain our support.

Because Christians are harmless as doves, they sometimes mistakenly assume that others have the same straight-forward, good-intentioned spirit that they themselves have. Unfortunately that is not the case. Hence we must not only be as harmless as doves, but as wise as serpents. Matt. 10:16.

6. This verse mentions "them that perish." These people are also called "them that are lost." (The word here translated "perish" (*apollumi*) in the middle voice means "to be lost.")

Thus we read in II Cor. 4:3-4 that, "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are *lost*: in whom the God of this world (Satan) hath blinded the minds. . ."

Text (2:11-12)

11 And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: **12** that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Translation and Paraphrase

11. And on account of this (attitude) God sends to them (through the working of Satan some) activity of error to cause them to believe the lie (that what the man of sin says is true, and many other lies also).
12. (And thus being led to believe the lie that they actually wanted to believe, things are worked out) so that they all may be condemned, (those dissatisfied souls) who did not believe the truth, but (on the contrary) were well pleased with unrighteousness.

Notes (2:11-12)

1. This thought may astound some people, but the Scriptures actually teach that when men refuse to accept what God plainly says, that God sends delusion to them, that they may believe a lie and be condemned.
2. There are numerous examples of this in the Bible.
 - (1) God hardened Pharaoh's heart and caused him to suffer many plagues, because Pharaoh first hardened his own heart. Exodus 3:19; 5:1-2; 7:3, 13.
 - (2) God hardened the hearts of the wicked inhabitants of Canaan, so that they would fight Joshua and be destroyed. Joshua 11:20.
 - (3) God sent a lying spirit to the prophets of Ahab, so that Ahab would go into battle and be killed. I Kings 22:19-23. (Of course, Ahab had long before rejected Jehovah.)
 - (4) God turned the Gentiles who refused to honor Him as God, over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which were horribly evil and self-destructive. Romans 1:28.
 - (5) Likewise now the lie of the man of sin comes to those who will not receive the love of the truth. Beware.
3. These verses bring out the point that when people believe a lie, they will be damned. How then can anyone dare to say, "It makes no difference what you believe as long as you are sincere"?

2:12,13 THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

4. Those who reject the gospel of Christ, His miracles, and His coming, often end by adopting superstition and believing some strange and unproven system of doctrine. He who refuses to receive the truth will at last believe lies. This is an unalterable reality. Almost any minister can tell of cases in his own experience where people rejected the gospel, and then later were taken in by some cult or sect.
5. The exceeding wickedness of sin is often not appreciated by the sincere child of God. He judges the feelings of others by his own nature which has been sanctified by the Spirit of God. But we must not permit ourselves to live in a dream world. Sin is very ugly, and very strong, and very deeply rooted. What it can do to the nature of a man is astounding.

The practice of sin even causes men to take pleasure in unrighteousness. They are proud to be wicked. Their glory is in their shame. Such people deserve to be damned.

They refuse to have God in their knowledge and try to suppress God's truth by unrighteousness. They know the judgment of God; that people who do such things are worthy of death. But they not only do those things, but take pleasure in associating with others who do them, and in encouraging others to practice them. Romans 1:18, 28, 32.

6. One group of men who refused to believe the truth was the Jews. They could never refute Paul's preaching, but they refused to obey it, and even forbade Paul to preach to the Gentiles so that they might be saved. I Thess. 2:16.

Paul told Timothy that men would turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables. II Tim. 4:4. Such people often end up following some strange doctrine.

7. While sinners may have pleasure in unrighteousness, love rejoices not in unrighteousness, but rejoices in the truth. I Cor. 13:6. Christians are ruled by love.

STUDY SUGGESTION

Turn ahead now to the "Did You Learn?" questions following the notes on this chapter, and see if you can answer questions 1 to 45.

Text (2:13)

13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, for that God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

Translation and Paraphrase

13. But we are obligated to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because (you have received the love of the truth and escaped the strong delusions, and) God has chosen you (from the beginning to be) firstfruits unto salvation, by means of the sanctification of (our) spirit (which is done by the Holy Spirit), and (by) belief of the truth.

Notes (2:13)

1. This verse is much consolation to us. In the preceding paragraph we considered the terrors of the man of sin, and the strong delusions that are sent to those who will not believe the truth. Now Paul reassures the Thessalonians, and all other true Christians, that they are beloved of the Lord, and that God has chosen them unto salvation. They are not deceived by delusions. They are beloved by the Lord.
2. In our outline we have called this brief paragraph "Thanksgiving for God's choosing the Thessalonians." (2:13-15).
3. From the beginning God has chosen and foreordained that some of the Gentiles should be saved. God chose the Gentiles who accepted Christ as his people. See Ephesians 1:4; 3:5-6; Romans 9:24-26. See also the notes on I Thess. 1:4.
4. This verse begins much like II Thess. 1:3: "We are bound (that is, obligated or indebted) to give thanks always to God for you." See notes on II Thess. 1:3 for further comment.
5. Note that we are chosen unto *salvation*. Oh, the joy of that word. It means safety, deliverance, and security.
6. Two means are set forth as being the cause of our being chosen:
 - (1) Sanctification of spirit.
 - (2) Belief of the truth.
7. There is a bit of uncertainty about the Greek text of this verse. The phrase, "from the beginning" (Gr., *ap' arches*), is given as "firstfruits" (Gr., *aparchen*) in Nestle's Gr. text. Westcott and Hort's Gr. text has "from the beginning" in the text and "firstfruits" in the margin. As you can tell, there is only one letter of difference in the two renderings. The division between the words proves nothing, as in the old Greek manuscripts there were no breaks between any of the words.

I find no English version (except Moffatt) inserting the word "firstfruits" into the text, although several have it in the margin. On the whole I think we are justified in saying that the

2:13,14 THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

King James version is as accurate as any in rendering it "from the beginning."

8. What is "sanctification of the Spirit"?

This phrase is also used in I Peter 1:2: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through *sanctification of the Spirit*, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

The word "sanctification" itself means "a making holy, consecration, purification." See notes on I Thess. 4:3.

Let us note first of all that the Greek text does not say, "Sanctification of *the* Spirit." The word "the" is not included. However, by common consent of scholars the omission of the *the* does not rule out the possibility that the spirit referred to is the Holy Spirit. But the absence of the article does make it possible that the spirit may *not* be the Holy Spirit.

Thus there are two possible interpretations of the phrase "sanctification of the Spirit:"

- (1) A sanctification wrought by the Holy Spirit. (Subjective genitive). This is the view of Thayer and A. T. Robertson.
- (2) A sanctification of our human spirit. (Objective genitive). This view is favored by Moffatt and Lenski. Moffatt translates the phrase, "By the consecration of your spirit."

Lenski objects to the idea of the subjective genitive ("sanctification by the Holy Spirit") and says that the fact that God, i.e. his Spirit, does the sanctifying work need not be stated, for this lies in the word "sanctification," which is in itself a term that expresses action. It is our "spirit" that God sanctifies, just as it is "truth" that our faith trusts.

According to either interpretation, it is the Holy Spirit that does the sanctifying. But we personally favor the view that it is our spirit that is sanctified (the objective genitive). II Cor. 7:1 lends support to this view. "Let us cleanse ourselves of all filthiness of flesh and *spirit*." Obviously the human spirit is meant there. So also I Thess. 5:23, where Paul prayed that our whole *spirit* and soul and body would be sanctified.

Text (2:14)

14 whereunto he called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Translation and Paraphrase

14. Unto which (salvation) he (has) called you by our gospel (which we preach), to (bring you unto that glorious day when we shall rejoice in) the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (as our bodies are resurrected and transformed to become like his glorious body).

Notes (2:14)

1. What is it "whereunto" God has called us? He has called us unto the whole program of being saved through sanctification of spirit and belief of the truth. (The genders of the Greek words indicate that no specific antecedent is in mind.)
2. Often people speak about being *called* by God through various means. The Scriptural method of being called is to be called *by the gospel*. Compare Romans 8:29-30.
3. The goal to which God has called us is that we may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- a. We become like Christ as we live the Christian life. II Cor. 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

As a man and woman who are married for many years come to resemble one another, so we come to resemble Christ as we live with Him.

- b. When the dead are resurrected, we shall be transformed to be like God and Christ, and our worthless bodies shall be made anew like Christ's glorious body.

Phil. 3:21: Christ "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body."

I John 3:2: "We know that he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is."

Romans 8:21 tells how the whole creation longs for the manifestation of the sons of God (the Christians), for the creation itself shall be then delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Romans 8:17: "If we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him."

3. If you have ever admired and marvelled at Christ (as I'm sure you have), rejoice that you may share His glory.'

Text (2:15)

15 So then, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours.

Translation and Paraphrase

15. Therefore then, brethren, stand (solidly) and hold fast the teachings which ye were taught, whether by (our spoken) word or by our letter.

Notes (2:15)

1. If the Thessalonians did not stand fast in the traditions that they had been taught, they would soon be in the condition of those who loved not the truth, and were deceived by delusion. See 2:10-12.

We likewise must stand fast in what we have been taught. We cannot be revamping the gospel message in each generation to suit ourselves.

2. We must mention again the use of that beautiful term, "brethren." Christians ought to address one another as "brother" or "sister."
3. The command, "Stand fast," is very emphatic. It enjoins us stand firm, persist and persevere. Compare I Cor. 16:13; Gal. 5:1.
4. The reference to "traditions" in this verse might give some people the idea that the church today should have spoken traditions as a guide as well as the written word. This is the Roman Catholic position.

A Catholic booklet entitled "A Catechism For Inquirers" says, "Where is God's revelation to man contained?" The answer given is that "God's Revelation to man is contained in the Bible and in Tradition." It asks another question: "Where else, then, is God's Revelation contained?" Answer: "It is contained in Tradition, i.e. in the living word of Christ and His apostles, which was not written down by them." (The booklet here refers to II John 1:12 and II Thess. 2:14 as proof of their statement.) Another question from the same book asks, "Where is this Tradition to be found?" Answer: "This Tradition is to be found chiefly in the writings of the Fathers of the Church of the first centuries of Christianity, in the decrees of the Church Councils, in the decisions of the Popes, and in the ceremonial of the Church."

5. It is a fact that the early church depended partly on oral teaching. But it is a mistake to allege that the gift of inspired oral teaching has been preserved by the "Church." By the close of Paul's life he wrote to Timothy and said, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God . . . that the man of God may be *perfect*,

thoroughly furnished unto *all* good works." II Tim. 3:16-17. If the Scriptures alone can make us perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto ALL good works, we do not need any other traditions.

