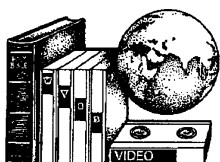


World Video Bible School®

Established 1986



1st THESSALONIANS

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1st THESSALONIANS

∞ Syllabus

I. GENERAL INFORMATION.

- A. Instructor: Don Walker.
- B. This course consists of 17 lessons on 6 DVDs.
- C. Each class is approximately 38 minutes long.

II. DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE.

- A. This is an in-depth study of 1st Thessalonians.
- B. Attention will be given to the second coming of Christ, the fact that we know not when it will be and the necessity of being prepared for that day.
- C. Students will gain a working knowledge of the book and be better able to teach others the truths in it.
- D. Students will examine the possibility and seriousness of apostasy.
- E. Students will be exhorted to godliness.

III. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS.

- A. Required.
 - 1. Bible (ASV, KJV or NKJV).
 - 2. 17 video lessons.
 - 3. Course notes.
- B. Optional: Any good (conservative) commentary on 1st Thessalonians.

IV. REQUIREMENTS.

- A. Read the entire book of 1st Thessalonians at least three times.
- B. View all seventeen video lessons in their entirety.

- C. Read the class notes in their entirety.
- D. Complete all memory work (explained below).
- E. Submit a term paper (explained below).
- F. Take one written test.
- G. Have a combined grade average of at least 70.

V. MEMORY WORK.

- A. Memory verses must be written (or typed) from memory, then mailed to VBI for grading. Verses must come from the ASV, KJV or NKJV, according to what you indicated on your VBI enrollment application.
- B. All verses must be written out or typed at one sitting. You may study more and start over if you make a mistake, but you must still start again from the beginning and write all the verses at one sitting.
- C. For this course, the following verses must be memorized:

2:4	3:12,13
2:13	4:16-18
2:19	5:16-22
- D. Memory work is due when you mail VBI your written test.
- E. Hint: A good method of memorizing is to write the verses on flash cards that can be easily reviewed throughout the course.

VI. TESTS.

- A. There is one written test.
- B. When you near the end of the book, contact us and request the test.
- C. When you receive the test, you have permission to look at it and study it.
- D. However, when you take the test, you must do so completely from memory, with no help from notes, Bible, textbook, etc.

VII. TERM PAPER.

- A. Write an overview of 1st Thessalonians, giving the highlights of each chapter and drawing out lessons we should learn.
- B. The paper should be a minimum of five pages, typed and double spaced.
If handwritten, the paper should be a minimum of seven pages, single spaced.
- C. The paper is due when you mail VBI your test and memory work.

VIII. GRADING.

- A. Memory work, term paper and test will be graded separately.
- B. Final grade is based on an average of all assigned work, with the test counting twice.
- C. You may request that a grade be explained or reconsidered, however VBI will have the final say.

IX. CREDIT.

- A. Credit will be issued, including a certificate, only after all work has been successfully completed, tapes have been returned (if rented) and all fees for this particular course have been paid in full.
- B. May God richly bless your study of His inspired word!

INTRODUCTION

- I. Thessalonica Well Known in Grecian World.
 - A. Once known as “Therma.”
 - B. Hot salt springs in the area.
 - C. 315 BC - the city was rebuilt and served as a great naval port station for a time.
 - D. By 146 BC it was the metropolis of the united province.
- II. During the Roman Wars.
 - A. Sided with Antony and Octavius.
 - B. Because of this it was declared a free city (42 BC).
- III. At time of Paul’s Visit.
 - A. Largest city of Macedonia.
 - B. Thus it had great influence.
 - C. Being a major city of the Macedonian Province would provide an opportunity for great good to be brought about for the cause of Christ.
- IV. Acts 17
 - A. Paul enters Thessalonica and goes into the synagogue.
 - B. For three Sabbaths he “reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered” (vs. 2,3).
 - 1. “Reasoned” - (GK – DIALEGOMAI) - To think different things with oneself, to ponder, then to dispute with others (Acts 17:17; 18:4, 19; 19:8,9; 24:25).
 - 2. “Opening” - (GK – DIANOIGO) - To open up completely. Lk 24:32 - “And they said one to another, ‘Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way and while he opened to us the scriptures’?”

3. “Alleging” - (GK – PARATITHEMI) - Literally, to place beside – explaining and giving evidence.
4. In a very practical sense, Paul was debating, using the Old Testament Scriptures to prove his points that Jesus is Christ.

V. The Results:

A. Some believed (verse 4).

1. Jews,
2. Devout Greeks and
3. Chief women.

B. A great uproar (verses 5-9).

1. Jews who believed not.
2. A serious charge (v. 7).
3. An intense hatred for “the way” by these Jews (v. 13).

VI. Great affliction linked with this church’s establishment.

A. 1 Thess 1:6, 2:2; 1 Pet 1:7-9; Jas 1:2-4; Acts 5:41.

CHAPTER ONE

1. **Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

“Paul”

1. Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1).
2. However in the case of the Thessalonians, Paul does not emphasize this point. This may indicate the close tie and respect these brethren had for Paul.
3. Though not exclusively, Paul’s main work would send him to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15,16; 22:21; 1 Cor 15:8-10; 2 Cor 12:11,12).

“Silvanus” (Silas)

We read of Silvanus joining Paul in the later verses of Acts 15, as he begins his second evangelistic journey.

1. Silas would be imprisoned with Paul in Philippi (Acts 16).
2. Silas would be with Paul when he preached in Thessalonica (Acts 17:4).
3. Silas would be in Berea with Paul and would remain there after Paul departed (Acts 17:10-14).
4. Silas will again join Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:5; 1 Cor 1:19).
5. Silvanus would also have tie with the apostle Peter (1 Pet 5:12).

“Timotheus”

1. After Paul and Silas had gone through Syria and Cilicia they came to Derbe and Lystra. Here they met Timothy. Timothy’s mother was a believing Jewess and his father was a Greek (Acts 16:2).
2. Timothy would be in Thessalonica and Berea with Paul, but would remain in Berea with Silas as Paul went to Athens (Acts 17:14).
3. Timothy’s character.

- a. Timothy was Paul's workfellow (Rom 16:21).
- b. Timothy was probably Paul's convert (1 Cor 4:17).
- c. Timothy was a man of unfeigned faith (2 Tim 1:5). Surely his mother, Eunice and grandmother, Lois, would serve an important role in this (2 Tim 1:5, 3:15).
- d. Timothy was probably of a shy disposition (1 Cor 16:10; 2 Tim 1:7).

*All in all, we have been introduced to three great servants of the Lord who would work together to bring glory to God.

"church of the Thessalonians"

- 1. This church was made up of (at least in the beginning) some Jews, a great number of devout Greeks and many chief women (Acts 17:4).
- 2. This congregation of the Lord's church was established in the midst of great conflict (Acts 17:1-9).

"...in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"

- 1. Here we have an interesting twist placed on this relationship. Notice the distinction. Most of the other references simply state "in Christ" or in "Christ Jesus". This seems to indicate the oneness of the Father and the Son. There is also a Divine - Human relationship that is spoken of here.
- 2. This is, at least in part, the idea of Biblical knowledge.

"grace and peace" - "grace" (Greek) - "peace" (Hebrew).

- 1. This looks like a combination of the usual Greek and Hebrew salutation.
 - a. There is a slight change in the Greek which is quite significant. Usually the Greek word CHAIREIN is used as the greeting. Here however, Paul employs the use of CHARIS which means "that which causes joy" (Rom 6:23; 2 Cor 8:9).
 - b. "peace" - (Gk - EIRENE) - This is the word that was used to translate the Hebrew word "SHALOM" when the Old Testament was translated into Greek. There is a greater significance than just "the absence of war." SHALOM considered the "wholeness" or "soundness" of man. It is a term of prosperity, especially in the spiritual realm (Col 1:2).

These originate with Jehovah.

1. Father of grace (1 Pet 5:10) and of peace (Heb 13:20).
 2. Grace and truth from Christ (Jn 1:17) and He is our peace (Eph 2:14).
 3. Eph 1:3; Jas 1:17.
- 2. We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;**

Thanksgiving.

It was a common practice for Paul to express his thanks to the Father for those he had had a part in converting. A simple look at Rom, 1 Cor, Eph, Phil and others of Paul's writings will bring this out. Paul had the ability to rejoice in the faithfulness of others (3 Jn 4; 2 Jn 4).

Prayer Directed to the Father.

Paul always prayed to the Father and never to Jesus (Eph 3:14; 5:20). A Christian must be discerning in distinguishing the divine roles among the members of the Godhead. It is the Father's role and His alone to be addressed in prayer (Mt 6:9).

Privilege of Prayer.

Prayer is a tool Jehovah provides by which we can benefit others also. The brethren were a constant topic in Paul's prayers.

1. Rom 1:9; Eph 1:16; Col 1:3.
2. Phil 1:4 - "Always in every prayer of mine for you making request with joy."
3. Mt 6:5-15; Lk 18:1-8.
4. Mk 1:35; Acts 16:25; 2:42.
5. 1 Tim 2:1; Phil 4:6; 1 Jn 5:14; Jas 5:16.

See handout entitled "It's A War Out There" (4) by Mike Vestal.

- 3. Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;**

*In this verse we find the specific reasons for Paul's thanksgiving on behalf of these brethren.

"work of faith"

1. Much of the religious world stumbles over the tie that faith, works and salvation have to each other.
2. The problem is usually a failure to realize that the word "works" is used in different ways in the Bible.
3. For example:
 - a. Paul will tell us in various passages, that we are not saved by works (Eph 2:9; Rom 4:2,4,5; Gal 3:2,5).
 - b. On the other hand, Paul will tell us in various passages that works are necessary and he will commend various ones for their works (Eph 2:10; Gal 5:6; Phil 2:12).
 - c. Other inspired writers will also point to the import of works (Jas 2:14-26; 3:13; 1 Pet 1:17; 2:12; 1 Jn 3:12; Rev 14:13).
 - d. After carefully considering the above passages, we learn certain points.
 - 1) The word "works" is used in different ways Biblically.
 - 2) It is not simply works and faith that are contrasted, but rather a specific kind of "works" (works of the law) contrasted with a specific kind of "faith" (obedient faith of the New Testament). Notice for example Romans 4. Verses 2,4 and 5 indicate that Abraham's justification was not of works. Yet, notice carefully 4:12-14. Paul clarifies himself and defines the contrast. In fact, Jesus tells us that faith is a type of work that we must do (Jn. 6:28,29).

* For a more detailed study of this subject, one may want to see the WVBS course on "Romans". There is also a separate video study course entitled "Gospel, Law and Grace".

4. Now back to our point. Genuine faith, whether it be before salvation (Rom 10:10) or after salvation from our past sins, will prompt obedient actions on the believer's part (1 Tim 4:6; Heb 10:38,39). These verses express exactly that which the Thessalonians were doing concerning their "work of

faith.” “Their faith had worked to make of them Christians; it had continued to work to keep them in Christ” (Robert R. Taylor, Jr., *Studies in First and Second Thessalonians*, p. 35).

