

1st Thessalonians

Chapter One

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

“Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in GOD the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.” (ASV)

“Paul, and Sylvanus, and Timothy, to the congregation of the Thessalonians, which is in GOD the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Favor to you, and peace from GOD our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.” (The Living Oracles. From this point on it will be designated as TLO)

“Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus” Unlike letters written in this time which are signed at the end (if one does not send a text or e-mail), letters in the time of this epistle were signed at the beginning. This was because they were usually in the form of a scroll, which then made it easy for the receiver to identify who had written him without unrolling the entire scroll. This letter was no different, and one learns immediately that the apostle Paul was the sender and that it was sent to the **“church of the Thessalonians.”** Bible students do not need lengthy explanations as to who the former Saul of Tarsus was. They recognize him as the former persecutor of Christians, who met the Lord on the road to Damascus and was sent into that city, where a devout servant of GOD named Ananias was sent to tell him how he could have forgiveness for persecuting and

murdering Christ Jesus' disciples. His missionary journeys are well documented in Acts, along with the persecutions he endured in order to be the Lord's servant. On one of these mission trips, he visited the city of Thessalonica, where the Jews tried to have him arrested. However the brethren sent him and Silas by night to Berea, where the Bereans (Jewish Bereans) **"were more noble than those of Thessalonica"** (Acts 17:11). Nevertheless, a congregation of saints (primarily consisting of Gentiles) had been established by them in Thessalonica before they were ushered out of the city.

It is to be noticed that two others joined Paul in greeting the church at Thessalonica — **"Silvanus"** and **"Timothy."** Timothy is also well known to the Bible student as having been converted by the apostle Paul and later becoming his valuable assistant. Note how Paul described Timothy.

"For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church" (1 Corinthians 4:17, emphasis added).

"Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from GOD our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Timothy 1:2).

But who is Silvanus? The name **"Silvanus"** is seen four times in the New Testament (1 Cor. 1:19; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; 1 Peter 5:12) and is likely the same person in 1st Peter as the one in Acts. In the first three places, he is identified as being with both Paul and Timothy as they worked in the Lord's service. **"Silvanus"** is a Roman name, possibly Aramaic in origin, from which the name **"Silas"** comes. It would

appear that Silvanus and Silas are one and the same person, when one considers who wrote Acts and the letters Paul penned.

To whom was this epistle penned? **“unto the church of the Thessalonians”** It should be understood that the phrase **“church of the Thessalonians”** was not a title for the congregation at Thessalonica. It is a description of them, the ἐκκλησία [*“a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly”* (Thayer)]. It should also be noted that this word is not always used in the Scriptures to designate an assembly of Christians. It is also used to designate a mob in Acts 19:32, which was up to no good. Applying the above definition generally to the Scriptures, and in particular this context, it refers to those who had been called out of their pagan or Mosaic religions in order to be the disciples of Christ. In the brief time Paul and his companions were in Thessalonica, before being run out by the angry and jealous Jews, a faithful remnant of believers had been established.

“in GOD the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ”
(The anointed One — Messiah) **How was Christ anointed?**

“GOD anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power” (Acts 10:38).

Thayer defined the word θεός as *“a god or goddess”* and added this note — *“the Godhead, trinity.”* That it indeed signifies the GODHEAD is seen in that all three members of the GODHEAD are seen in this text. GOD the Father (v. 1), GOD the Son (v. 1) and GOD the Holy Spirit (v. 5). Further, note that the **“church of the Thessalonians”** is referred to as being **“in”** the Father and **“in”** the Son (an obvious reference to the unity of

the GODHEAD), as to their being Christians.

“Being in God is one and the same thing with being in Christ”
(Coffman, p. 10).

Note some of the names given to Jesus the Messiah in Isaiah 9:6.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty GOD, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (emphasis added).

“grace be unto you” The TLO translates χάρις (**“grace”**) as *“favor.”* Thayer defines it as *“that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness, grace of speech...good will, loving-kindness, favor.”* The word **“grace”** has often been referred to as *“unmerited favor.”* As the definitions seen above indicate, this word has far more to it than simply favor. **His love for His creation** is behind the grace which He shows to mankind and particularly those who obey Him. Paul wished **“grace”** upon those to whom he wrote in the beginning of each of his letters, except Hebrews (This writer takes the position that Paul was the human chosen to write this letter.).

“and peace” Thayer stated that εἰρήνη refers to *“security, safety, prosperity...of the Messiah’s peace the way that leads to peace (salvation).”* There can be little doubt in this context that peace is referring to that which can only be given by the GODHEAD — eternal safety, salvation and peace with GOD. Speaking of the word **“peace,”** Edwards offered the following valuable observation.

“For the Greeks peace basically meant an absence of war. On the Hebrew tongue, however, it took on the Hebrew word (shalom), which encompassed the prosperity and wholeness of one’s spirit, a sense of overall well-being” (p. 19).

“This is peace that is both external and internal: Peace with God (Rom. 5:1-2). Peace with others (Eph. 2:14-16, and peace with ourselves (Phil. 4:6-7)” (Weaver, p. 42).

“from GOD our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” The translators of the ASV obviously did not believe this phrase was in the original manuscripts, so they eliminated it. This writer finds the emphasis of what has been given to the “called out” refreshing and encouraging to all saints, as it must have been for those in Thessalonica which were undergoing persecution.