6. Furthermore, there is a grave danger that we may fall into the same condemnation that the Jews received because they added human traditions to the laws of God. Jesus said, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Matt. 15:9. Also note Mark 7:9: "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."
7. The only apostolic traditions we now have are those in the Scriptures. This was not true of the Thessalonians. They had oral information, and at the time Paul wrote to them very few of the New Testament books had been written.
8. Paul declared that if anyone preached a gospel different from what he preached, he was to be accursed. Gal. 1:8-9. Paul told us that when we *read*, we may understand his knowledge of the mystery of Christ. Eph. 3:4. Let no one be misled or intimidated by people who claim to know more of God's will than the apostles have left for us in the New Testament. Often we see things practiced by people who follow their traditions that are contrary to what we read in the Bible. Surely any tradition that contradicts what the New Testament says cannot be a tradition approved by God.
9. Let us stand fast, and hold the apostolic traditions as we have been taught. The Thessalonians had been taught by word of mouth. We haven't. Both we and the Thessalonians have been taught by Paul's letters. Let us hold fast to these teachings.

Text (2:16-17)

16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, **17** comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

Translation and Paraphrase

16. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our father, who has loved us and given (us) everlasting consolation and good hope by (his) favor,
17. May he comfort your hearts and strengthen (you) in every good work and word.

Notes (2:16-17)

1. There is quite a contrast between the eternal destruction awaiting the sinner (II Thess. 1:9), and the everlasting consolation

which the Christian has. God's consolations are eternal in their effects.

2. These verses form the second of the prayers that close every chapter in II Thessalonians. In our outline, we call this a prayer that they be comforted and stablished.
3. There is no thought in the gospel message more precious than the thought that God loves us. Rev. 1:5: "Unto him that *loved* us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." I John 4:19: "We love him, because he first loved us."
4. Notice the close relation of God and Jesus. Both of them give us everlasting consolation. Both of them are asked to comfort and stablish the Thessalonians. Paul addresses his prayer to both. We do not honor God by placing Jesus second. They rank together. See John 5:23.
5. We so often need spiritual consolation. Paul prayed, "The Lord . . . comfort your hearts."
6. We have good hope from God, and our hope comes through His *grace*, that is, His favor. Our hope does not rest on our own works or our own merit. Because our hope rests on His favor, and because His favor is as high as the heavens, our hope is very sure.
7. In this prayer we sense Paul's anxiety for the Thessalonians. He was burdened greatly, desiring that they would become established firmly in the faith. "Stablish" means to make stable, set firmly, set fast, strengthen, make firm. (Thayer)
8. An anxious spirit, such as Paul's finds relief and comfort in prayer. Every minister must emphatically be a man of prayer.
9. We notice that both our words and our works must be established. What we say and what we do must both be right in the sight of God. "By thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Matthew 12:3.

STUDY SUGGESTION

Turn now to the "Did You Learn?" questions that follow, and see if you can answer questions 46 to 63.

DID YOU LEARN?

(Questions over II Thessalonians, chapter 2)

1. What is the topic of II Thessalonians, chapter 2?
2. What idea had greatly excited the Thessalonians? (2:2)
3. Concerning what two things did Paul beseech the Thessalonians? (2:1)

CHAPTER TWO

4. Did the Thessalonians think that the day of the Lord was near or already here? (2:2)
5. What three events were to precede the day of the Lord? (2:1-2)
6. What three sources of misinformation does Paul list as possibly causing the excitement? (2:1-2)
7. Explain what each of these three sources of misinformation may refer to.
8. What is another word for "falling away"? (2:3)
9. From what would people fall away? (2:3)
10. Did Paul predict "the" falling away or "a" falling away? (2:3)
11. The man of sin is also called the man of _____.
_____. (2:3)
12. What does the phrase "son of perdition" mean? (2:3)
13. Who is called the "son of perdition" in the gospels? (2:3)
14. Does the Bible specifically connect the man of sin and anti-christ? (2:3)
15. According to the futurist (or pre-millennial) view, what is (1) the falling away, (2) the man of sin, and (3) that which hinders the appearance of the man of sin? (2:3)
16. Did the early church fathers regard the man of sin as being one man, or a succession of men at the head of a system? (2:3)
17. Are moral conditions in the world worse now than they were in Paul's time? (2:3)
18. How long have we been living in the "last days"? (2:3)
19. According to the historical view (favored in this book), what is (1) the falling away, (2) the man of sin, and (3) that which hindered the appearance of the "man of sin"? (2:3)
20. True or false (circle which)—The mystery of lawlessness was already working in Paul's time. (2:3,7)
21. Mention several departures from the New Testament faith which might be part of the "falling away." (2:3)
22. What two things does the man of sin do toward all that is called God? (2:4)
23. Where shall the man of sin sit? (2:4)
24. What does he exhibit himself to be? (2:4)
25. What is the "temple of God" where the man of sin sits? (2:4)
26. Name some people who have exhibited themselves as if they were God. (2:4)

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

27. How do you know that Paul did not once tell the Thessalonians that Christ's coming was very near, and then later say that certain things had to happen first? (2:5)
28. What kept the man of sin from appearing long before he did appear? (2:6)
29. What is the relationship between the word "withholdeth" in 2:6 and "let" in 2:7? What do these words mean?
30. Is the force that restrained the man of sin an abstract force or a personal figure? (2:6-7)
31. Explain the phrase "mystery of iniquity." (2:7)
32. What is the restraining power, according to the view favored in this book? (2:7)
33. Explain how this restraining power hindered the appearance of the man of sin. (2:7)
34. List four ways in which the papacy fulfills the descriptions of the man of sin. (2:7)
35. How will the wicked one be destroyed? (2:8)
36. Is there one parousia of the Lord when He takes his church out of the world, and then another parousia when He will destroy the wicked one? (2:8)
37. Does miracle-working power prove that a man is pleasing to God? (2:9)
38. The coming of the Wicked one is after the working of whom? (2:9)
39. Was the man of sin to work miracles? (2:9)
40. What does the phrase "deceivableness of unrighteousness" mean? (2:10)
41. Unto (or "in") what people does the Wicked one come? (2:10)
42. What do these people refuse to receive? (2:10)
43. What does God send to people who will not receive the love of the truth? (2:11)
44. Give two examples where God sent delusions to people so that they might believe a lie and be damned. (2:11-12)
45. In what did the people who did not believe the truth take pleasure? (2:12)
46. Had the Thessalonians received the strong delusions and believed a lie? (2:13)
47. What is the brief paragraph, 2:13-15, called in the outline? (2:13)

CHAPTER TWO

48. Unto what had God chosen the Thessalonians and the other Gentile Christians? (2:13)
49. What are the two possible interpretations of the phrase "sanctification of the Spirit"? (2:13)
50. Through what other means (besides sanctification of spirit) had God chosen the Thessalonians? (2:13)
51. By what means had God called the Thessalonians? (2:14)
52. What is the goal to which God has called us? (2:14)
53. Which were the Thessalonians to do: (1) Stand fast; or (2) Search out the will of God for their own generation? (2:15)
54. What were the Thessalonians to hold fast? (2:15)
55. By what two means had they been taught? (2:15)
56. Why do we believe that the church now has no oral traditions that should be added to the writings of the apostles? (2:15)
57. In the outline what is the prayer in 2:16-17 called?
58. To what two people is this prayer addressed? (2:16)
59. God has given us everlasting _____
_____. (2:16)
60. Through what have we been given good hope? (2:16)
61. Did Paul feel that the Thessalonians were established firmly in the faith? (2:17)
62. In what two things did Paul pray that they would be established? (2:17)
63. Quote or write out from memory II Thess. 2:3, 14. 2:3 begins, "Let no man——." 2:14 begins, "Whereunto he——."

II THESSALONIANS, CHAPTER THREE

Chapter Topic:

Withdraw from Idlers



“Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly
——for——there are some——working not at all.” II Thess.
3:6, 11

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

Chapter Topic: "Withdraw From Idlers"

1. Paul asked for prayer that the word of the Lord might do what? (3:1) (Two answers) _____
_____;
2. Paul requested prayer that he might be delivered from _____
_____ and _____ men. (3:2)
3. Who is always faithful? (3:3) _____.
4. What will the Lord do for us? (3:3) (two answers) _____
_____;
5. True or false (circle which)—Paul had confidence that the Thessalonians would do what he commanded them. (3:4)
6. Into what two things did Paul pray that God would direct the hearts of the Thessalonians? (3:5) _____
_____;
7. What did Paul command the Thessalonians to do toward disorderly brethren? (3:6) _____.
8. The disorderly brethren did not walk after (or according to) the _____ which they received of Paul. (3:6)
9. Whose example should the Thessalonians have followed? (3:7) _____.
10. Paul did not eat any man's bread _____ (3:8)
11. When did Paul work, so that he might not be chargeable to any of them? (3:8) _____.
12. Yes or No (circle which)—Paul had power (or authority) to ask the Thessalonian Christians to support him, so that he would not have to support himself. (3:9)
13. Why did Paul labor as he did? (3:9) _____.
14. What had Paul commanded them? (3:10) _____
_____.
15. The disorderly brethren among the Thessalonians were _____
_____ not at all, but were _____ (3:11)

CHAPTER THREE

16. Paul commanded the disorderly that with quietness they _____
_____ and _____ their _____
(3:12)
17. "Brethren, be not _____ in _____
_____." (3:13)
18. Paul told the Thessalonians that if any man would not obey
this epistle to "note that man and _____
_____ with him." (3:14)
19. Why were they to do this? (3:14) _____
_____.
20. Nonetheless, they were not to count him as an _____
_____. (3:15)
21. Paul calls the Lord, "The Lord of _____." (3:16)
22. What did Paul pray that the Lord would give them? (3:16)
_____.
23. Who personally wrote the salutation of this epistle? (3:17)
_____.
24. What was the taken of every genuine epistle of Paul's? (3:17)

_____.
25. What did Paul pray would be with all of them? (3:18) _____

_____.
26. Memorize II Thess. 3:1,3,10.

II THESSALONIANS, CHAPTER THREE

Chapter Topic, "*Withdraw From Idlers*"

Outline

- I. Request for prayer; 3:1-2
 1. That the word may run and be glorified; 3:1
 2. That they may be delivered; 3:2
- II. Expressions of confidence; 3:3-5
 1. In the Lord; 3:3,5
 - a. He is faithful; 3:3
 - b. He will stablish you.
 - c. He will keep you from evil.
 - d. Prayer that the Lord would direct them; 3:5
 - (1) Into the love of God.
 - (2) Into the patience of Christ.
 2. In the Thessalonians; 3:4

III. Withdraw from idlers; 3:6-15

1. The command; 3:6
2. Paul's example of working; 3:7-9
 - a. Behaved not disorderly; 3:7
 - b. Worked night and day; 3:8-9
3. This command taught previously; 3:10
4. The report concerning idlers; 3:11
5. Idlers commanded to work; 3:12
6. Be not weary in well doing; 3:13
7. Withdrawal to produce shame; 3:14-15

IV. Prayer for peace; 3:16

Conclusion; 3:17-18

1. Paul's own salutation; 3:17
2. Benediction of grace; 3:18

Text (3:1)

I Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified, even as also it is with you;

Translation and Paraphrase

1. (Finally) brethren, for the future (please) be praying for us, that the message of the Lord may run (without ceasing) and be glorified (in the lives of many people) just as (it) also (does) among you.