“labor of love”

1. The Bible teaches us that “love” is a motivating force (1 Cor 16:14; 2 Cor 5:14).

“constraineth us” - (Gk - SUNECHEI HEMAS) - Means to hold together, confine, secure, to hold fast, to constrain. Christ’s love holds us together to our task. It was God’s love that prompted Him to give (Jn. 3:16) and it was Christ’s love that caused Him to give (Eph 5:25).
2. We must be a people of love (Col 2:2; 1 Pet 2:17; 1 Pet 1:22).
3. Love must motivate us to action (1 Jn 3:18; 5:3; Jn 14:15). Biblical love is labor in action (Mk 12:29-31; Rev 3:19).

“patience of hope”

1. “patience” - (Gk - HUPOMONE) - To remain under. It is not a negative, passive acquiescence, but an active, manly endurance. It is not the passive sufferer as much as it is the fortitude of a stout-hearted soldier (Jas 5:11 and Job; Rom 2:7; 5:3-5; 15:4; Gal 6:9; Mt 10:22).
2. “hope” - the patience a Christian is to manifest is based upon our hope (Rom 8:20-25; 1 Pet 1:3; 1 Cor 15:19; 1 Tim 1:1). We must realize that in the context of God’s word there is a certainty tied to hope.

“in Christ Jesus”

1. Eph 1:3. Note also the entire chapter of Ephesians 1; Rom 8:1; 2 Tim 2:10; 1 Jn 5:11; Rev 14:13.
2. Another important point here is this: The good we do must be done “in Christ” if we want God to be glorified (Eph 3:21; Jn 14:6; 15:1-8; 2 Tim 2:5).

Seen by Jehovah.

Psa 139; Heb 4:13; 2 Tim 1:12.

4. Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

“brethren”

This expression is found 17 times in 1 Thess. It is found another 7 times in 2 Thess. It is found at least once in each of the eight chapters which comprise these epistles.

“election” - (Gk - EKLEGOMAI)

1. Used by Jesus of His choice of the twelve disciples (Jn 15:16).
2. Used by Paul in Eph 1:4 of God’s eternal selection.
3. Word is found only 7 times in New Testament.
4. Always used of God’s choice of men (Acts 9:15; Rom 9:11; 11:5,7,8; 2 Pet 1:10; 1 Thess 1:4).
5. Whatever form this word takes; verb, noun, etc., it is composed of two words which mean “to say or to speak out”. Thus it means to express one’s choice. In this verse it is this fact: God has spoken out. He has selected His people. The brethren in Thessalonica had become, in response to the will of God, the ones whom God had selected as His own.

“Other verses supply valuable insights for the understanding of this word. Election is by the grace of God (Rom 11:5), is embraced by faith (Rom 11:20; Titus 1:1), as well as obedience to the commands of God (1 Pet 1:2). Election also necessitates the continuance in God’s goodness (Rom 11:22) by manifesting the qualities and virtues of the faithful Christian life (Col 3:12-17). In effect, then, to be the elect of God is to become the kind of persons whom God selects by one’s acceptance of his grace through faith and obedience to his will as well as continuing in his service so as to discharge faithfully one’s responsibility. These are the kinds of people God welcomes into his presence both now and in eternity” (William Woodson, *“Perfecting Faith”*, p. 28).

6. This election is always of character, not of an arbitrary selection (Lk 8:9-15). Jehovah has chosen a type of individual.
7. For a more detailed study of election and foreordination see supplemental handout.

*In verse five Paul will speak of the type of preaching that was done. In verse six he will speak of the reception of that proclaimed gospel.

5. **For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.**

“our gospel”

Gal 1:6-10.

Paul’s use of “our” is not speaking of ownership. But rather it speaks of privilege of proclamation. Cf: 2 Thess 2:14 with 2:4.

“in power and in the Holy Ghost”

The Gospel, we must remember, is heavenly in origin. This being true, it is only reasonable to expect confirmation of the Gospel (Mk 16:20; Heb 2:4). Remember Jn 3:2. We can also introduce here the thought of inspiration (2 Tim 3:16,17; 1 Thess 2:13; 1 Cor 2:13).

The gospel is not simply the preaching of an idea, it is the operation of a power (Rom 1:16; Jas 1:18-21; Acts 20:32; Jn 8:32; 17:17; Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12; 2 Cor 10:4,5).

“assurance”

1. Lk 1:4.
2. John in his first epistle tells us we may **know** (1 Jn 2:21; 3:5; 5:13).
3. 2 Pet 1:19; Heb 2:3; Col 2:2.

Their example.

The gospel was backed up additionally by the conduct of those who proclaimed it (Phil 1:15,16). Envy, strife, contention and insincerity can be conduct possessed when preaching the Christ. But notice what our conduct should be (Phil 1:27). What a tragedy it is for the lives of men to contradict the message proclaimed! Paul’s and his companions’ conduct in Thessalonica only showed consistency with the message proclaimed.

6. **And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.**

“followers”

They had followed the apostles' example of following Christ (1 Cor 11:1; Mt 5:16; 1 Tim 4:16; Eph 5:1; Rev 14:4; 1 Pet 2:21).

Notice the qualities of Jehovah which we are to possess (1 Pet 1:16; Mt 5:48; Mt 6:12; Jas 2:13). James will express the point negatively. However, the point remains: God is merciful and so, too, should be His disciples. There are many other qualities that we could mention here. Suffice it to say, we must fashion ourselves after the example of Deity.

They received the word.

Acts 17:11; Rom 16:17,18; Acts 2:41; Jas 1:21,22.

Much affliction attended their obedience.

One simply needs to read Acts 17:5-9 to see the attitude of the Jews who believed not. Notice Acts 17:13 and see the zeal of these stubborn Jews. Obviously, these unbelieving Jews had afflicted those in Thessalonica who had obeyed the gospel. Suffering and affliction are naturally linked to obedience to the Gospel (Phil 1:29; 2 Tim 3:12; Jn 16:33; 15:18-20).

Joy attended their affliction (1 Pet 4:16; Acts 5:41; Jas 1:2-4; 1 Pet 1:7-9; 2 Tim 2:12; Rom 8:18, 28, 31; Phil 4:13,19).

7. So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

The Thessalonians were examples. One of the greatest tools we will possess in our service to the Lord, whether it be evangelistic service or our work toward the brethren, will be a proper example (Acts 1:1; Ezra 7:10; 1 Tim 4:16; Acts 20:28). These faithful brethren were examples to all who believed.

Macedonia and Achaia

“At this time Greece was divided into these two geographical provinces. Macedonia was the northern part. Achaia constituted the lower portion or the southern part.” (*Studies in First and Second Thessalonians*, Robert R. Taylor, Jr., p. 37).

8. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

These were evangelistic brethren (Prov 11:30; 2 Tim 2:24; Rom 10:18; Col 1:6,23). The Thessalonians had done their part. Evangelism and Mt 7:12.

Their faith was spread abroad. Remember verse 3. Jas 2:17,18. Their work was faith in operation (Eph 2:8-10; Acts 10:34; Gal 5:6).

These brethren had a good report. Paul had converted these brethren. Yet, "For themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you" (1 Thess 1:9a). We must remember that actions speak louder than words anyway.

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

Conversion.

Acts 26:18; Col 1:13; 1 Pet 2:9; Eph 2:1-6; Col 3:5-10; 2 Cor 5:17. In this verse we see the power of the gospel. We are reminded of the complete transformation that is spoken of in Eph 4:28; Rom 12:1,2.

The living and true God

These brethren lived in the very shadow of Mt. Olympus. This was the mythical center of the Greek gods and goddesses. The contrast is made between the false gods and dead idols which they once served to the "living and true God" (Jn 17:3; Acts 17:22-31).

10. And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Waiting for Christ (Acts 1:11; Rev 22:20; 2 Pet 3:3-15). Paul spoke of Christ's coming in 1 Cor 15:23ff.

Resurrection and ascension.

The resurrection is explicitly spoken of here. The ascension to Heaven is implied here. Paul argued for the necessity of the resurrection in 1 Cor 15:12-20. The repercussions of denying the resurrection are unbearable.

Christ's resurrection and our hope (1 Pet 1:3-5). 1 Cor 15:19: - "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." Rev 14:13. This is our hope and it is valid only because of the resurrection.

Jehovah the Father and the resurrection (Rom 1:4; Eph 1:19-23).

The wrath to come.

1. Rev 6:12-17; Mt 3:7 - John the Baptist; Acts 17:31; Rom 2:5; Rev 19:15.

2. "Who shall be able to stand" (1 Thess 5:9; Rom 5:5-9)?
3. Rom 11:22; 1:16; 2:9; 2 Thess 1:7-10.

* The church today could learn from our brethren who lived in Thessalonica. As brother David Lipscomb wrote, "It is a matter of fact that hope in this sense does not hold its ancient place in the hearts of many professed Christians today. So far from being a power of God in the soul, a victorious grace, it is a sure token that God is absent. Instead of inspiring, it discourages; it leads to numberless self-deceptions; men hope their lives are right with God when they ought to search them and see." (*A Commentary on New Testament Epistles*, David Lipscomb, Vol. 5, p. 22).

CHAPTER TWO

1. **For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:**

"Our entrance in unto you was not in vain." Paul begins with the most important point. That is: our work in Thessalonica was fruitful (Acts 17:1-4). Paul preached. The word bore fruit: some Jews; great multitude of devout Greeks; many of the chief women.

2. **But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.**

The results in Philippi.

1. Brought before the magistrates (Acts 16:20).
2. Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned (Acts 16:22,23).

Suffering.

1. This suffering is expressed in two forms: Physical (suffered before); Mental (shamefully entreated). Greek - HUBRUTHENTES - It indicates an attitude of haughty insolence on the part of the oppressors.
2. It will be the lot of the faithful Christian (Phil 1:29; 2 Tim 3:12; 1 Pet 4:4, 16).
3. The treatment Paul and Silas suffered at Philippi would have discouraged and stopped weaker men. Yet, Paul and Silas continued on.

A grand contrast.

1. The Greek word for “but” is “ALLA”. It “is a strong adversative, putting the following words in emphatic contrast with the preceding.” (Leon Morris, *Commentary on 1 & 2 Thessalonians*, p. 42).
2. Their entrance to Thessalonica was quite the opposite from being vain. Just as the persecution these servants experienced brought the opposite result the Jews or the Devil expected.

Bold proclamation.

1. The Gospel is a power (1 Thess 1:5).
2. Weak, shy, timid and unclear proclamation of God’s word does not please Jehovah (Acts 14:1-3; 13:46).
3. The idea here is not only courageous, but also clear (Hab 2:2). We dare not allow the Devil’s assaults to shut our mouths. Nor can we allow persecutions to muddle our speech.

Boldness was “in our God.”

1. What would be the value or the use if it were done separately from Jehovah (Phil 4:13,19; Rom 8:28,31)?
2. Notice Paul’s statement in 2 Cor 5:8-11. The souls of the lost and glory to God were Paul’s driving forces.