1 Thess. 1:2 “We give thanks to GOD always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;”

“We give thanks to GOD always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;” (ASV)

“We give thanks to GOD at all times for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;” (TLO)

“We give thanks” The word εὐχαριστέω (**“thanks”**) is interesting because of its connection to the word **“grace”** in verse one. [*“to be grateful, i.e., (actually) to express gratitude (towards; specifically grace at a meal”*] (Strong). They gave thanks to GOD for something about these Thessalonians. **For what were Paul and his companions grateful to GOD?** The following context points out four specific areas for thanksgiving: (1) **“Remembering without ceasing your work of faith”** (v. 3), (2) **“labour of love”** (v. 3), (3) **“patience of hope”** (v. 3), and (4) **“your election of GOD”** (v. 4). These will be dealt with in more detail when the verses wherein they are found are examined more closely, but it should be observed how each one of these things leads to the next, with a conclusion in verse four.

Note also that the word **“we”** is used with regard to who was thankful for the Thessalonians — **“Silvanus and Timothy”** (v. 1) joined with Paul in these prayers regarding these brethren. This was, this writer believes, not just prayers for the group as a whole, but probably for specific individuals as well. If he be correct, it would have included something accomplished by these individuals in their Lord’s service, as well as for those who may have had a special need of some kind.

To Whom were they grateful regarding these faithful brethren? “to GOD” Lack of gratitude is a serious crime against Him from Whom all blessings flow. Man is often guilty of a failure to see GOD as the source of all his blessings. Since the phrase **“give thanks”** is in the present tense, it indicates a continuous action, i.e., they were continually giving thanks to GOD for these brethren. Further, this is an indication that they gave continual thanks for the blessings He bestowed upon themselves as well. Since GOD is continually blessing all of mankind (rain, sunshine, etc.), those who recognize where these blessings come from should continually be giving thanks to Him. Later in this letter, Paul expressed this idea by charging the Thessalonians to **“Pray without ceasing.”** Paul understood that thanksgiving prayers were not simply a privilege (though it is a privilege), but also a necessity for GOD’s people.

For whom did Paul and his companions pray? “always for you all” Note the burden Paul felt for all the churches, as expressed in 2 Corinthians 11:28. In that context Paul, listed many of the things which he had suffered for the cause of Christ. He then said the following as a conclusion in verse twenty-eight.

“Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches” (emphasis

added).

This should emphasize the importance of praying for all of GOD's people, even if no face-to-face contact has ever been made. Paul prayed for those he had never met — probably as fervently as he did for those he knew personally.

“For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh” (Colossians 2:1, emphasis added).

Because of what Paul himself had faced, he knew what would probably confront these brethren as they fought to maintain their faith. Whether one be facing physical or mental persecution, he needs the prayers of the saints to help him win the battle for salvation. **He needs their encouragement!** It is noted that when Paul prayed, he used names, whether it were for a group or individuals — even for the enemies of truth.

“Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to GOD for Israel is, that they might be saved” (Romans 10:1).

1 Thess. 1:3 “Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of GOD and our Father;”

“remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our GOD and Father;” (ASV)

“incessantly remembering your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of GOD, even our Father;” (TLO).

“Remembering without ceasing” One of the things human beings seem to be good at is forgetting. For instance — **How many people, after someone has died — pray for the widow/widower for a few days and**

then stop praying, because they forget how the living suffer after such? Or what about preachers who leave a congregation to go to another? Do they think of them and pray for them as well as for individuals in those congregations and community? Do they pray for those who have done wrong to anyone, including themselves?

“Perhaps we need to pray and work for better memories. For it is when we remember people (their faces, names and needs) that we are prompted both to thank God and pray for them” (Scott, quoted by Weaver, p. 47).

Paul apparently prayed for these brethren regularly, remembering them.

“Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches” (2 Corinthians 11:28, emphasis added).

Paul thought about and prayed for all the congregations of the Lord, and he apparently this was a daily habit.

Paul remembered three things about the Thessalonians: (1) **“work of faith,”** (2) **“labour of love,”** and (3) **“patience of hope.”** In the Corinthian letter, he noted these three things and said the following.

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (1 Corinthians 13:13).

In the immediate context of that verse, he had mentioned the importance of miraculous gifts during that time, but also mentioned that these gifts would end as soon as the Scriptures were completed (**“that which is perfect”**). *When the miracles ceased, what would be left to help the Corinthians through their struggles against the world of sin? “faith, hope, charity”*

“Work proceeds from faith, labor proceeds from love, and endurance proceeds from hope” (Weaver, p. 48).

“work of faith” Much of the religious world does not think that there is anything (work) which must be done

in order to have salvation. The word “**work**” comes from ἔργον, which Thayer defines as “*an act, deed, thing done;*” and Strong defined it as “*toil.*” But the question is *why do these denominationalists not practice what they preach?* If all one has to do in order to be saved is believe in Jesus, then there is nothing else he can do — including obeying any other command of the Lord. If “*faith only is a most wholesome doctrine*” (and it is not), *why make any financial contribution? Why make the effort to go somewhere for worship or the effort to do anything of a religious nature?* The Scriptures teach one to congregate, give of his means, care for the poor, widows and orphans, and a host of other things. Jesus thoroughly condemned the Pharisees because they twisted the Scriptures in order to fulfill their own desires. **Faith does not sit back and do nothing! FAITH WORKS!** The Bible clearly condemns faith which does not cause one to labor for and in the cause of Christ. Faith all by itself is worth **NOTHING**. Works all by itself is worth **NOTHING!** *Why?* Because they have no life.

