

CLASS NOTES - 1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

Taught By Robert Stapleton



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CLASS INSTRUCTIONS 1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

Robert Stapleton

CLASS DESCRIPTION:

1. This class will provide a verse-by-verse study of the books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians.
 - A. We will note the emphasis Paul puts upon the second coming of Christ.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

1. The books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians is to be read weekly during the quarter, with a reading log kept.
2. Instructions concerning reading log.
 - A. Keep a typewritten log of your reading, with dates and chapters read.
 1. Your log is to be turned in to the instructor no later than the beginning of class day during the finals week.
3. Read and critique the outlines, The First and Second Epistles To The Thessalonians by Mark Copeland, with a reading log kept.
 - A. Instructions concerning critique and reading log.
 1. Critique should be a three to five page double-spaced paper, Times New Romans, 12 font, 1-inch top, and bottom and side margins.
 - A. Watch your grammar and spelling.
 2. Turn in critique and reading log to instructor no later than the beginning of class day during the finals week.
 3. Critique will count for 20% of your total grade.
4. Tests:
 - A. Two scheduled tests will be administered.
 1. Each will account for 40% of your total grade.
 2. Any additional credit will be at the instructor's discretion.
5. Memory Verses:
 - A. The following verses are to be committed to memory:

1 Thessalonians 2:13
1 Thessalonians 4:16-18
1 Thessalonians 5:16-22
2 Thessalonians 1:6-9
2 Thessalonians 2:14, 15
2 Thessalonians 3:6
2 Thessalonians 3:14, 15

- B. Memory work must be done in the American Standard Version, English Standard Version, King James Version, or New King James Version unless the instructor grants permission to use another version.

1 THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION:

1. The first epistle to the church at Thessalonica was one of the first of the New Testament books to have been written.
 - A. Due to it having been written so early, it gives insight into the church and its problems twenty or so years after Pentecost.
2. It deals largely with the second coming of Christ.

BODY:

1. WHO WROTE THE BOOK?

- A. There has been no serious doubts about whether Paul was the author.
- B. Internal evidence points to Paul:
 1. The author refers to himself twice as Paul - 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2:18.
 2. The constant companions of Paul are associated with the author - 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 3:1, 2.
 3. The style and concern for the church that is displayed by Paul is seen herein.
- C. External evidence:
 1. About A.D. 140, Marcion accepted it as Paul's.
 2. About A.D. 170, the Muratorian Canon placed it in sixth place among Paul's epistles.
 3. About A.D. 180, Irenaeus referred to the book.
 4. Clement of Alexandria referred to the book and credited it to Paul.

2. TO WHOM WAS THE BOOK WRITTEN?

- A. The city of Thessalonica was originally called "Therma" due to the hot springs in the area.
 1. Located at the junction of the main road from Rome to the East and the road, which ran from the Danube River to the Aegean Sea.
 2. The brother-in-law of Alexander the Great, Cassander, rebuilt Therma in 315 B.C and renamed it after his wife.
 3. In 168 B.C. Thessalonica was conquered by Rome and made the capital of one of the four provinces into which Macedonia was divided.
 4. Later it was made the capital of the entire territory.
 5. Was composed primarily of Greeks, Romans and Jews.
- B. The church was established by Paul and Silas on Paul's 2nd missionary trip - Acts 17:1-10.
 1. Paul and Silas left Philippi after being beaten and imprisoned.
 2. They passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia since there was no synagogue there - Acts 17:1.
 3. Paul then arrived in Thessalonica and reasoned for three Sabbaths in the synagogue.
 - A. He preached the death and resurrection of Christ - Acts 17:3.
 - B. Many of the devout Greeks and chief women believed - Acts 17:4.
 4. A mob was stirred up against the church by the Jews and charges were brought against them.
 5. Paul and Silas were sent away during the night in order to save their lives - Acts

17:10.

3. WHEN AND WHERE WAS THE BOOK WRITTEN?

- A. Opposition was stirred up against Paul by Jews from Thessalonica who came to Berea - Acts 17:13-15.
 - 1. Paul was escorted by the brethren to the sea where he sailed for Athens.
 - 2. Silas and Timothy stayed behind for a short period of time.
 - 3. Paul preached in Athens and then went on to Corinth - Acts 17:16-18:4.
 - 4. Paul's concern for the church at Thessalonica was calmed when Silas and Timothy joined him and brought a good report of their steadfastness - Acts 18:5.
 - 5. This is when Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians.
- B. Paul was in Corinth in A.D. 51 and 52.
 - 1. Late in his stay he was brought before Gallio, the Roman proconsul - Acts 18:12.
 - 2. Inscription found at Delphi in 1909 mentions Gallio and dates his proconsulship at Corinth.
 - 3. Therefore, we can date the book at around A.D. 51 or 52 since it was written from Corinth.

4. WHY WAS THE BOOK WRITTEN?

- A. Paul desired to comfort the Thessalonian Christians in their affliction - 1:1-10; 3:1-13.
- B. He defended himself against those who questioned his ministry and motives - 2:1-20.
- C. Instruction was given on godly living and exhortation was given to flee fornication - 4:1-12.
- D. Correction was made relative to their misunderstanding of the 2nd coming of Christ - 4:13-5:11.

5. OUTLINE OF 1 THESSALONIANS

- A. Commendation by Paul of the Christians - chapter 1.
- B. Paul's answer to the false accusers by pointing them to his work among them - chapter 2.
- C. His expression of anxiety over the church and its afflictions - chapter 3.
- D. His exhortation to flee fornication and live godly lives - 4:1-12.
- E. His teaching on the 2nd coming of Christ - 4:13-5:11.
- F. Final appeals and admonitions - 5:12-28.

6. LESSONS WE LEARN FROM 1ST THESSALONIANS

- A. Christians need to imitate the Thessalonian Christians in work, love, and patience - 1 Thessalonians 1:3; Galatians 5:6; James 2:14-26.
- B. The Thessalonian church was mission minded - 1:8.
- C. The Thessalonian Christians had truly repented - 1:9.
- D. Christians need to follow the example set by Paul in dealing with prospects, new converts and brethren in general - 2:3-12.
- E. The teaching on sexual purity is needed today - 4:1-8.
- F. Christians need to love one another - 4:9, 10.
- G. Teaching on the 2nd coming:
 - 1. It will be personal, visible and audible - 4:16.
 - 2. Doctrine of the "Rapture" is false as the Christian will be ever with the Lord - 4:17.
 - 3. It will be unexpected - 5:1-3.
 - 4. Should be prepared at all times - 5:6-11.

5. The need to “pray without ceasing” - 5:17.
6. Man not only mortal, but is made up of a body, soul and spirit - 5:23.

CONCLUSION:

1. 1st Thessalonians is one of the first books of the New Testament to be written.
2. 2nd coming of Christ is mentioned in every chapter.
 - A. Mentioned 618 times in the New Testament.
3. Book has a larger concentration of teaching on the 2nd coming than any other New Testament book.

COMMENTARY, 1 THESSALONIANS

CHAPTER ONE:

Verse 1

1. Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, . . .
 - A. Silvanus would have been the Roman name while Silas would have been his Jewish name.
 1. Silvanus was, no doubt, Silas the prophet who was sent from Jerusalem to Antioch with the Apostle Paul - Acts 15:22, 32.
 2. He accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey during which the church at Thessalonica was established - Acts 15:40; 17:1-9.
 3. Some have suggested that he may have been the scribe who recorded Paul's words written to the Thessalonians in this epistle.
 - A. There is no evidence for this, though.
 - B. Timotheus would, of course, be Timothy, to whom Paul wrote 1 & 2 Timothy.
 1. He was the son of a Greek father and a Hebrew mother - Acts 16:1.
2. . . . unto the church of the Thessalonians . . .
 - A. The terminology is a little different here and in 2 Thessalonians from other locations where Paul addressed specific congregations as "at," "of," or "in" certain geographical locations - 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:2.
 1. Here, the reference is to those who lived in the city of Thessalonica and were members of the church.
 - A. This gets to a local sense.
3. . . . which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: . . .
 - A. Here is the important part of this statement; those to whom Paul wrote were "in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ."
 - A. This would speak to the spiritual sense of their relationship with both the Father and Son.
 1. The "Fatherhood" of God is seen here, as seen in other locations - Romans 8:12-17; Galatians 4:4-7.
 - B. To be "in" One, is to be in the other.
 - B. The word "Lord," from the Greek word "kurios," referred to His position as Sovereign.
 - C. The name "Jesus," simply referred to His proper name.
 1. It was the "name" that was to be given to Him, designating Him as Savior - Matthew 1:21.
 - D. The word "Christ," from the Greek word "Christos," got to the point of His being the Messiah.
 1. In all, we see a summation here.
 - A. Jesus was shown to be both Lord and Christ, and what that meant.
4. . . . Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - A. A common greeting extended at this time by Paul, although not a common salutation among those in society.
 - B. "Grace," from "charis," referring to an unmerited favor from God.
 - C. "Peace," from the Greek word "eirene," would be greater than the common sense as expressed by the Hebrew word "shalom."

1. This is “peace” that comes “from God.”
 - A. Thus a sense of spiritual “peace” - Philippians 4:7.

Verse 2

1. We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;
 - A. Paul commonly gave thanks - 1 Corinthians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 1:3.
 1. He often gave thanks for specific things - 2 Timothy 1:3.
 2. His thanks were always given to God.
 - B. W.E. Vine had this to say about prayer, “Prayer is properly addressed to God the Father Matt. 6:6; John 16:23; Eph. 1:17; 3:14, and the Son, Acts 7:59; 2 Cor. 12:8; but in no instance in the NT is prayer addressed to the Holy Spirit distinctively, . . . ” (Vine’s, n.d., p. 882).
 1. Recommended reading:
 - A. Answering Arguments Pertaining to Prayer - Jason Hilburn.
 - B. Defending Divine Doctrine Pertaining to Prayer - Jason Hilburn.
 - C. Jesus and Prayer, Fort Worth Lectures, 1983 - Gary Workman.
 - D. Shall We Pray to Jesus? - Robert R. Taylor, Jr.
 - E. Should We Pray to Jesus? - Jason Hilburn.
 - F. Spiritual Perspectives, Praying to Jesus - Gary Summers.
 - C. The phrase “making mention of you in our prayers” does not suggest a passing reference, as is often the case with prayer.
 1. Literally, the idea of every time they prayed, they remembered the brethren at Thessalonica.
 2. The word “prayer,” here is from the Greek word “proseuche,” and had reference to general prayers - 1 Timothy 2:1.

Verse 3

1. Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, . . .
 - A. The word “remembering,” is a present participle, indicating continuous action.
 1. Thus, they “always remembered,” or were always put in mind of them.
 - B. The phrase “work of faith” had reference to the work done by the Thessalonians that resulted from their faith.
 1. Contrary to what many in the denominational world would have us to believe, there is an association of faith and works - Ephesians 2:8-10; James 2:14-17.
 - A. Actually, faith is a “work” - John 6:27-29.
2. . . . and labour of love, . . .
 - A. “Labor” prompted by love.
 1. “Agape” love is active.
 - A. “God so loved the world that He gave. . .” - John 3:16.
 1. Because of His example, we set out to “labor” in the same way.
 - B. We are looking at the idea of “toil” here.
 1. Paul instructed Timothy to “do the work of an evangelist” - 2 Timothy 4:5.
 - A. The “work” here was to the point of exhaustion.
 2. The Corinthians were instructed to “always abound (ing) in the work of the Lord” - 1 Corinthians 15:58.
 3. Paul “labored” often - 2 Corinthians 6:5.

3. . . . and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, . . .
 - A. This is patience or steadfastness that came about due to hope.
 1. Even in the face of struggle, they were to remain steadfast.
 2. To accomplish this, “hope” was necessary.
 - A. Biblical “hope,” is deeper than the common definition expressed by the idea of desire.
 1. Of the Greek word “elpis,” Vine had this to say, “in the NT, favorable and confident expectation.” (Vine’s, n.d., p. 572).
 - B. They both desired and expected everlasting glory because of their relationship with the Lord.
4. . . . in the sight of God and our Father;
 - A. It is in God that the “hope” they have is to be realized.
 1. No doubt they are looking with “hope” to the events associated with the resurrection.

Verse 4

1. Knowing, brethren beloved, . . .
 - A. The word “knowing” literally referred to the idea of “since they knew their election . . .”
 - B. Not just “brethren” (“adelphos”), but “brethren beloved” (“egapemenoi hupo theou”).
 1. Literally, “beloved of God.”
 - A. Note the English Standard Version - “brothers loved by God.”
2. . . . your election of God.
 - A. The word “election” (“eklogen”) is translated “chosen” in some of the more modern translations, such as the English Standard Version and the New International Version.
 1. This would speak legions to those who composed the church at Thessalonica, since it was mostly composed of Gentiles, while the Jews had been previously chosen.
 - A. It is from the same word used by Jesus when He chose the Apostles - John 15:16.
 2. It is in reference to one having been “picked out” in reference to divine purposes.
 - A. God chose Abraham to be the father of the nation of Israel - Genesis 12:1-3.
 - B. He chose Jacob over Esau - Isaiah 41:8; Malachi 1:2, 3; Romans 9:12, 13.
 - C. He previously chose Israel - Isaiah 44:1; Acts 13:17.
 - D. Jesus chose the Apostles - John 15:16-19.
 3. There is no question concerning God having made a choice when it comes to what Paul is addressing.
 - A. What has to be understood is what all of this means.
 1. Freedom of choice from human perspective is not overruled by God’s choice.
 2. The person who chooses to be obedient to New Testament doctrine concerning salvation is the one who is “elected of God.”
 - A. God chooses from the sense that He has decreed that those who obey Him are saved, and those who reject Him are lost - Hebrews 5:9; Revelation 22:17; John 12:48.
 - B. He has not chosen the saved in the sense of choosing a specific person for salvation and another for condemnation.
 - B. Passages which help us to see God’s desire for salvation of all mankind.
 1. Matthew 7:21-23 - salvation based on doing, not election.
 2. Matthew 11:28-30 - universal promise to “all” who will “take” up the Lord’s

“yoke.”

3. Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16 - Great Commission is a universal commission.
4. Acts 17:30 - God commands “all” to repent.
5. Titus 2:11 - God’s grace has been extended to “all.”
6. 2 Peter 3:9 - God’s desire for “all” to repent is easily seen.

Verse 5

1. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, . . .
 - A. The word “gospel,” is from the Greek word “euaggelion,” and literally meant “good news.”
 1. Here it would be “good news” relative to salvation.
 2. The gospel was “theirs” in the sense that they were the proclaimers or messengers that brought it, rather than the point of origin or possession.
 - A. This was a common idea used by Paul - Romans 2:16; 16:25; 2 Corinthians 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Timothy 2:8.
 - B. More than the words of Paul.
 1. Not “just” teaching, but teaching with “power.”
2. . . . but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, . . .
 - A. An example of the “power” mentioned here would be seen in Acts 17:1-9.
 1. The word “power,” came from the Greek word “dunamis,” and suggested the idea of their words coming “with power” as seen in the New International Version.
 2. Literally, it was associated with a display of the “power of God.”
 - B. The “power” was associated “with the Holy Spirit,” as per the New International Version.
 1. No doubt having reference to the spiritual gifts associated with the preaching for the purpose of confirming the word - Mark 16:20; 1 Corinthians 2:4, 5; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:1-4.
3. . . . and in much assurance; . . .
 - A. The confidence that the Apostles had would have been rooted in the operation of the Holy Spirit on them as manifested in the spiritual gifts.
4. . . . as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.
 - A. Reference here to how they conducted themselves while at Thessalonica.
 1. In a way, this kind of reminds us of 2 Peter 3:11.
 - B. The way the Apostles and others conducted themselves at Thessalonica was for the benefit of the Thessalonians.
 1. Recall what Paul commanded Timothy - 1 Timothy 4:16.
 2. Remember the saying, “Practice what you preach.”

Verse 6

1. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, . . .
 - A. “Followers” or “imitators,” as seen in the American Standard, English Standard, and New International Versions.
 1. From the Greek word “mimetes.”
 2. Vine stated this, “in 1 Thess. 1:6; 2:14, the accompanying verb is in the aorist tense, referring to the definite act of conversion in the past.” (Vine, n.d., pp. 588, 589).
 3. Paul, as he followed Christ, was “worthy” of being “imitated” - 1 Corinthians 11:1.

- B. By saying “and of the Lord” Paul eliminated any possibility of his being impugned for setting himself up as the sole example.
- 2. . . . having received the word in much affliction, . . .
 - A. The word “affliction,” refers to “tribulation,” from the Greek word “thlipsei,” as seen in a number of passages in the New Testament - Romans 5:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:4, et.al.
 - 1. Of course Paul was well versed when it came to “affliction,” having experienced it many times - Romans 5:3; 2 Corinthians 2:4; Colossians 2:24; 2 Timothy 3:10, 11.
 - B. Paul did not indicate the source of their “tribulation.”
 - 1. It has been suggested that they may have come from both Jew and Gentile - Acts 17:5-9; 1 Thessalonians 2:14.
- 3. . . . with joy of the Holy Ghost:
 - A. “Joy” that came from the Holy Spirit as part of the “fruit of the Spirit” - Galatians 5:22.
 - 1. Recall what James had to say - James 1:2-4.
 - 2. Recall how that Paul and Silas sang while imprisoned at Colosse - Acts 16:25.

Verse 7

- 1. So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.
 - A. The English Standard Version states, “so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.”
 - 1. As they dealt with the “tribulations” that came upon them, they set a good example to the believers throughout Macedonia and Achaia.
 - 2. The word “ensamples,” here is from the Greek word “tupos,” sometimes translated “pattern” - 1 Timothy 1:16; Titus 2:7.
 - 3. The procedure is interesting here.
 - A. The Thessalonians followed Paul, as he followed Christ, and then they became an “ensample,” “example,” “pattern,” or “model” (as per the New International Version) to others.
 - B. Macedonia and Achaia were two provinces of the Roman Empire that covered so much of the world at that time.
 - 1. Achaia would have been what we consider southern Greece, including Athens and Corinth, while Macedonia would have been the northern part of Greece, including Berea, Philippi, and Thessalonica - See Appendix # 1, page 65.