*All of this is amazing when we consider that the suffering did not cease when Paul departed Philippi. Even in Thessalonica Paul’s proclamation of the Gospel was “with much contention.”

3. For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

“exhortation”

1. Greek - PARAKLESIS - “Persuasive discourse, calling to one’s side, for admonition, encouragement, or comfort” (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. 4, p. 16).
2. McGarvey and Pendleton write this: “The word ‘exhortation’ has a double significance – it includes the idea of rousing the slothful, and also that of comforting the sorrowful.” (McGarvey & Pendleton, *Commentary on Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians and Romans*, p. 7).

3. Brother Marshall Keeble would say, “To afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted.”

“not of deceit”

1. Notice Jn 18:19-21.
2. Paul’s preaching and his manner could be scrutinized without fear of contradiction (2 Cor 6:8; Rev 12:9). Note Paul’s words in 2 Cor 11:1-15.
3. Deceit is a quality of Satan’s servants. Paul was God’s servant.

“nor of uncleanness”

1 Thess 4:7; Phil 4:8; Mt 5:8; 1 Tim 5:22.

4. **But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.**

“But”

Just the opposite was true.

“As we were allowed of God”

“allowed” - (GK – DOKIMAZO) - To test, prove, to scrutinize (1 Jn 4:1). A form of this word is used twice in this verse.

“trieth” (KJV) is taken from the same word. It means approved after testing. Prov 17:3 - “The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the Lord **trieth** the hearts.”

“to be put in trust with the Gospel”

James reminds us of the grave responsibility of teaching “God’s Word” (Jas 3:1). “The Gospel” (Rom 1:16) **must** be preached (1 Cor 9:16).

“even so we speak”

Jer 22:29; 20:9; 1 Pet 4:11; Titus 2:1; Eph 4:15; 2 Tim 4:2.

“not as pleasing men”

Lk 6:26; Gal 1:10; 2 Tim 4:3 - "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;" (Isa 30:10; Jer 5:31).

"but God, which trieth our hearts"

The only one we should be concerned with pleasing is our God. If He is pleased, then those who are seeking to please Him will also be pleased. God knows our very thoughts and attitudes (Psa 139). Paul preached as one who knew that he would stand before God one day and give an account.

5. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness:

"neither at any time used we flattering words"

"flattering" - (GK – KOOLAKEIA) - This word involves the idea of selfish motives. It is flattery not merely for the sake of giving pleasure to others but for the sake of self-interest. Absalom stole Israel's heart in this fashion.

1. Prov 28:23 - "He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue."

Paul was desirous of lasting results.

2. Prov 29:5 - "A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet."
3. Prov. 26:28 - "A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin."
4. Prov 6:24 - "To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman."

"as ye know"

By reflecting upon Paul's preaching and conduct while among them, they would be able to attest to these claims of Paul.

"nor a cloak of covetousness"

Lk 12:15; Col 3:5; 1 Tim 6:10.

This would be the motivation of false teachers.

1. Titus 1:11 - "Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."
Jude 11, 16.
2. Phil 3:18,19 - "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, **whose God is their belly**, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."
3. Rom 16:17 - "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but **their own belly**; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

"God is witness"

The Thessalonians themselves could attest to the external (no flattering words), yet, God who knows the hearts of men must be witness to the absence of that which was within (the motivation of covetousness).

6. Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

Paul, in this and in the following verses, emphasizes both the purity of motive and the purity of conduct. Their whole desire and action was to please God and to benefit the Thessalonians. The brethren there knew this and God would also stand as witness to these proclamations.

"Nor of men ... nor yet of others"

We must guard ourselves, recognizing the danger, of seeking the favor of and to please men (Gal 1:10; Lk 6:26; 2 Cor 4:3,4).

"when we might have been ... as the apostles of Christ"

The second thought of this verse has challenged many. What is Paul trying to say?

"burdensome" - (GK - BAROS) – Its literal translation is "To be in a burden." Same word used in Gal 6:2. Contrast this with Gal 6:5 - (GK - PHORTION).

"BAROS is here understood (1) in its simple meaning of 'weight,' or 'burden' ... with reference to the Apostle's right of maintenance ... or (2) in its derived sense of 'authority,' 'dignity' ... pointing to the honor they might have expected to

receive at the Thessalonians' hands" (George Milligan, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians*, p. 20). He also says, along with J.B. Lightfoot, that it is probable that Paul has both in mind.

Three lessons to be learned here.

1. Those who proclaim the gospel are worthy to be supported by the gospel (1 Tim 5:17,18; 1 Cor 9:6-15).
2. Render honor to whom honor is due (Rom 13:7). God ordained positions deserve a certain amount of honor and respect. Especially when that position is filled by one such as Paul who will be meticulous in carrying out its responsibilities. Paul was an apostle, sent by Jesus Christ and He deserved respect for that purpose alone, if no other.
3. Paul waived this liberty or God-given right. He did not demand these of the Thessalonians. This causes me to respect him even more.

7. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

Contrast this with the conduct mentioned in verse 5.

Eph 4:15 - "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

Mt10:16 - "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."

Paul's language is beautiful, indeed! There is no mistaking his love, devotion and concern for these brethren.

"Nurse" - (GK - TROPHOS) - Used only here in the New Testament. This word means to give food to. In Lk 23:29 it is used to speak of a mother nursing her baby at her breast.

8. So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

"So being ... you"

"affectionately desirous" - (GK - HOMEIROMAI) - To desire earnestly, to yearn after. The reference goes back to the statement in v. 7 of a nurse cherishing her children.

“imparting the gospel of God”

What a great treasure this is (Rom 1:16; Jas 1:21; Prov 23:23; 2:1-4)!

“but also our own souls”

Mk 8:36,37. Paul would have given his own soul (Rom 9:1-3)!

9. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

“ For ye remember ... travail”

“labor” - (GK - KOPOS), “travail” - (GK - MOCHTHOS). “KOPOS” is a blow or a bruise. It signifies “wear and tear”. MOCHTHOS signifies a struggling to overcome difficulties or hardships. Paul would pay whatever price (Jn 4:31-34).

“laboring night and day”

Did not want to be burdensome. “chargeable” - a burden. Remember verse 6.

“we preached unto you the gospel”

At great cost (1 Cor 9:16). Remember verse 4 of this chapter.

10. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

No one could question their conduct.

1 Pet 2:11, 12; Mt 5:13-16.

“holily”

1 Pet 1:16; 2:9.

“justly”

Isa 56:1 - “Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice.”

Mic 6:8; Acts 24:25.

“unblameably”

Phil 2:15; 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6 (Elders).

Power of a proper influence (Acts 1:1; Ezra 7:10; 1 Tim 4:16; Acts 20:28).

**11. As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you,
as a father doth his children,**

“exhorted, comforted and charged every one of you”

“exhorted”

2:3.

“comforted”

Our world has an abundance of that which causes grief, fear and sorrow.

4:18 - Note the context.

“charged” - (GK - MARTUROMAI)

To bear witness or to testify.

Let us take a moment and notice what we must do with our preaching and teaching.

1 Thess 2:11

- Exhort
- Comfort
- Charge (testify)

2 Tim 4:2

- Reprove
- Rebuke
- Exhort

Jn 16:8-11

- Reprove the world of:
 - sin
 - righteousness
 - judgement

“as a father doth his children,” Remember verse 7. Now we look at a father and his care for children.

1. Not addressed as “Father Paul” (Mt 23:9).
2. Yet Paul was a spiritual father to these Thessalonians (1 Cor 4:15).

12. That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

“That ye would walk worthy of God”

1. Our walk.
Paul uses this thought in other areas of writing (Eph 4:1, 17).
2. “worthy” - (GK - AXIOS) - Of equal weight. Imagine a set of balances with God on one side and our walk or manner of life on the other side (Eph 5:1).

“called you unto His kingdom and glory”

Col 1:13; Mt 16:16-19; Rev 1:9. Premillennialism is a false doctrine!

13. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing”

This is another statement of Paul’s prayer habits (5:17; Phil 4:6; 1:2,3; Rom 1:8; Eph 1:16; Eph 3:14).

“when ye received the word ... heard of us”

Rom 10:14-17; Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16; Lk 24:46-49; 2 Tim 2:2. Paul had preached, they had heard and had received (Acts 2:41).

“received - (GK - DECHOMAI) - Has the idea of welcoming it as well as receiving it. These brethren realized the value of the Gospel and welcomed it unto themselves.

“received it not ... as it is in truth ... word of God”

1 Cor 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16,17; 2 Pet 1:19-21; Jer 1:9.

“which effectually worketh also in you that believe”

Jas 1:18-25; Acts 20:32; 2 Cor 10:4,5; Lk 8:5-8, 11-15.

14. For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:

Results of receiving the word:

1. They became followers (imitators) of the churches in Judea (Acts 1:8). This was the main homeland of the Jews. Jerusalem was its capital.
2. This is where the church began.
3. Jn 15:18-27.
4. The Jewish Christians were persecuted (Acts 4:1-3, 17, 21; 5:25-33, 40-42; 6:8-15; 7:54-60; 8:1-4).
5. The Thessalonians also suffered (Acts 17:5-9; 1 Thess 1:6, 2:1).

15. Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

Paul's inspired description of the Jews:

1. “Killed the Lord Jesus” (Acts 2:36, 3:15).
2. “Killed their own prophets” (Mt 23:37; 5:12; 21:35,36; 22:6).
3. “And have persecuted us.”

They do not please God.

Gal 1:13; 1 Tim 1:13; Acts 8:3; 9:4.

“contrary to all men”

“contrary” - (GK - ENANTIOS) - Opposite, antagonistic (Acts 4:12; 1 Cor 3:11; Jn 14:6). Romans 3 teaches that all, Gentiles (chapter 1) and Jews (chapter 2), need the gospel (Rom 1:16; 2 Thess 1:7-9). Yet, the Jews would turn men away from the ONLY means of life, THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

16. Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

“Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved,”

Cornelius (Acts 10:22,32,33; 11:12-14). However, the Jews in Thessalonica would not allow the Gentiles to hear. Therefore, the Gentiles could not be saved (1 Pet 1:23). Jn 3:1-7.

“To fill up their sins alway:”

Notice this chart::

<u>The Prophet's Confirmation</u>	
	Mt. 3:7
	Isa 1:4
	Jer 6:28
	Mal 3:7

Jn 16:2.

“For the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost”

Wilbur Fields observes this:

“God’s wrath against the Jews was particularly demonstrated at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Already at the time when Paul wrote this epistle, the great rebellion of the Jews against the Romans was taking form. When the rebellion finally came in 66 AD, it led to a bloody war, in which the walls, temple, and much of the rest of Jerusalem were demolished and burned down. 97,000 people were carried away captive into slavery, and eleven hundred thousand (1,100,000) perished, many by starvation and killing one another. Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us about this in *Wars of the Jews*, VI, ix, 4. Paul was certainly correct when he said that wrath was come upon them to the uttermost” (Wilbur Fields, *Thinking Through Thessalonians*: College Press, Joplin, Missouri, p. 71).