“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26).

In order for faith to have value, it must be alive in order to accomplish the goals given it. No wonder Luther tried to dismiss the book of James as a straw epistle — it contradicted his doctrine. No wonder that denominationalists deny that labor must be exercised in the Lord’s cause to be saved — **it contradicts their doctrine**.

“and labour of love” The word “**labour**” in this phrase is from κόπος. This word refers to “*fatiguing toil, intense labor united with trouble*” (Fields, p. 32).

“Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his

working, which worketh in me mightily" (Colossians 1:29). Consider for a moment the Scriptures' commands to care for one's aged parents. Many times such care means a lot of hard work has to be done by the caregiver. Doing chores they no longer can do, taking them to the doctors, and the list goes on. **Why does one do these things?** Because of his love for them. The Lord has commanded His servants to labor in His vineyard. That means to do everything He has told them to do. **Why does one work hard in the vineyard of the Lord?** Because of the love he has for the One Who has done so much for him that he can never repay his debt of gratitude, even if he had a million years to try.

"For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living GOD, Who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe" (1 Timothy 4:10).

"For GOD is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Hebrews 6:10, emphasis added).

Again, **why does one do the works GOD has commanded him to do?** Because he loves GOD and, thus, wishes to please Him.

"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6, emphasis added).

"and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ"

Thayer defines the word ὑπομονή ("**patience**"), as "*steadfastness, constancy, endurance.*" He then added the following noteworthy thought.

"In the NT the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and loyalty of faith and piety by even the greatest of trials and sufferings."

Another way of saying this is that a Christian does not give up when the going gets tough — **because he is**

tough.

But what is “hope?” Thayer defines this word (ἐλπίς) as “*expectation of good...joyful and confident expectation of eternal life.*” From where does this hope arise? What causes it? **“in our Lord Jesus Christ”** The first thing to observe is that one must be **“in”** Jesus in order to have this hope. How does one get into Jesus? One must be immersed **into** Him.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death” (Romans 6:3)?

This hope is based upon Jesus because of what He has done for man. This involves many things, but these should be considered briefly. Hope rests in the facts that GOD came to this earth, gave man His Father’s word, died on the cross, arose from the dead, and returned to His home in Heaven where the GODHEAD will welcome His faithful followers when time is no more.

“in the sight of GOD and our Father” Our Father in Heaven is watching. It is this author’s studied belief that Paul was encouraging them to remember that GOD is ever watching. Thus, He knows the trials and victories of His people. He knows their work, faith, labor, love, patience, and hope — and He is eager to bestow a crown of victory upon their heads.

1 Thess. 1:4 “Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of GOD.”

“knowing, brethren beloved of GOD, your election,” (ASV)

“knowing, brethren, beloved of GOD, your election:” (TLO)

“Knowing” They knew something. Something was beyond doubt to them. They knew that these to whom they wrote were their **“brethren,”** i.e., they were of the saved, the saints, those who had hope of eternal life

with GOD through Christ. Can one today know who his brothers and sisters in Christ are and, if so, how?

“Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them”
(Matthew 7:16-20, emphasis added).

“election” Strong defines this word (ἐκλογή) as *“(divine) selection,”* and Thayer gives a little more understanding by declaring that it is *“the act of picking out, choosing.”* The Biblical questions to be considered are these: When did He make His choice, for what did He choose them, and why were they chosen?

“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not GOD chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him” (James 2:5)?

It is learned from the above passage that GOD has chosen the **“poor”** (in spirit), **“rich in faith,”** and **“them that love Him.”** But one cannot be poor in spirit, rich in faith, and love Him, unless he is willing to obey Him.

“If a man love Me, he will keep My words” (John 14:23).

“If ye love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

“For this is the love of GOD, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3).

It is also seen that He chose them to inherit a kingdom – an everlasting kingdom. When did GOD choose these individuals to inherit His kingdom?

“Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”

(Matthew 25:34).

The concept is easy to understand, when considering all of these passages. GOD chose those who would live on His earth through the ages who loved Him and kept His commandments. He did not look down through time and say that John Doe would be saved and Sue Doe, would be lost as some erroneously teach.

“Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth GOD, to you is the word of this salvation sent” (Acts 13:26, emphasis added).

This is why Jesus invited everyone to come to Him in obedience — **because they could**. It was their individual decision as to whether they met the qualifications GOD set before the world was ever created.

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30, emphasis added).

GOD does not save by the group — He saves individually!

1 Thess. 1:5 “For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.”

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

“for our Gospel came not to you in word only, but also with power, and with the Holy Spirit, and with much assurance: as you know what sort of men we were among you.” (TLO)

Verse five answers the question as to how Paul

could know that these brethren were of the election of GOD. They had the Gospel proclaimed to them. When the Gospel is preached, it will contain among other things, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. It should also be considered that it is not a Gospel, but the Gospel. It is not a faith among many. It is the faith which Paul proclaimed and which must be proclaimed today.

Why did Paul refer to the Gospel as “our Gospel?” Was Paul saying he had originated what he taught? He was proclaiming that they had heard the Gospel from him — not by him.