Notes (3:1)

1. How often Paul asked for prayer. (See notes on I Thess. 5:25, par. 1.) Do you ever pray for preachers and missionaries? They are only men. They need your prayers.
2. Notice how unselfish Paul's prayer was. He did not ask for prayers for his own ease, but only that the word of God may make progress.
3. Please recall now the chapter topic of chapter three, "Withdraw from idlers," and recall point I in the outline of chapter 3, "Request for prayer" (3:1-2).
4. The word "finally" does not necessarily indicate a conclusion, but only a new phase of discussion which does happen here to be the closing one. (The Greek is *to loipon*, "for the future," "what remains," "hereafter," "henceforth," "for the rest.")
5. Note that the gospel is the "word of the Lord," and not the "wisdom of men."
6. Paul speaks here of the word of the Lord as living and moving. Compare Heb. 4:12. Also Psalm 147:15. The word of God is not a dead writing, but a dynamic living power.

7. The gospel needs free course. It can be hindered by opposition and sometimes almost stopped altogether. A runner could not make very good time running in a junk yard. Satan likewise makes the path of the gospel a real obstacle course. But prayer can clear out the obstacles.
8. How different this verse sounds from popular denominational expressions. Men say, "Pray for a great moving of the Spirit." Paul said, "Pray that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified." (Amer. Stan. Vers.)
9. Paul compliments the Thessalonians by indicating that the word of the Lord had free course in their hearts. This was a deserved compliment. But it is one that can easily be lost. We cannot rest on past laurels. The word of God must continue its course in our hearts without letup.

Text (3:2)

2 and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and evil men; for all have not faith.

Translation and Paraphrase

2. And (please pray also) that we may be delivered from perverse (men, such as are out of their divinely appointed place and manner of life) and (from) evil men. For (it goes without saying that) the faith is NOT (held) by all (people. And these unbelieving men would hinder us if they could).

Notes (3:2)

1. Paul did not ask for prayer merely to escape hardship and persecution. Compare II Thess. 3:1. He wanted to be delivered from the restraint that wicked men would impose on his preaching.
2. Everywhere Paul went he faced "unreasonable and wicked men," such as he described here. In fact he was facing such men in Corinth at the time this letter was written. See Acts 18:6, 12.
3. The word translated "unreasonable" (Gr., *atopos*) means "out of place, not befitting, unbecoming, improper, wicked unrighteous." (Thayer). The Amplified New Testament renders it "perverse" and the New English Bible as "wrong-headed." (We like that rendering.)
4. It has always been true that "all men have not faith." Those without faith are not to be relied on without caution. They often plot and persecute in an attempt to hinder the preaching of the gospel. Even Jesus would not commit himself to men, because he knew all men, and knew what was in man. John 2:24-25.

3:2-4 THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

5. Some people will never believe, no matter how clearly and tenderly the gospel is preached to them. We can only pray that we may be delivered from such men.

Text (3:3-4)

3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and guard you from the evil one. 4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command.

Translation and Paraphrase

3. But (though there are many men who have no faith,) the Lord is (always) faithful. (It is he) who will strengthen (and make) you (firm in the faith) and (will) keep you from (Satan) the evil one.
4. And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you (knowing that the Lord works within us all,) that you both (now) do and will (continue to) do the things which we command you.

Notes (3:3-4)

1. Men may be naturally wicked and actively engaged in evil against us, but the Lord is faithful. He will keep us from evil (or from the evil one). He that is within us is greater than he that is in the world. I John 4:4.
2. Paul prayed in II Thess. 2:17 that God would stablish them. Now in this verse he expresses confidence that God would do that very thing. (See notes on II Thess. 2:16-17 for more about being "stablished".)
3. Many verses in the New Testament teach us that the Lord will keep Christians from evil. These are precious promises.
 - a. Jude 24: "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling."
 - b. I Pet. 1:5: You "who are kept by the power of God."
 - c. II Pet. 2:9: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation."
 - d. John 17:15: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."
 - e. See also I Cor. 10:13.
4. However, many verses also warn us that we can refuse to avail ourselves of God's keeping power and thus we *can* fall away.
 - a. Gal. 5:4: "Ye are fallen from grace."
 - b. Heb. 3:12: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

- c. Heb. 4:11: "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."
5. The power of God which can keep us from Satan is ours for the taking. But we ourselves have to do the taking, and when we have once taken it, we must hold it fast.
 6. The thing that made Paul confident about what the Thessalonians would do was his confidence in what God would do for them. God's faithfulness inspires confidence in the faithfulness of God's children.
 7. The things which Paul commanded the Thessalonians were undoubtedly those traditions which they had been taught, whether by word, or by this epistle. II Thess. 2:15.
 8. Paul's confidence in his converts was a real joy to him. He had no confidence in what evil men might do. But he had confidence in what his Christian brethren would do. Compare II Cor. 7:16: "I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things."

Text (3:5)

5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ.

Translation and Paraphrase

5. (We desire not merely that you perform those things which we command you,) but may the Lord (actually) guide your hearts (by a straight path) into (an attitude of mind in which you will truly possess) the love of God, and into the patience and steadfastness) of Christ. (These divine qualities are needed by us all.)

Notes (3:5)

1. Again the apostle is on his knees: His prayer in this verse expresses the longing so often stated in the Thessalonian letters that they might be made perfect and become like the Lord.
2. Our feelings toward all men should not be mere human feelings, but we should have within us the love of God and the patience of Christ. These were the feelings that Paul wanted the Thessalonians to have.
3. The word "direct" (*kateuthuno*) means to "make straight, guide, direct." (Thayer). In the N.T. it is found only here and in Luke 1:79. In the Gr. O.T. it is found in Solomon's prayer: "*Prepare* their (the people's) hearts unto thee." I Chron. 29:18; II Chron 19:3. King Jehoshaphat *prepared* his heart to seek God.

Like a bee making a straight line to his hive, our hearts should be so prepared and directed by the divine nature within

us that they will go straight and without wavering into the will of God.

4. Paul prayed that the Lord would direct their hearts into two things:

- (1) *The love of God.* This does not mean that they should come to be loved by God, for they had already shared His love when they were saved. Rather it means that *they* should come to have so much of the love of God within them that it would shine forth out of them.

- (2) *The patience of Christ.* The word *patience* (*hupomone*) here means steadfastness or endurance. It is not limited to patiently waiting for Jesus to come back, but it signifies that we should have the same patient disposition that Christ had. "Let us run with *patience* the race that is set before us." Heb. 12:1.

Text (3:6)

6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us.

Translation and Paraphrase

6. But we command you, brethren, by the name (and therefore by the authority) of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you (refuse to associate with and) withdraw yourselves from every brother (any Christian) who is walking (and conducting his daily life) in a disorderly manner (like a soldier out of the ranks,) and (is) not (walking) according to the traditions which ye received from us.

Notes (3:6)

1. In II Thess. 3:4 Paul expressed confidence that the Thessalonians would obey his commands. Now he gives one. "Don't associate with Christians who won't work."
2. "Walking disorderly" in this verse applies to a refusal to work. See II Thess. 3:11-12.
3. This command is not addressed to an evangelist, or bishop, or elder, but to the "brethren," the whole church.
4. The command is given in the name of Christ, that is, by His authority. Paul did not give this command on the authority of his own likes and dislikes.
5. There are several types of sinners mentioned in the New Testament, from whom we are to withdraw ourselves. In every case these are (professed) church members who do these things. We

can't withdraw ourselves from all the sinners in the world without going out of the world, but certain things are not to be tolerated if one who is called our "brother" (fellow-Christian) does them.

- (1) Rom. 16:17—Avoid those which cause divisions and teach doctrine contrary to that which we have learned.
 - (2) I Cor. 5:11—Do not keep company with a Christian brother who is a fornicator, covetous, idolater, railer, drunkard, or extortioner.
 - (3) I Tim. 6:5—Withdraw from those who will not consent to the words of Christ, but dispute perversely, and think that godliness is a way of gain.
 - (4) II John 10—Receive not into your houses those who bring not the true doctrine about Christ.
 - (5) Matt. 18:15-17—Reject those who wrong you, if they will not make it right after you go and tell them.
 - (6) II Thess. 3:6, 10-12—Withdraw from church members who will not work. II Thess. 3:14.
6. The word "disorderly" means "out of the ranks" (often used to refer to soldiers out of the ranks), "disobedient to the prescribed order or rule," "irregular." The same word is used in II Thess. 3:11. In this chapter it refers to those who would not work but were busybodies, meddling in other people's business.
7. Notice carefully that we are only to withdraw from those who *walk* disorderly. *Walk* is a present participle, indicating a continuous manner of conduct. There is a great deal of difference between an occasional lapse in doing our duty to God and in *walking* that way consistently.
8. Concerning the *traditions* which Paul insisted that they obey, see the notes on II Thess. 2:15.

Text (3:7-8)

7 For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; 8 neither did we eat bread for nought at any man's hand, but in labor and travail, working night and day, that we might not burden any of you:

Translation and Paraphrase

7. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us (in the way we lived), because we were not (like) disorderly (soldiers while we were) among you:
8. Neither did we eat (and get our) bread free gratis from anyone, but (we obtained our food) by (fatiguing) labor and (hard)

3:7-9 THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

toil, working day and night, so that we would not (be a) burden (to) any of you.