17. But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

“But we, brethren, ... short time in presence”

So strong was the affliction and persecution, Paul had to leave (Acts 17:10).
“Being taken from you” - (GK – APORPHANIDZO) - Root of this word gives us
“orphan”. This is a very strong statement!

“not in heart”

1. The brethren and their standing were constantly on Paul's mind (3:1,2,7,8).
2. Though Paul physically was removed from these brethren his heart and concerns were very much with them (Col 2:5).

“endeavored the more abundantly to see your face with great desire”

1. Paul had a great desire, but not only that, he “endeavored the more abundantly”.
2. We do not know the extent of Paul's actions in trying to get back to see the brethren in this congregation, but do not confuse his lack of success with a lack of desire or attempt (Rom 1:11,13).

18. Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

“Wherefore we would have come ... once and again”

Plans had been made, time and again, but had fallen through. Paul had not been able to return to these brethren.

“but Satan hindered us”

1. “hindered” - (GK – EGKOPTO) - Rom 15:22 - Paul's preaching and new opportunities had hindered him from going to Rome. This is a military term. It holds the picture of an army destroying the road or taking out a bridge to slow the progress of their enemy. We do not know the specifics, but Paul knew who was behind it.
2. “Satan”
 - a. Paul believed in the reality and personal activity of Satan.
 - 1) Eph 2:2, 4:27.

- 2) 2 Cor 4:4.
- 3) Acts 26:18.
- 4) 1 Tim 5:15.
- 5) 2 Cor 11:3, 14,15.

b. So did other inspired writers.

- 1) 1 Pet 5:8.
- 2) Rev 12:9.
- 3) Lk 22:31.

19. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?”

1. “This Epistle is, for the most part, very practical, but Paul at this point is almost lyrical in his expressions of esteem for his converts.” (Leon Morris, *Thessalonians*: Tyndale Press, London, England, p. 59). It would be difficult to over-emphasize the magnitude of Paul’s feelings here. This attitude of Paul helps explain the concern we see in this context for the faithfulness (or lack of if that were the case) of the Thessalonians. Had they turned back to the world his hope would have vanished, his joy would be gone and his crown of rejoicing would have wilted.
2. “crown of rejoicing,”

“crown” - (GK – STEPHANOS) - Laurel wreath given to the victors at the games, the festive garland. It can also mean the royal crown.

“rejoicing” - (GK – KAUCHESIS) - At times rendered “boasting” or “glory-ing.” It gives the impression of joy outwardly expressed or inwardly felt.

“Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?”

1. One can imagine the joy of Paul when these Thessalonians ceased being servants of sin and became servants of righteousness (Rom 6:17,18). But Paul knew his work was not done. This initial conversion was simply the beginning. Exhortation and indoctrination would follow. His work

would not be complete until these brethren stood in the very presence of Jesus Christ at His return.

2. Indoctrinate new converts.
 - a. 1 Pet 2:2; 2 Pet 3:18.
 - b. Acts 2:42.
 - c. Mt 28: 19,20.
 - d. Oh, how this has been neglected in the church!

20. For ye are our glory and joy.

But, to this point, the case was that these brethren were growing and abounding in the Lord.

1. Paul's labor, and that of others, was abounding. It was a glory and joy to be associated with these brethren. That was not always the case in Paul's life. 2 Tim 4:10 (Demas), 14 (Alexander the coppersmith). 2 Tim 4:16. Just as the intensity of Paul's feelings of hope, joy and glory were strong, we can also feel the intensity of sorrow in these verses.
2. We learn much about the man, Paul, in these verses.

CHAPTER THREE

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

"Wherefore"

We must remember that men have divided the Bible into chapters and verses. This refers back to 2:17-20.

"When we could no longer forbear"

"forbear" - (GK – STEGO) - Cover, cover up with silence, bear up against, endure, bear or forbear.

"we thought it good to be left at Athens alone"

“alone” - (GK – KATALEIPO) - Can be used of abandoning or leaving father and mother (Eph 5:31), or dying and leaving loved ones (Mk 12:19). It can also express a sense of desolation.

Paul’s use of language here is quite interesting. Good to be abandoned? Or to die and leave loved ones? Or desolation? The idea is that to know the state of the Thessalonians, and where they stood, was better than the help and assistance that Paul would have gained from those he was sending. Paul’s concern for the churches is one of his greatest attributes (Phil 1:23, 24; 2 Cor 11:23-28; Phil 2:1-5).

2. And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

“And sent Timotheus ... in the gospel of Christ”

Timothy

“our brother” (1 Tim 3:15; Gal 4:4-7; Rom 8:16,17).

“minister of God” - This would be a “servant” - it is also the word used to refer to deacons (1 Tim 3:8ff).

“fellowlabourer” (1 Cor 3:9; Phil 4:2,3).

“in the gospel of Christ”

He was a brother because of the gospel (Jn 3:1-7; Jas 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23). He served and labored in the gospel.

Let us mention a small footnote here.

There is question concerning whether “minister of God” or “fellowlabourer” should be in this verse because of the various manuscript evidence.

ASV – “Timothy, our brother and God’s minister in the gospel of Christ.” NKJV reads almost same as KJV.

Neither thought is foreign to Scripture, nor would either be inconsistent in reference to Timothy. This should cause no problems for us in our study.

“to establish you and to comfort you in your faith”

“establish” - Make them stable or set them fast in the faith (see verse 3).

- 1) Lk 22:31, 32 - "And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren'." (Acts 14:19-23; Acts 16:5.)
- 2) Phil 1:25 - "And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith."
- 3) 1 Pet 5:10 - "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

"comfort" - Exhortation (2:3).

"concerning your faith"

Paul wanted these brethren to be people of faith who faithfully administered God's duties.

3. That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

"That no man should be moved by these afflictions"

There are many examples of those who were less than strong in the face of that which the Devil puts before us (Lk 8:13).

"for yourselves know that we were appointed thereunto"

Jn 16:33 - "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Acts 14:22 - "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

Jn 15:18,19 - "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

Mk 10:30 - "But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."

4. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

“we told you before that we should suffer tribulation”

Obviously, Paul had dealt with this topic in their presence (2 Tim 3:12; Phil 1:29; 2 Tim 1:7,8).

“even as it came to pass, and ye know”

They had learned this lesson not only from the teaching of Paul but also they had learned it first hand (Acts 17:5-10).

5. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

“For this cause”

Paul knew what these brethren were facing. He knew the challenges and temptations (1 Cor 9:27; Jer 20:7-9). If this great servant, Jeremiah, was tempted to cease, how would these new converts stand up to the onslaught?

“when I could no longer forbear,” See verse 1. Paul has, in the preceding verses explained why he is troubled, perplexed and desirous to know.

“I sent to know your faith”

Paul’s predominate concern is not their physical well being. It is their spiritual standing, “their faith” that he is concerned about. As Christians we can survive physical abuse and even death. We cannot survive if we lose our faith (3 Jn 2).

“lest by some means that tempter have tempted you”

The tempter (Mt 4:1,3; Jas 1:2-15).

Temptation is used in two different ways in this context:

1. Hardships and afflictions (trials) and
2. Enticement (1 Cor 10:13).

“and our labour be in vain,” Remember 2:18-20. Paul is concerned about his “spiritual investment”

– Verse six begins a new section. Timothy has returned with news concerning these brethren.

6. But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also [to see] you:

“But”

Paul has shown what could have been. They could have succumbed to the temptation and affliction and fallen away. The enemy could have won.

“But” Contrasted to what could have been reality.

“now when Timotheus came from you unto us”

“Now” seems to indicate immediate action on Paul’s part. As soon as Timothy returned with news, Paul sat down and wrote this epistle (Acts 18:1,2 - Corinth).

“and brought us good tidings”

Prov 25:25 - “As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.”

Paul had brought “good news” (the gospel) to Thessalonica. Now, Timothy was bringing “good tidings” (reports of their faithfulness) from Thessalonica.

“good tidings” - (GK – EUAGGELIDZO) - This is the same word used by the inspired writers to indicate the proclamation of the Gospel. Oh, how Paul must have been thrilled to hear this report!

“your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always desiring greatly to see us”

Timothy’s report:

Good news about their faith (inward religion),

Good news about their love (outward religion),

Good remembrance of Paul and

Desire to see Paul.

7. Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:

“Therefore, brethren”

Because of the report received. Also notice the affection that is associated with the term “brethren.”

“we were comforted ... your faith”

“comforted” - (GK – PARAKALEO) - Encouraged or strengthened.

Remember verse 2. Paul desired for them to be comforted and now he was comforted by them.

“affliction” - (GK – ANANKE) - The choking, pressing care.

“distress” - (GK – THLIPSIS) - The crushing trouble.

Paul was not only concerned deeply for these brethren, but the events directly surrounding his work were crushing down upon him. Notice Acts 18:5-9. Before Timothy’s return, Paul’s situation was far from being a happy one.

Notice this quote from Leon Morris:

“Up to this point Paul had had little to encourage him. In four successive centers there had been discouragement. A promising beginning had been followed by forcible disruption in Philippi, Thessalonica and Beroea, and in Athens he had had little success. Small wonder that he began his preaching at Corinth ‘in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling’ (1 Cor 2: 3). But when the messengers came from Thessalonica they brought such a report of the continuing steadfastness of the converts that Paul saw that the blessing of God had after all rested upon his work there, and this so caused his spirits to rise that he was able to give himself much more energetically to the work he was doing. This appears to be the meaning of ‘Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ’ (Acts 18:5). Out of this sense of relief and reassurance Paul wrote his first letter to the Thessalonians, and it is clear that he wrote with a full heart.” (*The Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians*, p. 14).

8. For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

“For now we live”

Phil 1:21; Gal 2:20. This meant that Paul would have to dedicate his life to His (Christ's) brethren (Jn 15:12,13; Phil 2:1-5). We are our brother's keeper and when faithfulness is maintained, there is occasion to rejoice (2 Jn 4; 3 Jn 4).

“if”

This is the biggest small word in the Bible! It is a conditional term. Before the result can be had (“we live”), the condition (Thessalonians standing fast in the Lord) must be met.

“ye stand fast in the Lord”

Eph 6:11,13,14.

1Cor 15:1 - “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand,”

1 Cor 16:13 - “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”

9. For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy where-with we joy for your sakes before our God;

Thanksgiving

Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 1:4; Eph 1:16; Phil 1:3; Col 1:3; 2 Thess 1:3; Phil 1:4; 1 Thess 5:18; 2 Cor 2:14; 1 Cor 15:57.

“render to God”

“render” - (GK – ANTAPODIDOMI) - This word carries the idea of something that is due. When Paul heard of the Thessalonians' faithfulness, he knew that he owed it to Jehovah to give thanks. Paul had labored. Paul had been spent on behalf of these brethren. Yet, he knew that it was God that had given the increase (1 Cor 3:6-9).