Verse 8

- 1. 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.
 - A. For the phrase “sounded out” Robertson wrote, “to sound out of a trumpet or of thunder, to reverberate like our echo. Nowhere else in the N.T. So ‘from you’ as a sounding board or radio transmitting station (to use a modern figure). It marks forcibly ‘both the clear and the persuasive nature of the **logo tou Kuriou**’” (Robertson, 1931, p. 12, emp. his).
 - 1. It is important to note that this is in the perfect tense, indicating that “the word of the Lord” was still being “sounded out” at the time Paul wrote.
 - B. The phrase “in every place” may be hyperbolic, but whatever the case, the church had been active in “sounding forth the gospel.”
 - 1. Thessalonica was located on the Egnatian Road and served as a sea harbor.

- A. Because of this, the word was able to go out in every direction.
- C. The point that Paul was getting at was that the church had done such a good job in spreading the gospel that there was nothing for he and his companions to do.

Verse 9

1. For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, . . .
 - A. The English Standard Version states, “For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, . . .”
 1. Specifically, the phrase “manner of entering in” had to do with the kind of “welcome” they had received.
 2. Literally, Paul was saying that the “reports” they were getting back from others was that he and his companions had been well received among the Thessalonians.
 - A. It is interesting to note that these “reports” seemed to keep on coming in.
2. . . . and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;
 - A. Secondly, they are having “reported” to them how the Thessalonians had “turned to God from idols.”
 1. The word “turned,” here is “epistrepho,” and was commonly used to express the idea of “turning to God” - Acts 3:19.
 - A. Repentance would be seen here.
 - B. The object from which they “turned” was idols and the object to whom they “turned” was God.
 1. Idol worship, etc., was very much rooted in Macedonian culture, as their temples were the center of social life.
 - C. They “turned to God . . . to serve . . .”
 1. The phrase “to serve” is from the Greek word “douleuo,” and referred to serving as a slave as expressed by Paul to the Romans - Romans 6:16-18.
 - D. The phrase “living and true God” had to do with the contrast between the idols that were dead and inactive to God who was both “living and true.”
 1. “True” here would be in reference to His being “real” in contrast to that which was not.
 2. We note Paul instructing those at Lystra to “turn from these vanities unto the living God” - Acts 14:15.

Verse 10

1. And to wait for his Son from heaven, . . .
 - A. Even while “waiting” they were “serving.”
 1. Too many today are only “waiting.”
 - B. The “wait” here was for Jesus’ return.
 1. We have here a present infinitive, which suggests the idea of their “keeping on waiting.”
 2. Paul wrote to the Philippians concerning their “looking” or “waiting” for His return - Philippians 3:20.
 - A. The New King James Version states, “from which we also eagerly wait.”
2. . . . whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, . . .
 - A. The deity of Jesus was confirmed by His resurrection - Acts 2:24-33; 1 Peter 1:3.
 - B. They were “looking for,” “waiting for,” a living Savior as opposed to those who might

- “look” for an idol.
3. . . . which delivered us from the wrath to come.
 - A. The New International Version states here, “and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead - Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.”
 1. Judgment and wrath is coming upon the disobedient - Acts 17:28-31; Romans 2:5-8; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9.
 2. But the faithful child of God has been “delivered” or “recued” from that wrath.
 - A. Remember, there is “no condemnation to them that are in Christ” - Romans 8:1.

CHAPTER TWO:

Verse 1

1. For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:
 - A. The Thessalonians did not need for others to tell them of the success of the spread of the gospel as they were well aware themselves.
 1. Literally, Paul was saying, “You know how that our coming was not in vain.”
 - B. The phrase “our entrance in unto you” may appear a little strained in the King James Version.
 1. The English Standard Version makes it somewhat clearer, “For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain.”
 - C. Their coming “was not in vain.”
 1. Literally, their visit to Thessalonica had purpose.
 - A. That, of course, was the spread of the gospel.

Verse 2

1. But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, . . .
 - A. Prior to Paul’s visit to Thessalonica he had faced “affliction” at Philippi - Acts 16:16-40.
 1. Undoubtedly upon his arrival at Thessalonica he made them aware of his mistreatment.
2. . . . we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.
 - A. After having experienced being put in prison and in stocks (Acts 16:23, 24), when they arrived at Thessalonica they were bold in their proclamation of the Word.
 1. The word “bold,” (“parresiazomai,” in Greek), referred to the idea of openly expressing oneself freely.
 - A. The American Standard Version states, “we waxed bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel.”
 - B. Even in the face of “much contention” at Thessalonica, they continued to be “bold” in their presentation of the gospel.
 - C. In his presentation of this, Paul was getting at the heart of the issue at hand, the accusation that he and his companions were not sincere in their efforts to preach.
 1. To which he writes, the reason they did what they did, in the face of such “affliction,” was because they were sincere.

Verse 3

1. For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:
 - A. The word “exhortation,” is from the Greek word “paraklesis,” and, according to

Robertson means, "Persuasive discourse, calling to one's side, for admonition, encouragement, or comfort" (Robertson, 1931, p. 16).

1. Literally, their preaching was not done out of "error."
 - A. The word "deceit" does not actually convey what Paul was addressing.
 1. Better to be seen as "error or impurity" as seen in the English Standard Version.
 - B. The bottom line is, we are seeing that what he did was done out of pure motives.
 1. There was no attempt on their behalf to take advantage of the Thessalonians through some measure of underhanded activity.

Verse 4

1. 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.
 - A. The word "allowed," from the Greek word "dokimazo," is better seen as "approved."
 1. Therefore, they were "approved" of by God to be put in trust of the gospel.
 2. His point, essentially, was that God would not "approve" of them if they were practicing some sort of underhanded tactics.
 3. God had "tested" them and had "approved" of them.
 4. Recall how that Paul had pointed out that he had been separated unto the gospel - Romans 1:1.
 - B. Because of this, they sought not to "please men, but God."
 1. Reminds us of the question Paul asked of the Galatians - Galatians 1:10.
 - C. It is God that "triest the reigns and the heart" - Jeremiah 11:20.

Verse 5

1. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:
 - A. The phrase "flattering words" had to do with such speech that would "flatter" the hearers while avoiding the truth.
 1. No such thing as such insincere speech found in their lives.
 - B. This is the third time that Paul has said "as you know" in this chapter - 1 Thessalonians 2:1, 2, 5.
 1. He is calling upon them to serve as witness to themselves.
 - A. Self-verification.
 - C. The phrase "nor a cloke of covetousness" is translated "nor with a pretext for greed" in the English Standard Version.
 1. Paul said, "You know we did not put forth a false reason in order to cover up the real one."
 2. They did not come because of "greed."
 - A. "Covetousness" is from the Greek word "pleonexia," and means, "a desire to have more, always in a bad sense" (Vines, n.d., p. 255).
 - B. Such desire was not their motivation.
 - D. Paul often called upon Deity as "witness" - Romans 9:1; 2 Corinthians 1:23; Philippians 1:8.

Verse 6

1. Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been

burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

A. Paul did not seek the praise of men.

1. Not of men in general.
2. Not of the Thessalonians.

B. As an Apostle, he never used that position to be “burdensome” to the Thessalonians.

1. Perhaps in reference to their right for financial assistance, of which they never asked.
2. They had the “authority” to do so, as seen in the American Standard Version, “when we might have claimed authority as apostles of Christ.”

C. The phrase “apostles of Christ” should be understood in the more general sense of “one sent.”

1. Similar to Barnabas - Acts 14:14.
2. Jesus is referred to as “the Apostle and High Priest of our profession” - Hebrews 3:1.

Verse 7

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

A. The word “gentle,” here, is from the Greek word is “epios,” and according to Vine means, “mild, gentle, was frequently used by Greek writers as characterizing a nurse with trying children or a teacher with refractory scholars, or of parents toward their children.” (Vines, n.d., p. 485).

1. Such “gentleness” would be similar to the care offered by a mother.

B. The phrase “even as a nurse cherisheth her children” indicates the way in which the “gentleness” of Paul and his companions was displayed.

1. “Like a nursing mother taking care of her own children” as seen in the English Standard Version.
2. We see an emotional tie here between Paul, his companions, and the Thessalonians.

Verse 8

1. So being affectionately desirous of you, . . .

A. We find a term of endearment here.

B. Literally, since they were loved as children, . . .

2. . . . 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.

A. . . . not only were Paul and his companions willing to preach the gospel to them, but they were willing to give their lives for them.

1. This reminds us of what Paul wrote concerning the Christians at Rome - Romans 9:1-3.

B. This love caused them to keep nothing profitable back from them as a nursing mother is not only concerned with the feeding of her child.

1. She feeds the child, but she also tends to it every need.

Verse 9

1. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: . . .

A. It seems that Paul continues to deal with the matter of their having been accused of “deceit.”

1. In doing so, he calls upon the “brethren” to verify their “labour and travail.”

B. The word “travail” should be seen as “difficulties,” or “hardships” endured due to their efforts put forth on behalf of the Thessalonians.

1. Recall how Paul pointed out his work that provided support for his efforts - Acts 18:3; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-10.
2. . . . for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.
 - A. “Labouring,” here, is from the Greek word “kopos,” and had reference to the tiresome nature of the work that Paul was involved in.
 1. Literally, the idea of his “laboring” until exhaustion.
 - A. This was done both “night and day.”
 2. His point was, if they came to take advantage of them, they surely failed by having to “labor night and day” while they provided for their own needs, since they were not “chargeable unto any of” them.
 - B. His not being “chargeable” to the Thessalonians did not mean he did not have the right for such support, only that he did not use that right - 2 Corinthians 2:5; 2 Thessalonians 3:8.

Verse 10

1. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:
 - A. The false accusers must face both the Thessalonians and God as “witnesses” of their behavior.
 - B. The word “unblameably,” (“blameless” in the English Standard Version), was from the Greek word “amemptos,” and had reference to their being without reproach relative to the accusations made against them.
 1. Paul was not saying that they were sinless, only that in this specific area no one could lay reproach upon them.

Verse 11

1. As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,
 - A. Again, Paul calls the Thessalonians to witness by pointing out that they “know” what Paul and his companions did and how they acted.
 - B. The word “exhorted,” from the Greek word “parakaleo,” referred to the idea of entreating another.
 - C. The word “comforted,” from the Greek word “paramutheomai,” would be better seen as “persuaded,” or “encouraged,” as seen in the English Standard Version.
 - D. The word “charged,” from the Greek word “marturomai,” would refer to the idea of an appeal.
 1. This could have to do with his appeal to the Thessalonians to stand as “witness” to their actions, etc.
 - E. The phrase “as a father doth his children” reintroduces the family image again.
 1. We see in this his love and manifestation of his concern for them.
 2. The image is interesting, given the “gentleness” seen above, and the encouragement seen here.
 - A. We might see this as a “gentle persuasion.”

Verse 12

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

- A. Herein is the reason for the three participles seen above.
 - 1. The idea of the kind of “walk” that the Christian is to conduct is seen often in the writings of Paul - Romans 8:4; 13:13; 1 Corinthians 7:17; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 4:17; 5:15; Colossians 4:5.
- B. Their having been “called” by God is their having been “called” by the gospel - 2 Thessalonians 2:14.
- C. The “kingdom,” here, is the church - Matthew 16:18, 19; Colossians 1:13.
- D. The “glory” would be both temporary and eventually eternal - 2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:4; 1 Peter 5:10; 2 Peter 1:11.

Verse 13

- 1. 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.
 - A. Paul’s thanks was continual.
 - B. The word “received,” here is the Greek word “paralambano,” and referred to their having been receptive of what Paul had taught.
 - 1. It reminds us of what Paul wrote to the Galatians - Galatians 1:8, 9.
 - A. It is one thing to have the gospel preached to you and yet a totally other thing to “receive” it.
 - C. “The word” was seen as “effectually” working in those that believed.
 - 1. In other words, they received it as what it was, God’s Word, and allowed it to “work” in them - Ephesians 3:20; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 4:12.

Verse 14

- 1. For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: . . .
 - A. Again we see the family image as Paul used the term “brethren.”
 - 1. To the Ephesians he wrote of the “family” in heaven and on earth - Ephesians 3:15.
 - B. “Followers” or “imitators,” as per the English Standard Version.
- 2. . . . for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:
 - A. Here is the area wherein they were imitating the Jewish churches of Judaea.
 - 1. Even though they were mostly Gentiles, they were suffering persecution like the Jewish Christians in Judaea were - Acts 5:27-42.
 - B. The word “countrymen” would refer to those of Thessalonica, most of whom would be Gentile.
 - 1. In Acts 17:1-9 we note, though, that it was the Thessalonian Jews that started the persecution against those in Thessalonica.

Verse 15

- 1. 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:
 - A. It was the Jewish leaders that brought Jesus before the Roman authorities - Matthew 27:1-11; Acts 2:22-24.
 - B. They had also “killed . . . their own prophets” - Matthew 23:29-32; Luke 11:47-51; Acts 7:51, 52.

- C. The phrase “and have persecuted us” is translated “and drove us out” in the English Standard Version.
 - 1. Paul was referring to the events seen in Acts 17:1-10 where Paul and companions had been driven out of Thessalonica.
- D. They not being “pleasing to God” was the result of the rejection of Jesus, which resulted in the rejection of the Father - John 5:22-24.
- E. The phrase “and are contrary to all men” had to do with their hatred of others which was shown in their hostility toward them.
 - 1. This would be in reference to the hostility of the Jews as seen manifested in the next statement.

Verse 16

- 1. Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, . . .
 - A. Recall when Paul spoke to the Jews concerning the Gentiles being saved and the response of those who heard him - Acts 22:21, 22.
- 2. . . . to fill up their sins alway: . . .
 - A. Literally, by doing what they were doing here, they were said to be filling up the measure of their sins.
 - 1. They were piling one sin upon another.
 - 2. Some have suggested that the hindrance of the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles was done with intent to make sure that no sin was omitted from their lives.
- 3. . . . for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.
 - A. This refers to the punishment that is coming upon them for their actions - Romans 2:5, 6; 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10.
 - 1. Some see this as reference to the coming destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
 - A. Perhaps so, but clearly the judgment that will come will be in its fullest sense on the “Day of Judgment.”
 - 1. No doubt this would be seen in the word “uttermost.”

Verse 17

- 1. 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.
 - A. Reference, again, back to what happened in Acts 17:1-10.
 - 1. The phrase “taken away” literally indicates he felt as one “orphaned” from them, as a child taken from its mother.
 - B. Although the separation was physical, it was not “in heart.”
 - 1. In other words, he was still with them in spirit.
 - C. His “desire” to see them was temporarily thwarted by the continued attempts to take his life by the Jews - Acts 17:13-15.
 - 1. It seems they would fairly much stop at nothing in their attempt to keep the gospel away from the Gentiles.

Verse 18

- 1. Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.
 - A. We see the eventual source of the attempt on the lives of Paul and his companions, Satan.
 - 1. The Jewish persecutors were nothing more than tools of Satan as seen in other

locations - Acts 5:3; 2 Corinthians 2:11.

- B. The word rendered “hindered,” here is the Greek word “enekopsen,” and was used to describe some sort of a ditch cut into a road to prevent travel.

Verse 19

- 1. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? . . .
 - A. They were, as will be seen later - 1 Thessalonians 4:15; 5:1-3.
 - B. Some have accused Paul of “boasting” here in a negative way because the word “rejoicing” is from the Greek word “kauchesis.”
 - 1. However, like many words, “kauchesis” may mean one thing in one place and another in another location.
 - A. “Kauchesis” is translated “boasting” in Romans 3:27; 2 Corinthians 11:10, 17.
 - 2. But, here, this would be in the sense of his doing so similar to an athlete glorying over (boasting over) his victory.
- 2. . . . Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?
 - A. They would be his source of “glory” (“doxa”) when the Lord comes.
 - 1. In other words, they would be the manifestation of his efforts as seen in his writing to the Corinthians - 1 Corinthians 3:13-15.
 - 2. Recall John’s sense of “joy” over the faithfulness of his “children” - 3 John 3, 4.

Verse 20

- 1. For ye are our glory and joy.
 - A. It is revealing about the character of Paul that he “gloried” in other’s faithfulness as opposed to his efforts.
 - 1. Do you think we could learn something here?

CHAPTER THREE:

Verse 1

- 1. Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;
 - A. Because of the desire that he had to know about the Christians at Thessalonica, he could not put off finding out about them any longer.
 - 1. This desire was so intense that he felt it better to remain at Athens alone and send Timothy to check on them.
 - B. In Acts 17:14, 15 we note that Silas and Timothy followed him to Athens.
 - 1. From this text in 1 Thessalonians we learn additional information not provided in Acts 17.
 - A. Although we are not told how long they stayed with Paul, it appears it was not a long period of time.
 - 1. Timothy was sent to Thessalonica.
 - 2. And it appears that Silas may have returned to Berea, or some place in the area.
 - C. From Athens Paul travelled to Corinth, meeting up with both Silas and Timothy, who came to him from Macedonia - Acts 18:1-5.