*“He (Paul) never uses the word **gospel** in the sense of a message which originated with him and his co-laborers” (Weaver, p. 56).*

Fields gave the following interesting observation about the Gospel, which is the truth.

“The gospel is by its very nature intolerant. It is kind, but intolerant” (p. 35).

Truth, the Gospel, must always immediately reject error — it always stands in opposition to error. Thus, no compromise of any sort can be tolerated by those who proclaim the Gospel. So how had the Gospel come to the Thessalonians?

“in word” They had not learned the truth by reading it. It had been directly spoken to them. How? “in power, and in the Holy Ghost” There can be little doubt that this refers to the Holy Spirit’s guidance in what Paul proclaimed.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

If this author be correct in his understanding, the word

“power” would remind the Thessalonians that the word had been proclaimed with power, as well as with miracles, which were used to confirm the spoken word.

“And they (apostles, RK) **went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following”** (Mark 16:20).

“GOD also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will” (Hebrews 2:4).

“I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of GOD; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ” (Romans 15:18-19).

The Gospel was also preached **“in much assurance.”**

The word **“assurance”** comes from πληροφορία, which Strong defines as *“entire confidence,”* and Thayer defines as *“most certain confidence.”* The Thessalonians knew that Paul had spoken to them with full confidence in what he taught. There was no hesitancy, no meekness, about what he taught. Further, they could have full confidence in what they came to believe, because of the miracles which were worked among them (Mark 16:20).

There was also another evidence for his confidence. In that time, there were many traveling around proclaiming *“great”* philosophies, but they did it in order to profit off of those to whom they spoke or to gain followers for themselves. Paul pointed out the difference here between himself and them. **“as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake”** The Thessalonians saw him and those with him and how they lived and acted among them. He had

not sought their money, nor had he sought men to be his followers. He had always encouraged them to follow Jesus, to be His disciples. Everything Paul and his company had done was to benefit the Thessalonians in introducing them to their hope of eternal salvation. Verse six presents another evidence that the Thessalonians had become Christians.

1 Thess. 1:6 “And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:”

“And ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit;” (ASV)

“And you became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having embraced the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.” (TLO)

“And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord” Thayer states that the word **“and”** (καί) can be translated as *“therefore,”* and it is translated as such four times in the New Testament. He also showed that that word is translated in the Scriptures by over one hundred other words. After considering these words, this writer believes the word *“therefore”* best fits this context. GOD’s word had been spoken to them. They had seen the power by which it had been affirmed and the unselfish lives Paul and his companions had lived. **Because** of these reasons, they **“became followers of us, and of the Lord”** — Christians.

The word **“followers”** is more correctly translated as *“imitators”* in the ASV. They imitated Paul’s obedience to the Gospel, and the text implies that they imitated his manner of life as a Christian.

“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 3:17).

What is an imitator? It is one who *“copies, or attempts to make the resemblance of anything”* (Webster, 1828). Another way of considering this is that of one who is making another his model. In this case, it is a model of one’s life — one which is worthy of copying.

“having received the word in much affliction”

The word **“affliction”** comes from θλίψις, which is defined as *“a pressing, pressing together, pressure”* (Thayer). Used as a metaphor, it means *“oppression, affliction, tribulation, distress, straits”* (IBID). The idea seems to be that they had received the Gospel, even though much pressure had been exerted on them to refuse it. One is not told what pressures were put upon them. Thus, it could be any one of many persecutions which Paul himself had endured. This pressure was no doubt primarily caused by the Jews of Thessalonica, as seen in Acts 17:5-9, but would also probably have come from those with whom they had previously worshipped idols.

“with joy of the Holy Ghost” Littrell translates this phrase as *“with joy of a spirit made holy,”* which is worthy of contemplation. When one obeys the Gospel, he cleanses his soul through obedience and thus becomes holy. Note how John 15:3 ties in with this context.

“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.”

The word cleanses. **How?** By leading one to immersion, where his sins are washed away (Rev. 1:5; Acts 22:16).

The term **“joy”** comes from χαρά, which Strong declares to be *“cheerfulness, i.e., calm delight.”* The affliction they had gone through had been turned into

gladness. **Why?** Because it proved they were as they ought to be in the eyes of GOD.

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake” (Matthew 5:11).

“Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake” (Luke 6:21).

Note a comparison which Fields made here between Jesus, Paul and the Thessalonians.

(1) Each received the word of God.

(2) Each experienced much affliction.

(3) Each had joy in their affliction.” (p. 37).

The first two are evident in each of those listed above, but let one concentrate here on the joy of each.

Jesus:

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of GOD” (Hebrews 12:2).

Paul:

“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church” (Colossians 1:24).

Thessalonians: the present text.

1 Thess. 1:7 “So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.”

“so that ye became an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia.” (ASV)

“So that you become patterns to all who believe, in Macedonia and Achaia.” (TLO)

Their acceptance of the Gospel, their steadfastness

with joy, in spite of the persecutions they suffered, caused something to happen. **“So that ye were ensamples”** The word **“ensamples”** comes from τύπος, which Thayer says is *“an example...in the technical sense, the pattern in conformity to which a thing must be made.”*

“Derived from τυποω, ‘mark with an imprint, stamp a form,’ the substantive τυπος properly refers to a mold for producing a shape, or a wooden stamp for making an imprint in clay, the stroke of a numismatic die, the engraving of seals, a figure that juts out” (Spicq, Vol. 3, p. 384).