“for all the joy”

Again, our faithful life is a joy to the faithful. Paul's question boils down to this.

“How can I thank God enough for your faithfulness?”

10. Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

“Night and day praying exceedingly”

It is a constant and continued prayer (1 Thess 5:17). It is also a fervent prayer (Jas 5:16; 1 Jn 5:14). Mk 1:35 - The practice of our Lord.

“praying” – (GK - DEOMAI) - This word expresses a feeling of lacking or of need. He did not use the Greek word PROSEUCHOMAI – which stresses more a sense of devotion of God.

Paul’s prayer is two-fold in desire:

1. “That we might see your face.” This whole context has shown how Paul desired to be among his brethren in Thessalonica.
2. “And might perfect that which is lacking in your faith.” His desire was not for social reasons. It was a desire based on spiritual needs, that is, to perfect that which was lacking. As strong as their faith was - there was still more growth needed. There is not a time in the life of a Christian when there is no longer a need to grow. This is certainly true with new converts!

* Paul will now become even more specific concerning petitions to the Father on their behalf.

11. Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.

“Now God Himself ... our Lord Jesus Christ”

Notice how “our Lord Jesus Christ” is linked with “God Himself and our Father.” Christ’s Lordship and oneness with the Father is the stress of this statement. In fact, the verb (GK – KATEUTHUNAI) is singular.

Jn 17:21 - “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

Zech. 13:7 - “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is **my fellow**, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.”

Jehovah’s Witnesses on this point.

Isa 44:6 NWT; Rev 1:17,18.

Isa 44:24 NWT; Col 1:15-17.

Also note that Paul realizes it is Jehovah who is in control (Jas 4:13-15).

“Direct our way to you”

“Direct” - This would be the opposite of “hindered” in 2:18. Paul wants the way to be cleared so he can see these brethren.

12. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all [men], even as we [do] toward you:

“And the Lord make you”

Spiritual growth comes ultimately from above (Gal 5:22,23). From above we receive the standard of what is spiritual (1 Pet 2:2; 2 Pet 3:18). From above we receive exhortation to grow (Phil 4:8; 2 Pet 1:5-10; 1 Pet 1:13-16). From above we receive instruction on how to grow. It is similar to how the Holy Spirit makes overseers (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1).

“to increase and abound in love one toward another”

1 Thess 1:3; 1 Pet 1:22, 2:17; Col 2:2; 1 Jn 4:7-11, 16-21.

Jn 15:12 - “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

1 Cor 16:14 - “increase and abound” – Our love one for the other must constantly be growing.

“and toward all men” - Mk 12:30,32; Gal 6:10.

“even as we do toward you” - Paul practiced what he preached.

13. To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

“To the end”

What Paul desired and requested had an ultimate goal in mind.

“He may stablish your hearts”

Remember 3:2

“unblameable”

Phil 3:6; 2:15; 1 Tim 3:2 - Not sinlessly perfect – But rather, they have dealt properly with their sins.

“in holiness before God”

Every thing or one associated with God must maintain holiness (Isa 6:3; Rev 4:8; Lev 11:44-47; 1 Pet 1:13-16).

“before God, even our Father”

He is the one with whom we have to do.

“at the coming of our Lord...”

Paul has closed all three chapters with reference to the coming of our Lord. This was for the first century saints, and should be for us, a prominent thought and meditation.

“with all his saints”

Who are these saints? The phrase literally means the “holy ones.”

1. Angels? 2 Thess 1:7 - “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.”

Mt 25:31 - “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.”

2. Dead Saints? 1 Thess 4:10 - “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.”
3. Could it have reference to both? It very well could be both.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. **Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort [you] by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, [so] ye would abound more and more.**

“we beseech ... Lord Jesus Christ”

“beseech” – Asking or requesting (Rom 12:1).

“exhort” – Urging or encouraging (Heb 10:24,25). Paul did both.

“by the Lord Jesus Christ”

What greater incentive could a Christian present than the Lord Jesus Christ?

2 Cor 5:14-17.

“as ye have received of us”

Paul taught truth (see verse 2; also 2:13).

Paul lived truth (remember 2:6-8).

“walk to please God”

Eph 4:1,17; 5:1; Jas 4:4; 1 Jn 2:15-17; Amos 5:15; Rom 12:9; Acts 10:34.

“so ye would abound more and more”

Christian life is the more abundant life (Jn 10:10).

We must never be satisfied with where we stand (1 Cor 15:58; Col 1:10).

2. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

“For ye know ... the Lord Jesus”

What Paul taught was the commandment of Christ (1 Cor 14:37). See notes on 2:13.

Jn 14:15 - Commandments and obedience (Mt 7:21; Heb 5:8,9; Rev 22:14).

3. For this is the will of God, [even] your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

“For this is the will of God”

Notice how concerned Paul is that the brethren consider God and that they seek to please Him. “how ye ought to walk and to please God” (verse 1). “this is the will of God.”

Also notice how God’s commandments must be considered in this. Ezra 10:3 speaks of “those that tremble at the commandments of our God,” (Neh. 8:5-8).

“even your sanctification”

Sanctification signifies the process that ends in holiness. It means to be set apart for God’s purpose.

1. Deity sanctifies us. 1 Thess 5:23 - “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and [I pray God] your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Heb 2:11 - “For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified [are] all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.”

2. He sanctifies us by the word.

Jn 17:17-19 - “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.”

Acts 20:32.

Acts 26:18 - “To open their eyes, [and] to turn [them] from darkness to light, and [from] the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”

“that ye should abstain from fornication”

“the body is not for fornication.” (1 Cor 6:13)

“Flee fornication.” (1 Cor 6:18)

“Fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” (Heb 13:4)

4. **That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;**

In verse 3 Paul dealt with the truth in a negative sense: “Abstain from fornication.” Here, he is dealing with it in a positive sense: “possess his vessel in sanctification and honor.”

“That every one of you”

There would be no one excluded in this admonition.

“possess his vessel”

“possess” – (GK - KTAOMAI) - To procure for oneself, get, gain, acquire. It is this word that causes some to conclude that “vessel” must refer to a wife. For, they say, we do not “acquire” or “get” our bodies. We will be back to this point.

“vessel” – (GK - SKEUOS) - This word has a variety of meanings; containers, household utensils. The Greeks, in their writing, would use it to refer to the physical body, because they considered it to be the “container of the soul”.

In Scripture, it is used to refer to the physical body. For example, in 1 Sam. 21:4, 5, we read:

“And the priest answered David, and said, [There is] no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women. And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women [have been] kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the **vessels of the young men are holy**, and [the bread is] in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel.”

2 Cor 4:7 - “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

1 Pet 3:7 - wives are referred to as the weaker vessel.

Some would turn to this passage and show that the wife is referred to as a “vessel”. If we note this passage carefully, however, it is the wife’s body that is referred to as the “weaker vessel” as opposed to the husband’s body being the “stronger vessel”.

Yet, how can one procure for himself or get or acquire a vessel? It would not be out of line to call upon heathen fornicators who have obeyed the Gospel to acquire a “vessel of sanctification and honor” by abstaining from fornication.

It seems that the use of the term “vessel” therefore would be referring to the physical body.

“in sanctification and honor”

Sin (sexual impurity) brings dishonor and shame (Jer 3:25). It will also remove us from our God and those that are sanctified (Isa 59:1,2; Acts 20:32). Paul wants them to have fellowship with the Father and thus with the saints (1 Jn 1:7).

“sanctification”

“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor 1:30).

“But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” (2 Thess 2:13).
1 Pet 1:2 (KJV) - “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”

5. Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

“Not in the lust of concupiscence”

“lust” – (GK - PATHOS) - A feeling which the mind suffers – not a violent feeling – but rather an overmastering feeling, in which the man is borne along by evil as though its passive instrument.

“concupiscence” – (GK - EPITHYMIA) - Desire, craving, longing, desire for what is forbidden, lust (Rom 7:8; Col 3:5). Generally translated “lust” in the KJV. Note the ASV - “not in the passion of lust, even as the Gentiles who know not God.” Purity of thought is the answer to purity of action (Phil 4:8; Mt 5:8).

“even as the Gentiles which know not God”

Eph 4:17-19 - “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”

“which know not God”

It is not that God had not revealed Himself. It is rather, they do not choose to know (2 Pet 3:15,16; Rom 10:1-3).

6. That no [man] go beyond and defraud his brother in [any] matter: because that the Lord [is] the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

* We must remember the context. Verse 6 lies between the thoughts of fornication and lust on the one side and uncleanness on the other. Paul has not left these thoughts in this verse. Notice the ASV's translation of this verse.

"That no man transgress, and wrong his brother **in the matter**: because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as also we forewarned you and testified" (1 Thess 4:6 ASV).

"That no man go beyond"

"go beyond" – (GK - HUPERBAINO) - To go beyond bounds. 1 Cor 4:6 - "And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and [to] Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think [of men] **above that which is written**, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another."

2 Jn 9

Paul has in mind the boundaries that he has set in this context and in this discussion. They were not to go beyond the boundaries of what God has revealed concerning sexual conduct.

"and defraud his brother"

"defraud" – (GK - PLEONEKTEO) - To have more, to have an advantage, to take advantage of another. "Brother" in this verse is not a "brother in Christ," but rather a "brother man."

"in any matter"

ASV – "in **the matter**"

The matter of fornication, lust and uncleanness. "No one can commit fornication without defrauding and wronging someone. It is a sin that always wrongs and hurts others, and not just ourselves. By it men can wrong someone's wife or future wife, someone's sister, someone's marriage or future marriage, someone's home or family life. Besides that, it is a sin against GOD (Psa 51:4). And it is a sin against our body (1 Cor 6:18).

"because the Lord is the avenger of all such"

The avenger is one who satisfies justice, by punishing the wrongdoer. Rom 13:4 - "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, **a revenger to [execute] wrath upon him that doeth evil.**"

Jehovah will punish breaches of all the sins referred to here.

Definitely, the day of judgment is in mind here.

But, it may not be all that is in mind. Punishment for these spiritual crimes may be coming upon men even in our day (Rom 1:24,26, 28).

7. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

“For God has not called us to uncleanness”

Jer 7:8-16; Rom 6:1-4; Col 3:1-10; 2 Cor 5:17.

“but unto holiness”

2 Cor 6:14-7:2; 1 Pet 1:13-16.

Paul has already used the term “sanctification” twice in this context (verses 3,4). This is the same word. We are saints, who are set apart for God’s service.

8. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

“He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man”

“despiseth” – (GK - ATHETEO) - To treat null and void, to regard as of no account.

“rejected” (Lk 7:30).

“frustrate” (Gal 2:21).

“bring to nothing” (1 Cor 1:19).

To disregard these teachings concerning spiritual purity is not to disregard man.

“but God”

Lk 10:16 - “He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.”

Again, we see Paul making an indirect reference to inspiration. See 2:13. To disregard His teaching is to say that, God is one Who can be disregarded.