Verse 2

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

- A. Timothy is referred to by Paul by three different phrases, “brother,” “minister,” and “fellowlabourer” in the King James Version.
 - 1. The word “brother” carried on the familial connection that he had indicated in chapter two.
 - 2. The phrases “minister of God” and “our fellowlabourer” are translated “God’s coworker” in the English Standard Version and “God’s minister in the gospel of Christ” in the American Standard Version.
 - A. There is some manuscript variation on this as seen in the different English translations.
 - 1. Some manuscripts have the word “sunergos” while others have the word “diakonos” but only the King James Version and the New King James Versions include both phrases.
 - 2. Vincent states, “Fellow laborer, Omit from text” (Vincent, 1887, p. 32).
 - 3. There is no reason to assume that the word “diakonos” had reference to Timothy relative to an official sense of his being a “deacon.”
- B. Timothy was described as a “servant” or “laborer” “in the gospel of Christ.”
 - 1. Recall how Paul instructed Timothy to “do the work of an evangelist” - 2 Timothy 4:5.
- C. The “work” that he was to do was to “establish” or “strengthen,” as per the New International Version, and to “comfort,” or “exhort” as per the English Standard Version.
 - 1. The “exhortation,” here, was in the area of their “faith” - 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 3:5-7; 5:8.

Verse 3

- 1. That no man should be moved by these afflictions: . . .
 - A. The phrase “be moved” conveyed the idea of their not being “rooted up and moved” away from the “faith” because of the “afflictions” they were facing.
 - 1. The “afflictions” would be the previously mentioned trials that came from their “countrymen” - 1 Thessalonians 2:14.
- 2. . . . for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.
 - A. The English Standard Version states here, “For you yourselves know that we are destined for this.”
 - 1. Their being “appointed” for such trials was not in the sense that they were pre-ordained to suffer such.
 - A. Rather, they knew that they would suffer such because they had been forewarned.

Verse 4

- 1. 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.
 - A. The English Standard Version states, “For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, . . .” which better gets the idea across.
 - 1. The word “told” is from the Greek word “prolego,” and indicated repeated action relative to the warnings that came from Paul.
 - B. Even though Paul had repeatedly warned them, he still feared that they would be caught “with their guard down.”
 - 1. We see in this the sense of 2 Timothy 3:12.

Verse 5

1. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, . . .
 - A. He had had all he could stand not knowing what was going on with the brethren at Thessalonica.
 1. Literally, he could not endure the lack of knowledge any longer.
2. . . . lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, . . .
 - A. The “tempter” here would be the devil - Matthew 4:3-5.
3. . . . and our labour be in vain.
 - A. Paul was concerned that they might have given up the faith, and as such, the previous work he had done among them would be “in vain” - 1 Corinthians 3:15.

Verse 6

1. 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:
 - A. Timothy had recently made the trip from Thessalonica to Corinth, bringing him news, when Paul wrote to the Thessalonians.
 1. Upon arriving at Corinth, he reported to Paul the “good news” (“euangelizo”) concerning their “faith and charity.”
 - A. The word “faith” would be indicative of their “faithfulness” or “fidelity.”
 - B. The word “love” is “agape.”
 - B. Although there were some who were in opposition to Paul at Thessalonica, the Christians for the most part were not convinced that Paul was a false teacher.
 1. Recall, he had pointed out that some were accusing him of trying to “pull the wool” over their eyes, but such was not true - 1 Thessalonians 2:3.
 - A. As a matter of fact, Paul pointed out that they “greatly desired” to see him, as he desired to see them - 1 Thessalonians 2:17.

Verse 7

1. Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:
 - A. Paul had faced a good amount of affliction and distress as he was anxious over their condition.
 1. He struggled with idolaters in Athens - Acts 17:16-18.
 2. While at Corinth he struggled with Jews who were being obstinate - Acts 18:5, 6.
 - B. Now, though, he is finding “comfort” or “encouragement” from the “good news” that Timothy brought to him.
 1. The word “comforted” here is the same word found in verse 2, “parakaleo.”
 - C. So, Paul was saying that he derived great “encouragement” from knowing that they were being true to the faith even though he had gone through great “affliction and distress.”
 1. The word “distress,” here, is from the Greek word “anagkei,” and meant, according to Robertson, “*Physical necessity*, common sense in late Greek, choking (*agcho*, *angor*), and *crushing* trouble (*thlipsis*, *thlibo*)” (Robertson, 1931, p. 26, emp. his).

Verse 8

1. For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.
 - A. This is present, active, indicative suggesting a sense of their having stood, and are

standing.

1. We see the idea of “standing firm” as seen in the New International Version.
- B. It is interesting the way that Paul puts this.
 1. “For now we really live, . . .”, New International Version.
 2. Paul was expressing personal happiness over the way the Thessalonians were living.
 - A. This kind of reminds us of John - 3 John 3, 4.

Verse 9

1. For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;
 - A. Paul wished to thank God for the joy that resulted from the faithfulness of the Thessalonians.
 1. Literally, the idea expressed by Paul was “what thanks could they give back or return to God” for the happiness they felt.
 2. The sorrow they experienced before paled in contrast to the joy they felt knowing of the maintained fidelity to God of the Thessalonians.
 - B. But not only was he thankful to God, he was thankful to them.
 1. The Thessalonians were the basis of their joy, but the real source was God.

Verse 10

1. Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?
 - A. We can see here Paul and his companions understanding of the value of persistence in prayer - Luke 18:1-8; 1 Thessalonians 5:17.
 1. This reminds us of James’ words in James 5:16, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”
 - B. Their prayer was that they “might see” the faces of those they loved at Thessalonica.
 1. Although he had been encouraged by the good news brought to him by Timothy, he still wanted to see them face to face.
 - C. His desire to see them was in order that he “might perfect that which is lacking” in their faith.
 1. To the Romans Paul indicated a desire to see them in order that he might “impart unto” them “some spiritual gift, to the end” they “may be established;” - Romans 1:11.
 2. There seemed to be some areas where there needed to be some “mending” done as seen in the Greek word “katartizo,” used in Matthew 4:21 of “mending nets” and Galatians 6:1 in “restoring” one “overtaken in a fault.”
 - A. In chapter 4:1 and 10 we see where they needed further assistance so that they might “abound more and more” and “increase more and more.”
 - D. The word “faith” here is not one’s personal faith such as that which “comes from hearing,” but, rather, “the faith,” such as seen in Jude 3.

Verse 11

1. Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.
 - A. Paul put his faith in both the Father and Son concerning whether he would ever return to Thessalonica.
 1. The phrase, “direct our way” literally referred to the idea of to “clear the way,” as

seen in the New International Version.

2. He, some three or four years later, travelled through Macedonia, which would have provided him the opportunity to visit Thessalonica, since Thessalonica was located in the province of Macedonia.

A. It was in Macedonia that he gave “them much exhortation” - Acts 20:1, 2.

3. It, also, appears that he may have returned one other time - 1 Timothy 1:3.

Verse 12

1. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:
 - A. Robertson suggests that Paul prayed to Christ with the statement here (Robertson, 1931, p. 27).
 1. However, that is a stretch, since there is no way to say for sure that the designation “Lord” is referring to Christ.
 - B. We see in this passage Paul’s desire and prayer that the Thessalonians grow in love for each other.
 1. Robertson says that the phrase “make you to increase” is “first aorist active optative,” indicating a “wish for the future” (Robertson, 1931, p. 27).
 2. The verbs “increase” and “abound” essentially say the same thing.
 - A. Robertson said, “It is hard to see much difference between the two verbs” (Robertson, 1931, p. 27).
 - C. The word “abound” is “perisseuo,” and suggests the idea of an “overflow of love.”
 1. Of course this fulfills the “new commandment” given by Jesus relative to each other as Christians - John 13:34, 35.
 2. It, also, fulfills the “royal law” - James 2:8.
 - D. We see in the phrase “even as we do toward you” continued growth in love toward the Thessalonians by Paul and his companions.

Verse 13

1. To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, . . .
 - A. As they grew in love for each other, they would be “established in heart.”
 1. The word “stablish” is the same word seen in verse 2 concerning Timothy’s purpose in going to Thessalonica.
 - B. As they grew in love for each other, their hearts were made “unblameable in holiness.”
 1. Literally, they would become without “blame” “in holiness,” which would speak to their service to God “before God.”
2. . . . even our Father, . . .
 - A. The “all seeing eye” of God was watching over them - Psalms 139:7-13.
3. . . . at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .
 - A. The “parousia” of Christ - Philippians 1:9, 10; 1 Thessalonians 2:19.
 1. There is no indication of the time of the coming of Christ, only that they needed to conduct themselves in view of His coming - 2 Peter 3:9-14.
4. . . . with all his saints.
 - A. There are a couple different ideas as to who Paul had in mind when he wrote of the “saints” as the word “hagioi” is not definitive.
 1. Those who were faithful who previously died.

2. Angels
3. Perhaps both.
- B. We know that Jesus will “bring with him” those faithful Christians who “sleep” - 1 Thessalonians 4:14.
 1. If we remind ourselves that Paul is addressing problems over the Second Coming, then that might suggest that he only had in mind the righteous dead, and why he did so.
- C. We know that angels will come with Him, and that there is a “role” they will play - Matthew 25:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:7.
- D. Caution needs to be used here so as to not get caught up in the millennial mania that is so prevalent today.
 1. You might want to get a copy of our material on Eschatology and spend some time in study of Premillennialism.
 - A. These are available through the School office.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Verse 1

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.
 - A. Other than the King James Version, the majority of translations begin verse 1 with the word “finally,” indicating the idea of his addressing the final major part of his epistle.
 1. Paul did this on other occasions - Ephesians 6:10; Philippians 4:8.
 2. Having introduced the subject of the second coming of Christ, he now proceeds to conduct a more complete discussion of it.
 - B. Paul both “beseeched” and “exhorted” the Thessalonian brethren concerning how they “ought to walk” as Christians.
 1. “Beseech” is from the Greek word “erotao,” and referred to an “urgent request.”
 - A. Paul uses it 20 times in the epistles he wrote.
 2. “Exhort” is from the Greek word “parakaleo,” and referred to the idea of an “entreaty.”
 - C. This was done by invoking authority from the Lord.
 - D. The Thessalonians “had received” teaching from Paul and his companions as to how to “walk the walk” - 1 Thessalonians 2:12.
 1. This would be “walking” the “straight and narrow” road that leads to life - Matthew 7:14.
 2. The English Standard Version better presents the point Paul was making by saying, “you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing.”
 - A. Although the phrase “just as you are doing” is absent from some manuscripts, it is found in a number of others such as the Alexandrinus, Sinaiticus, and Vaticanus.
 3. Timothy had previously apprised Paul of the Thessalonians faithful “walk.”
 - A. Now Paul commends them and encouraged them to keep it up.
 1. Literally, Paul was telling them to “excel even more” when it came to

following the teaching of God.

Verse 2

1. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.
 - A. The word “commandments” is from the Greek word “parangello,” and, according to Vine, means “For parangelia (cp. parangello, above), ‘a proclamation,’ see CHARGE. (Vines, n.d., 212).
 1. Literally, what we see here is an authoritative order passed on to the Thessalonians by Paul.
 2. It would be similar to a military order, coming from the top down, being passed on from one to another.
 - B. There is no question concerning the source of the command,
 1. Paul was adamant to show that the commands came from the Lord.
 - A. Paul had previously addressed the fact that what they had received was not the word of men, but “the word of God” - 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

Verse 3

1. For this is the will of God, . . .
 - A. Specific indication that what they were being commanded to do, was the “will of God.”
2. . . . even your sanctification, . . .
 - A. In order to be “sanctified,” they must follow the commands of God.
 - B. The word “sanctification” comes from the Greek word “hagiasmos,” and expressed the concept of “holiness.”
 1. Recall what Jesus had to say about sanctification - John 17:17.
 2. We see here the sense of consecration to a deity.
 - A. Robertson indicated that it did not originally “include holiness of life” (Robertson, 1931, p. 28.
3. . . . that ye should abstain from fornication:
 - A. A number of translations use the phrase “sexual immorality” here, although I am not sure that is as specific as it needs to be.
 1. The Greek word found here is “porneia,” and refers to all illicit sexual activities.
 - B. Illicit sexual activity was prevalent at the time of the writing of the New Testament, although there does not appear to be any specific occasion addressed by Paul here such as he did with the church at Corinth - 1 Corinthians 5:1-7.
 1. Recall what Paul wrote concerning such sins as these having been put away at conversion - 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21.
 2. What we see here is an example of what is needed to be “set apart” from the “things of the world” - 1 John 2:15-17.

Verse 4

1. That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;
 - A. Literally, so that they might learn and thus know.
 - B. As to what Paul meant when he wrote of “his vessel” there is some conflict.
 1. Some suggest he was writing about their body, while others see him writing concerning their wife.
 - A. The English Standard Version states, “each one of you know how to control his own body” but adds in the footnote “Or how to take a wife for himself.”

2. One thing that should be considered is that the New Testament never refers to the wife as a “vessel” (“skeuos,” in the Greek).
 - A. However, on a number of occasions the human body is referred to thusly - Acts 9:15; Romans 9:21-23; 2 Corinthians 4:7; 2 Timothy 2:21.
3. It would seem, then, that Paul was simply instructing them how to conduct themselves in matters of purity in view of sexuality.
 - A. We might see a sense of their becoming “master” of their bodies.

Verse 5

1. Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:
 - A. “Lust of concupiscence” refers to “lustful passion” from the Greek words “epithumia” and “pathos.”
 1. “Epithumia” refers to strong desire, normally evil desire, but from time to time it may refer to good desire - 1 Thessalonians 2:17.
 - B. A consideration of Romans 1:18-32 reveals quite a list of such evil desires acted upon by the Gentiles.
 - C. From Romans 1:26-28 we see how God dealt with those who refused to retain God in their knowledge.

Verse 6

1. That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: . . .
 - A. The English Standard Version gives a little clarity to this where it states, “that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter.”
 1. Illicit sexual conduct would “defraud” or “wrong” another as such would always involve others in sin one way or the other.
2. . . . because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, . . .
 - A. The word “avenger,” from the Greek word “ekdikos,” indicates that God is the One who will administrate justice in such matters.
 1. It is found in Romans 13:4, where it refers to the role of the civil magistrate.
3. . . . as we also have forewarned you and testified.
 - A. Paul had previously warned them and “testified” of the judgment that would come upon those who practice sin - Hebrews 13:4.
 1. The word “testified” had reference to the idea that Paul was “testifying” before God that such warnings had already been issued.
 - A. As such, they should not be caught “off guard” on such matters.

Verse 7

1. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.
 - A. They had been called by the gospel - 2 Thessalonians 2:14.
 - B. They had been called by the gospel to a life of purity rather than impurity.
 1. The contrast is clear!
 2. Paul indicated the contrast with the Galatians as he wrote of the difference between the “works of the flesh” and the “fruit of the spirit” - Galatians 5:19-23.
 - A. Notice, also, his point in Galatians 5:23, “And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”

Verse 8

1. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, . . .

- A. Better as per the American Standard Version, “Therefore he that rejecteth, rejecteth not man, but God.”
 - 1. The word translated “despiseth,” in the Greek is “atheteo,” and according to Robertson means to “to proscribe a thing, to annul it” (Robertson, 1931, p. 30).
 - A. It was used in the sense of annulling a document.
- B. Paul’s point was, those who rejected these teaching rejected God who gave them.
- 2. . . . who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.
 - A. Two different ideas held here.
 - 1. Those that reject God reject the power behind the Christian life.
 - 2. Those that reject God reject the Holy Spirit, Who dwells in them.
 - A. Whichever he means, it ends up saying essentially the same thing.
 - B. By rejecting God, they are rejecting the means whereby they may be holy.

Verse 9

- 1. But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.
 - A. The phrase “brotherly love” comes from the Greek word “philadelphia.”
 - 1. “Phileo,” the root word from which “philadelphia” comes, has to do with the emotion that one may have for another.
 - 2. Robertson had this to say, “Late word, love of brothers or sisters. In profane Greek (one papyrus example) and LXX the word means love of those actually kin by blood, but in the N.T. it is the kinship in the love of Christ as here.” (Robertson, 1931, p. 30).
 - B. Paul pointed out here that he did not feel compelled to write unto the Thessalonians concerning this matter as they had already been taught about it.
 - 1. This probably had reference to the time that Paul had previously visited them.
 - C. The phrase “taught of God” had to do with inspiration.
 - 1. Some suggest it had to do with direct teaching from the Holy Spirit, but if so, then there would have been no need for apostolic writings such as seen in the New Testament.
 - D. The “love” that they had been “taught of God” is from the Greek word “agapain,” rather than “phileo.”
 - 1. Thus two different thoughts here.
 - 2. “Agape” love is the love one has even for his enemies - Matthew 5:44.

Verse 10

- 1. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: . . .
 - A. In 1 Thessalonians 3:6 we note that Timothy reported to Paul concerning the Thessalonians love for those of Macedonia.
 - 1. This would include cities other than Thessalonica, such as Berea and Philippi.
 - B. It is important to note the scope of their love.
 - 1. It was “toward all the brethren.”
- 2. . . . but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;
 - A. We noted in 1 Thessalonians 4:1 that the word “beseech” meant “an “urgent request.”
 - B. So Paul “urged” them to grow in their love (“agape”).
 - 1. Remember, Jesus gave a “new commandment” concerning “agape” - John 13:34, 35.

A. The “newness” there had to do with the degree - “as I have loved you.”

Verse 11

1. And that ye study to be quiet, . . .
 - A. Three specific things are pointed out here by Paul that needed to be seen in the lives of the Thessalonian Christians.
 - B. First, they were to “study to be quiet.”
 1. The English Standard Version translates this as they were to “aspire to live quietly.”
 - A. It seems that due to their misunderstanding concerning the coming of Christ, there was a sense of unruliness about them.
 - B. The constant state of restlessness needed to be corrected.
 1. A similar thought was presented to the Philippians - Philippians 4:4-7.
 - C. So, rather than striving to be unruly, they were to strive to be in control of themselves.
2. . . . and to do your own business, . . .
 - A. Secondly, rather than spending their time being “busy-bodies,” they were to tend to their “own affairs” as seen in the English Standard Version.
 - B. Peter issued a similar encouragement to those to whom he wrote - 1 Peter 4:15.
3. . . . and to work with your own hands, . . .
 - A. They were told to work, rather than “fiddle their time away.”
 - B. Robertson had this to say, “Paul gave a new dignity to manual labour by precept and example. There were ‘pious’ idlers in the church in Thessalonica who were promoting trouble.” (Robertson, 1931, pp. 30, 31).
4. . . . as we commanded you;
 - A. Paul had previously taught them what they should do, but it appears they had not paid sufficient attention.
 1. Because of this, they had become “busybodies,” living off of others - 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12.
 - A. From this text, two specific commands were being broken.
 1. They were to work - 2 Thessalonians 3:10.
 2. They were not to be “busybodies” - 2 Thessalonians 3:11.