In the English language, the word “type” comes from this original word τύπος.

This author and his wife have a hobby of making wooden toys for children. As a toy is designed, a number of patterns are often made from thin pieces of wood, until one becomes the standard. When a desired toy is to be made, the pattern is taken from its drawer, laid on the wood and then traced. The result is that a toy is made which closely resembles the original pattern — time after time. In religion, Jesus is the ultimate pattern, which (when followed) produces Christians. Strive as one might, the finished product never quite matches the original (just as in the example of the toys above).

These imitators of Paul (who imitated Christ) then became examples of faithful Christians to all with whom they came in contact (note the next verse). Particularly this was true of **“all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.”** These two places were provinces of the Roman Empire. Together they are today known as Greece. The cities of Thessalonica, Philippi and Berea were in the province of Macedonia. The cities of Athens and Corinth were in the province of Achaia. **How was it possible for the Thessalonian brethren to be**

such an influence over such a broad area? Thessalonica was a major seaport on the continent. This would cause their lives and examples to have influence in many far-removed places. Beyond that, probably even more were influenced by them because the city sat on a major trade road to the east.

"This church is the only church in the New Testament that is spoken of as a model for others" (Edwards, p. 24).

1 Thess. 1:8 "For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to GOD-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing."

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

"Besides, from you the word of the Lord has resounded, not only in Macedonia and Achaia; but also in every place your faith in GOD is spread abroad, so that we have no need to speak anything." (TLO)

"For from you sounded out the word of the Lord"

What happens if one stands in a canyon and yells out a word? It echoes, i.e., that word is sounded over and over as it reverberates down the canyon. One probably wonders what that has to do with this text. The words **"sounded out"** come from ἐξηχέομαι, which Strong defines as *"to echo forth, i.e., resound."* Spicq gives one a better understanding by saying that it means to *"recount, narrate, explain, interpret...In the Bible this verb, which usually translates the piel of the Hebrew sapar clearly means 'recount, narrate'"* (Vol. 2, p. 21). So what did they narrate, explain and interpret over and over? Considering the context, there is no doubt that

“the word” refers to the Gospel, i.e., the good news of salvation which Jesus delivered to the world from His Father. It was that Gospel for which Paul and they had suffered many things. **What were they doing with the word?** In spite of afflictions, they were proclaiming it everywhere. **How?** Through those they taught in this vital port city and who then carried it with them. **To what extent had their words of hope been echoed forth?**

“in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to GOD-ward is spread abroad” The idea seems to be that the faith they had adopted and their faithfulness to it were being broadcast all over what is known today as Greece. Another way of putting it is that people were talking about their great faith. Not only was this true in Macedonia and Achaia, but it was also being spread to other parts of the empire as well. As people learned more about their faith, it probably would have caused them to ask questions about the Gospel, and apparently many would have been saved.

“so that we need not to speak any thing” The idea is that Paul did not have to tell anyone about their faith — he was being told by those who had come in contact with these Thessalonian brethren.

“I thank my GOD through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world”
(Romans 1:8).

During World War II, the Gospel was being echoed out to the world from America, as its soldiers carried it with them to the battlefields. Congregations were established, and some have flourished, just as is seen in this context.

There is another thought which needs to be considered when thinking about their reputation — it was spread far and wide. Whether one likes it or not,

the reputation of every congregation is known and spread — whether it be good or bad. There is a congregation this writer knows about which had a reputation of immoral activities and another of members hating each other to the point of physically fighting on the front porch of the church building. Neither of these congregations has grown, but instead they have decreased in number. One can only hope that somehow their reputations can someday be reversed. On the other hand, there is a congregation in Memphis, Tennessee, that is known all over the world for its good work. No congregation is perfect, as will be seen in chapter three of this book. Some are good, and others are not. Thank GOD for congregations like that of Thessalonica who are honestly trying, even with the faults they may have! Thank GOD for imperfect individuals who are striving to obey GOD.

1 Thess. 1:9 “For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to GOD from idols to serve the living and true GOD;”

“For they themselves report concerning us what manner of entering in we had unto you; and how ye turned unto GOD from idols, to serve a living and true GOD,” (ASV)

“For they themselves publish concerning us, what sort of entrance we had to you, and how you turned to GOD from idols, to serve the living and true GOD;” (TLO)

“For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you” In Corinth, Paul was hearing from many people from all over these provinces of the conversion of the Thessalonians. This was exciting news, and it was quickly shared far and wide.

Littrell believed that, before Paul could even get the word out about the new brethren at Thessalonica, people were reporting their conversion to him. Being present tense, it signifies that Paul was being continuously told about their conversion.

How did they react to Paul's preaching among them? **"and how ye turned to GOD from idols"** The word **"turned"** comes from ἐπιστρέφω, which is defined by Thayer as *"to turn to"* something. Fields stated that this word is in the *"aorist tense indicating complete, punctiliar, point of action."* What this means is that they had made a complete turn to GOD, not a half-hearted effort. They did not reserve a place for GOD alongside of *"other"* gods of their imaginations. When they turned, they completely gave up the gods they had previously followed. They gave up all acts of worship which were foreign to GOD.

"Nearly all of the holidays and festivities of Macedonia were built around such gods, with their temples being the center of social life. These new Christians had to be willing to quit going to such activities with their neighbors" (Edwards, p. 26).