Notes (3:7-8)

1. Often I have marvelled that Paul never hesitated to urge people to follow him. We are all aware of our own failings, and are therefore reluctant to tell people to imitate us. But the people in most churches will never rise higher than their leaders. So if the ministers and leaders do not set an example for the people to follow, the people will not rise to new spiritual heights. We should not boast about doing good, but we should not hesitate to be a visible and unashamed example.
2. Note these other Scriptures where Paul speaks about people "following" (or, more correctly, imitating) him: I Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; I Thess. 1:6.
3. The Thessalonians were commanded to withdraw from every brother who walked disorderly and would not work. (See notes on II Thess. 3:6.) Paul could say without any hesitation that he himself had NOT walked disorderly among them as far as working was concerned. He had gone far beyond the demands of duty and necessity.
4. Eating bread "for nought" means eating free gratis, or at someone else's expense. (The Gr. is *dorean*, the accusative of *dorea*, used adverbially.)
5. Concerning how Paul worked night and day and labored and toiled, see notes on I Thess. 2:9.
6. Lest anyone think by this verse that ministers have no right to impose upon their people the burden of supporting them, read the next verse, II Thess. 3:9.

Text (3:9)

9 not because we have not the right, but to make ourselves an example unto you, that ye should imitate us.

Translation and Paraphrase

9. (Now we did) not (labor to support ourselves) because we do not have authority (to demand support from you), but so that we could (both be and) give ourselves (as) an example to you, so that you might imitate us (with confidence that you would be doing what is right).

Notes (3:9)

1. Numerous Scriptures indicates that ministers of the gospel have the right to receive support. See Matt. 10:10; I Cor. 9:14; I Tim. 5:17; Luke 10:7.

2. This verse repeats the thought of II Thess. 3:7 that Christian leaders should set an example for people to follow, if they expect the people to rise to greater heights in their service to Christ.
3. Concerning the word *ensample* (Gr., *typos*) see notes on I Thess. 1:7, par. 2.
4. Concerning the matter of being followers (or imitators) of Paul, see notes on II Thess. 3:7-8, paragraphs 1 and 2.
5. Paul worked for three reasons.
 - (1) To make himself an example of how every Christian should work.
 - (2) To deprive his enemies of any opportunity of saying that he was preaching for money. See II Cor. 11:9,12.
 - (3) Also Paul felt that preaching the gospel without charge was for him a bonus of service that he wanted to give. See I Cor. 9:14-18.

Text (3:10)

10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you. If any will not work, neither let him eat.

Translation and Paraphrase

10. (We set you an example of how you ought to work and support yourselves. You must all do likewise.) Because even while we were (in Thessalonica) with you, we kept commanding you that if any (man) did not desire to be working (and wouldn't work), don't let him eat.

Notes (3:10)

1. The saying, "He who will not work shall not eat," is famous in American history. Captain John Smith of the Jamestown colony laid down that rule in Virginia.
2. However, the principle is much older than John Smith. Paul said practically the same words to the Thessalonians. And the principle goes clear back to the time of Adam when God said, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." (Gen. 3:19). He who is able to work and unwilling to do so shall not be fed. Compare Eph. 4:28; Rom. 12:11.
3. Christianity is a religion for working men. Jesus was a carpenter. (Mark 6:3). Peter was a fisherman. Paul was a tent-maker. (Acts 18:3).
4. In the first letter to the Thessalonians Paul wrote about this matter of people who would not work. There he besought and

3:10,11 THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

exhorted them to, "Do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you." I Thess. 4:10.

5. Evidently the loafers had not paid attention to Paul's exhortation in his first letter. So now in this letter, Paul states the matter as a command and puts some real teeth into it. No work, no eat.
6. The statement, "We commanded you," is in an imperfect tense, which indicates repeated action in past time. Therefore we have rendered it in our translation, "We kept commanding you."

Text (3:11)

11 For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all, but are busybodies.

Translation and Paraphrase

11. (We repeat our command about working,) for we keep hearing that some (among you) are walking disorderly (like the out-of-rank soldiers we mentioned), not working (at all), but going around (the) work, (bustling, and piddling around with trifling, useless matters).

Notes (3:11)

1. It seems to be a pet notion of some Bible interpreters to think that these people in the Thessalonian church who were not working were the people who thought that the Lord had come (or was coming very soon). Their idleness is assumed to have been caused by their faulty ideas about the Lord's coming.

The Scripture makes absolutely no connection between the fact that these people were loafing and their faulty notions about the Lord's coming. The habit of idleness may have been part of their background, as many of the Greeks were not very ambitious about physical work. Compare Titus 1:12, and the notes on I Thess. 4:11-12.

2. Concerning this matter of walking *disorderly*, see the notes on II Thess. 3:6, paragraphs 2 and 6.
3. Paul had no doubt received frequent reports from people coming in and out of Corinth about things that were happening in Thessalonica. He kept hearing (imperfect tense) that some of them were not working.
4. There is a little play on words in this verse which is not apparent in English. We have tried to bring it out in our translation and paraphrase.

Paul said that he heard that some were not working (Gr., *ergadzomai*), but were busybodies (Gr., *periergadzomai*). *Periergadzomai* has the meaning of going around the work (as if

dodging it), or "bustling about uselessly, busying one's self with trifling, needless, useless matters." It is used to describe people who are meddlesome in the affairs of others. See I Tim. 5:13.

Moffatt renders the phrase cleverly: "Busybodies instead of being busy."

Text (3:12)

12 Now them that are such we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

Translation and Paraphrase

12. But such as these (who are not working) we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ (by His name and authority) that they, while working with quietness (and not meddling in the business of others), eat their own bread (which they have earned themselves).

Notes (3:12)

1. The idlers in the Thessalonian Church were restless and meddlesome, not quiet and industrious. It is usually true that people who have no business of their own try to meddle in the business of others.
2. The word "quietness" in this verse is from the same root as the word "quiet" in I Thess. 4:11, where Paul told them to study to be quiet. See notes on that verse.
3. Every Christian mechanic or professional man should know that he is expected to give his very best service in return for the pay he receives. When we serve our masters, we serve the Lord Christ.
4. Those who had been idle were to earn and eat THEIR OWN bread. The words, "their own," are emphatic.

Text (3:13)

13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing.

Translation and Paraphrase

13. But (we must say to all of) you, brethren, do not become weary in doing good.

Notes (3:13)

1. Life becomes tiresome, and boresome, and seems futile to all of us at times. But we should not get weary of the duties of life so as to desire idleness. Discharge all your duties faithfully, whether secular or religious. God's rest lies ahead of us. See Heb. 4:9 and Rev. 14:13.
2. Gal. 6:9: "And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

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- I Cor. 15:88: "Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."
3. To become weary (Gr. *egkakeo*) means to lose courage, become weary, faint, flag. It is used in Eph. 3:13 where Paul urges "that ye *faint* not at my tribulations." Also in II Cor. 4:1, 16.
 4. We like J. B. Phillips translation of this verse. "And the rest of you—don't get tired of honest work."

Text (3:14-15)

14 And if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed. 15 And yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Translation and Paraphrase

14. But if anyone (will) not obey our word (which we send) through (this) epistle, take not of this (person, and then be careful) not to keep company with (or get mixed up together with) him, so that he may be ashamed (and repent).
15. But (even while shunning him) do not consider him as (if he were) an enemy, but keep exhorting him as a brother (for such he still is, even though an erring one).

Notes (3:14-15)

1. Some people are just too stubborn and willful to be treated gently. They do not appreciate nor respond to kindness. But few people can bear the test of being left severely alone. Therefore Paul tells us that if any church member will not obey the instructions in this letter that his Christian brothers are to take notice of him and have no company with him. If he will not repent because the apostles of Christ have spoken, he must be made ashamed of his course by seeing that it is repudiated by the church.
2. Christians never should shun one of their sinning brethren because they desire to make him a laughing-stock, but so that, feeling ashamed, he may quickly make himself right with God and his brethren.
3. For a list of evil which are not to be tolerated, and from which we should withdraw, see notes on II Thess. 3:6, par. 5.
4. The command, "Have no company with him," (Gr., *sunanamignumi*) means not to get mixed up together with him, nor to keep company or be intimate with him.
5. The object of all church discipline is to save and not to punish.

We leave all punishing strictly in the hands of God. Note that even in I Cor. 5:5, where Paul told the church to put out the incestuous man, that this was done so that his fleshly instincts would be destroyed and his spirit saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

6. We are not to hate the offending brother nor consider him as our enemy. Rather we should weep over him. Lev. 19:17: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt surely rebuke thy neighbor, and not bear sin because of him." (Amer. Stan. Vers.)

Text (3:16)

16 Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with you all.

Translation and Paraphrase

16. Now may the Lord of peace himself give the peace (of heaven) unto you throughout everything (you do and) in every manner (that He can provide it). The Lord be with all of you.

Notes (3:16)

1. The church in Thessalonica had passed through stormy waters. The apostle prays that God may now give them peace in the harbor of His care.
2. In our outline, this prayer that closes chapter three is called (obviously enough), "Prayer for peace."
3. Although much of the third chapter of II Thessalonians contains strong words, it closes with sincere good wishes and a prayer for peace.
4. This peace is not a far-off peace, but a peace now, and by every possible means.
5. For the meaning of the title, "God of peace," see notes on I Thess. 5:23, par. 3.
6. Paul, like Jesus, gave his followers the benediction of peace. John 14:27. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Text (3:17)

17 The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.

Translation and Paraphrase

17. (I close with) the salutation of (myself,) Paul, in my own hand (writing). (Watch for this salutation,) which is (my) sign in every (true) epistle (of mine). Thus I write.

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Notes (3:17)

1. Here Paul closed his epistle by adding the salutation in his own handwriting. The letter had thus far been written by one to whom he dictated, as was his custom, but now he adds this brief final salutation in his own handwriting. It was the proof that the epistle was truly from Paul. Perhaps their attention is called to this because of a false epistle. See notes on II Thess. 2:2, par. 10.
2. Certain other epistles close exactly as this one.

I Cor. 16:21—"The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand."

Col. 4:18—"The salutation by the hand of me Paul." (Actually the Greek of these two verses is identified with that in II Thess. 3:17.)

Gal. 6:11—"See with how large letters I write unto you with mine own hand."

Text (3:18)

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Translation and Paraphrase

18. May the favor of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. (Amen)

Notes (3:18)

1. As in every one of Paul's epistles, he closes with the benediction of grace, or divine favor. We are saved by grace. We live by grace. We shall praise God's grace throughout the ages to come. Eph. 1:6.
2. The word "Amen" is omitted in Nestle's Greek text. (He does place it in the margin.) Also it is omitted by the American Standard Version and others. But it rests on fairly substantial authority, and we include it in our paraphrase. It seems so appropriate following the riches of this epistle. See notes on I Thess. 5:28.