Verse 12

1. That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, . . .
 - A. Paul “changed gears” here and moved to how they were to treat those who were not members of the church.
 1. The word “honestly” is better seen as “decently,” coming from the Greek word “euschemon.”
 - B. From this we see it is important how we conduct ourselves “out in the world.”
 1. People often say, “I would rather see a sermon than hear one.”
 2. I heard it said of a preacher once, who had just completed a sermon, “It was a good sermon, it is just a shame he does not practice what he preaches.”
 3. Keep in mind, the Christian is to “provide things honest in the sight of all men” - Romans 12:17.
2. . . . and that ye may have lack of nothing.
 - A. This would refer to why they should work, so that they “may have lack of nothing.”

1. This would speak of that which is needed for sufficiency of life, not the access of such.
2. The English Standard Version states, “and be dependent on no one.”

Verse 13

1. But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, . . .
 - A. The Greek word “agnoein” is used here and referred to the idea of “not knowing.”
 1. Note that he was specific as to what he “would not have” them “to be ignorant” on.
 - B. The phrase “concerning them which are asleep” had to do with those previously deceased.
 1. From the Greek word “koimomenon,” in the present tense, which indicated repetition.
 - A. In other words, concerning those who from time to time died.
 2. The word “sleep” was used among both Gentile and Jew to refer to death - Deuteronomy 31:16; 2 Samuel 7:12; 1 Kings 1:21; John 11:11; Acts 13:36.
2. . . . that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.
 - A. The word “sorrow” is from the Greek word “lupesthe,” and had reference to a “continued sorrow” or “grief.”
 - B. Those “others which have no hope” would be those “left behind” by unbelievers at their death.
 1. The same idea was expressed relative to the Gentiles having “no hope” outside the “covenants of promise” - Ephesians 2:12.

Verse 14

1. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, . . .
 - A. The word “if” here was used in the sense of “since.”
 1. Robertson stated, “Condition of first class, assuming the death and resurrection of Jesus to be true.” (Robertson, 1931, p. 31).
 - B. Literally, Paul was saying that since “we believe that Jesus died and rose again,” we will believe that we may do so likewise.
 1. Specifically, of course, he is referencing those who had already died to give hope to those remaining.
 - C. Keep in mind the picture Paul “painted” of Christ being the “first fruits” of the resurrection - 1 Corinthians 15:23.
2. . . . even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.
 - A. Just as Jesus rose from the dead by the power of God, so will those who were dead in Him rise from the grave - John 5:28, 29; Acts 2:24.
 - B. Go back and review what we noted in 1 Thessalonians 3:13 on the phrase “with him.”
 1. This probably had to do with His “bringing” them “with him” into the eternal state.
 2. Keep in mind, there is nothing in the Scriptures that would suggest that Jesus is ever going to step foot on this earth again.

Verse 15

1. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, . . .
 - A. This would seem to have reference to his writing having authority from the Lord.
 1. A similar statement is seen in 1 Thessalonians 2:13.
 2. Some have suggested that it may be to some statement made by Jesus not recorded such as Acts 20:35.

- A. But that is probably pushing it a bit.
- 2. . . . that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.
 - A. The pronoun “we” here has been used by some to suggest that Paul thought that he would be “alive” when Jesus came again.
 - 1. However, in 1 Thessalonians 5:1, 2, 10 he indicated that he did not know what his condition would be when the Lord came.
 - 2. Robertson had this to say, “Paul here includes himself, but this by no means shows that Paul knew that he would be alive at the Parousia of Christ. He was alive, not dead, when he wrote.” (Robertson, 1931, p. 32).
 - B. The word “prevent” is from the Greek word “phthano,” and is better translated “precede” as seen in the English Standard Version.

Verse 16

- 1. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, . . .
 - A. The word “shout” comes from the Greek word “keleusma,” and has reference to a shouted command or order more so than just a generic shout.
 - 1. Vincent had this to say, “Lit. *a shout of command*, as of a general to his army, an admiral to his oarsmen, or a charioteer to his horses.” (Vincent, 1887, p. 42, emp. his).
 - 2. It has been suggested that the context of this “shout” will be the Lord’s command for “all that are in the graves . . .” to “. . . come forth” - John 5:28, 29.
- 2. . . . with the voice of the archangel, . . .
 - A. There is but one “archangel” mentioned in the Bible, Michael - Jude 9; Revelation 12:1-9.
 - 1. Gabriel is often referred to as an “archangel,” but not in the Bible.
 - 2. The Book of Enoch mentions four “archangels” - Gabriel, Michael, Uriel, and Raphael - Book of Enoch 9:1.
 - A. Wikipedia describes the Book of Enoch as, “an ancient Jewish religious work, traditionally ascribed to Enoch, the great-grandfather of Noah” (Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Enoch).
 - B. You can download a free copy of the Book of Enoch at the following web site: <http://www.hermetics.org/pdf/enoch.pdf>.
- 3. . . . and with the trump of God: . . .
 - A. We see mention of “the voice of the trumpet” indicating God’s presence at Sinai prior to the giving of the Ten Commandments - Exodus 19:16-20.
 - B. A “trumpet” was used to summon the Israelites - Numbers 10:1.
 - C. Jesus made mention of His appearance announced “with a great sound of a trumpet.” - Matthew 24:31.
 - 1. No doubt this would be seen as symbolical since the “coming” here was at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
 - D. Paul mentioned the “last trump” in his letter to the Corinthians - 1 Corinthians 15:52.
 - E. Here in 1 Thessalonians, Paul’s reference to “the trump of God” would be in regard to that which would announce the coming of the Lord at his final coming.
 - 1. As the trumpet was used to awaken men from their sleep, here, symbolically wise,

- this “trump” will awaken those previously deceased from their “sleep.”
4. . . . and the dead in Christ shall rise first:
 - A. All the deceased will “awaken,” however Paul did not mention this here due to the context of the discussion.
 1. Remember, he is seeking to “give hope” to those that “hope” could be given.
 - A. There is no “hope” in line for those who die outside of Christ.
 2. Consider John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 concerning the universality of the resurrection and judgment.
 - B. Of course, we must be reminded here as to how one gets “in Christ” - Galatians 3:27.

Verse 17

1. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, . . .
 - A. The phrase “caught up” is from the Greek word “harpazo,” and is translated “caught away” (Acts 8:39) and “caught up” in 2 Corinthians 12:2, 4.
 1. The word “rapture” is not found in the scriptures even though it seems to be a subject that is on just about everyone’s mind.
 - A. The word “rapture” is from the word “rapere,” found in the expression “caught up” in the Latin translation of this passage.
 2. We should be aware that our “argument” is not with the word “rapture,” but with the false doctrine associated with it taught by the premillennialist.
2. . . . to meet the Lord in the air: . . .
 - A. Recall Jesus’ ascension, and what was said then about His coming again - Acts 2:9-11.
 - B. Some see this phrase suggesting God’s final victory over Satan, since Satan is referred to as “the prince of the power of the air” - Ephesians 2:2.
 1. Please see author’s notes on Eschatology for an extended study of the “rapture.”
3. . . . and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
 - A. The “meeting” is “in the air.”
 1. Nothing is said about Jesus stepping foot on the earth.
 - B. His coming, the resurrection, and the Judgment all “usher” in the “eternal realm” in which the redeemed, as the kingdom, will be turned over to God the Father - 1 Corinthians 15:24, 25.
 - C. It will be at His coming that “all” “shall be changed,” as the “corruptible” shall “put on incorruption,” and the “mortal” shall “put on immortality” - 1 Corinthians 15:51-54.

Verse 18

1. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.
 - A. Those that had lost “hope” over the previous death of faithful loved ones were having that “hope” restored by Paul.
 1. Even though deceased, they would share in the events associated with the coming of Christ, just as those that would be alive when He comes will share in it.
 - B. “Comfort,” or “encouragement” could then be had by those still living.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Verse 1

1. But of the times and the seasons, brethren, . . .
 - A. The word “times” comes from the Greek word “chronos,” and references the idea of the

order of time.

1. It speaks of a long period of time.
 - B. The word “seasons” comes from the Greek word “kairos,” and refers to a more specific period of time suggestive of opportunity.
 1. Vincent had this to say, “Καίρός is the *suitable* time, χρόνος the time *measured by duration*. Hence καιρός *ajuncture, an occasion*, as Matthew 16:3. The distinction is so well marked that have the phrases χρόνου καιρός the *right moment of the time*, and εὔκαιρος χρόνος the *opportune moment*.” (Vincent, 1887, p. 43).
 - C. The exact same wording is found in Acts 1:7 relative to that which had been put under the power of the Lord.
2. . . . ye have no need that I write unto you.
- A. Because Paul had already written to them concerning this, there was no reason to do so again.
 1. In 1 Thessalonians 4:9 Paul used the same phrase concerning having no need to write unto them, but that time about brotherly love.
 - B. It seems that they may have been asking just how long they were going to have to wait until the Lord comes.
 1. Paul’s response, simply put, was “they already knew what is what about it” because of prior teaching - Matthew 24:36, 43.

Verse 2

1. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.
 - A. The phrase “know perfectly” indicated that their knowledge was such that they should have no doubt concerning the Lord’s coming being “as a thief in the night.”
 1. The English Standard Version translates the phrase “akribos” as “fully aware.”
 2. It is like Paul was saying, you are “fully aware” of the fact that you do not know when the Lord is coming again as that information is reserved for God alone.
 - B. As to the phrase, “the day of the Lord,” there were no definite articles before the words “day” and “Lord” in the Greek.
 1. This resulted in the phrase having the nature of a noun.
 - C. Additionally, the phrase “day of the Lord,” or one similar to it, was used a number of ways in the Bible in so far as the fulfillment of it.
 1. Relative to Amos’ prophecy in regard to the coming of condemnation on Israel - Amos 5:18, 20.
 2. Relative to the destruction of Jerusalem - Hebrews 10:25 (possibly).
 3. Relative to the coming of Christ in judgment upon all humanity - Acts 2:20; 1 Corinthians 1:8; 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:4; Philippians 1:6.
 - D. The phrase “cometh as a thief in the night” brings to mind the teaching that originated from what Jesus said in Matthew 24:36.
 - A. We see a similar statement in 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 3:3; 16:15.
 - B. The idea expressed by this statement is clear.
 1. Jesus’ coming would be when they least expected it.
 2. As such, they were encouraged to prepare and stay prepared.
 - E. It is interesting, as we think of this passage in view of the number of premillennial writers who have written numberless pages on the subject of trying to pin point His coming, that

Paul spends so little time on it.

Verse 3

1. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; . . .
 - A. This reminds you of the response of the false prophets during the time of Jeremiah, who when confronted with Jeremiah's prophecies concerning the destruction that was to come, said, "Peace, peace" when there was no peace - Jeremiah 6:1, 14.
2. . . . then sudden destruction cometh upon them, . . .
 - A. The word "destruction" here, from the Greek word "olethros," refers to a state of ruination instead of a state of non existence.
 - B. The same word is used in several New Testament passages which help us to see that "destruction" is not what Paul had in mind - 1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9.
3. . . . as travail upon a woman with child; . . .
 - A. The English Standard Versions states here, "then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman," which points to the unexpected arrival of the "destruction."
4. . . . and they shall not escape.
 - A. Those that are disobedient and, as such, are unsuspecting and unprepared will not escape the judgment that was to come - 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10.

Verse 4

1. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, . . .
 - A. Paul draws a contrast between those in Christ and those out of Christ.
 1. He singles out "brethren" here who "are not in darkness."
 - B. "Darkness" would clearly have reference to the realm of spiritual darkness as opposed to the realm of spiritual light.
 1. Recall the contrast Jesus made - John 8:12.
 2. Recall what Paul wrote to the Colossians concerning the "power of darkness" - Colossians 1:13.
 3. Vincent's statement concerning the phrase "in the night" in verse 2 is interesting, "It is noteworthy how many of the gospel lessons on watchfulness are associated with the night and a visit by night. See Matthew 24:43; Matthew 25:1-13; Mark 13:35; Luke 12:35, Luke 12:38; Luke 17:34; Luke 12:20." (Vincent, 1887, p. 44).
2. . . . that that day should overtake you as a thief.
 - A. The word "overtake" here referred to their not being "laid hold on."
 1. This would show that they were "on guard" or watching for "that day" to come even though they had no idea when that would happen.

Verse 5

1. Ye are all the children of light, . . .
 - A. Some see the word "all" here speaking only of those members of the church at Thessalonica that were weak.
 1. That seems to be quite a stretch.
 - B. Keep in mind, Jesus is the "light" - John 1:4-9; 14:6.
 1. As a matter of fact, the Book of John has a considerable amount of information on "the light."
 - C. We think of the "light" in view of the "light of the gospel" that they "walked" in.

1. Consider 1 John 1:7.
2. . . . and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.
 - A. Literally, they were the “sons of light and sons of the day” as seen in the American Standard Version.
 1. The word “children” used here twice is from the Greek word “huioi,” found in such passages as Mark 3:17 where it is translated “sons.”
 2. Being the “son” of something often suggested that they were characterized by that which they were a “son” of.
 - A. “Sons of thunder” - Mark 3:17.
 - B. “Sons of men” - Mark 3:28.
 - C. “Sons of God” - John 1:22.
 3. Consider this when you think of Jesus’ being the “light of the world” - John 8:12.
 - B. The distinction seen here refers to those who live in such a way that they are represented by those who conduct business during the day light hours as opposed to those who do so during the night.
 1. So to be the “sons of the light” or “sons of the darkness” would be to be characterized by “light” or “darkness.”

Verse 6

1. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; . . .
 - A. Notice the use of “therefore” or “so then” as per the American Standard Version.
 1. In other words, since they were “children of light” they needed to be careful to not follow the spiritual indifference seen in “others.”
 - B. Here Paul switches from using the word “sleep” to refer to death to using it to describe spiritual awareness.
 1. According to Robertson, the word “sleep” is a “Present active subjunctive (volitive), let us not go on sleeping.” (Robertson, 1931, p. 35).
 - A. There may have been some moral laxity in the church at Thessalonica and Paul warned them to not continue in such.
 - B. If not, then at the least there might be the temptation to become morally lax in a world full of “darkness.”
 1. Don’t we find it difficult to stay awake when in the dark?
2. . . . but let us watch and be sober.
 - A. The phrase “let us watch” is also “present active subjunctive” indicating the sense of continued watchfulness and soberness.
 1. The danger of “falling asleep” was present and, therefore, the need to be encouraged to “watch and be sober.”
 2. “Watchfulness” would indicate being “alert,” as seen in the New International Version.
 - B. “Sober” is from the Greek word “nepho,” and indicated, in the figurative sense, as seen here, the idea of sober-mindedness.
 1. It is used this way in a number of passages in the New Testament - 2 Corinthians 5:13; 1 Timothy 3:2; 3:11; Titus 1:8; 2:2, 4, 6; 1 Peter 1:13; 4:7; 5:8.
 2. The New International Version translates this as “self-controlled.”
 - A. Such would be needed to be what they should.

Verse 7

1. For they that sleep sleep in the night; . . .
 - A. Here Paul moved to speak of “sleep” and “drunkenness” from a literal perspective.
 1. Of course such activities are normally considered to be things associated with the night (i.e. darkness).
2. . . . and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.
 - A. The New International Version translates this as “and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.”
 1. There are two different Greek words used here, although there is little difference in the two.
 - A. The first use is the Greek word “methuo,” which indicated the idea of being “drunk.”
 - B. The second use is the Greek word “methusko,” with the distinction of meaning to get “drunk.”
 - B. Paul used this common activity to convey the message he wished to get across.
 1. This should not be viewed of his approval of such things, only that they served as an example of what he wanted understood concerning the difference between “daylight” and “dark” when it came to spiritual matters.

Verse 8

1. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, . . .
 - A. Those described in verse 5 should be “sober,” which we see defined above.
2. . . . putting on the breastplate of faith and love; . . .
 - A. This is how they (we) might be “sober.”
 - B. The “breastplate” was a part of the soldier’s armor provided for protection.
 1. Robertson has this to say, “The same figure of breastplate in Ephesians 6:14 , only there ‘of righteousness.’ The idea of watchfulness brings the figure of a sentry on guard and armed to Paul’s mind as in Romans 13:12 ‘the weapons of light.’” (Robertson, 1931, p. 35).
 - C. “Faith” and “love,” then, become a part of the Christian’s defensive armor against “darkness” and the attacks that would come from the Devil.
3. . . . and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.
 - A. The “helmet” would also be a part of the soldier’s defensive armor.
 1. The “hope of salvation” would be in reference to their final salvation.
 - A. As they laid their “hope” upon things eternal, they would be better prepared to turn from the temptations that came their way - Colossians 3:1-5.
 - B. We might compare this context with the context of Romans 13:11-14 as we see several similarities.

Verse 9

1. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, . . .
 - A. The English Standard Version states, “For God has not destined us for wrath.”
 1. Literally speaking, God has no plan for Christians to suffer condemnation at the Judgment - Romans 8:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:10.
2. . . . but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,
 - A. “Salvation” is “by” or “through” “our Lord Jesus Christ” - John 14:6; Acts 4:12;

Ephesians 1:7.