The text is very clear as to their actions. Unlike the Galatians, the Thessalonians completely gave up any worship that tried to compete with true worship to GOD.

"to serve the living and true GOD" They turned completely away from the false gods they had served to be GOD's servants. There are two things to be noticed here. First is the word **"serve,"** which comes from δουλεύω, which Strong defines as *"to be a slave to (literally or figuratively, involuntarily or voluntarily): be in bondage."* Second is the word ἀληθινός (**"true"**), which Thayer states is *"that which has not only the name and resemblance, but the real nature corresponding to the name. In every respect corresponding to the idea signified by the name, real,*

true genuine.” In other words, they made themselves bondmen to the real and only GOD.

“True means real, genuine, as opposed to that which is pretended, which has no real existence” (Lipscomb, p. 22).

1 Thess. 1:10 “And to wait for His Son from Heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”

“and to wait for His Son from Heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come.” (ASV)

“and to wait for His Son from Heaven, Whom He has raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath which is to come.” (TLO)

“And to wait for His Son from Heaven” Thayer defines the word ἀναμένω (**“wait for”**), as *“to wait for one (with the added notion of patience and trust).”* Waiting for one also indicates that one is ready, i.e., he has gotten his life in order. His change is complete. The above phrase shows that it was not enough to believe in GOD the Father, but one also must believe in His Son and what He did. Those who say they believe in GOD the Father, but do not believe in Jesus as GOD and GOD’s Son, do not really believe in the Father to begin with.

“Whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus”

Thus one sees the doctrine of Jesus’ resurrection and ascension back to where He came from — Heaven.

“Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46-47).

Further, the doctrine that He will return someday was

accepted among them, and they were patiently waiting for His return. This would also imply, it would seem, their belief in all that Jesus did while on earth (the virgin birth, the truths He taught, the miracles He did). Jesus, and His apostles, warned the disciples always to be ready for His return.

“Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 24:44).

To be ready, one must constantly guard his life from the advances and attacks of Satan. To **examine himself constantly** in order to be sure that he is living the kind of life prescribed by GOD to the very best of his ability.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates” (2 Corinthians 13:5, emphasis added)?

Why follow Jesus? “which delivered us from the wrath to come” The word **ῥύομαι** (“**delivered**”) means “*to draw to one’s self, to rescue, to deliver*” (Thayer). **How does Jesus deliver His servants from ὀργή [“wrath” – “anger, wrath, indignation...punishment” (Thayer)] to come?** By drawing them to Himself, to separate them from those who will be punished with eternal damnation. Note that in their present state on earth, as faithful servants of GOD, they had been delivered from the punishment to come — as long as they stayed the course. **Why?** Because it is this living GOD, this living Jesus, who will save them from the GODHEAD’S wrath.

“For our citizenship is in Heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself” (Philippians 3:20-21, ASV).

“If evil did not provoke him to anger he would forfeit our

respect, for he would no longer be God” (Weaver, p. 80).

If one truly believes that Jesus is coming again, what will he do? Will he sit around dreaming of an heavenly abode? No! He will be about his Father’s business, i.e., winning souls by teaching the Gospel to anyone who will listen. He will use any tool with which he is accomplished (in person, radio, TV, internet, writing, etc.). He will be busy in the Lord’s vineyard.

1 Thessalonians Chapter Two

1 Thess. 2:1 “For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:”

“For yourselves, brethren, know our entering in unto you, that it hath not been found vain:” (ASV)

“For yourselves know, brethren, our entrance among you, that it was not in vain.” (TLO)

In this chapter, Paul not only defended the Gospel and himself, but he also showed his outstanding principles of behavior among those whom he taught.

Those who stood against Paul (whoever they were), appear to have been trying to cause the Thessalonians to distrust Paul’s motives. Thus, they appear to have been accusing him of ulterior motives for the teaching he was doing (make followers of himself for selfish gain).

“**vain**” — κενός (ken-os) — “empty” (Strong); “empty, vain, devoid of truth...metaphorically, of endeavors, labors, acts, which result in nothing, vain, fruitless, without effect” (Thayer).

*“The word for **vain** is one of those that can have either of two possible meanings, ‘failure’ (without results), or ‘empty’ (without power or content)” (Weaver, p. 87).*

Thus, Paul called upon the Thessalonians to remember how he had come among them. Going back to the first chapter, it is seen that they accepted him even though they could have easily shunned him because of some physical problem he had.

“After being beaten without mercy at Philippi, and after being thrown into the inner part of the prison and placed in stocks” (Littrell, p. 10).

Spicq stated that, from Homer onward, this word κενός was used to signify “empty hands” (p. 304). In Isaiah

32:6, it was used to mean, *“to leave empty, i.e., fruitless...It is in this sense that St. Paul’s visit to Thessalonica was not without success”* (Spicq, Vol. 2, p. 305). Putting all of these definitions together, it gives one the sense that Paul had come among them, done his teaching, and left the proof that his work had been fruitful among them — he did not leave empty handed. This was shown by how many had become Christians. This truth was being spread far and wide (as mentioned in chapter one) throughout Greece. They did not have to rely upon what others said. They themselves knew what had taken place among them.

Further, they were his proof that he had not come among them to win followers for himself — the Thessalonians followed Christ to Whom Paul had pointed them. And he had not gained any physical wealth from them. It may also mean that he did not take **anything** away from them. Instead, he brought something to them which was of immense value. It may also be that Paul was distancing *“himself from disreputable teachers and to present himself and his message in a positive light”* (Weaver, p. 85).