STUDY SUGGESTIONS—

1. Review the outline of II Thessalonians, chapter 3.
2. See if you can answer the "Did You Learn?" questions that follow immediately.

DID YOU LEARN?

(Questions over II Thessalonians, chapter 3)

1. What is the chapter topic of II Thess., chapter 3?
2. What is the heading of the section, 3:1-2, in the outline?
3. For what two things in 3:1-2 did Paul request prayer?

CHAPTER THREE

4. What did Paul desire that the word of the Lord might have and be? (3:1)
5. From whom did Paul request prayers that he might be delivered? (3:2)
6. What do men without faith sometimes do that affects the preaching of the gospel? (3:2)
7. Though men may be without fault, who is always faithful? (3:3)
8. From what will God keep us? (3:3)
9. Will God's keeping power save us regardless of what we do? (3:3)
10. Paul's confidence in the Thessalonians was based on his confidence in whom? (3:4)
11. Paul was confident that the Thessalonians would do what? (3:4)
12. Into what two things did Paul pray that the Lord would direct their hearts? (3:5)
13. How were the Thessalonians to treat those who walked disorderly? (3:6)
14. To what does walking *disorderly* refer in this chapter? (3:6)
15. What is the idea implied in the expression, "*walking disorderly*"? (3:6)
16. Whom were the Thessalonians to follow (or imitate)? (3:7)
17. What does "eating bread *for nought*" mean? (3:8)
18. Does a minister have the right to receive support for his work? (3:9)
19. Why did Paul work to support himself? (3:9)
20. What had Paul commanded them while he was yet with them about working? (3:10)
21. What connection is there between the fact that some of the Thessalonians were not working and their faulty ideas about the Lord's coming? (3:11)
22. Some of the Thessalonians were "working not at all, but were _____." (3:11)
23. Whose bread were the idlers to eat? (3:12)
24. In what are we not to become weary? (3:13)
25. How were the Thessalonians to treat any man who would not obey the words of Paul's epistle? For what purpose were they to do this? (3:14)
26. Were the Thessalonians to regard a disobedient brother as an enemy? (3:15)
27. What did Paul ask the God of peace to give to the Thessalonians? (3:16)

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28. What is the topic of the prayer that closes chapter three? (3:16)
29. How did Paul show that this epistle was a genuine epistle from him? (3:17)
30. What is the benediction of II Thessalonians? (3:18)
31. Quote, or write out, from memory II Thess. 3:1,3,10.
 - 3:1 starts, "Finally, brethren,——."
 - 3:3 starts, "But the Lord is——."
 - 3:10 starts, "For even when we were——."

Special Studies

I. THE COMING JUDGE

By Seth Wilson

When Jesus was riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, surrounded by the excited throng shouting His praise, the people of the city asked, "Who is this?" And some of the crowd answered, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."

How far short their description fell! How little they really understood who He was!

Today, far too many people are thinking of Jesus as only a teacher or prophet from Galilee in the days of long ago. They think that He has had some interesting and important effects upon society. They may respect somewhat His teaching and His following, but they only think that they know Jesus.

No one knows Jesus who thinks that He belongs to the past, or who considers that we have to do only with the moral and social application of His teaching.

He is far more than a prophet in the past. He is a power in the present. And He is the most certain and significant of all the prospects for the future!

Jesus is living and reigning today at the right hand of the Father in heaven, offering His covenant of mercy and the new birth of the Spirit to all who will receive, calling out of the world a people for His own possession. He is coming again to earth to consummate this age, to receive His redeemed ones unto Himself, to purify His kingdom, and to execute the righteous judgment of God upon all the living and the dead.

The gospel of Christ is a message of facts—facts of history, unchangeable as the past naturally is, and sure as historical records and testimony can make them. But they are not just ordinary facts such as might be found in every part of history. They are unique facts of men's experience with God when God came to men in

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human form in the person of Jesus Christ. They are the incomparable facts of His life and works, revealing His divine person and power and His eternal purpose for all men of every age. Thus the gospel is not merely a record of the past. It is even more than the truth regarding our present duty and welfare. It points inexorably to the future. It is most important as a preparation for and a promise of things to come. Predictions are an inseparable and most vital part of the gospel, giving meaning to its facts and purpose to its commandments. The promises and warnings of the Lord help to enlighten and to motivate every believer of His word.

The most important prospects for the future for you and me and everyone are not the prospects of national prosperity or depression or war or conquest of space, but the certain coming of Jesus to end this age and to institute a new order of things.

WE CAN BE SURE OF HIS COMING

That He is coming is sure because He said so. We, of course, cannot know it or prove it any other way, except to take His word for it. But we can trust Him completely because of the undeniable facts of His first coming which clearly proved His divine character. To anyone who believes in Him as the Son of God the predictions of His word are plain enough to make us very sure that He is coming back in person in visible form.

He said, "If I go . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself" (John 14:3). "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with his angels; then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matt. 16:27). "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory" (Matt. 25:31). "They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:30b). Under oath in court, on trial for His life, Jesus said, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming of the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26:64).

He made several parables for the purpose of emphasizing the importance of His coming and the need for being watchful and ready for it. "As in the days of Noah . . . so shall the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:37-42; Luke 17:26-30). The householder and the thief; the faithful and the wicked servants (Matt. 24:43-51). The foolish virgins (Matt. 25:1-13). The parables of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) and of the pounds (Luke 19:11-27).

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Angels said, "This same Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

Those whom Jesus sent to preach the gospel He also inspired by His Spirit to guide them into all truth and to make known to them things to come (John 16:13-15). Throughout their preaching and their writings they taught that Jesus was coming again *in person*. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (I Thess. 4:16). See also Acts 3:20,21; I Per. 1:7; 5:4; II Pet. 3:3,4; James 5:7; Heb. 9:28; I John 2:28; Rev. 1:7; I Cor. 1:7; 4:5; 11:26; 15:23; Phil. 3:20, 21; Col. 3:4; I Thess. 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:16-18; 5:1-4, 23; II Thess. 1:7-10; 2:1,8; I Tim. 6:14,15; II Tim. 4:1,8; Tit. 2:13. The apostolic writers not only speak plainly and directly of Christ's coming, but they also refer to His "appearing", "being manifested," His "presence," the "revelation" of Christ, and the "day of Christ." (e.g. Phil. 1:6,10; I Cor. 5:5; II Thess. 2:2; Heb. 10:25).

Some men say they count 318 times that His coming is mentioned in some manner in the 260 chapters of the New Testament. No doubt some of that number are obscure references, and of some it may be very doubtful whether they are interpreted correctly when they are applied to the second coming of Christ. But definite and plain predictions of that great event are made literally dozens of times such manner that they could not be fulfilled in the conversion or death of individuals, in the beginning of the church, the coming of the Holy Spirit, or the judgment upon Jerusalem. They emphatically predict things which have not happened yet and they could not point to a secret or "spiritual" or invisible coming.

WHEN? NO ONE KNOWS.

When He is coming, we do not know, because He has not told us that (Matt. 24:36). He has continually emphasized the need to be ready at all times because no one will know when He is to come (See Rev. 16:15; I Thess. 5:2,3; Matt. 24:27-51; 25:1-13). He will come as a thief in the sense that His coming will be unannounced, unexpected and sudden. In the same sense it will be as travail upon a woman with child.

But he has assured us that when He does come it will be evident to all, with power and great publicity, as the lightning in the east

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is seen unto the west, with a great shout and the sound of the trumpet (Rev. 1:7; Matt. 24:26,27,30,31; I Cor. 15:52; I Thess. 4:16).

WHY HE WANTS US TO KNOW OF THE FUTURE

Our Lord wants us to know some things about the future. He wants us to be warned and prepared for crisis that must come. He wants us to understand the nature of our salvation, and know that this world is not our hope or our permanent home. He wants us to look forward with hope and longing to His coming in glory and to our perfect union with Him whom we love. He wants us to realize that He Himself is our destiny and our exceeding great reward. He wants us to have assurance and comfort in the afflictions and sorrows of life.

He would have us all to be as strong and steadfast as Paul, by having his kind of faith in the "far more exceeding weight of eternal glory" and by looking with him "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." Read II Cor. 4:16 to 5:11.

Daily consciousness of the imminent return of Christ will surely prompt more godly living, promote more sacrificial giving, produce more patience and even rejoicing under trials, and purify our motives in all that we do. We need to realize that we do not live our lives to be seen of men, or to "get by" in the world; but we do all our works under His watchful eye, and we shall soon stand before Him to give account.

The heart of Christianity is the vital power of faith, hope, and love—all centered upon Jesus Christ. Any one who does not believe His word enough to hope for His coming and to love His appearing will surely lack the personal force of Christ in his life.

The predictions of His coming should be even to the unbeliever an inducement to heed more seriously Christ's commands and claims, because His coming is a threat to the disobedient as well as a promise to the faithful.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN HE COMES?

The Lord has revealed only a few particulars and some things of the general nature of the great events which will take place when He comes. No doubt there are many things in store for us that we have not been told because we could not grasp and appreciate them now. Very likely some of the things predicted will not happen just as we imagine them. It is difficult, if not impossible, to tell in what order or how close together the following events will come to pass. But we are told that in connection with His coming or after it: the

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dead will be raised (I Thess. 4:16; John 5:28,29); the saved will be with the Lord (John 14:3; I Thess. 4:17); the bodies of the redeemed will be changed into the likeness of the body of His glory (Phil. 3:21; I Cor. 15:52-54; Rom. 8:23-25); the world and the works therein will be burned up (II Pet. 3:11-13); a crown of glory will be given to the faithful (II Tim. 4:8; I Pet. 5:4); Christ will execute judgment upon all men (II Tim. 4:1; Jude 14,15; Acts 10:42; 17:31; John 5:22-29; II Cor. 5:10); He will reject many who thought they were saved (Matt. 7:21-23; 22:13,14; Luke 13:25-27; cf. Matt. 13:40-43 and 47-50); the door of salvation will be forever closed (Luke 13:25-28); there will be grief and terror in the hearts of many because they are unprepared to meet Him (Matt. 24:30,50,51; 25:30; Rev. 1:7; 6:14-17; Luke 13:28; I Thess. 5:3; II Thess. 1:7-9).

Whether or not all men are to be judged at one time, or whether there will be two judgments, or three or five, is relatively unimportant. Probably no man knows just how and when it will all be done, but the Lord will take care of it without our figuring it out. The important matter is to be ready for judgment by being in Christ, and to know that "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10).