- B. So as they stayed “awake,” spiritually wise, put on the necessary “armor” to withstand, they were promised salvation rather than “wrath to come” - 1 Thessalonians 1:10.

Verse 10

- 1. Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.
 - A. Christ suffered and died for all mankind, but salvation is only for those who accept that “free gift” - Matthew 11:28-30; John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Romans 6:23.
 - B. Whether alive or dead when He comes again, the faithful will “live together with him.”
 - 1. Therefore, they had no reason to be concerned about those who had already passed from this life.
 - C. Jesus will “come again” to “receive” the faithful unto Himself - John 14:1-4.
 - 1. We will live and reign with Him eternally - 2 Timothy 2:12.

Verse 11

- 1. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.
 - A. To “comfort” was to actually “encourage” or “exhort” one another as is seen in a number of translations.
 - 1. The idea of mutual encouragement is seen often in the New Testament.
 - A. Look at the number of “one another” passages in the New Testament.
 - B. The word “edify” here is from the Greek word “oikodomeo,” and is translated “build” in a number of translations.
 - 1. This word was used when describing the building of a house.
 - A. Thus, here, the “building up” of one another.
 - C. It is evident that they were already in the process of doing so, but they needed encouragement to continue to do so.

Verse 12

- 1. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, . . .
 - A. “Beseech” carried with it the idea of to “request.”
 - 1. The English Standard Versions states, “We ask you, . . .”
 - B. To “know” here is better understood as to “appreciate,” as per the New Century Version, or “respect,” as per the English Standard and the New International Versions.
 - C. This “respect” was to be shown to those that “labour among” them.
 - 1. The word “labor,” is from the Greek word “kopiao,” and had reference to labor of a laborious nature, as noted before.
 - A. A sense of intensity is seen here when it came to their laboring among the Thessalonians.
- 2. . . . and are over you in the Lord,
 - A. There is some conflict as to who it is that Paul had in mind here.
 - 1. Given the early date of the writing of this epistle, some have suggested that elders were not yet present in the church in Thessalonica, so they could not be in mind.
 - A. But there is no proof of that one way or the other.
 - 2. Others have suggested that certain influential men in the early church may have been who Paul had in mind.
 - A. However, never do we see such men being described as being “over” others.

3. Others believe that they were the prophets that are later mentioned in verse 20.
 - A. The same thing could be said here as of the influential men, no such reference to prophets is found when it came to their being “over” others.
4. The only ones described of in the New Testament as holding the position of being “over” others were the elders and the “oversight” they were to have Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7; 17; 1 Peter 5:1-3.
3. . . . and admonish you;
 - A. The word “admonish” here is from the Greek word “noutheteo,” and referred to the idea of counseling another.
 1. Clearly we see how this would be part of the work of being a shepherd.

Verse 13

1. And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. . . .
 - A. The word “esteem,” is from the Greek word “hegeomai,” and literally meant for them to be held in high estimation or value.
 - B. Their being held high in estimation was due to “their work’s sake.”
 1. This was not something given someone not due the “honor.”
 - A. Recall Paul’s words in Romans 13:7.
 2. How often have we heard it said that respect is something earned?
2. . . . And be at peace among yourselves.
 - A. It may well have been that proper respect had not been paid to those in a position of authority “over” them, so Paul is seeking to correct that and the resultant lack of peace that ensued among them.
 1. No matter how good the leader may be, if those who follow him refuse to do so, his ability is thwarted and conflict arises.
 - B. Christians should do all they can to engender peace in the local congregation - Matthew 5:9; Romans 14:19; 1 Corinthians 14:33; Galatians 5:22.

Verse 14

1. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, . . .
 - A. To “exhort” was to “urge” as seen in the English Standard Version.
 - B. To “warn” was to “admonish” as seen in the American Standard and English Standard Versions.
 - C. The word “unruly” came from the Greek word “ataktos,” and was used when describing a soldier who fell out of step with the rest or an uncontrolled mob that needed to be brought under control.
 - D. More than likely the issue at hand here was that due to their belief that Jesus’ advent was near that there was no reason to continue to work.
 1. As such, they were dependent upon others for what they should be doing themselves.
2. . . . comfort the feebleminded, . . .
 - A. This seems to reference those who had lost heart and had “thrown in the towel.”
 1. They needed to be told to get back in line like the soldier who fell out of step.
3. . . . support the weak, . . .
 - A. Those who were spiritually weak and who needed to be encouraged to be strong in the Lord.
 1. Kind of reminds us of Romans 15:1 and Galatians 6:1.

4. . . . be patient toward all men.
 - A. "Patience" would be suggestive of their being "longsuffering."
 1. As is often said, "Patience is a virtue" - 2 Peter 1:6.

Verse 15

1. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; . . .
 - A. The phrase "See that" is plural and, therefore, speaks to them as a whole.
 1. Thus the church is responsible to the actions of individual members.
 2. If one sets out to violate the principles herein found, it is the job of the rest to step up and stop it.
 - B. The phrase "render evil for evil" is a prohibition against retaliation - Romans 12:17.
 1. The Christian is to do "good unto all men" - Galatians 6:10.
 - C. It is important to keep in mind that there is a difference between retaliation and self-defense.
 1. The question of how the child of God is to react to capital punishment, physical restraint, and war is a difficult and emotion filled question.
 - A. If we are to come to terms with this question, we must first divorce from it any feelings of emotion.
 - B. The reason for this is that a purely emotional approach to this question will result in an illogical, irrational conclusion.
 2. The proper way to determine the correctness of the involvement of the child of God in these matters is to search the scriptures to see what they have to say.
 3. Does the Bible allow the child of God to take the lives of other human beings in war, or while trying to restrain them from harming family members, or through capital punishment?
 - A. Genesis 9:6
 1. Since man is made in the image of God, and his blood is precious in the sight of his maker, God has ordained the punishment of death for all who unlawfully take the life of others.
 2. Let us be careful that we do not hastily cast this scripture aside due to it being in the Old Testament.
 - A. The reason for this is, there are many principles found in the Old Testament that are continuing to the present time - Genesis 2:24; 3:16; 3:19.
 3. It is true that Jesus' death on the cross abrogated the Law of Moses, but He did not repeal the principles that had already been laid down.
 - B. Murder is wrong
 1. Murder has and will always be wrong.
 - A. But our discussion is not dealing with murder, but with the taking of another's life as a restraint against something or for punishment of a criminal act.
 2. Murder can be defined as, "The intentional killing of one human being by another, with malice aforethought, and without moral right or legal authority."
 - A. This is the deciding line between what is condemned and approved by scripture.

3. Law and order with justice must be upheld, and the sanctions of the law enforced.
 - A. Otherwise, “every man will become a law unto himself.”
 - B. If this should ever come about, the weak, the good, the gentle, the kind, the generous and the noble will be ruled and robbed, abused and killed by the vicious, the strong, the reprobate, and the evil.
 - C. This is precisely the point that Paul makes - Romans 13:1-7.
 - D. No doubt we have heard it said, “All that is needed for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing,” attributed to Edmund Burke.
- C. Romans 13:1-7
 1. In Romans 12:19 we read, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”
 - A. And all too often we tend to say that at judgment this will come about while overlooking that which we have just read in Romans 13:1-7.
- D. Argument against self-preservation by force.
 1. Let us examine some of the arguments that have been presented to “prove” that a child of God cannot participate in a war, capital punishment, or physical restraint.
 2. Perhaps the strongest reason offered against participation in these things is that it is contrary to love, forgiveness and mercy.
 - A. The following scriptures are sometimes given to prove this point - Matthew 7:12; Romans 13:8-10.
 - B. Granted, love is to be the distinguishing mark of the Christian - John 13:34, 35.
 1. But love is not weak kneed passivity.
 2. It was a loving and all merciful God who commanded the total destruction of the Amalekites - 1 Samuel 15:3.
 3. It was a God of infinite mercy who rained down fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah - Genesis 19:23-25.
 4. It is the Lamb of God whose wrath we read of in Scriptures - Revelation 6:16.
 - C. At times love dictates restraint against an evildoer.
 1. Suppose you were to pull into a parking lot late one evening and saw some fiend dragging an innocent girl or women into the woods near it.
 - A. What would love dictate for you to do?
 1. Call the police?
 - A. No, as a pacifist you cannot request aide from the law.
 1. “It would seem, then, that the servants of God may accept the assistance of those whom God has ordained to be His ministers unto them for good, but they may not call upon them nor rely upon them for the carrying out of the purposes of God.” (Rogers, 1971, p. 27).
 2. “Take as an example the criminal rapist, what will love do - leave the criminal unopposed, and leave a helpless victim without the protection of resistance? On the basis of love itself,

a choice would be inevitable. It was on this point that R. L. Whiteside said, that if he should see a criminal dragging an innocent woman or girl into a secluded spot to assault her, he would have no more compunctions of conscience against shooting down that criminal than to shoot a mad dog attacking a child. We subscribe to that statement unreservedly,”
(Wallace, 1967, p. 225).

3. Let a person teach that participation in war is wrong for the Christian and he can be pushed to the point that he cannot so much as lift his little finger to restrain another.
4. To assume the position of several in the brotherhood in this area is to have the Bible on the side of the criminal.
5. In regards to forgiveness, if a man were to murder 50 people, and while on trial he obeyed the gospel, if he was not immediately set free then he has not been forgiven, if the principles set forth by the pacifist dictated to the civil power what was to be done.
6. War and capital punishment are horrible, but they have always been such, and God has always commanded such.
 - A. To say, “Allow the civil government to do the dirty work” while keeping the Christian’s hands clean, is to encourage others to sin, if we believe it sinful to protect us.
 - B. To say, “Let the non-Christian do the wrong, while we do the right” is to remove all obligations of right doing from the non-Christian - James 4:17.
 - C. To say, “All Christians will be pacifistic” would have all who believed they were Christians, regardless of what religious preference they were as pacifists.
 1. This would result in the vilest of men running the world.
2. . . . but ever follow that which is good, . . .
 - A. The Christian’s constant desire should be that which is good or beneficial for all, including his enemies.
 1. “Opportunity” comes into the picture here - Galatians 6:10.
 2. As God has sought “opportunity” for “good” for humanity, there will come a time that “opportunity” turns to wrath.
 3. Keep in mind; we are to, as much as is possible, be at peace with all men - Romans 12:18.
 - A. As they say, “It takes two to tango.”
 - B. Sometimes it simply is not possible to be at peace due to the actions of others.
 1. As much as we might want it, it simply is not possible.
 3. . . . both among yourselves, and to all men.
 - A. Not only were they to seek peace among themselves, but also with those of the world.
 1. Paul expressed a concern for outsiders more than once in this epistle - 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:12.
 2. When possible, we “heap coals of fire” on our enemies’ head as we do “good” to

them - Romans 12:20.

Verse 16

1. Rejoice evermore.
 - A. Paul “shifts gears” here and begins to address their attitude toward life.
 1. The simple facts are such that even when the Christians struggle with problems of life, there are still reasons to rejoice.
 - A. Study the Book of Philippians some time.
 1. I have subtitled it, “Joyful Confidence in Adverse Circumstances.”
 2. Look at the number of times Paul used the word “rejoice” in the book - Philippians 1:18; 2:16, 17, 18; 2:28; 3:1, 3; 4:4.
 - B. Paul encouraged the Romans to rejoice - Romans 5:2; 12:15; 15:10.
 - C. Even when faced with trials, there is room for joy - James 1:2, 3.

Verse 17

1. Pray without ceasing.
 - A. The word “pray” here is “proseuchesthe” and refers to the devotional aspect of prayer.
 1. The joy found in the lives of Christians causes them to turn to God in devotion.
 - B. “Without ceasing” would have reference to prayer to God on a regular basis - Luke 18:1; Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18.

Verse 18

1. In every thing give thanks: . . .
 - A. Regardless of the circumstances one finds himself in, give thanks.
 1. If things are going well, pray - 1 Thessalonians 2:13.
 2. If things are not going so well, pray - James 1:3.
 - B. We have so much to be thankful for, even when “everything is not coming up roses.”
 1. Circumstances of life sometimes leave us feeling helpless, but never hopeless.
2. . . . for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.
 - A. God wants to hear from His children!
 1. But not only does He want to hear from them, He wants them to be thankful and to express thanksgiving to Him.
 2. It isn’t enough to have some “warm fuzzy feeling” of appreciation.
 - A. That appreciation should be expressed.
 - B. Someone has said our prayers are like “Old McDonald’s Farm” “A gimme gimme here, a gimme, gimme there, here a gimme gimme, there a gimme gimme, everywhere a gimme gimme.”

Verse 19

1. Quench not the Spirit.
 - A. To “quench” was to cease from doing something either in the sense of not doing it at all, or to stop the habit of doing something already being done.
 - B. The “Spirit” here would, of course, be the Holy Spirit.
 1. As to how He was not to be “quenched” may be difficult to determine.
 - A. A number of commentaries see this as reference to the “normal indwelling of the Holy Spirit” they see promised in Acts 2:38.
 1. However, if it be the case that rather than the “gift of the Holy Spirit” being the Holy Spirit Himself but, instead, the gift that came from the Holy Spirit,

- a difficulty might arise depending on what that gift was.
- B. Others see this as reference to the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts that were present during the time Paul wrote to the Thessalonians.
 - 1. If so, this would have nothing to do with man in the 21st century as such gifts are no longer found in the church.
- C. It may well have to do with “quenching” the Spirit in the sense of paying no attention to the Word that came through Him.
 - 1. This would, of course, have meaning today, since man is to not only hear the word, he is to follow it - James 1:22.

Verse 20

1. Despise not prophesyings.
 - A. To “despise,” here, was to count as nothing or of no value rather than to hate.
 - B. “Prophesyings” would be in reference to “prophet sayings.”
 1. During the time of the early church prophets were present - 1 Corinthians 14:29-32; Ephesians 4:11.
 2. Their role was two-fold in the sense that what they said may have been of the nature of the revelation of new teachings from God, or of the nature of further elaboration on that which had been revealed.
 - A. Prophecies were to be desired, as they served the purpose of edifying the church - 1 Corinthians 14:1, 4, 5.
 - C. The danger in “despising” them would be that such came from God, and as such, when they rejected the prophets they, in essence, rejected God.
 - D. It was important that the early Christians be careful concerning prophecies, as there were “false prophets among them” - Matthew 7:15; 24:11; 24:24; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1.
 1. However, all “prophecies” were not to be counted as of no value simply because some were.
 - E. Since there are no modern day prophets, this passage would have no bearing on modern day revelation as some denominational preachers have otherwise claimed.

Verse 21

1. Prove all things; . . .
 - A. The phrase “prove all things” is translated “test everything” in a number of versions.
 - B. John instructed those to whom he wrote to “try the spirits whether they are of God” - 1 John 4:1.
 1. The teachings must be “tested” - Acts 17:11.
2. . . . hold fast that which is good.
 - A. Early Christians had the spiritual gift of “discerning of spirits” - 1 Corinthians 12:10.
 1. There was also the regulative principle seen in 1 Corinthians 14:29 that prophets were to be judged by others.
 - B. It should be kept in mind that, although, spiritual gifts do not exist today, that does not remove from us the responsibility to verify the truthfulness of what we are taught.

Verse 22

1. Abstain from all appearance of evil.
 - A. The word “abstain” comes from the Greek root word “apecho,” is present middle imperative, indicative of an ongoing command.

1. We see a clear distinction represented here between that which is “good” and that which is “evil,” and how the Christian is to respond to each.
- B. The American Standard Version better represents what Paul had to say here when it states, “Abstain from every form of evil.”
 1. The Greek word “eidos,” translated “appearance” in the King James Version and “form” in the American Standard Version is incorrectly represented by the modern definition of the word “appearance.”
 - A. Robertson has this to say about “eidos” - “The papyri give several examples of *eido* in the sense of class or kind and that idea suits best here.” (Robertson, 1931, p. 38, emp. his).
 - B. Vine has this to say, -“It has a somewhat different significance in 1 Thess. 5:22, in the exhortation, ‘Abstain from every form of evil,’ i.e., every sort or kind of evil (not ‘appearance,’ AV). This meaning was common in the papyri, the Greek writings of the closing centuries, B.C., and the New Testament era. See FASHION, SHAPE, SIGHT. Cp. No. 4.” (Vine. n.d., p. 68, emp. his).
- C. Keeping this in the context, we would see Paul referring to false prophesy as “evil.”
 1. Of course the all-inclusiveness is seen here when Paul used the word “all” or “every.”

Verse 23

1. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; . . .
 - A. Paul now prays for the Thessalonians and their ultimate salvation.
 1. When doing so, he points out from which comes the “peace that passeth understanding” - Philippians 4:7.
 2. God is characterized here by Paul as the “God of peace” similar to John’s characterization of Him as being “love” - 1 John 4:8.
 - A. It is God who sought to make peace with man, even though it was not He who brought about the lack of such - 2 Corinthians 5:19.
 - B. The word “sanctify” here referred to the idea of their being set apart for holiness.
 - C. The word “wholly” had reference to the idea of “completely,” as seen in the English Standard Version.
2. . . . and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - A. Paul’s reference to their “whole spirit and soul and body” undoubtedly was designed to indicate his desire that they be fully kept without blame until the Lord comes again.
 1. Jesus, when addressing the question posed to him concerning “which is the first commandment of all” (Mark 12:28) said they were to “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength” to describe the fullness of the love they were to have for Him - Mark 12:30.
 2. There is a distinction taught in the Scriptures when it comes to “soul and spirit.”
 - A. See Appendix # 2, pages 66, 67.
 - B. The “preservation” would be dependent upon their continued desire for such.
 1. This is why they were to “prove all things, hold fast that which is good” and “abstain from every form of evil.”