1 Thess. 2:2 “But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our GOD to speak unto you the Gospel of GOD with much contention.”

“but having suffered before and been shamefully treated, as ye know, at Philippi, we waxed bold in our GOD to speak unto you the Gospel of GOD in much conflict.” (ASV)

“For although we had before suffered, and were shamefully handled, as you know, at Philippi, we were bold, through our GOD, to speak to you the Gospel of GOD, amidst a great combat.” (TLO)

Strong defined the word προπάσχω (“**suffered before**”) as “*to undergo hardship previously: suffer before.*” Next, Paul said that he and his fellow missionaries had been ὑβρίζω [(hoo-brid-zo) “**shamefully entreat**”]. Strong defines this word as “*to exercise violence, i.e., abuse.*” Thayer added this thought to the word — “*of one who injures another by speaking evil of him.*” Zodhiates adds to one’s understanding of this word by saying it was “*to act with insolence, wantonness, wicked violence, to treat injuriously*” (p. 1402). One may read of the events of this shameful treatment in Acts 16:19-24.

There can be no doubt that Paul and his companions had suffered both (mentally and physically) at Philippi. When this writer was very young, and probably many of you as well, when someone taunted him there was a little saying that was commonly used to thwart the sting of their words — “*Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never harm me.*” Unfortunately, that saying is not true — things said to people can hurt them, and hurt them badly. Therefore, it behooves each person to be careful with his words. Lies had obviously been told about Paul and his company which had caused some to believe that they were evil. As seen in the definitions above, those lies caused them to suffer physically and also mentally.

“But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another...The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord” (Matthew 10:23-24).

Paul and the disciples at Philippi followed the Lord’s advice, as one should today. If one is trying to teach another, and it becomes apparent that the student is not really interested, move on to another. That is what they did.

One might expect those who had been treated so shamefully at Philippi to tone down their message or act in a cowardly manner (which far too many do). In spite of the way they had been treated, when they got to Thessalonica, they were bold in continuing to proclaim the Christ and His doctrine. Thayer states that the word παρρησιάζομαι [(par-hray-see-ad-zom-ahee) **“bold”**] indicates *“to grow confident, have boldness, show assurance, assume a bold bearing.”* Strong said it means *“to be frank in utterance or confident in spirit and demeanor.”* What is seen is that they spoke openly, boldly and without restraint, as if they had not suffered so shamefully in Philippi. This attitude was exhibited continuously in every place where Paul went, no matter how he was treated. Without fear or favor, he proclaimed GOD’s word. Note what made Paul bold — **“in our GOD.”** His relationship with GOD made him strong, bold, and unafraid of the earthly dangers and pitfalls which all must endure.

*“The word **our** goes further and indicates close relationship – God of our choice, our service, whose grace sustains, whose spirit cheers, whose presence is our reward”* (Weaver, p. 90).

This writer has often concluded that those in Christ will suffer more in this life than those who live for this world.

“to speak unto you the Gospel of GOD with much contention” He spoke the good news of salvation with much ἀγών [(ag-one) **“contention”**], *“in much conflict”* (ASV), *“great combat”* (TLO). The Greek word above is said by Thayer, among other definitions, to mean *“generally, any struggle or contest.”* ἀγών is an athletic term.

“The term (ἀγών) refers first to a gathering, especially for games or contests; then the contest itself, and finally the agony, anguish, or anxiety that is connected with it, or also any kind of agony, anguish, or anxiety, concern or solitude” (Hendriksen,

p. 61).

Christianity **is** a contest, a struggle between right and wrong, truth and error. It is often a **very** intense struggle demanding great effort and sometimes heartache. But it is a struggle worthy of engagement, worthy of great effort, which can be appreciated by the sufferer, by the eternal reward for faithfulness.

It is well known that the Spirit directed Paul to use quite a few athletic terms in his writing, and he was probably well aware of what is known today as the Olympic games. Considering the definitions seen above, one might ask, **What was the contest about? Truth and error!** He battled strenuously against the forces of evil error, wielding **“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of GOD”** (Ephesians 6:17).

1 Thess. 2:3 “For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:”

“For our exhortation is not of error, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:” (ASV)

“Besides, our exhortation was not from error, nor from impurity, nor with guile.” (TLO)

In considering the purpose of this verse, this writer would agree with Edwards that those who were accusing Paul of wrong doing were probably guilty of the very things of which they were accusing him — error, impurity, and deceit (p. 53). It should also be considered that Paul did his work of winning souls for Jesus everywhere in the same manner as he had in Thessalonica — teaching only truth, living a pure life, and without any hidden agenda. Further, when he contended earnestly, he did not do so with a bad attitude, or the desire to destroy those with whom he

contended. He also did not do so simply to be the victor in a contest. He did so with the pure motive to save a soul from eternal destruction.

The word παράκλησις [(par-ak-lay-sis) **“exhortation”**] is a *“calling near, summons...persuasive discourse, stirring address”* (Thayer). The word also carries the idea of *“admonition, encouragement”* (IBID). All throughout this letter, Paul encouraged them, and commended them, to remain faithful to the Gospel with the freedom it gave them. In doing so, he used the powerful words of the Spirit to convince them that neither the Mosaic Law or idols could justify anyone. Paul pleaded with them to obey the Christ and warned them about the many deceivers around them.