Let every sinner remember this fact, and contemplate what it will mean—our Savior will be our Judge! He who once served the sentence of death for us, who now makes intercession for us at the throne of God, who invites all to come unto Him and be saved—it is He who will come in flaming fire, rendering vengeance upon all that know not God and obey not the gospel!

II. A SECRET RAPTURE CONSIDERED

By Seth Wilson

I truly desire to see people awakened to the reality and tremendous significance of the second coming of our Lord. But to put all the emphasis upon a secret rapture and mysterious disappearance of the saved, as if that were certainly the nature of Christ's coming, is to teach as Bible truth what is at best a doubtful, speculative view of the implications of the Bible.

The Lord's coming is surely and clearly taught; so also is the separation of the saved from the unsaved, the resurrection of those

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in Christ, the transformation of the bodies of both the living and the resurrected saints, and their rising to meet Him, ever to be with Him. But after much restudy of the Scriptures, I agree with R.A. Torrey's statement: "The doctrine of the secret rapture of believers does not seem to have much support in Scripture."

I have seen the Baptista motion picture on the rapture and have heard the idea for years. I have had no particular reason to oppose it, and have no feeling against it, if that is what the Lord wants to do; but I just can't find that the Scripture teaches it. I have the MILLENIUM BIBLE by Biedewolf before me; and it makes the fullest study of all the implications which men have found in or read into every prophetic passage. It certainly favors a premillennial view with separate resurrections, a period of tribulation, etc.; but its comments on the rapture are divided, uncertain, and confused, not at all strong for a secret rapture.

I Thess. 4:13-17 does indeed teach that the saved (both living and resurrected) will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air at His coming, but there is no indication that it is silent and secret so that it leaves the rest of the world mystified by their absence. It says that the Lord will come with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God. How can we know that this coming to meet His saints is a different coming from that described in Rev. 1:7 where it says: "Every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him"? He said that we should not believe it if one said, "He is in the secret chambers." "For as lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be." (Matt. 24:26,27; Luke 17:23,24).

Those who hold that Matt. 24:30—"They *shall see* the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory"—refers to a third coming (or to a second phase of His coming) seven years after He has taken the saved out of the earth, run into serious difficulties. They must make verse 31 refer to a group called "his elect" who are not of the church or the redeemed at His coming. The parable of the ten virgins surely does not indicate that those who are unprepared at His coming will be gathered in later. I Thess. 5:3 indicates that the coming of the Lord which brings sudden destruction upon the wicked is to be in a time when they are saying, "Peace and safety," which hardly seems to be at the climax of seven years of terrible tribulations after all the righteous have disappeared.

The Scriptures most cited as teaching this seven years of tribulation are from Daniel and Matt. 24:21, 29, which in context refer to

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the Jews and the fall of Jerusalem. In Luke 17:22-37 Jesus told His disciples that they would desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, but would not be able to, until He comes upon both the godly and the ungodly by surprise when they are buying, selling, planting, and building, apparently unmindful of any impending judgments.

The Bible does not say that Jesus is coming once "for his saints" and again "with his saints." The passage in I Thess. 4:13-17, which is supposed to teach the former, says, "even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him." If "to be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord" (see II Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21-23), then, when the Lord comes to unite the dead saints with the living ones and to transform the bodies of both (see I Cor. 15:51; Phil. 3:20, 21), why wouldn't He bring the saints with Him? Isn't it also possible that Jude 14—"The Lord came with ten thousands of His holy ones" (this is the American Standard Vers. and "saints" simply means "holy ones")—refers to the angels that come with Him, as stated in Matt. 25:31—"And all the holy angels with him" (see also Matt. 16:27)? Matt. 13:39-41 says He will send the angels to gather the wicked, and Matt. 24:31 also says that when He comes, He will with the sound of a great trumpet send forth His angels to gather His elect from all parts of the world.

The statements about one being taken and another left (Matt. 24:40, 41; Luke 17:34, 35) do not necessarily picture a secret rapture. The word which is translated "taken" in each of these verses is the same word exactly which is used in John 14:3—"I will come again and receive you unto myself." These verses may only say that of people who live and work together here, one will be received by the Lord and the other left out, when Jesus comes for His own.

When the Scripture says that His coming will be as a thief in the night, it explains that it means suddenly and unannounced upon those who are not looking for Him, but it never indicates that it means stealthily and unseen. (See I Thess. 5:1-3; Luke 12:39-46; Matt. 24:42-44; Rev. 16:15). In fact, Peter says: "But the day of the Lord shall come as a *thief*; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise; and the elements shall be dissolved with a fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up." All this comes "as a thief!"

There may be some time between events that are associated with the Lord's coming, the resurrection of the saved, the resurrection of the wicked, the judgments of men, destruction of the earth, estab-

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lishment of a new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness (II Pet. 3:13), etc. But the time tables which men offer on the "rapture," the "tribulation," the "revelation of Christ with the saints," the "millenium," the "judgment of the nations," etc., is all speculative. It is not found in the Scripture and the advocates of all these things cannot find grounds enough to agree among themselves concerning the order and timing of them.

Even the expression in I Thess. 4:16—"the dead in Christ shall rise first"—does not necessarily depict a second resurrection. The contrast which is stated in the context is between the living believers and the dead believers. The living will not precede the dead, because the dead will be raised first. Then (next) the living will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. Nothing at all is said about the resurrection of the unbelievers in the entire chapter.

I know that Rev. 20:5 says, "The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection." I am not at all sure exactly what many verses of this chapter refer to, although their general intent is clear. But I do notice that it does not say, or even clearly imply, that the reigning with Christ for one thousand years to take place upon the earth. And it does not say, or even clearly imply, that the thousand years of reign begins at the second coming of Christ. It says that John saw the "souls" of martyrs and of undefiled worshippers of Jesus reigning with Him. Jesus is reigning even now, at the right hand of God, far above all rule, and authority, and power (Eph. 1:20-23). Long ago He told the church in a letter, that He had overcome and sat down on His Father's throne with him. (Rev. 3:21). Jesus said on earth that He was a king, and that His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:33-37). He also solemnly promised that the kingdom would come with power while many that heard Him speak were still alive (Mark 9:1). The apostles preached that the Christians of their day were in the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13; Rom. 14:17), although they looked forward to the kingdom of the future also (II Pet. 1:11, and others). They considered that the universal gospel of their day fulfilled the prophecy of Amos 9:11, 12 about God's building again the tabernacle of David (Acts 15:15-18). Rev. 1:6 cites it as a fact in John's day that "He made us to be a kingdom and priests." They even speak (rather mystically) of the fact that He has raised us up with Christ and made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6). The first resurrection of Rev. 20:5 could be the resur-

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rection of the believer when he is "raised with him (Christ)" and "made alive together with him" (Col. 2:12,13; 3:1; Eph. 2:5). Or why couldn't it?

III. WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN JESUS COMES BACK?

By Wilbur Fields

1. Every eye will see him. Rev. 1:7
 - a. He will come visibly. Matt. 24:27
 - b. He will come with angels (Matt. 16:27), and with clouds, and power, and great glory. (Matt. 24:30)
2. He will come with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel (Michael; Jude 9), and the trumpet of God. I Thess. 4:16; Matt. 24:31; I Cor. 15:52
3. Many will wail when they see Him. Rev. 1:7
4. All who are in the graves will come forth. John 5:28-29
 - a. Both the just and the unjust. Acts 24:15
 - b. The dead are raised incorruptible. I Cor. 15:52
 - c. The dead in Christ are resurrected first, before we that remain are caught up. I Thess. 4:16-17.
5. Our bodies shall be instantly changed to become immortal (I Cor. 15:52-53), powerful (I Cor. 15:43), and spiritual (I Cor. 15:44).
6. The saved shall be caught up into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. I Thess. 4:17. Angels will gather together the Lord's chosen ones. Matt. 24:31.
7. There will be a separation on earth. The saved will be taken and the wicked left. Matt. 24:40-41; 13:49; Luke 17:34-36.
8. Angels shall gather the wicked, like reapers gather up tares. Matt. 13:40-41.
9. All nations shall be gathered before the judgment throne. Matt. 25:31-32.
10. The judgment will follow. Matt. 25:33-46; Rev. 20:11-13.
 - a. Christ will be the judge. Matt. 25:31-32; Acts 10:42; John 5:22.
 - b. At the judgment those who are saved will face no condemnation, and have no sins to give account for. But they

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will be judged to determine the reward of their works. John 5:24. Romans 8:1; Hebrews 8:12; I Corinthians 3:14; II Cor. 5:10.

11. The wicked shall be cast into the lake of fire. Rev. 20:15; Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43-48.
12. The present earth and heaven shall be pass away. II Peter 3:10, 12; Rev. 20:11; Hebrews 12:26-27.
13. A new heaven and new earth will be revealed. II Peter 3:13; Rev. 21:1.
14. Christ will deliver the kingdom (the church) to the Father. I Cor. 15:24.
15. The saints will enter into the city, New Jerusalem. Rev. 22:14.
16. The New Jerusalem will come down out of heaven. Rev. 21:2, 10. (Presumably it will come down to the new earth. Note Rev. 21:24-26.)
17. The saints will serve God in the new heaven and earth forever and ever. Rev. 22:3; 21:24-26.

"Therefore, be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of Man cometh." Matt. 24:44.

IV. THE COMING OF THE LORD WITH ALL HIS "SAINTS"

By Wilbur Fields

In our notes on I Thess. 3:13 we stated our opinion that the *saints* who will come with Jesus from heaven will be the angels, his "holy ones."

While this teaching has been held by most Bible interpreters throughout the centuries, it is now regarded almost as modernism by some people.

As a sample of the teaching now popular among some people, we quote here from a widely circulated series of prophecy lessons:

"We need to ever keep in mind that there will be a 'second coming' and a 'third coming' of Christ, which some writers prefer to speak of as the first and second phase of Christ's return." "He will return 'FOR his saints,' and he will also return 'with His saints.' When He returns FOR His saints, then it is that He comes only in the clouds. But when He returns with his saints, then it is that His feet will once again stand on the Mt. of Olives."

According to this system of interpretation, the following series of events will occur when Christ comes:

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- (1) He will come FOR His saints in the clouds.
- (2) The dead in Christ will be resurrected.
- (3) The resurrected and the living saints will be taken up out of the world to be with Christ, leaving the unsaved behind. (This taking up of the saints is usually called the "rapture," a term not found anywhere in the Scriptures. See brother Seth Wilson's fine article, "A Secret Rapture Considered," in this book.)
- (4) Following the "rapture" there will (supposedly) be a period of 7 (or $3\frac{1}{2}$) years, during which the Antichrist will rule the world, and a Great Tribulation will occur.
- (5) Then Christ is to return WITH his saints to punish sinners and reign for a thousand years (the millenium).