Verse 24

1. Faithful is he that calleth you, . . .

- A. God is often described as being “faithful” - 1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:13; 2 Thessalonians 3:3.
 - 1. It literally refers to the idea of His carrying through with His promises - 1 Corinthians 1:8, 9; Philippians 1:6; Hebrews 10:23.
- B. In 1 Thessalonians 2:12 Paul wrote that God had “called” them “unto his kingdom and glory.”
 - 1. In 2 Thessalonians 2:14 we see the means of this “calling” - the gospel.
- 2. . . . who also will do it.
 - A. The English Standard Version says here, “he will surely do it.”
 - 1. Salvation is dependent upon the faithfulness of God, which is without question, and the faithfulness of man - 1 John 1:7; Revelation 2:10.

Verse 25

- 1. Brethren, pray for us.
 - A. The tense here suggests that Paul was asking them to keep on praying for them.
 - 1. It was a common thing for Paul to seek prayer on his behalf - Romans 15:30; Ephesians 6:19; Colossians 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 3:1.

Verse 26

- 1. Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.
 - A. Such a greeting was common for Paul to express - Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12.
 - 1. Peter gave instruction to those to whom he wrote to “Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity.” - 1 Peter 5:14.
 - B. Greeting with a kiss was the common means of greeting at this time.
 - 1. As such, neither Paul nor Peter were instituting what might be called a “Christian greeting,” but was qualifying the already existent greeting.
 - A. We might consider the kiss that Judas Iscariot gave to Jesus as an example of the opposite of what is in mind here - Matthew 26:49.

Verse 27

- 1. I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.
 - A. Literally, Paul was putting them “under oath” and calling upon “the Lord” as witness that this epistle was to be read.
 - 1. We see a similar encouragement for the reading of Colossians and Revelation - Colossians 4:16; Revelation 1:3.
 - B. The word “read” had reference to a public reading at, perhaps, the congregational setting.

Verse 28

- 1. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.
 - A. A similar closing as seen in Paul’s other epistles - Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 16:23; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 6:18; Philippians 4:23.

2 THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION:

1. Book was written shortly after 1 Thessalonians.
2. It seems the Thessalonian Christians still failed to understand the second coming.
 - A. Perhaps some felt that it was imminent - 2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2.
 1. This had led some to quit working - 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12.
3. The church was still facing great persecution.
4. He sought to correct their false understanding of the 2nd coming and encourage them to steadfastness.

BODY:

1. WHO WROTE THE BOOK?

- A. Internal evidence indicates it was Paul.
 1. Two times the writer refers to himself as Paul - 2 Thessalonians 1:1; 3:17.
 2. Vocabulary and style are that of Paul.
 3. Some argue it is a forgery.
 - A. Claim that since it is so much like 1 Thessalonians it must be a forgery.
 - B. Others claim that since it is more severe in tone than 1 Thessalonians, it must be a forgery.
 1. However, there is no proof for either.
- B. External evidence for Paul is strong.
 1. Mentioned in the Didache about A.D. 100.
 2. About A.D. 110 Ignatius seems to refer to it.
 3. Justin Martyr and Polycarp, mid 2nd century, seem to refer to it.
 4. About A.D. 180 Irenaeus mentions the book by name and ascribes it to Paul.
 5. Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian both quoted 2 Thessalonians, with Tertullian giving Paul credit for the authorship.

2. TO WHOM WAS THE BOOK WRITTEN?

- A. Written by Paul, his co-workers Silas and Timothy, and to the church at Thessalonica - 2 Thessalonians 1:1.
- B. Church established by Paul and Silas on 2nd missionary journey - Acts 17:1-10.
 1. The city of Thessalonica was originally called "Therma" due to the hot springs in the area.
 - A. Located at the junction of the main road from Rome to the East and the road, which ran from the Danube River to the Aegean Sea.
 - B. The brother-in-law of Alexander the Great, Cassander, rebuilt Therma in 315 B.C and renamed it after his wife.
 - C. In 168 B.C. Thessalonica was conquered by Rome and made the capital of one of the four provinces into which Macedonia was divided.
 - D. Later it was made the capital of the entire territory.
 - E. Was composed primarily of Greeks, Romans and Jews.

3. WHEN AND WHERE WAS THE BOOK WRITTEN?

- A. Paul was still in Corinth where he wrote 1 Thessalonians - Acts 18:1, 5.

- B. 1 Thessalonians written about A.D. 51 or 52.
- 1. 2 Thessalonians written shortly afterward.

4. WHY WAS THE BOOK WRITTEN?

- A. Persecution against the church had become worse so Paul wrote to encourage it - 2 Thessalonians 1:4-12.
- B. His teaching on the 2nd coming had either been misunderstood or perverted.
 - 1. It may be that they had received a forged letter claiming to be from Paul, which caused them to misunderstand his teaching - 2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2.
 - 2. Many were expecting the 2nd coming to happen at any minute - 2 Thessalonians 2:3.
 - 3. He assured them that the falling away and the revealing of the man of sin must come first - 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4.
- C. Some had quit work thinking the Lord was coming soon - 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12.

5. OUTLINE OF 2 THESSALONIANS

- A. Salutation, greetings and gratitude for their faith - 1:1-3.
- B. Exhortation to courage and steadfastness in persecution - 1:4-12.
- C. Falling away and the coming of the man of sin predicted - 2:1-12.
- D. More thanksgiving and encouragement to steadfastness - 2:13-17.
- E. Paul's request for their prayers on his behalf - 3:1-5.
- F. Discipline of the disorderly commanded - 3:6-15.
- G. Closing - 3:16-18.

6. LESSONS WE LEARN FROM 2 THESSALONIANS

- A. Those who do not know God, and who do not obey the gospel are lost - 1 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Mark 16:16; Titus 1:2.
- B. Work is commanded by God - Genesis 2:15; Ephesians 4:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:8-12.
- C. Church discipline must be practiced - 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 12-15.
- D. The falling away and the revealing of the man of sin must come about before the 2nd coming of Christ.
 - 1. Things written about the man of sin:
 - A. Exalts himself above all that is called God and sits in His temple - 2:4.
 - B. Will continue until the 2nd coming - 2:8.
 - C. Gains credibility by Satan's power, sign and lying wonders - 2:9.
 - D. Deceives people who really do not love the truth - 2:10-12.
 - 2. Suggestions as to who this "person" is:
 - A. Satan.
 - B. Infidel Jew.
 - C. Jewish Nation.
 - D. Roman Emperor.
 - E. Roman Empire.
 - F. Papacy of Rome, or a single Pope.
 - G. Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, or other political leader.
 - H. Some "Antichrist" yet to come.
 - I. Masonic Lodge.
 - J. Ecumenical Movement.
 - K. A principle of lawlessness or ungodliness.

3. Most common view is that it refers to the papacy.
 - A. “That which restrains” is the Roman Empire, which prevented a powerful Pope to arise while it held power.
 - B. The “falling away” is the great apostasy of the church which led to the Roman Church.
 - C. Man of sin would sit in the “temple of God.”
 1. I.e. the church - 2 Thessalonians 2:4.
 - D. Man of sin would oppose God and exalt himself.
 1. Has been true of the Popes who claim Divine titles.
 - E. Man of sin would deceive by signs and lying wonders.
 - F. Man of sin would continue until the 2nd coming.

CONCLUSION:

1. Book contains some of the fullest teaching on the 2nd coming.
2. Refutes the idea held by some that the New Testament teaches that Jesus was to come in the lifetime of the Apostles.

COMMENTARY, 2 THESSALONIANS

CHAPTER ONE:

Verse 1

1. Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
 - A. The greetings here from Paul, Silvanus and Timothy is nearly identical to the ones found in 1 Thessalonians chapter one.
 1. The exception is the inclusion of the word “our” here.
 - B. With the listing here of the three there is no indication that the epistle was written by all three, only that the greetings and sentiments found here came from them.
 - C. The phrase “Lord Jesus Christ” composes the fullness of his title as opposed to the presentation of a proper name.
 1. “Lord” would have reference to His sovereignty.
 2. “Jesus” was the name given him by the angel prior to His birth - Matthew 1:20, 21.
 3. “Christ” would have reference to His being the “Messiah.”

Verse 2

1. Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - A. Although similar in phraseology to the common Greek and Hebrew greeting, these go far beyond them due to their spiritual nature.

Verse 3

1. We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, . . .
 - A. The English Standard Version translates this to say, “We ought always to give thanks to God for you,” which better conveys the idea Paul was expressing.
 1. The Greek word translated “bound” is “opheilo,” and is translated “owed” in Matthew 18:28; Luke 7:41; 16:5, 7; Romans 13:8.
2. . . . as it is meet, . . .
 - A. Literally, “as it is fitting” as seen in the New King James Version.
3. . . . because that your faith groweth exceedingly, . . .
 - A. In 1 Thessalonians 1:2, 3, Paul had given thanks for them and for their “work of faith.”
 1. Here he indicated that their faith had increased considerably.
 - A. As we consider this, keep in mind from that which faith comes - Romans 10:17.
4. . . . and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;
 - A. The love they had had for each other was also increasing.
 1. It seems that his prayer recorded in 1 Thessalonians 3:10-12 was answered.

Verse 4

1. So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:
 - A. Paul and his companions “boasted” (as per the English Standard Version) of them to congregations around Thessalonica.
 1. The Bible in Basic English states “we take pride in you.”
 - B. The congregations here would probably include those of Athens, Berea, Corinth and other locations near to Thessalonica.
 - C. Paul pointed out specifically in which areas they took pride - “patience and faith” in their “persecutions and tribulations.”

1. We can see these as being a response to their faith.

D. The word “endure” is “anecho,” and indicated the sense of that which was ongoing.

Verse 5

1. Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, . . .
 - A. The New King James Version states, “*which is* manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God.”
 1. That which the Thessalonians were facing was plain evidence of God’s righteous judgment.
 - B. As with a number of Biblical principles, such a statement may seem contrary to what we would normally think.
 1. For example, we would not normally think to “count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations” - James 1:2.
 - A. Persecution serves as a “sign” of God’s blessings, as promised by Jesus in the Beatitudes - Matthew 5:11, 12.
 2. The reality is, for Christians, persecution is pictured as being inevitable - 1 Thessalonians 3:3; 2 Timothy 3:12.
 3. Like fire to gold, persecution has the ability to bring about “praise and honour” - 1 Peter 1:5, 6.
2. . . . that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, . . .
 - A. We see them as being faithful in these things indicates their “worthiness” in being in the kingdom, both now and eternally.
3. . . . for which ye also suffer:
 - A. The early Christians suffered for the kingdom - 1 Peter 1:11.

Verse 6

1. Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;
 - A. God is “just” in His passing of judgment upon those who afflicted the faithful.
 1. Remember, “vengeance” belongs to God - Romans 12:19.
 2. We note Paul promised the “severity of God” would be meted out for the wicked - Romans 11:22.
 - B. To “recompense” (“antapodidomi”) was to “repay.”
 1. Remember the rule of “sowing and reaping” - Galatians 6:7.

Verse 7

1. And to you who are troubled rest with us, . . .
 - A. The phrase “rest with us” has reference to their being “granted relief” as indicated by the Greek word “anesis.”
 1. This would be relative to the anxiety associated with the “tribulation” they were suffering.
 - B. Notice the use of the plural pronoun “us” used here.
 1. Paul, like John, was a “companion in tribulation” - 2 Corinthians 7:4; Revelation 1:9.
2. . . . when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,
 - A. Jesus is pictured here as then (now) being concealed.
 - B. Three things are said here concerning Jesus’ coming.
 1. He is coming “from Heaven” - Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 1:10.
 2. He is coming “with his mighty angels” - Matthew 25:31.

3. He is coming “in flaming fire” - 2 Peter 3:10.
- C. The American Standard Version, as do others, differs from the King James Version here where it states, “at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire,”

Verse 8

1. In flaming fire . . .
 - A. The phrase “in flaming fire” is from the Greek “en puri phlogos,” and has reference to “fire characterized by flame.” (Robertson, 1931, p. 43).
 - B. There seems to be sufficient manuscript verification for the inclusion of this at the end of verse 7, rather than the beginning of verse 8.
 1. But it does not change anything wherever it is placed.
2. . . . taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:
 - A. God is going to “vindicate” those who “endured” persecution.
 1. This reminds us of the question asked in Revelation 6:10.
 2. The use of the word “vengeance,” given its present day definition, leaves the wrong impression here.
 - A. Vine well presents the proper understanding, “lit., ‘(that which proceeds) out of justice,’ not, as often with human ‘vengeance,’ out of a sense of injury or merely out of a feeling of indignation. The word is most frequently used of Divine ‘vengeance,’ e.g., Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30. For a complete list see AVENGE, B, No. 2. The judgements of God are holy and right (Rev. 16:7), and free from any element of self-gratification or vindictiveness.” (Vine, n.d., p. 1207).
 - B. The phrase “them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” had reference to those that failed to acknowledge God and render them obedient to His Word.
 1. There is no reason to see this as specifically referring to two separate groups of people per se.
 - A. Some see Jew and Gentile (pagan) here, but that seems to be a stretch.
 2. Granted, the phrase could be viewed from the perspective of those who deny God’s existence (i.e. the Atheist), and those who acknowledge Him as God, but who do not obey His Word.
 - A. But it could also be viewed from the perspective of those who deny His existence and therefore refuse to obey the gospel.

Verse 9

1. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;
 - A. The word “punished,” here literally meant to “pay the penalty,” which would indicate the righteousness of God.
 1. They are literally getting what they deserve.
 - B. The word “destruction” has given way over the years to an incorrect application when it has been used to suggest annihilation.
 1. Rather, though, the Greek word “olethros,” conveyed the idea of the sense of separation “from the presence of the Lord.”

- A. The same Greek word is used in 1 Corinthians 5:5, with the man guilty of incest being delivered “unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh.”
 - 1. For this to have happened, if the word “olethros” meant annihilation, then the man under consideration would have ceased to exist.
 - A. However, Paul in 2 Corinthians refers to the Corinthians extending forgiveness to him - 2 Corinthians 2:6, 7.
- C. We note that the word “destruction” is modified by the word “everlasting” or “eternal.”
 - 1. Such word usage would not be the case of annihilation was in mind.
 - A. Vincent well sums this up with the following, “In the present passage it is urged that ὀλεθρον destruction points to an unchangeable, irremediable, and endless condition. If this be true, if ὀλεθρος is *extinction*, then the passage teaches the annihilation of the wicked, in which case the adjective αἰώνιος is superfluous, since extinction is final, and excludes the idea of duration. But ὀλεθρος does not always mean *destruction* or *extinction*.” (Vincent, 1887, p. 61, emp. his).
- D. This separation is “from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”
 - 1. Literally, they will be shut off from the presence of the Lord as seen in Matthew 7:23 and 25:41.
 - 2. Further, they will be separated from the majesty of the Lord.
 - A. In the next verse we will be introduced to the idea of the “admiration” of those who see the Lord on that day.
 - 1. Here, just the opposite.

Verse 10

- 1. When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, . . .
 - A. Here we see the beginning of the contrast to what Paul wrote about in the previous verses.
 - 1. Jesus is coming “to be glorified in his saints.”
 - A. The Greek word “endoxazo” is used only here and in verse 12 in the New Testament pointing to the fact that Jesus will be “glorified in” “his saints.”
 - 1. Faithful Christians will reflect His glory as a mirror reflects the image on the one who looks into it - Romans 8:29; Colossians 3:10.
 - 2. We see this reflection as we consider the fact that we are “his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” - Ephesians 2:10.
- 2. . . . and to be admired in all them that believe . . .
 - A. The English Standard Version states here, “and to be marveled at among all who have believed.”
 - 1. Previously Paul indicated that unbelievers would be separated from the presence of God, while here just the opposite.
 - 2. A sense of awe is seen here in how the believers that see Jesus on that day will view Him.
- 3. . . . (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.
 - A. No doubt Paul was referring to the teachings that the Thessalonians had heard from him - Acts 17:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 2:13.
 - 1. The effects of teaching and believing what is taught is seen here.

Verse 11

1. Wherefore also we pray always for you, . . .
 - A. We see that the prayers had a purpose behind them, “that our God would count you worthy of this calling.”
 1. Not only did they give thanks, they also prayed prayers of supplication on behalf of the Thessalonians.
2. . . . that our God would count you worthy of this calling, . . .
 - B. To be counted “worthy” here would be in reference to the idea of their having conducted their lives in such a way that at Judgment God might look upon them in favor.
 1. There is nothing suggestive of merit here.
 2. Rather, by their acceptance of their call to faith and their continued faithfulness, God will judge justly.
3. . . . and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:
 - A. The prayer was also directed at the Thessalonians that they be faithful in doing all that God would have them to do.
 1. The English Standard Version states, “and may fulfill every resolve for good.”
 2. The Christian seeks opportunities to do “good,” as Jesus went about doing “good” - Galatians 6:10; Acts 10:38.
 - B. The phrase “the work of faith” would be in reference to those things done due to one’s faith.
 1. Recall Hebrews 11 and the number of “Old Testament worthies” who acted on their faith.
 - C. The phrase “with power” is from the Greek “en dunamei,” and referred to the idea of “in power.”
 1. Paul could “do all things through Christ which strengtheneth” him - Philippians 4:13.
 2. This could have reference to spiritual gifts in the first century and God’s providence in the 21st century.
 3. We, also, remember the “power” associated with the “gospel” - Romans 1:16.

Verse 12

1. That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, . . .
 - A. God is glorified when Christians do “good works” - Matthew 5:16.
 1. God is glorified when we obey His Word - John 17:8-10.
 - B. The “glory” that the Lord had been given by the Father was given to His disciples - John 17:22.
 1. When we do what God would have us, people will see that in our lives and it will result in our being spoken well of.
2. . . . according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - A. The source for this is “the grace of God.”
 1. This is so due to the fact that were it not for that grace, we would have no chance to do such “good” in order to be praised or “glorified.”