“who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit”

Acts 2:38; 5:32; 6:1-8; 19:1-7; 1 Cor 6:19,20; Eph 2:21,22.

To disregard Paul's teaching on sexual purity is to also fail to consider Deity (the Holy Spirit) who dwells in us.

WHO IS AFFECTED BY FORNICATION?

1. It is a sin against my own body (1 Cor 6:18).
2. It is a sin against my fellow man (1 Thess 4:6).
3. It is a sin against God (1 Thess 4:8).
4. It is a sin against the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 4:8).

Therefore "possess your vessel in sanctification and honor" (1 Thess 4:4).

9. But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

"But as touching brotherly love"

Two of the most obvious characteristics of our first century brethren were:

1. The purity and holiness which characterized their lives and
2. The love they had one for the other. Paul has dealt with the first and now he turns to the second.

"brotherly love"

(GK - PHILADELPHIA)

Paul did not use "AGAPE".

Those who have experienced the "AGAPE" love of God must be displaying the "PHILADELPHIA" love.

Outside the New Testament this word almost invariably denotes the love binding together the children of one father.

In the New Testament it is without exception used for the love uniting Christians to one another.

It is found 6 times in the New Testament.

Rom 12:10 - “[Be] kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.”

1 Thess 4:9 - “But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.”

Heb 13:1 - “Let brotherly love continue.”

1 Pet 1:22 - “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, [see that ye] love one another with a pure heart fervently.”

2 Pet 1:7 - “And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.”

“ye need not...taught of God to love one another”

Paul said there was no need to exhort them. The reason – they were “taught of God to love one another.”

“taught of God” - (GK - THEODIDACTOI) - This word is found only here in the New Testament. It means to be “taught by God”.

Jn 7:17 - “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or [whether] I speak of myself.” Where there is a genuine will to do God’s will, it is there that man is taught by God – THROUGH THE DOCTRINE.

10. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

“And indeed ye do it ...in all Macedonia”

Here is another reason why Paul had no need to exhort them. He knew they knew because they were doing it (2 Cor 8:1-6).

“but we beseech ... more and more”

1 Thess 4:1 - “Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort [you] by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, [so] ye would abound more and more.”

1 Thess 3:12 - "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all [men], even as we [do] toward you." The same word is used in this verse. Mediocrity and status quo are great enemies of spiritual growth. No matter what we accomplish, we must never be satisfied with where we are (1 Cor 15:58).

11. And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

"And that ye study to be quiet"

"study" – (GK - PHILOTIMEOMAI)

This is a compound word from "PHILOS" - love and "TIME" - honor. Thus to love or seek after honor, to be ambitious. It is the idea of making the pursuit of a thing one's earnest endeavor.

1. Rom 15:20 - "strived."

2. 2 Cor 5:9 - "labor."

"quiet" – (GK - ESUCHADZO) - To lead a quiet life, rest, keep quiet. 2 Thess 3:12 - "Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread." A.S. Peake – "Make it your ambition to pursue your ordinary avocations with a quiet mind."

"and to do your own business"

There is a sense in which we are to be concerned about the matters of others (Phil 2:4; Gal 6:1,2). Attitude and purpose must be emphasized here. There is also a sense in which we must "mind our own business." 1 Pet 4:15 - "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or [as] a thief, or [as] an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters." Similarity of teaching concerning "judging" (Mt 7:1; Jn 4:24).

"and to work with your own hands"

There seemed to be a misapprehension and a misunderstanding among the Thessalonians concerning the second coming of Christ. Thinking His coming may have occurred any moment some of them may have quit their jobs. Passages in 2 Thessalonians strongly imply such an unhealthy situation. With this spare time and lack of funds, they were busybodies in other's matters and a burden on others. 2 Thess 3:10 - "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." Honest

labor is honorable. Work was assigned in Eden before sin entered the world (Gen 2:15-17).

NOTICE THESE PASSAGES WHICH DEAL WITH OUR VERSE!

1. Eccl 3:7 - "A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak."
2. Eccl 5:2 - "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter [any] thing before God: for God [is] in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."
3. Eccl 5:3 - "For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice [is known] by multitude of words."
4. Jas 1:19 - "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath"
5. Col 4:6 - "Let your speech [be] alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."
6. Jas 3:1 - "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same [is] a perfect man, [and] able also to bridle the whole body."

"as we commanded you"

When in their presence.

12. That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and [that] ye may have lack of nothing.

*The reasons behind what Paul has said thus far.

"That ye may walk honestly among them that are without"

The Christian walk would include his entire life.

"honestly" – (GK - EUSCHEMONOS).

1. "honestly" (Rom 13:13).
2. "decently" (1 Cor 14:40).

This word means - “of elegant figure, shapely, graceful, comely, bearing one’s self becomingly in speech or behavior” (Thayer, p. 236).

There is a sense in which we should not be concerned with what the world thinks. We live by a different standard (Lk 6:26; Gal 1:10; 1 Pet 4:4). Yet, there is another sense in which we must concern ourselves with the thoughts of the world, lest we bring reproach upon Christ and His church or hinder the gospel (1 Pet 4:14-16; 1 Cor 9:19-23).

“and that ye may have lack of nothing”

We have certain responsibilities that must be fulfilled (1 Tim 5:8). In each of the preceding chapters Paul has concluded with the same thought. That would be the coming of our Lord. The Thessalonians, who had “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” were waiting for His Son from Heaven (1:9,10). What was Paul’s hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? The Thessalonians “in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming” (2:19). Paul’s desire for the brethren in Thessalonica was that they would abound in love one toward another and that they would be unblamable in holiness before God “at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints” (3:12,13). It seems that Paul had taught concerning this matter while he was in their presence. However, it also seems that there was some misunderstanding on the part of these brethren. So, in verse 13 and on, Paul will deal with the topic of the dead in Christ and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (verses 13-18).

13. But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren”

Paul would use this expression often to open a new section of thought (Rom 1:13; 11:25; 1 Cor 10:1; 11:3; 12:1; 2 Cor 1:18; Phil 1:12; Col 2:1).

“concerning them which are asleep”

“asleep” – (GK - KOIMAOMAI) - This verb is found 18 times in the New Testament. In four of these it is used literally to refer to those who are asleep (Mt 28:13; Lk 22:45; Jn 11:12; Acts 12:16). In the other 14 uses (including this verse) it is used to refer to those who are dead. Paul is going to teach them concerning those who have died in Christ.

14. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again”

Paul has introduced an inconsistency in their thinking. Why think those who have died are going to miss out? Christ died and was raised again. This is the hub of the gospel (1 Cor 15:1-4). Paul's message in Thessalonica centered on this point (Acts 17:3,4). All of the preaching of the Book of Acts centered on this fact (1 Cor 15:17-20). "And declared [to be] the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom 1:4).

"even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him"

There is a slight question that arises concerning the phrase "in Jesus". The literal translation is "through Jesus". Does the phrase belong to "even so them also which sleep *through Jesus*"? Or, does it belong to "*through Jesus* will God bring with Him"? There is disagreement on this point among the commentators. This point should not really pose a problem for us. Those who are under consideration here are the faithful - 3:13 - "at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all His saints." They shall return with Him.

Notice this quote from Curtis Cates.

When Christ returns, God is going to raise the dead. Specifically, in this context, Paul was *limiting* his discussion to the dead in Christ, those for whom the Thessalonians were concerned. "But if the Spirit of Him [God] that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom 8:11). Since the "body apart from the spirit is dead" (Jas 2:26), God will cause Christ to bring the spirits of the departed righteous with Him, having taken them from Paradise (Lk 16:19-31), at His second advent. Note the statement of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 3:13, "...at the coming of our Lord Jesus, with all his saints." In the "twinkling of an eye," the souls will be reunited with their own bodies, the bodies will be changed from corruptible to incorruptible and the glorified saints will meet the Lord in the air (1 Cor 15:35-49, especially 50-57). The Thessalonians would not need to worry about those who sleep in Jesus; they will be especially blessed! Note Paul's firm assertion: "since we believe, even so,...." "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory" (Col 3:4).

- 15. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.**

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord"

Here is yet another reference to the inspiration of Paul's message.

An Assignment (before the next class).

List the references, both direct and indirect, that Paul makes concerning the message being from God, in this epistle.

We will give the answers in the beginning of our next class.

“That we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord”

Did Paul believe Christ would come during his life? There are those who discredit the Bible; those who concoct false doctrines along these lines. One of those, Max King says Christ's second coming has already happened at the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Notice these passages from 1 Thess: 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; and 2 Thess 1:7.

Do these passages teach that Christ was expected to come in Paul's lifetime?

Inspiration and inerrancy (Mk 13:32).

Christ's second coming will be visible, bodily and personal.

1. Acts 1:11; Lk 24:39.
2. 2 Thess 1:7 - “the Lord shall be revealed.”
3. 2 Tim 4:1,8 and Heb 9:28 teach that Christ shall be revealed.

Notice the different terminology employed by Christ concerning the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and His second coming.

1. Destruction of Jerusalem AD 70.
Mt 24:4-34 teaches that there would be signs that would warn of this devastation. It would come in “this generation” (Mt 24:34).
2. His second coming.
Mt 24:36; Mk 13:32.

An event that is unpredictable, just as the flood was unpredictable (Mt 24:39).

Mt 24:42-44.

Well, then, has Paul simply given the skeptic ammunition by being wrong or by contradicting what other passages plainly teach? Let us ask and answer two questions.

1. Did Paul know that Christ would come in his generation?

NO!!!

2. Did Paul know Christ would not come in his generation?

NO!!!

Paul was simply using the language of a man who did not know when Christ would return. He did know, however, that it could be any moment and he did understand the need for preparation and desired that all would be prepared. Each of the passages we have noted in our study of this point will fit this line of thought. Thus we have no error, no inconsistency and no contradiction.

“shall not prevent them which are asleep”

“prevent” – (GK - PRAEVENIO) - To come before, to get the start of. Today the word “prevent” means to hinder or to restrain. In 1611, when the KJV was translated, it meant to “go before” or to “come before”.

Notice these two versions.

1. ASV - “...shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep.”
2. NKJV - “...will by no means precede those who are asleep.”

Psa 119:147 - “I prevented the dawning of the morning and cried.” David did not prevent or hinder the dawning of the morning. He preceded it.

Paul’s point is simple. Those who are alive when Christ returns (whenever that is) will have absolutely no advantage over those who sleep (who have died in the Lord).

- 16. 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:**

We are now going to notice one of the fullest descriptions of what will take place when Christ returns that Scripture affords us. One thing should stand out in our minds as we read and meditate on these events – THE WHOLE SCENE IS AWE-INSPIRING AND FULL OF GRANDEUR!!! To understand the magnitude of this event is to understand that words cannot express the majesty of this event adequately.

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout”

God in person will come down from Heaven. It will not be a substitute or an assistant but THE LORD HIMSELF! Rev 1:7 - "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they [also] which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." He will display that glorious body that we long for (Phil 3:21).