May we offer three objections to this system of interpretation.

(1) We observe first of all that the Scripture in NO place makes any distinction between Christ's coming FOR His saints, and his coming WITH His saints. It does not even use the expression, "coming FOR His saints." We would be the first to acknowledge that Christ is coming to take up His saints to be with Him, but to make a distinction between that coming and the coming WITH His saints is to make a distinction where the Scriptures make none.

(2) I Thess. 3:13 almost utterly rules out the possibility that Christ is coming back with his people, after having taken them out of the earth previously.

In that verse Paul prayed that the Thessalonian Christians might be established unblameable in holiness *at the coming* of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

Now surely no one could say that saints who had been resurrected and transformed in body, and taken up to be with Jesus would need to be further established unblameable in holiness. Only if they were here on earth would they need to be established in holiness when the Lord comes.

Unless the saints (referring to the people) could be in two places at once, we cannot interpret the phrase, "with all his saints," to mean "with all his *people*."

They would have to be on earth where they needed to be established unblameable in holiness. And they would have to be with the Lord coming down from heaven at the same time, if the idea is true that the Lord is coming with all his people.

(3) Thirdly, the word "saints" is frequently applied to angels as well as people.

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The word "saint" means "holy one." Note these references where it refers to angels:

(a) Deut. 33:2—"And he came with ten thousands of *saints*." (This describes how the Lord came down on Mt. Sinai.)

(b) Dan. 4:13—"I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and behold, a watcher and an *holy one* came down from heaven." See also Dan. 4:23. The word here translated "holy one," is the same word as is elsewhere translated "saint."

(c) Daniel 8:13—"Then I heard one *saint* (or holy one) speaking, and another *saint* said unto that certain *saint* which spake." These *saints* were the angels that revealed to Daniel the visions.

(d) Psalm 89:5-7—"And the heavens shall praise thy wonders O Lord; thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the *saints* (holy ones). For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the *saints* (holy ones), and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him."

(e) Luke 9:26—"For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the *holy angels*." See also Mark 8:38 and Rev. 14:10. The word translated "holy" in all of these verses is the same word that is translated *saints* in many other places.

Many verses teach plainly that Christ is coming back with the angels. See II Thess. 1:7; I Thess. 4:16; Mark 8:38; Matt. 16:27; 25:31; Luke 9:26. But the only way that men can "prove" that *people* will be WITH Christ when He comes back is to interpret dogmatically the word *saints* to mean "people," when it does not necessarily refer to people at all.

The view that the "saints" (or holy ones) who will come with Jesus are angels adds light to the following verses:

(1) Zechariah 14:5—"And the Lord my God shall come, and all the *saints* with thee." (The American Stan. Vers. renders this verse: "And all the holy ones with thee.")

(2) Jude 14—"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment—." (Amer. Stan. Vers. has "with ten thousands of his holy ones.")

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We agree with R. C. Foster in his statement: "We do not read of two comings of Christ at the end of time, but one great coming on the clouds of heaven even as He ascended, and then the judgment of all the world." (THE FINAL WEEK, p. 114).

V. "THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID"

By Wilbur Fields

"The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." Luke 1:32

These words were spoken by the angel Gabriel to Mary, when he told her that she would conceive and bring forth a son, Jesus.

Many people feel that this prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, and that Jesus has not yet received the throne of his father David. They look forward to a time when Jesus will sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem, and reign for a thousand years.

Sometimes the question is asked, "Who is now sitting on the throne of David?" The answer that is sought in many cases is, "No one."

However, we think that Jesus Christ IS now ruling from the throne of David. Please let us give you five reasons why we think this:

I. *The throne of David is the same as the throne of God.*

- a. Exodus 19:3-6—When the Israelites were constituted into a nation, they became a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation." God was their king.
- b. I Sam. 8:7—When the Israelites demanded that they have a king to rule over them, God said, "They have rejected *me*, that I should not reign over them."
- c. II Sam. 3:10—This is one of many passages that uses the expression "throne of David."
- d. I Chronicles 29:23—"Then Solomon sat on the *throne of the Lord* as king instead of David his father."
- e. Jeremiah 22:30—God spoke of King Jehoiachin (Coniah) in this manner: "For no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah."
- f. These Scriptures point out that God was the original king of Israel. But the Israelites rejected God from being king over them, and chose a king of their own. God permitted this, and the throne of God was to that degree moved from heaven to earth. Thus we find the throne of David being called the throne of the Lord. David's throne was God's

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throne. After the time of Coniah and the destruction of Jerusalem, the kingdom was withdrawn from Jerusalem and Judah. The throne of David, the throne of God, was gone from the earth.

II. *Christ was to receive his kingdom in heaven, not on earth.*

- a. Daniel 7:13, 14—"I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days (who is God), and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him." (Notice that Christ received his kingdom when he was before God in heaven.)
- b. Luke 19:11-12—This Scripture tells how Christ, as he drew near to Jerusalem for His last visit, told a parable, because some thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. In his parable He told how a nobleman had to go into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom. The nobleman represents Christ himself. Christ had to go into a far country, heaven, to receive his kingship, and this He did when he ascended back into heaven. He is king there now. And, as in the parable, He will return, not so much to reign (for He is already doing that now), but to judge his servants. Luke 19:15
- c. Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world." John 18:36. We do not look for a worldly, material manifestation of Christ's kingdom.

III. *The time for the establishment of the Lord's kingdom is long since past.* If Christ is not king by now, and isn't ruling from David's throne, then the word of God has come to nought.

- a. Daniel 2:44—The kingdom of God was to be established in the days of the fourth world empire, the Roman. The kingdom of God was to be established "in the days of these kings." The Roman empire fell in 486 A.D. If Christ's kingdom were not established before then, the word of God has come to nought.

(Incidentally, the four empires of which Daniel prophesied were the Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, and Roman.)

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- b. The kingdom was nigh (or near) in the time of John the baptist. Matt. 3:2.
 - c. The kingdom was to be established during the lifetime of those living while Christ was still on earth. Mark 9:1. Surely Christ told the truth. Surely his kingdom was established, and he sits upon the throne.
- IV. *After the day of Pentecost, when the church was established, the kingdom of Christ is always spoken of as being in existence.*
- a. Before Pentecost, the kingdom is spoken of as future. See Mark 15:43; Acts 1:6.
 - b. After Pentecost, it is spoken of as existing.
 - (1) Col. 1:13—"And hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."
Note—The kingdom of Christ is also the kingdom of God. See Eph. 5:5.
 - (2) Rev. 1:9—"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos."
 - (3) Hebrews 12:28—"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved——."
 - (4) Acts 8:12—"But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ——."
- V. *The Scriptures indicate that Christ is now ruling on the throne.*
- a. Rev. 3:21—"To him that overcometh will I (Jesus) grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Remember that the throne of David and the throne of God were the same throne.)
 - b. I Cor. 15:25-26—"For he (Christ) must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (Of course Christ will destroy death by the resurrection of the dead.) These verses indicate that Christ's reign is to *end* when the dead are raised, instead of just beginning following the resurrection, as some teach.
 - c. Mark 16:19—"So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God."

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- d. Psalm 110:1-2—"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: *rule* thou in the midst of thine enemies." (This is a clear prophecy about Jesus. See Heb. 1:13. Note that Jesus is to *rule* while he is at the right hand of God in heaven. He is sitting in his Father's throne, which is also the throne of David. How can anyone say that no one is now sitting on the throne of David?)
- e. Acts 10:36—"Jesus Christ: (he is *Lord* of all:)"
 "Hail to the *King* we love so well!
 Hail! Immanuel!
 Glory and honor and majesty,
 Wisdom and power be unto thee,
 Now and evermore;—
 King of Kings and Lord of Lords,
 All hail, Immanuel!
 (D. R. Van Sickle)

VI. QUESTIONS ABOUT "SPIRIT" AND "SOUL"

By Wilbur Fields

1. Is there any difference between *spirit* and *soul*?
2. What are the words which are translated as *spirit* and *soul*?
3. What does the word *spirit* mean and refer to?
4. Does man have a *spirit*?
5. Can the spirit of man exist apart from his body?
6. What does the word *soul* mean?
7. What is the relation of soul to spirit?
8. Is the soul immortal?

Question 1—Is there any difference between *spirit* and *soul*? Or are they two names for the same thing?

There surely is a difference between them. Otherwise Paul could not have written in I Thessalonians 5:23: "Your whole *spirit* and *soul* and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Neither could he have written in Hebrews 4:12 that the word of God pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit.

Question 2—What are the words which are translated as *spirit* and *soul*?

Words translated *spirit* are *ruach* (a Hebrew word in the Old Testament), and *pneuma* (a Greek word in the New Testament.)

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These two words have almost identical meanings. (Another Hebrew word which is translated *spirit* a few times is *neshamah*, which means "breathing" or "breath.")

Words translated *soul* are *nephesh* (Hebrew), and *psuche* (Greek). These words also have almost identical significance.

Don't let these Greek and Hebrew words scare you. Wherever they may be used in the remaining questions, they will be explained.

Question 3—What does the word *spirit* mean and refer to?

- a. The word "spirit" (in both Greek and Hebrew) means "wind" or "breath." See Gen. 8:1 and John 3:8 for examples of this.
- b. Then sometimes it signifies anger or fury, as in the expression, "the *blast* of thy nostrils." (Job 4:9). It is used this way in II Thess. 2:8.
- c. Then *spirit* refers to mental or moral qualities in general, as in Ex. 28:3, "spirit of wisdom," and Ezek. 11:9, "a new spirit."
- d. The word "spirit" is applied to apparitions (or ghosts). See Luke 24:37.
- e. The word applies to the life-principle, applying alike to God, who is spirit (John 4:24), to angels who are ministering spirits (Heb. 1:14), and to man's life-principle.

Question 4—Does man have a "spirit"?

Emphatically he does.

- a. Zechariah 12:1—"The Lord formeth the *spirit* of man within him."
- b. Numbers 16:22—"O God, the God of the *spirits* of all flesh."
- c. James 2:26—"As the body without the *spirit* is dead."
- d. Job 32:8—"There is a *spirit* in man: and the inspiration of the almighty gives them understanding."
- e. Man is a creature to whom life has been imparted by God's spirit. Our life is only a result of God's breath (spirit) upon us. Our spirit and breath is God's breath. Job 34:14—"If he (God) set his heart upon man to gather unto himself his *spirit* and his breath, all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust." See also Isa. 2:22.