CHAPTER TWO:

Verse 1

1. Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering

together unto him,

- A. The phrase “gathering together unto him” had reference to that time in which the Lord will “gather together his elect” - Matthew 24:31; Mark 13:27.
 - 1. Of course this would have reference to the Judgment Day that was to come.
- B. Since the Thessalonians were being misled into believing that the second coming had already passed, this futuristic reference would set the stage for Paul’s discussion concerning the truth of the matter.
- C. It is interesting that the Greek word used here “episunagoge,” is only used here and in Hebrews 10:25, where it refers to the “assembling together” of Christians for worship.
 - 1. I have often said that “the closest thing we have on earth to compare to heaven is the assembly of the church.”
 - A. This seems to, at least to me, bear that out.

Verse 2

- 1. That ye be not soon shaken in mind, . . .
 - A. In view of what Paul had just indicated, they were being “beseeched” to “be not soon shaken in mind.”
 - 1. Literally, they were being encouraged by Paul to keep their heads.
 - B. The Greek word “saleuo” was used at times to refer to one being “agitated or excited,” such as in Luke 6:38; Acts 17:13.
 - 1. It was also used when referring to one being moved from a position such as a ship would be moved from its moorings.
 - A. This would seem to be the case here.
- 2. . . . or be troubled . . .
 - A. The English Standard Version has this phrase saying “alarmed.”
 - 1. Robertson has this to say, “to be in a state of nervous excitement (present passive infinitive, as if it were going on),” (Robertson, 1931, p. 47).
 - A. The Revised Standard Versions actually states, “not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited.”
 - B. The New English Bible has this passage saying, “I beg you, do not suddenly lose your heads or alarm yourselves, . . .”
- 3. . . . neither by spirit, . . .
 - A. Keep in mind 1 John 4:1 on this.
 - 1. His reference was probably one dealing with the false prophets that he had previously addressed - 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22.
- 4. . . . nor by word, . . .
 - A. Reference to some oral teachings they had heard.
- 5. . . . nor by letter as from us, . . .
 - A. The phrase “as from us” gives us insight into the situation of the length these false teachers were willing to go in order to be able to persuade the Thessalonians to listen to them.
 - 1. A false claim has been made, suggesting that they had met with Paul and he had agreed with them on their doctrine.
 - A. The English Standard Version states it this way, “or a letter seeming to be from us.”

6. . . . as that the day of Christ is at hand.
 - A. The English Standard Version states, “to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.”
 1. So there it is, various means were being used to say to the Thessalonians that “the day of the Lord has come.”
 - A. Literally, it was already on them or present.
 1. This would be the false teaching that came from Hymenaeus and Philetus - 2 Timothy 2:17, 18.
 - B. “Nearness,” or “certainty” was not what they were saying.
 1. Instead, they were falsely claiming that the Lord had already come.

Verse 3

1. Let no man deceive you by any means: . . .
 - A. Robertson hits it on the head with his description here, “Paul broadens the warning to go beyond conversation and letter. He includes ‘tricks’ of any kind. It is amazing how gullible some of the saints are when a new deceiver pulls off some stunts in religion.” (Robertson, 1931, p. 49).
 1. Being “deceived” or “beguiled” as per the American Standard Version is to be misled by some form of underhandedness, regardless of whatever means they attempted to use.
2. . . . for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, . . .
 - A. Paul, now, presents several points regarding that which must happen before Christ was to return.
 1. What we see here is Paul trying to get them to think that if these things must come first, and they haven’t, then Christ must not have come.
 - B. The first thing that Paul specifically mentions is “a falling away.”
 1. Literally, he had in mind “apostasy” or “rebellion” as the phrase “falling away” is from the Greek word “apostasia,” which Vine defines as “a defection, revolt, apostasy, is used in the N.T. of religious apostasy. . . In 2 Thess. 2:3 ‘the falling away’ signifies apostasy from the faith.” (Vines, n.d., p. 413).
 2. There is more specificity seen in translations other than the King James Version in view of the article in this phrase.
 - A. “The falling away” - American Standard Version.
 - B. “The rebellion” - English Standard Version.
 - C. “The falling away” - New King James Version.
 - D. “The rebellion” - Revised Standard Version.
3. . . . and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;
 - A. The second thing mentioned, which would be a manifestation of the “man of sin, the son of perdition.”
 1. The phrase “man of sin” is better viewed as “man of lawlessness” as seen in the English Standard Version.
 2. Over the years, a number of possible answers have been given when it comes to the designation “the man of sin” in so far as who or what “he” is.
 - A. A line of popes.
 - B. A line of Roman Emperors.
 - C. Satan.

- D. However, there is no reason to see this as having a specific “man” in mind but, rather, a reference to the personification of evil.
 - 1. The point Paul was making was that there was coming a time in which evil would so increase that “lawlessness” would be the way of life, and then the Lord would come.
 - A. Paul expressed similar sentiments in 1 Timothy 4:1-3 and 2 Timothy 3:13; 4:3.
 - 2. When you think about it, that makes more sense than the other views from the perspective of God’s forbearance and its limitation.
 - A. When did God “destroy the world by water?”
 - 1. When their wickedness got to the point where “every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” - Genesis 6:5.
 - B. When this happens again, it will be “revealed.”
 - 1. The evidence of it will be in every walk of life.
 - A. In the public - there it will be.
 - B. On the television - there it will be.
 - C. On the internet - there it will be.
 - D. On the printed page - there it will be.
 - E. In music - there it will be.
 - F. In the home - there it will be.
 - G. In religion - there it will be.

Verse 4

- 1. Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, . . .
 - A. Opposition to God and His ways.
 - 1. Consider the events of the present day.
 - A. Abortion.
 - B. Homosexuality/same sex “marriages.”
 - C. Increase in crime.
 - D. Destruction of the home - the so-called “women’s liberation movement.”
 - E. The sanctity of the home - we have gone from “starter homes” to “starter wives.”
 - G. Gambling.
- 2. . . . or that is worshipped; . . .
 - A. Worship is directed at man instead of God.
 - 1. What do we see going on in religion today?
 - A. See Appendix # 3, pages 68, 69, written by Reformed Presbyterian author Brian Schwertley.
 - B. The following is taken from my class notes for the course at BTSOP on Current Issues in the Church, pages 16, 17.
 - 1. “The worship of God has always been somewhat of a ‘playground’ for the devil.
 - A. The Bible identifies four types of worship:
 - 1. Ignorant - Acts 17:16-31.
 - 2. Vain - Matthew 15:8, 9.
 - 3. Will (self-chosen) - Colossians 2:23.
 - 4. True - John 4:24.

- B. When it comes to the worship of the church the sovereignty of God has been displaced by the sovereignty of the consumer (i.e. worshiper).
 - 1. Christianity is being marketed, packaged, and sold to a secular consumer.
 - 2. What we have ended up with is worship that is 'user friendly.'
 - A. In other words, whatever pleases man is the rule.
 - 1. If we want mechanical instrumental music - we have it.
 - 2. If we want drama - we have it.
 - 3. If we want choirs - we have them.
 - 4. If we want testifying - we have it.
 - 5. If we want hand clapping - we have it.
 - 6. If we want... - we have it with no regard to Colossians 3:17."
- 3. . . . so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.
 - A. It is as if this "man" has literally sat where God should be sitting.
 - 1. This is exactly what is happening all over the world as people seek to turn His will and way into what they want it to be in religious matters.
 - B. The word "temple" here is from the Greek word "naos," and referred to the holiest part of the temple.
 - 1. This could easily be seen indicating that evil had overtaken the place where God "dwells" today - 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19.
 - A. Remember, the church is the "house of the living God" - 1 Timothy 3:15.

Verse 5

- 1. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?
 - A. Paul called their attention to the fact that he had previously warned them of this, and that as such, they should not be getting caught off guard.
 - 1. The phrase "I told you these things" was in the imperfect tense and indicated that he not only told them, but did so repeatedly.
 - A. Therefore, they should know better than to be "deceived" by what they were hearing.

Verse 6

- 1. And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.
 - A. The English Standard Version states here, "And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time."
 - 1. A "couple" important points are seen here.
 - A. First, the Thessalonians "knew" something.
 - B. Second, they "knew" that the "man of lawlessness" was being restrained.
 - C. Third, they "knew" that he was yet to be "revealed."
 - D. Fourth, they "knew" that if he was "restrained," and yet to be "revealed," then the second coming of Christ could not have already happened.
 - B. The "what" that "withholdeth" "him" would no doubt be the principle of law and order, both physically and spiritually.
 - 1. This would involve government and true religion.
 - A. When we see the decline in both so evident today, we have to wonder . . . don't we?
 - 2. Recall the statement by 18th Century British Statesman Edmund Burke, "All that is

needed for the preservation of evil is for all good men to do nothing.” (or words to that affect).

A. Add to that the evil that is increasing more and more in our society, and we can easily see what is ahead.

Verse 7

1. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: . . .

A. Evil was already at work at the time Paul wrote the Thessalonians, even though such deeds were not so readily known.

1. We can easily see how that the knowledge of evil’s existence in the world is so much easier seen today than during the time Paul wrote this epistle.

A. Someone injures or kills several people in a theatre, and within a few minutes word has crossed the globe.

2. . . . only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

A. Some have used this to suggest the Holy Spirit as the one restraining the “man of lawlessness.”

1. But the last part of the passage suggests that the “restrainer” is “taken out of the way” by force.

A. What power could do this, if it spoke of the Holy Spirit?

B. If we see this referring to government and true religion, then we can see how with the “watering down” of laws and religion this could easily be the case.

1. When evil is left unrestrained, it will grow worse - 2 Timothy 3:13.

Verse 8

1. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, . . .

A. Notice how this passage started, “And then . . .”

1. When the forces that are holding back (present tense) “lawlessness,” stop doing so, “then” shall come the “revelation” of the “man of lawlessness.”

A. The greater the “lawlessness,” the greater the “lawlessness” will be.

1. Intensification is seen here.

A. Reminds you of the principle of sowing and reaping - Galatians 6:7.

1. You sow good, good comes.

2. You sow evil, evil comes.

2. . . . whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, . . .

A. Personification is seen in the word “whom.”

B. Compare this to Isaiah 11:4.

C. In the end, Jesus will destroy evil with His Word - Revelation 1:16; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12.

1. It will be at that time that all of His enemies will be destroyed - 1 Corinthians 15:24-26.

3. . . . and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

A. Majesty is seen here.

1. “Brightness” is from the Greek word “epiphaneia, and referred to the fact that at His coming He will “shine forth” - Matthew 24:27; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 1:10.

B. So now they should know what they already should have known, Jesus has not yet come and will not do so until what he has just written comes to pass.

Verse 9

1. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan . . .
 - A. Still the personification.
 - B. This shows us that Satan is not the “man of lawlessness” as the “one” described as such “is after the working of Satan.”
 1. This tells us that “his” works are on “par” with Satan.
2. . . . with all power and signs and lying wonders,
 - A. Three words used here that are also used to describe the activities of the Lord and the apostles - “power, signs, wonders” - Acts 2:22; Hebrews 2:3, 4.
 1. Each of these words is used to describe things above human characteristics.
 - A. “Power” (dunamis) would have reference to spiritual gifts (miracles), and the ability to perform them.
 - B. “Signs” (“semeia”) would have reference to the character of the miracles, indicating something greater than the miracles themselves.
 - C. “Wonders” (“terata”) would draw your attention to the fact that they are above man’s ability to explain.
 - B. One clear difference, though, is seen when Paul referenced “lying wonders.”
 1. The New International Version states “counterfeit miracles” while the Revised Standard Version states, “with pretended signs.”
 - A. These give the sense of what is being said here.
 1. These are deceitful acts since God would now be unable to manifest real miracles to show the false ones up.
 - A. Recall how Moses performed greater miracles than the magicians of his time to prove himself - Exodus 7:8-13.
 2. If the events we are looking at here are not yet in the future, then we would have to admit that Jesus’s second coming has already happened.
 - A. If in the future, and if these are real miracles, how could God show them to be false unless the “age of miracles” has not passed?
 - C. You cannot hardly turn your television on today to any sort of religious programing without seeing someone perform a “miracle,” or hear them claim about having done so.
 1. Obtain a copy of Fake Healers Exposed by V.E. Howard and note the number of documented “lying wonders” that he exposed in that small booklet.
 - A. Copies of this booklet are available through the School office.
 2. The book “Give Me That Prime-Time Religion” by Jerry Sholes is subtitled “An insider’s report on the Oral Roberts Evangelistic Association” and is an expose of Roberts and his “lying wonders” by one who came out of that organization.
 3. Legion is the articles and books that have been written over the years that have exposed such time after time.

Verse 10

1. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; . . .
 - A. Those who follow after these “lying wonders” will “perish.”
 1. Literally, with Paul’s use of the Greek present participle “tois apollumenois,” he actually wrote of “those who are perishing” as seen in the English Standard Version.
 - A. In other words, as they actively follow such shenanigans they are presently in a

- lost condition which, if continued in, will result in their being lost for eternity.
2. . . . because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.
 - A. Herein is the reason for the fact that those who were being deceived were perishing, they did not “love the truth.”
 1. We recall, “truth” saves - John 8:32; James 1:21.
 2. Those that love the Lord “keep His commandments” - John 14:15.

Verse 11

1. And for this cause . . .
 - A. Because they do not love the truth, a “strong delusion” is going to come upon them.
2. . . . God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:
 - A. The phrase “shall send” is, according to Robertson, “Futuristic (prophetic) present of the time when the lawless one is revealed” (Robertson, 1931, p. 53).
 1. He goes on to say, “Here is the definite judicial act of God (Milligan) who gives the wicked over to the evil which they have deliberately chosen (Romans 1:24 Romans 1:26 Romans 1:28),” which actually gets the point across.
 - A. God has determined that those who are “bent” on “lawlessness” will be free to pursue whatever path they so choose, just as those who are determined to do good may choose that path - Joshua 24:15; Matthew 7:13, 14.
 - B. Earl Edwards well explains how it can be said of God that He who is good can be seen as the source of a “strong delusion” in this quote, “The problem of how God, who is good and is the source of all truth, can send ‘a deluding influence’ in order that some ‘will believe’ a lie might be paralleled to God’s work in the law of gravity. When a person jumps off a cliff to his death, does God ‘send’ him to death or does he kill himself? Looking at it from Paul’s standpoint, God does it because He set in motion the law of gravity.” (Edwards, 2005, p. 288).
 2. From the Book of Exodus we find explanation of this from two passages involving Pharaoh and God having “hardened” his heart - Exodus 8:32; 9:12.
 - B. Their believing “a lie” was a choice they made.
 1. Evidence to the contrary was available.
 - A. We have just seen where Paul reminded them of his previous teachings.
 2. Perhaps we can use an idiom to illustrate the point, “There is none so blind as those who will not see.”

Verse 12

1. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, . . .
 - A. Since they have determined to “believe a lie” the end is clear.
 1. Like telling a lie, believing one is very similar.
 - A. You tell one, you must tell another, then another, and then another to cover up the previous ones.
 1. You believe one, you must believe another, then another, and then another to stay consistent with the previous ones.
 2. There seems to be no end here, as is often the case, except for the condemnation that comes.
 - B. The word “damned” in the King James Version refers to the idea of their being “judged” as seen in the American Standard Version.

1. Literally, they will be judged “guilty as charged.”
 2. . . . but had pleasure in unrighteousness.
 - A. Here is the root cause of it all.
 1. They found “pleasure in wickedness.”
 - B. Remember, though, that “the pleasures of sin” are but “for a season” - Hebrews 11:25.
- Verse 13
1. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, . . .
 - A. Paul seemed to constantly be at thanks for the brethren.
 1. Good lesson for us to learn.
 2. Paul used the word “brethren” 24 times in 23 verses in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and over 100 times in total in his epistles.
 2. . . . because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation . . .
 - A. The “beginning” here would, most likely, have reference to the time of the beginning of the “scheme of redemption” - 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 1:4; 3:5-9; 1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8; 17:8.
 - B. Not that they were individually “chosen,” but that God “chose” that those who “obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine” were “chosen” for “salvation” - Romans 6:17; Hebrews 5:9.
 3. . . . through sanctification of the Spirit . . .
 - A. Literally, “sanctification by the Spirit” as per the English Standard Version.
 1. “Sanctification” has to do with being “set apart.”
 2. This “sanctification” would come “by the Spirit” through the word - John 17:17.
 - A. This initially comes at conversion, and continues through the Christian’s entire life - 1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11; 1 Peter 1:2.
 4. . . . and belief of the truth:
 - A. In contradiction to believing “a lie,” freedom from condemnation comes by belief and obedience to the truth - John 8:24, 32; Romans 8:1; Hebrews 11:6.

Verse 14

1. Whereunto he called you by our gospel, . . .
 - A. The word “whereunto” would speak to the desired goal, i.e. sanctification that leads to salvation.
 - B. The “he” here would no doubt be God who “called” the Thessalonians - Acts 17:1-4.
 1. The word “called” here is “kaleo,” and is point action in the Greek indicating that which happened once.
 - C. The phrase “our gospel” does not indicate the source of origin, but rather the means of conveyance.
 1. Paul wrote to the Romans concerning the “gospel of Christ,” but then referred to the gospel as “my gospel” - Romans 1:16; 2:16.
 - A. Similar terminology is seen in other locations.
2. . . . to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - A. Here is why they had been “called,” to bring glory to the Lord.
 1. This reminds us of Matthew 5:16.
 - B. Notice the use of the pronoun “our” here as Paul sought to indicate the sense of an intimate relationship.