"shout" – (GK - KELEUSMA) - This is a shout of command: a charioteer to his horses, a shipmaster to the rowers, a commander to soldiers. THERE IS ALWAYS A RING OF AUTHORITY AND A NOT OF URGENCY. This is the very voice of our Lord.

1. Jn 5:28 - "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves **shall hear his voice**."
2. Psa 50:3,4 - "Our God shall come, **and shall not keep silence**: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people."

"with the voice of the archangel"

Michael is called the archangel (Jude 9; Rev 12:7).

"and with the trump of God"

Ex 19:16; Heb 12:19 - the giving of the law. 1 Cor 15:52; Mt 24:31.

"and the dead in Christ shall first rise"

Remember v. 15 - those that remain "shall not precede them which sleep." Take a moment to notice Jn 5:28,29. All of the dead shall be raised here. It is only the ones that are in Christ that will stand with Christ. There are those who would link 1 Thess 4:16 with Rev 20:5. Their point is "The dead in Christ shall rise first (1 Thess 4:16), but the rest of the dead lived not again until the 1,000 years were finished" (Rev 20:5). We must note however that the first is contrasted with the "we which are alive and remain." It is not the "in Christ" and "out of Christ" that are first and second. It is the dead in Christ and those who have not physically died when Christ returns that are first and second. There will be only one resurrection. Also note Acts 24:15: "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."

17. **Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.**

“Then we which are alive and remain”

There will be men and women alive when Christ returns. Mankind will not literally annihilate itself. After the dead are raised, then those who are alive and remain shall be changed (Phil 3:20; 1 Cor 15:51-58).

“shall be caught up together with them in the clouds”

“Them” are the dead in Christ which have been raised. All the faithful will be caught up together in the clouds.

“clouds” - Scripture ties Christ’s coming and clouds (Rev 1:7; Mt 24:30). The Lord’s presence is often associated with clouds and smoke (Ex 19:18; Isa 6:4; Psa 18:11,12; Mt 17:5).

“to meet the Lord in the air”

The literal reading is “to a meeting of the Lord in air.” The word “meet” – (GK - APANTESIS) is a noun. It is a meeting in the air. Christ will not set foot on the earth (2 Pet 3:7-11).

“and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (Jn 14:1-3; 17:24).

18. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

“comfort one another with these words”

“comfort” is the same word which is translated “exhort” in other passages. The coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead are both a comfort and a stimulus. They are a joy and an incentive for us to serve Christ more fully.

Paul has held consistent. He closes this section just as we have seen him close the preceding chapters – WITH CHRIST’S SECOND COMING.

CHAPTER FIVE

As we enter our study of chapter 5 we see Paul continuing the topic that began in 4:13. Although we must realize that this very topic, the second coming of Christ, has been mentioned throughout this epistle. The events of this coming are set forth in 4:13-17 and verse 18 is an exhortation to use these truths to “comfort one another”.

1. But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

“But of the times and the seasons, brethren”

“times” – (GK - CHRONOI) - Time in the chronological aspect.

“seasons” – (GK - KAIROI) - Time in a qualitative aspect. The first word denotes time - five minutes is five minutes - no matter what you are doing. However, in the second word, five minutes with a fiancée may seem as a fleeting moment whereas five minutes in the dentist’s chair may seem as an eternity. It is only five minutes in both cases, but the quality is different.

In our context, “CHRONOI” speaks of time whereas “KAIROI” deals with the nature of the times or the critical events that surround His return.

“ye have no need that I write unto you”

Paul must have instructed them on these matters while in their presence and they should know these matters. In Matthew 24 Jesus will speak of the signs that will surround a certain event. That event He speaks of is the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus said in verse 34, “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” In Matthew 24:36 Jesus will change topics and speak of His return. He says there, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but my Father only.” Our premillennial friends need to note this dividing line in Mt 24!!! (Also notice Lk 21:20-36. Between verses 33 and 34 we see the change of topics).

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

“For yourselves know perfectly”

Men would like to know perfectly – and it seems the Thessalonians were no different – when Christ will come.

“perfectly” – (GK - AKRIBOS) - Precisely. Paul tells them they already know precisely that nothing can be known precisely, concerning the time of His return.

“the day of the Lord”

This expression is used frequently in the Old Testament. It is applied to numerous occasions when God’s judgment is poured out on sinful men.

1. Amos 5:18-20 – Israel’s destruction by Assyria.

2. Zeph. 1:14-18 – Judah’s and Jerusalem’s destruction by Babylon.
3. Joel 2:1-3 – refers to the locust plague at hand.
4. In 2 Peter 3:10, it is applied to the end of the world. It has reference to a day of impending doom upon wicked men.

“so cometh as a thief in the night”

Numerous passages compare the Lord’s coming to that of a thief.

1. Mt 24:43 (KJV) - “But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.”
2. 2 Pet 3:10 (KJV) - “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”
3. Rev 3:3 (KJV) - “Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”
4. Rev 16:15 (KJV) - “Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed [is] he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”

The comparison is to the sudden and unexpected arrival of a thief.

3. **For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.**

“For when they shall say, ‘Peace and safety’”

Oh, how little men know about the true danger of their soul!

“peace and safety”

1. Ezek 13:10 (KJV) - “Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and [there was] no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered [mortar].”

2. Jer 6:14 (KJV) - "They have healed also the hurt [of the daughter] of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when [there is] no peace."
3. Jer 8:11 (KJV) - "For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when [there is] no peace."
4. Mic 3:5 (KJV) - "Thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him."
5. Mt 24:39 (KJV) - "And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

"then sudden destruction cometh upon them"

2 Thess 1:6-10

"destruction" – (GK OLETHROS) - Not annihilation. But rather, total and complete ruin. In 2 Thess 1:9 the same word is used and means separation from God.

Rev 6:16

The drunkard will have his cup to his lips.

The swearer his oath on his tongue.

The murderer his gun in his hand.

The adulterer will be in the very act.

"as travail upon a woman with child"

Isa 13:6-8; Jer 4:31. These speak of the pain associated with the event. Our context probably has the suddenness in mind also.

"and they shall not escape"

"Shall not" is quiet strong. Literally it is "They shall (most certainly) not escape." (See also 1 Thess 4:15.)

4. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

As we began this chapter, Paul introduced the “day of the Lord”. In this discussion, he spoke of the “sudden destruction” from which they (the wicked) shall not escape. As we begin with verse 4 Paul is now going to make a contrast. Where in earlier verses he spoke of the wicked, he will speak of the “brethren” who must be children of light.

“But ye, brethren”

The Greek here is very emphatic. The brethren are just as far removed from the wicked as they can be.

“are not in darkness”

Darkness represents evil, just as light represents goodness.

1. Rom13:12 - “The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.”
2. 2 Cor 6:14 (KJV) - “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”
3. Eph 5:8 (KJV) - “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now [are ye] light in the Lord: walk as children of light.”
4. Eph 5:11 (KJV) - “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove [them].” (See Eph 4:17-19.)
5. Eph 6:12 (KJV) - “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [places].”
6. Col 1:13 (KJV) - “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated [us] into the kingdom of his dear Son:”
7. 1 Pet 2:9 (KJV) - “But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:” (See 1 Jn 1:5-7; 2:8-11.)

Notice how Paul will refer to this point in 2 Cor 4:6.

2 Cor 4:6 (KJV) - "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Also see Isa 60:1,2.

"that that day should overtake you as a thief"

"that day" – must be the day of judgment. Though these brethren did not know the time Christ would return, they KNEW HE WOULD and, therefore, if they were living properly, it would not overtake them.

5. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

"Ye are all the children of light"

A few passages concerning "light":

1. 1 Jn 1:5.
2. Jn 8:12.
3. Psa 119:105,130.
4. Mt 5:16.
5. Mt 6:22.

"and the children of the day"

darkness = night

light = day

As children of God, we do what we do in the open. We have nothing to hide (Phil 2:15).

"we are not of the night, nor of darkness"

1 Jn 2:15-17; Jas 4:4; 2 Cor 6:14ff; Rom 6; 2 Cor 5:17.

6. Therefore let us not sleep, as [do] others; but let us watch and be sober.

"Therefore, let us not sleep"

Paul uses a different Greek word here than what he used in 4:13 "for sleep".

(GK - KOIMAO) - In other passages it speaks of moral indifference (Mk 13:36; Eph 5:14). As Christians, we can not be indifferent about the way we act or carry ourselves. We cannot be indifferent about spiritual matters.

“as do others”

So many walk unconcerned in these matters (1 Cor 16:13; Mt 24:42; 25:13; Col 2:8).

“but let us watch and be sober”

“watch”

1. Mt 24:42 - “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.”
2. Mt 25:13 (KJV) - “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”
3. Mt 26:41 (KJV) - “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed [is] willing, but the flesh [is] weak.” (See Mk 13:33-37).
4. Lk 21:36 (KJV) - “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”
5. Acts 20:31 (KJV) - “Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”
6. 1 Cor 16:13 (KJV) - “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”
7. Heb 13:17 (KJV) - “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that [is] unprofitable for you.”

As Christians we are constantly on the watch. We watch for:

1. Satan’s devices,
2. Our own soul,
3. Our brethren.

In this context we are watching for the coming of our Lord. Phil 3:20 - "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Not only are we watching for His coming, but we are longing for it.

"be sober" – (GK - NEPHO) - This term literally means to be free from intoxicants. It can be used to also condemn all kinds of excess (1 Pet 1:13; 5:8). Drunkenness is condemned in the Bible (Mt 24:48-50; Lk 12:45,46; Gal 5:19-21). Eph 5:18 (KJV) - "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;" (Pr 20:1; 23:20,21,29-35).

7. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

The conduct of those who are unprepared.

Paul has already spoken of those who are of the darkness or of the night. However, he has also told the brethren that they are not of darkness or of the night, but, rather, are "children of light, and the children of the day" (v. 5).

8. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

"But let us, who are of the day"

He has spoken of the conduct of those outside of Christ and now he turns his attention to Christians.

"be sober"

See notes on verse 6.

"putting on the breastplate of faith and love"

Rom 13:12 (KJV) - "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."

Paul uses an aorist participle for "putting on" and it signifies a once for all step. Paul had a certain attraction for the armor metaphor, for he uses it often (2 Cor 6:7; 10:4; Eph 6:13ff). {This is Paul's most extensive use.}

"and for a helmet, the hope of salvation"

Note in this verse, as is the case in others, faith, love and hope are linked together (1 Thess 1:3; 1 Cor 13:13).

Also note that hope is tied to salvation. This must have reference to the culmination of salvation. That is, our standing in the very presence of Jehovah when the smoke of the battle has settled.

9. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath”

First let us look at the “us.” Who are they? These are the children of light and the children of the day. Those who are watchful, sober, vigilant and prepared. It is not specified individuals, but rather, a specified type of individual. These types of individuals are “not appointed to wrath”. Who are appointed to wrath? Those of darkness and of the night, who are unprepared.