Question 5—Can the spirit of a man exist apart from his body?

Yes.

- a. Hebrews 12:23—"Ye are come to the "*spirits* of just men made perfect." (Even Paul the apostle never considered he was perfect on earth. Phil. 3:12. But Christians have come into fellowship with the spirits of saints who are dead to earth, but made perfect before God.)

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- b. I Pet. 3:19—"He (Christ) went and preached unto the *spirits* in prison." (These "spirits in prison" were the people who had been disobedient to the word of God in the time of Noah.)
- c. Acts 7:59—"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." (Stephen was dying as he spoke these words.)
- d. Ecclesiastes 12:7—At death, "then shall the dust (our bodies) return to the earth as it was; and the *spirit* shall return unto God who gave it." (There is something within man that the gravedigger cannot bury. It is the spirit of man.)
- e. Numerous other Scriptures go along with this teaching that the real person can exist apart from his body. Note II Peter 1:13-14: "As long as I am in this *body*, knowing that shortly, I must put off this tabernacle (or body)." Also II Cor. 5:9, "We labor, that whether present or *absent* (from the body) we may be accepted of him." (There is more on this subject under question 8 in this article.)

Question 6—What does the word *soul* mean?

This word has many meanings and applications. It cannot be adequately defined by just one definition, unless a very broad definition is given.

The Hebrew word *nephesh* (translated "soul") is found 754 times in the Old Testament (according to Young's Concordance), and is translated 35 different ways. It is translated "soul" 428 times (in the King James version), "life" 119 times, "person" 30 times, "self" 19 times, "heart" 15 times, "mind" 15 times, "creature" 9 times, "dead body" 8 times, and 27 other ways not more than five times each. In one place (Isa. 19:10) it is even rendered (and obviously well) as "fish."

It is a common error to take a meaning of *nephesh* which it has in some references, and then to argue that that is its meaning always. For example, some say that *nephesh* just means the "person himself." One writer arguing for this view says that when God created man, the combination of the body and the breath of life BECAME a living soul. "Only as these are brought together do we have a living breathing being or person. The Bible use of the word "soul" makes it clear that this, and *only* this, is its meaning." We agree that the Bible uses the word *nephesh* (or soul) to mean the "person himself." But it is just plain wrong to say that that is its only meaning.

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Likewise some say that the *soul* is the animal life which is in the blood. It is a fact that the word *nephesh* (soul) has this meaning in many references. But this is NOT its only meaning.

Some interpreters (especially those who believe in soul sleeping and annihilation) refer to the references (there are very few of them) where the word *nephesh* (soul) refers to a dead body, and then try to imply that that is what the word "soul" means in other references.

In an effort to determine what the word *nephesh* (or soul) refers to in the Bible, I have gone over all its occurrences, plus the 103 occurrences of *psuche* (soul) in the New Testament. In most cases we can tell by the context what the word refers to. For example if a Scripture passage speaks about laying up words in your heart and *soul*, we naturally interpret the word soul to mean "mind" in that reference, as indeed it does in several references.

My survey of all the occurrences of *nephesh* and *psuche* leads me to this conclusion: *Nephesh* (soul) *refers to any and all of the manifestations of life, both human and animal, material, mental, or emotional, both in the body and out of the body.* (That is a broad definition, if you ever read one.)

I do not claim my analysis is infallible. For in many cases the word *nephesh* can have more than one significance in one reference. But here is a list of some of the most frequent applications of the word *nephesh*, as they appeared to me:

- (1) Approximately 215 times in the O.T. *nephesh* refers to a person or the person himself. Certainly a whole person is a manifestation of life. Deut. 10:22; Gen. 12:5. Compare Acts 2:41.
- (2) Approximately 195 times it refers to the animal life which is in the blood, or just to "life." See Gen. 19:20; Lev. 17:11; Deut. 12:23. Animals have *nephesh* as well as humans. Prov. 12:10; Gen. 1:20, 30. Note—If the *nephesh* is *in* the blood, manifestly it cannot always mean "the person himself."
- (3) Approximately 115 times it refers to man's deep innermost nature. Ps. 103:1: "Bless the Lord, O my soul." See also Deut. 11:13; Song 1:7.
- (4) Approximately 53 times *nephesh* apparently means emotions or feelings. I Sam. 30:6; I Sam. 2:33 (where it is rendered "heart"); Zech 11:8.

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- (5) About 18 times it means "mind" (and is translated that way 15 times). Deut. 11:18; Gen. 23:8.
- (6) About 17 times it means "appetite." Prov. 23:2; Deut. 12:15; Micah 7:1.
- (7) Fourteen or more times it refers to God's nature, being, and feelings. Lev. 26:11; Ps. 11:5; Gen. 1:21.
- (8) It means "creature" at least 12 times. Gen. 1:21.
- (9) It means "affection" approximately 9 times. Ezekiel 23:18; Gen. 34:3.
- (10) In eight references it is rendered "dead body." Lev. 21:11; Num. 6:6; 9:6,7,10; 19:11, 13. Haggai 2:13. The fact that a dead body could be called *nephesh* would seem to be due to the fact that the body becomes so closely identified with the person, that the body itself comes to be spoken of as the person. We still today speak about burying people when they die, although we do not mean to imply that we have buried the person's spirit, mind, feelings, etc.
- (11) In contrast to the use of *nephesh* to describe a dead body, in several references it refers to the life-principle, or spirit, which can depart from the body and exist apart from the body. In such references the word *soul* is almost synonymous with *spirit*. Note these references:

Gen. 35:18—"And it came to pass as her *soul* was in departing——."

I Kings 17:21,22—"Elijah cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord, my God, I pray thee, let this child's *soul* come unto him again——and the *soul* of the child came into him again." (If the soul cannot exist apart from the body, how could it have come back into him again?)

Prov. 23:14—"Thou shalt beat him (thy son) with the rod and shalt deliver his *soul* from hell." (The word "hell" in this reference refers to Sheol, the unseen world, the abode of the dead.) Punishing a child will not save him from dying and going into the unseen world. Hence this verse must refer to some place besides the grave where the soul can go into a place of security, if he has been chastised as a youth and directed to live in the right way.

See also Psalm 16:10 and Isa. 38:17.

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(12) *Nephesh* means "pleasure" in about 4 cases. Ps. 105:22.

There are a few other meanings of the word *nephesh* in the O.T., each used only a few times.

A study of the 103 occurrences of *psuche* (soul) in the New Testament indicates that it has a significance practically identical with *nephesh* in the O.T. *Psuche* is translated as "soul" 58 times, "life" 40 times, "mind" 3 times, "heart" once, and "heartily" once.

Besides the references in the Old Testament which show that the *soul* can live on after death and does not require a body to have identity, these New Testament references confirm the same:

- (1) Matt. 10:28—"Fear not them which can kill the body, but are not able to kill the *soul*." This verse could have no meaning if the soul ceased to exist at physical death.
- (2) Luke 12:20—"This night thy *soul* shall be required of thee."
- (3) Rev. 6:9; 20:4—In these verses John tells about seeing the *souls* of them that had been slain.
- (4) Rev. 18:13—"merchandise—of slaves and souls of men." Manifestly the word "soul" in this verse does not mean "persons;" for it is contrasted with slaves, who are living beings up for sale.
- (5) See also Acts 2:27; 31, where Christ's soul is said not to have been left in Hades. His *soul* here is almost synonymous with his *spirit*, which he commended unto God when he died. Luke 23:46.
- (6) I Peter 4:19.

In summing up the meaning of "soul," let us repeat again. The word *soul* refers to any and all of the manifestations of life, both human and animal, material, mental, or emotional, both in the body and out of the body. It is a very inclusive word.

Question 7—What is the relation of soul to spirit?

- (1) Sometimes the two words mean practically the same thing. The *spirit* can be called soul because the soul is the manifestation of the life produced by the spirit. Thus it is used in Acts 2:27; Rev. 6:9; 20:4; I Kings 17:21-22; Luke 12:20.

Don DeWelt correctly says, "The *soul*, or *life* in the blood of man is never called *spirit*. But the eternal invisible *spirit* is sometimes called *soul* or *life*." (From YOU AND ME AND GOD.)

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- (2) Man IS not a spirit (as God is), but he HAS a spirit. Man both IS and HAS a soul, which can be surrendered, as Elijah said in I Kings 19:4, "O Lord, take away my life (nephesh)."
- (3) When the word *soul* refers to animal creatures, or to the life which is in the blood, it has little or no relation to *spirit*.
- (4) The soul, or life manifested, is the result of the inbreathing of the divine spirit. The soul is the sum of all the personal manifestations of the life which springs from the spirit. It is our personal identity, and will be preserved at the coming of the Lord Jesus.

Question 8—Is the soul immortal?

As you can understand by what has been said in this article, if by *soul* we refer to animal life or something similar, of course the soul is not immortal and can die. The word soul often means "the person himself," and when used with this meaning, anyone would admit that the soul will die.

However, in those references where the word *soul* is practically synonymous with *spirit*, we would expect to find the soul continuing a conscious existence after physical death, and we do find just that.

We have avoided using the term "immortal soul" because the Scriptures do not use that particular expression, and we desire to speak where the Scriptures speak and be silent where they are silent.

However, this does not cancel out the precious hope of the child of God that when he is absent from the body, he will be at home with the Lord. II Cor. 5:8-9. This cannot refer to our existence after the resurrection, for we shall have a body then. I Cor. 15:44. At death our spirit leaves the body. Then while we are *absent from the body*, we may be present with the Lord (if we have been saved by accepting Christ).

A similar thought is given in Phil. 1:23, where Paul expressed himself as being in a strait (or quandry), desiring both to remain on earth so he could help the Philippians develop in their faith, and a "desire to *depart and to be with Christ*, which is far better." If there is no conscious existence after physical death until the resurrection, this verse does not make much sense. If that were the case, Paul just as well have been patient, for no one will see Christ until the resurrection, and we shall all see Him at the same time.

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We prefer to hold the belief that Stephen evidently held. When Stephen was being stoned to death, he saw the heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." He expected to go where Jesus was, and so do I. Acts 7:55-59.

The Scriptural teaching that we may depart and be with the Lord is one of the greatest comforts of the gospels to the Christian. We thrill to know that we are only two or three heartbeats away from the Lord.

Besides this hope of the future life, there is the ever-present hope that the Lord Jesus may come this day, even before we die.

Both of these hopes are most precious to those who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ, "who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." I Thess. 5:10.

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