Verse 15

1. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, . . .
 - A. So, because of what has just been said, . . . “stand fast . . .”
 1. Previously, in this chapter, Paul had mentioned those that were “soon shaken.”
 - A. Here the contrast.
2. . . . and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, . . .
 - A. The word “traditions” is from the Greek word “paradosis,” and had reference to that which was handed down or over to someone.
 1. Context would determine its usage in so far as to what type of “tradition” or “teaching” was under consideration.
 - A. It could be bad - Matthew 15:9.
 - B. Or, as in the case here, it could be good - 2 Thessalonians 3:6.
 - B. To “hold” was “to have a masterful grip on a thing” (Robertson, 1931, p. 54).
3. . . . whether by word, or our epistle.
 - A. Regardless of the means of transmission, they were to “hold” to them.

Verse 16

1. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and . . .
 - A. Paul prays again.
 1. Here for help for the Thessalonians that they might “hold on.”
 - A. Recall how Paul asserted his ability to “do all things through Christ” - Philippians 4:13.
2. . . . hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,
 - A. The English Standard Version states here of God, “who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace.”
 1. “Comfort” or “encouragement” was needed at this time, and that is what Paul prayed for.

Verse 17

1. Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.
 - A. Paul now centralizes his prayer for them to be comforted in their “hearts.”
 1. This would be the “inner man” that Paul wrote about to the Ephesians - Ephesians 3:16.
 2. The “comfort,” no doubt would have to do with knowing that what they were concerned about was not true.
 - A. Jesus had not yet come.
 - B. Their loved ones had not missed the resurrection.
 - B. Paul, also, prayed that they would be “strengthened” or “confirmed” when it came to the efforts they were putting forth.
 1. What we would see there would be the manifestation of what was in the “inner man.”

CHAPTER THREE:

Verse 1

1. Finally, brethren, pray for us, . . .
 - A. Paul has now come to the point where he brings his epistle to a conclusion.
 - B. As he does so, he asks the Thessalonians to pray for them.

1. This was a regular request of Paul - Romans 15:30; Ephesians 6:19; Colossians 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:25.
2. . . . that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, . . .
 - A. Two specific things are in mind that he asked them to pray for relative to the spread of the gospel.
 1. First, that “the word of the Lord may have free course.”
 - A. The English Standard Version states, “the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored.”
 - B. Robertson states, “may keep on running and being glorified” (Robertson, 1931, p. 56).
 1. The “glorification” would come from a continued acceptance of it - 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 2:13.
3. . . . even as it is with you:
 - A. We see his prayer for the boundaries to be broadened, and that the gospel would be accepted by others as it had been by the Thessalonians.

Verse 2

1. And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: . . .
 - A. The word “delivered” here is from the Greek word “rusthomen,” and is seen as their being “rescued.”
 - B. The phrase “unreasonable and wicked men” is better seen as “wicked and evil men” as per the English Standard Version.
 1. This probably had to do with the persecution that he had experienced - Acts 18:12-21; 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16.
 2. The present definition of the word “unreasonable” does not give the full strength of the Greek word “atopos,” which would indicate the idea of “perverseness.”
2. . . . for all men have not faith.
 - A. Here is why these men did as they did, they did not “have faith.”
 1. Not faith in the sense of belief in God, but rather, they did not accept the Christian faith.
 - A. This would take us back to the Jews that persecuted Paul as noted above.
 - B. So, Paul’s hope was to be “rescued” from those who cared nothing for the faith and who persecuted those who did.

Verse 3

1. But the Lord is faithful, . . .
 - A. Regardless of who or what Paul was up against, he recalled that “the Lord is faithful.”
 1. From Paul’s perspective, God is a promising keeping God - 1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:13; 2 Corinthians 1:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:24.
2. . . . who shall stablish you, . . .
 - A. The word “stablish” here is from the Greek word “sterizo,” and referred to the idea of their being “established” as seen in the English Standard Version.
 1. Paul used this word occasionally - Romans 16:25; Colossians 2:7; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:17.
3. . . . and keep you from evil.
 - A. The sense of guarding or protecting is seen here.

1. Recall what we have seen from 1 Corinthians 10:13.
 - A. God knows our limits, and as such promises to not allow us to be tempted beyond them and then He provides the strength to stand firm.
 - B. The phrase “from evil” is better understood as being kept from “the evil one” as seen in the New King James Version.
 1. Consider Paul’s words to the Ephesians along these lines - Ephesians 6:16.

Verse 4

1. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, . . .
 - A. Of the word “confidence,” Robertson states “we are in a state of trust” (Robertson, 1931, p. 57).
 - B. The phrase “in the Lord” referred to his seeing their obedience through the “eyes of the Lord,” or as the Lord would view them.
- 2, . . . that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.
 - A. His “state of trust” had to do with the Thessalonians, and that they not only were doing what they had been commanded, but that they would do so in the future.
 1. We see here not only a statement of Paul’s conviction of their status but, also, an admonition for their continued doing so.

Verse 5

1. And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, . . .
 - A. His prayer was that men would love God and that their hearts would be directed toward an even greater love of Him.
2. . . . and into the patient waiting for Christ.
 - A. We see here his prayer that they have “the steadfastness of Christ,” as seen in the English Standard Version.
 1. This would be that they were “steadfast” as Christ was in the face of difficulties in life.
 - B. Both the American Standard and the New King James Versions use the word “patience” here.

Verse 6

1. Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . .
 - A. By the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul issued this “command.”
 1. As the Lord’s messenger, Paul issued such commands based on Christ’s role, and his role - 1 Thessalonians 2:4-6.
 - B. Note that the command was to the “brethren,” which would be all inclusive of the membership of the church at Thessalonica.
2. . . . that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, . . .
 - A. To “withdraw” themselves is to “place one’s self away from” (Vincent, 1887, p. 70).
 - B. The phrase “walketh disorderly” has reference to one who would be seen as “freeloading” off of another.
 1. We noted on 1 Thessalonians 5:14 that the Greek word “atakos” “was used when describing a soldier who fell out of step with the rest or an uncontrolled mob that needed to be brought under control.”
 2. Thus, specifically so, Paul was instructing the Thessalonians to “withdraw” themselves from those that were refusing to work, and as such were practicing

idleness.

A. The English Standard Version states, “keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness.”

3. . . . and not after the tradition which he received of us.

A. That which they had previously been taught from the perspective of apostolic authority.

B. The bottom line here was that those who were being idle were not to be put up with by those who were faithful.

1. It may be that the idleness they were practicing was the result of the incorrect understanding of Jesus’ second coming as that which was in the past.

A. However, regardless, they had been taught to work and provide the necessities of life.

Verse 7

1. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: . . .

A. Paul used the phrase “yourselves know” before - 1 Thessalonians 3:3; 5:2.

1. He used it to express the fact that the Thessalonians had previous knowledge to what he was addressing.

A. No doubt this knowledge came from his previous teachings.

B. Their following Paul was possible because he followed Christ - 1 Corinthians 11:1.

1. Paul had encouraged the Corinthians, the Philippians, and the Thessalonians to follow him, or do as he did - 1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 4:9.

2. . . . for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

A. Paul indicated that they could imitate him because they “were not idle when we were with you” as per the English Standard Version.

1. Again, expressing the idea of an orderly military formation.

2. His life was in complete opposition to the lives of those he criticized.

Verse 8

1. Neither did we eat any man’s bread for nought; . . .

A. The English Standard Version states here, “nor did we eat anyone’s bread without paying for it.”

1. Literally, Paul was saying that while at Thessalonica they paid their own way and did not live off of others as some were doing now.

2. . . . but wrought with labour and travail night and day, . . .

A. Paul was holding down two jobs, tent make and preacher.

1. To do both as they should be done would require such labor that Paul used the word “kopos,” which referred to labor that is done that result in fatigue.

3. . . . that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

A. Paul could not be accused of being idle or any such things due to the labor that he was doing.

1. This was clearly an instance in which Paul was able to say, “Do as I do.”

Verse 9

1. Not because we have not power, . . .

A. As an apostle, Paul had the right to ask for financial support.

1. The Greek word “exousia,” was used here and translated “power” or “right” (As per the American Standard Version), and indicated the authority and freedom he had to

seek such.

A. Such authority, though, does not mean one has to exercise it, which is what Paul did here and at Corinth - 1 Corinthians 9:12-15.

B. On other occasions he exercised it - 2 Corinthians 11:8; Philippians 4:16.

2. . . . but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

A. He chose not to exercise the “right” here so as to serve as an example of one who “labored” for the “bread” that was set before him.

Verse 10

1. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

A. Having visited them some months prior to the time of his writing this epistle, Paul had issued the command for them to work instead of being idle.

1. The word “commanded” here carried with it the idea of his having done so repeatedly.

A. This would, no doubt, indicate the severity of the problem at hand.

B. The command is clear.

1. No doubt a general principle of life seen here based on what God had told Adam following the fall - Genesis 3:19.

Verse 11

1. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

A. We are not provided with any information as to the source of what Paul had been told.

1. Paul had learned that although they had been repeatedly warned, there were still some which paid no heed to what they had been commanded to do.

B. The word “busybody” would have reference to the idea of their meddling in the affairs of others of whom they had no business doing so.

1. This, as you can imagine, caused problems.

A. Those not working had the time to meddle in the business of those working who had little time for anything.

1. That would not set well, and no doubt, resulted in problems.

Verse 12

1. 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. Paul’s attention is turned to those who are walking “unruly.”

1. He “commands” them and “exhorts” them concerning their turning from their “unruly” ways.

1. Paul was not wishing to “wash his hands of them” in any sense.

A. Rather, he seeks to turn them back to the right path in life by this action.

B. Paul was commanding them “to do their work quietly and to earn their own living” as per the English Standard Version.

C. To “eat their own bread” was to eat that which they earned rather than sponging off of others.

Verse 13

1. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

- A. Paul changes direction here, and centers in on those who are doing what is right.
 - 1. He instructs them, as he did the Galatians, to not be “weary in well doing” - Galatians 6:9.
 - A. What we see here is encouragement for them to persevere even in the face of the issue at hand.

Verse 14

- 1. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.
 - A. Paul issued a command here to the congregation as to what they were to do if those who were in error continued to practice such.
 - B. The phrase “note that man,” according to Robertson, meant “Put a tag on the man” (Robertson, 1931, p. 60).
 - 1. This reminds us of Paul’s words to the Romans - Romans 16:17.
 - C. To “have no company with him” indicated a withdrawal of all forms indicative of fellowship.
 - 1. This could go so far as the refusal of consuming a meal in such a way that would indicate fellowship - 1 Corinthians 5:11.
 - D. The phrase “that he may be ashamed” gets to the heart of the matter.
 - 1. Like the situation in 1 Corinthians 5, the withdrawal of fellowship would cause the erring ones to take stock of their lives.
 - 2. I would like to mention here, that in order to withdraw fellowship, there must be such first.

Verse 15

- 1. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.
 - A. Paul urged them to consider the fact that they were still brethren in Christ.
 - 1. As such, proper admonition due to their love for the one in error was to be the case - Galatians 6:1.

Verse 16

- 1. Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.
 - A. Very similar to Paul’s prayer in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 28.

Verse 17

- 1. The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.
 - A. Due to the number of false epistles that seemed to have surfaced, attributed to Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:2), he found it necessary to place some sort of a “token” on his epistles.
 - 1. Paul had put a similar “mark” on other epistles - 1 Corinthians 16:21; Galatians 6:11; Colossians 4:18.

Verse 18

- 1. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.
 - A. Nearly the same as found in 1 Thessalonians 5:28.

APPENDIX # 1



APPENDIX # 2

SOUL AND SPIRIT

David Lipscomb stated, “You have a pretty tough and grisly piece of meat for a babe to masticate and digest if you undertake to define the difference between *soul* and *spirit*.”

Although it is characteristic of many people to use these terms interchangeably the scriptures differentiate them. Paul states, “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.” – 1 Thessalonians 5:23. The Hebrew writer stated, “For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.” - Hebrews 4:12. Since the sacred writers provided for “the dividing of soul and spirit,” in those instances where they differ, so ought we and so we must if we are to entertain biblical concepts of these words.

The word “spirit,” when denoting the human entity (from the Greek word *pneuma*), is a specific term and designates that part of us which is not susceptible to death and which survives the dissolution of the body - Acts 7:59 - “And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” The spirit is infused in us directly from God and is not a product of human generation - “Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?” - Hebrews 12:9.

The word “soul,” (from the Greek word *psuche*), however, is a generic word and its meaning must be determined, in any given instance, from the context in which it appears. If I said tomato you are at once able to conjure up in your mind the vegetable by this name and you are not dependent on my usage of the word to ascertain its meaning. But, were I to ask, “Define the word bark for me,” you could not possibly know whether I mean by it the sound a dog makes or the outer covering of a tree unless I presented further information. On the other hand, if I were to say, “Bark is thicker this winter than usual,” you would be able with ease to gather the meaning of the term from the context.

Similarly, when someone asks, “Define the human spirit for me,” another can at once correctly say, “It is the immortal nature, that portion of man derived directly from God, and not subject to death.” But, when one asks, “What is the biblical significance of the word soul?” We must respond by asking, “What passage of scripture do you have in mind in your reference to the soul?” since it is used in four different senses in the sacred writings:

1. As a synonym for person: “And there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.” - Acts 2:41. “Wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.” - 1 Peter 3:20.
2. To denote the animal life which man possesses in common with the beasts of the field and which is lost in death: “He spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence . . .” (Psalm 78:50.) By this it is simply meant that they were allowed to die. Thus

their soul was their physical life.

3. The intellectual nature in contrast with the higher spiritual nature and the lower physical nature “Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God . . .” - 1 Corinthians 2:14. The “natural man” of this passage being literally, the soulish man, since the adjective “natural” translates a form of the Greek word for soul, which may be expressed in English as physical. This usage is supported by etymology and required by the context. Note Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 1:18-28 and 2:6-16.
4. As a synonym for the never-dying spirit: “Because thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades, neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption.” - Acts 2:27. Here it is obvious that the word soul signifies the immortal nature; that entity of the Lord which was not to undergo death.

From this it is seen that there is no pat and easy answer to the question, “What is the soul?” since any proper reply must take into account the significance intended by the inspired penman who used it. It is not unusual for materialists (among whom are “Jehovah’s Witnesses,” Adventists, and Christadelphians) to induce an uninformed person in these matters to affirm that “the soul never dies,” and then to produce numerous statements from the Old Testament that the soul does indeed die, the conclusion then being pressed that man is wholly mortal, his entire being subject to death. The argument is false as is the conclusion because it results from the assignment of a specific meaning to a generic term where such was not the intent of the Old Testament writer. The spirit of man is not subject to death (Genesis 25:8; 35:18; Psalm 90:10; Acts 7:59; 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-8); it is the spirit leaving the body which constitutes death (James 2:26); and, in any instance when death is affirmed of some part of us, it does not embrace the spirit-the immortal nature.

(Most of this material is from an article written by Guy N. Woods several years ago.)

APPENDIX # 3

The Chaos of Present-Day Worship

If a person visited several professing Christian churches on the Lord's day and observed all the different ways in which these churches conducted their worship, he would probably conclude that Christian worship was an arbitrary affair—that it was something determined by man, based primarily on custom and tradition. In one church he might see people burning incense, lighting candles and praying to statues. At another church he might see people chanting and kissing icons (i.e., pictures of the saints). At another people might be shouting and clapping as the rock group jams and struts on the stage. At another church he might see a drama group, and at another, Bo-Bo the clown giving a sermonette to the children.

Many evangelical churches reject the empty ritualism and paganism of Roman Catholicism. They recognize that Romanism has perverted Christian worship by mixing it with Greek and Roman paganism. But what evangelicals do not realize is that the worship conducted in most Bible-believing churches today is a mixture of Christian worship with American pagan culture—the culture that worships self, success, entertainment and leisure.

The modern evangelical church has departed from the scriptural law of worship, which says that only God determines how He is to be worshiped.⁵ “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it” (Deut. 12:29-32).⁶ Churches have been seduced by our entertainment-oriented, man-centered culture. Thus, their worship paradigm increasingly has been taken from Las Vegas and Hollywood. Therefore, the modern evangelical worship service is more and more a show for man, directed to man, with man-pleasing songs and lots of entertainment: music soloists, rock groups, ‘gospel’ groups, skits, plays, videos, singers, performance choirs, liturgical dancing, comedians, celebrity guest speakers, and so on. In most of these churches people even clap after a performance as though they were at a rock concert or a Broadway play.⁷ Churches today are designed for entertainment with a stage, intricate theatrical lighting, and sophisticated sound systems. Most preaching today is also entertainment-oriented, with pop-psychology, props, jokes, and other gimmicks. Preaching today is often long on story telling and humor but short on theology, biblical exposition and exegesis.

Who sets the parameters on what is permissible in worship, God or man? Most Christians would argue that man chooses.⁸ Thus, most churches have a man-centered *pragmatic* view of worship: “What makes *me* feel good in worship? What will bring more people into church? What can we do to have an exciting, emotional experience? What songs can be performed that will entertain the congregation? What kind of band should we have to attract young people to our services? What kind of music and sermon will make the

unchurched comfortable in our church?” Baby boomers are accustomed to having everything tailored to their wants and perceived needs. If the church wants to grow, shouldn’t it adapt itself to our culture? Most professing Christians have neglected to ask a few very important questions. What kind of worship pleases and glorifies God? What does the Bible say about this? These questions cannot be answered by pollsters, sociologists, psychologists, or the church growth experts, but only by God Himself as He speaks to us in His infallible word.

The problem with most churches today is that they simply have ignored what the Bible says about worship. Everyone has his own theology and rules regarding the worship of God. The only major difference between biblical and unbiblical worship is the fact that some Christians derive their rules of worship from the Bible *plus* human opinion and pragmatic considerations while others follow *only* the strict parameters laid out in God’s word.⁹ The Roman Catholic church, for example, openly denies the final, definitive authority of Scripture and thus allows *men* to formulate autonomous doctrine and worship. Everyone with a knowledge of church history knows that this led to gross idolatry, superstition and paganism in worship practice during the Middle Ages.

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