Now, let us look at the “wrath.” This of course speaks of the “wrath of Jehovah”. Satan has been successful in erasing in the mind of many the idea of Jehovah and His wrath on the wicked (Rom 11:22; 2 Thess 1:7-9; Rev 6:17ff).

“but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ”

Salvation is for those who are lost (Lk 19:10; Rom 3:10, 23; 1 Jn 1:8,10; Rom 6:23).

“by our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jn 14:6; 1 Cor 3:11; Acts 4:12; 2 Tim 2:10). These men and women of Thessalonica had obeyed the gospel and were striving to remain faithful so as to be prepared when Christ returned. They are the ones who are appointed to salvation, NOT TO WRATH!!!

10. Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

“Who died for us”

Jn 3:16; Rom 5:8; 1 Tim 1:15; 2 Cor 5:17-21.

1. Phil 2:8 (KJV) - “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”
2. Rom 6:3 (KJV) - “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with

him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

3. Gal 2:20 (KJV) - “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness [come] by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”

“that”

There was a purpose or a reason.

“whether we wake or sleep”

Whether we are alive on this earth when he returns or we are dead and buried.

“we should live”

Mt 16:18; Rev 1:18.

Jn 11:25, 26 (KJV) - “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

“together with him”

Notice the idea of fellowship that is expressed in this passage (2 Jn 9). It will make no difference with the Lord whether we have died on this earth or remain when He returns, we will have fellowship with Him. Phil 3:10 - “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death,”

11. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

“Wherefore comfort yourselves together”

Remember 4:18. This section of the epistle which deals with the second coming is now brought to a close and Paul exhorts them to comfort themselves with these truths. The tense Paul uses here denotes a continuous action. It is not only a “once in a while” comforting – it must be a constant and continuous action.

“and edify one another”

We are speaking of building one another up (Jude 20; Rom 14:19; 15:2).

“even as ye do”

Paul’s exhortation was not to begin these things. It was an exhortation to continue doing them constantly.

12. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

“And we beseech you, brethren”

This is the tone of a respectful request (Rom 12:1).

“to know them”

“to know” - We are not looking at a term which speaks of a mere acquaintance. They are to know the worth of, to appreciate the value of these. It holds the idea of having regard to, to cherish, pay attention to those mentioned.

“which labor among you”

This is the first of three descriptive terms indicating and describing ONE OFFICE – THE ELDERS (1 Tim 3:1).

1. When we consider the responsibilities of elders, it should help us to recognize that we are dealing with labor and work.
2. A second point is that these labor “among the brethren.” 1 Pet 5:1 - “The elders which are among you.” Scripturally an eldership cannot oversee a multiplicity of congregations. Those who are chosen to serve in this capacity are “among you”.

“and are over you in the Lord”

1 Tim 3:1 - “the office of a bishop” – the office of “overseer”. See Heb 13:7, 17.

As Christians, we must understand that God’s line of authority, as far as the church is concerned, includes men who serve in the position of overseership – elders.

The Biblical principles of authority and subjection to authority, therefore, would apply here.

“and admonish you”

“admonish” - Warn, exhort, place in one’s mind.

“apt to teach” (1 Tim 3:2).

“feed the church of God” (Acts 20:28).

The principle of watchman would apply here (Ezek 3, 33).

Take a moment to note that others may do the actual teaching – preachers for example. But it is the elders’ responsibility to oversee. This word also denotes that the elders are to see that the thoughts and ideas communicated from one to the other are laid to heart, that they are taken into the mind of the hearer. It may be explanation, encouragement, reproof, rebuke or other training which sees that the lesson is learned in the proper way.

13. And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. [And] be at peace among yourselves.

“And esteem them very highly in love”

Here we find the second responsibility outlined for the flock. The first was “know them”.

“esteem them very highly” - The word literally means to count, or account, or to judge. It has to do with a proper appraisal. Recognize the work and responsibility and appreciate those who fulfill them properly.

“in love” - This is the grand motivation. With these responsibilities (also note Heb 13:17) we can see the wisdom in selecting men to oversee who are qualified by the standards of God’s Word. How many have failed in respecting men who are elders because the men were unqualified?

“for their work’s sake”

The esteem and value does not reside within the individual. It resides in the fact that these are bringing glory to God in their lives by laboring in this “work”.

“and be at peace among yourselves”

How much work has been left undone because of the wars and bickering and chaos that are brought about by weak men in congregations of the Lord? Godly elders will wrestle long with these situations. It will bring heartache and sorrow to the proper type of leaders (Heb 13:17).

14. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all [men].

“Now we exhort you, brethren”

In verse 12 it speaks of the elders admonishing. But now Paul is encouraging provoking all of the brethren. There is a sense in which elders are especially responsible. Yet that does not mean that each Christian is not also responsible.

“warn them that are unruly”

For “warn” we refer back to “admonish” in verse 12.

“unruly” – (GK - ATAKTOUS) - Is a military term signifying the soldier who does not keep in ranks. It is one who steps out of place or out of order. (One who does not perform his duty, idle, loafing). We are our brother's keeper and we do have responsibilities (Gal 6:1; Jas 5:19,20; 1 Pet 4:8; Lk 17:3).

“comfort the feebleminded”

“feebleminded” – (GK - OLIGOPSUCHOS) - This word is found only here in the New Testament.

“OLIGOS” - little and “PSUCHE” - soul = literally, little - souled. All authorities agree, however, that it means fainthearted. It is speaking of those who lack courage - whether naturally or because of the circumstances (Heb 12:12,13). Men at times need to be encouraged to be like Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25).

“support the weak”

Those who are spiritually weak or even those who are weak in their conscience.

1. Spiritually weak (Mt 28:20).

3:2 - “Timothy was sent to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith.”

3:10 - “perfect that which is lacking in your faith.”

Law of the jungle - Survival of the fittest, of the strong and the weak perish.

Law of Christ - The fittest (strong) support the weak.

2. Weak in conscience (Rom 14; 1 Cor 6,8,10).

“be patient toward all”

“patient” – (GK - MAKROTHUMEO) - To persevere patiently and bravely in enduring misfortunes and troubles. The opposite of exasperated, short-tempered and despairing (1 Cor 13:4; 2 Pet 1:5ff).

15. See that none render evil for evil unto any [man]; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all [men].

“See that none render evil for evil unto any man”

Prov 20:22; Mt 5:39; Rom 12:17-21; 1 Pet 3:9.

Leon Morris - “Faced with opposition from both Jews and Gentiles, and with some differences within the church itself, this must have been exceedingly difficult for the Thessalonians, yet Paul does not hesitate to put the matter plainly to them. Christian teaching is not meant to be applied only when circumstances are easy. Christianity is a robust faith, empowered with a divine dynamic, and is to be lived out even under the most trying circumstances” (*The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians*, pg. 101)

“but ever follow that which is good”

Acts 10:34.

“both among yourselves, and to all men”

Gal 6:10; Mt 7:12.

16. Rejoice evermore.

A people of joy.

Phil 4:4; (All of the book of Philippians); Jas 1:2-4; Acts 5:41; 2 Cor 6:10. Jesus often said, “Be of good cheer.”

17. Pray without ceasing.

A people of prayer.

Mk 1:35; Lk 18:1; Mt 7:7-8; Phil 4:6; 1 Jn 5:14; Jas 5:13,16.

18. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

“In everything give thanks”

A people of thanksgiving.

Psa 75:1; Phil 4:6; Eph 5:20.

“In everything”

Arising out of the recognition of the divine sovereignty and providence is the importance of giving thanks under all circumstances, even in trials and tribulations.

“for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you”

This could be said of all three injunctions.

19,20. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings.

We must remember that they were in a day (when Paul wrote) of miraculous revelation.

We need to take a moment to look at the miraculous gifts of the first century.

1. Purpose.

Mk 16:20; Heb 2:4.

2. What they were.

1 Cor 12:7-11.

3. When they would cease.

1 Cor 13:8-13; Eph 4:7-16.

The Spirit was the one who empowered those who prophesied for the purpose of giving God's revelation unto men. To despise prophesyings, would be to quench the work of the Spirit and thus remove one's self from the life giving revelation of God (Eph 4:30). Today, if we turn our back on the result of the Spirit's work, the word of God, we can, in a sense, quench the Spirit.

21. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

“Prove all things”

1 Jn 4:1; Phil 1:10. We must be discerning (Heb 5:12-14).

“hold fast that which is good”

Prov 23:23; Rom 12:9. The value of truth and that which is good (Jn 8:31,32).

22. Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Hate the evil (Amos 5:15; Psa 97:10; Rom 12:9). The fact that Jehovah sent His Son shows the hatred that God has for evil.

Do not even look like you are tied to evil.

The word translated “abstain” literally means “run in the other direction”.

As Christians, we must do all that we can to show and live righteousness.
We dare not even take on the appearance of evil.

23. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and [I pray God] your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“And the very God of peace”

Isa 9:6 - Christ is the Prince of Peace.

Jn 14:27; Phil 4:7 - Christ provides peace passing understanding.

Col 1:20; Eph 2:13-16.

Rom 10:15 - We preach a gospel of peace.

Where grace abounds (Eph 2:4-8), peace will follow.

“Sanctify you wholly”

Jn 17:17; Acts 20:32. Jehovah sets us apart by the word of God. He sets us apart completely. To the point that we will not even look like we are going to do evil.

“and I pray God”

This was Paul's passion and practice.

"your whole spirit and soul and body"

Paul has already in this verse said that he wanted them to be sanctified wholly, totally and completely. It is unlikely that Paul's main point is the distinction between the soul and spirit. However, he does indirectly show the distinction (Heb 4:12). The challenge of this study is that often the "soul" and "spirit" are used interchangeably in Scripture. Very simply put, the "spirit" is what links us to Jehovah and separates us from the rest of creation. Our minds, personalities, emotions, etc. would dwell here. The "soul" on the other hand would be that which animates our bodies. Again, this would not be a hard and fast rule.

"be preserved blameless"

Not sinlessly perfect. Blameless, because he has dealt with the sins in his life properly.

"unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"

Every chapter of this epistle has ended with the same thought. This chapter is not different.

24. Faithful [is] he that calleth you, who also will do [it].

Those things that Paul has prayed will be, because God hath promised and He is faithful. Called by the gospel (2 Thess 2:14; Mt 11:28ff; Rev 3:20).

25. Brethren, pray for us.

Just as Paul was a man of prayer, he desired the prayers of others (Phil 4:6; 1 Tim 2:1ff).

26. Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.

This was a common greeting in the day that Paul wrote. Also notice how Christianity will exalt the common, "Holy Kiss."

27. I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

"charge"

This is a term closely linked to the commands of the military. One of higher rank giving another of lower rank a command with the expectation that it will be fulfilled.

“by the Lord”

This magnifies the command (2 Tim 4:1,2).

“that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren”

Every one was to hear what Paul had to say on these matters.

28. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you. Amen.

2 Cor 8:9.

May the God of peace bless each one of us as we study more and more and ever walk nearer to the Lord!