“Exhortation carries the idea of rousing the slothful, and also of comforting the sorrowful” (McGarvey, quoted by Fields, p. 54).

How had Paul used these powerful GOD-given words?

Not with πλάνη (**“deceit”**). This word means *“a wandering out of the right way”* (Zodhiates). Thayer lets one know that *“one led astray from the right way, roams hither and thither.”* Weatherly stated that it means *“to cause to wander from the path”* (Weaver, p. 94). This fits well with the idea of one in the darkness of religious error who does not have the light he needs to keep from stumbling, so he stumbles from error to error, never truly finding the peace and justification for which the human spirit longs. All generations must be aware that deceivers have always been abundant in this world and be careful not to allow themselves to be deceived or tricked into doing that which is sin. He must also warn others of the dangers of deception as did Paul here.

“Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13).

How does one keep from being deceived?

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits”

whether they are of GOD: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1, emphasis added).

But one might ask, **How can one tell if a teacher is a false teacher (“prophet”)?** Search the Scriptures (John 5:39)!

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of GOD; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which GOD giveth: that GOD in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to Whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever” (1 Peter 4:11).

How did Paul use the powerful words the Spirit gave him?

Not with ἀκαθαρσία [(ak-ath-ar-see-ah) **“uncleanness”**] — *“the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living”* (Thayer). This word is used to describe *“filth in a natural or physical sense; moral uncleanness, lewdness, incontinence in general”* (Zodhiates, p. 108). Were the enemies of Paul and the truth arguing that Paul and his helpers had led sexually unclean lives while among them? If so, it explains why Paul was urging them to remember how they had lived among them. Rather than an unclean life filled with the desires of the flesh, they had always lived lives of purity. They lived lives with one goal in mind, to reach the eternal abode of purity and to take as many with them as possible on this incredible journey. It should also be considered that many of the heathen worship activities held out the “carrot,” so to speak, the practice of sexual immorality, as a part of their worship. This also might also involve the sensual and emotional excitement generated in many religious services today. Paul did not live or teach that way. **How did Paul live among them?**

Not in δόλος [(dol-os) **“guile”**] — *“to decoy; compare; trick (bait), i.e., (figuratively) wile”* (Strong). He

did not *“take advantage through craft and underhanded methods”* (Edwards, p. 53). The idea of this word is better gained by considering a duck hunter or fisherman. The duck hunter puts decoys out (which look like ducks) to make the ducks feel safe and draw near the danger which awaits them. The fisherman places what looks like a delectable meal for the fish on a hook, thus disguising the true intent of the hook until it is too late. It would thus appear that Paul was saying he did not disguise his words to cause them to believe they were getting true religion, when in fact they were receiving nothing more than what they had before becoming Christians — religions that were worth nothing. Note also the idea that he had not used enticing words to trick them into obeying the Gospel or to gain anything personally for himself. Unfortunately, too many will try to trick people into becoming Christians with fun and games, pretended acts of piety, emotions, and smooth words.

“Paul is emphasizing that he and Silas presented the pure word of God – no deceit, no impure doctrine, no guile in the presentation of the gospel” (Littrell, p. 13).

How had Paul and his companions come among them? Why was his preaching different from that of the philosophers and false teachers of his day?

1 Thess. 2:4 “But as we were allowed of GOD to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but GOD, which trieth our hearts.”

“but even as we have been approved of GOD to be intrusted with the Gospel, so we speak; not as pleasing men, but GOD who proveth our hearts.” (ASV)

“But as we were approved of GOD, to be entrusted with the Gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but GOD, who tries our hearts.” (TLO)

“But as we were allowed (*“approved”* – ASV, TLO) **of GOD”** Thayer defines the word δοκιμάζω [(dok-im-ad-zo) **“allowed”**] as *“to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as metals.”*

“The tense used suggests a ‘completed state,’ meaning ‘tested and proved,’ so that currently they stood approved by God to preach His message” (Edwards, p. 54).

By whom was Paul tested? By or **“of GOD.”** This would of course go back to Acts chapter nine, where one sees Saul/Paul’s being called by the Christ. **How did GOD test Saul for the work He had for him?** When looking at the above definitions, one notices the concept of scrutinizing. GOD had scrutinized Saul before this time, i.e., He had examined the kind of man he was and determined that he had an honest and loyal heart which would accept the evidence presented to him. He was the kind of man who was willing to give his life for the cause in which he believed. Further, GOD gave Saul a choice. He could have continued the course he was following, or he could give it up to be Christ’s servant. One should carefully follow Paul’s example in staying the course.

GOD saw that Saul was the kind of man who could **“be put in trust with the Gospel.”** The word **“trust”** comes from πιστεύω (pist-yoo-o) — *“to entrust, commit in trust to someone...to be entrusted with something, to have something committed to one’s trust or charge”* (Zodhiates, p. 1,161). The most important tool of a Christian was entrusted by an all-knowing GOD into the hands of mortal man. Paul’s fidelity would be tested over and over in his life, and to say the least, he proved himself worthy of the εὐαγγέλιον [(yoo-ang-ghel-ee-on) **“Gospel”**] with which he was entrusted. Today,

Christians have also been entrusted with the Gospel. Are they using it as GOD has directed without deception or error?

For what purpose did GOD give Paul the Gospel? **“even so we speak”** Paul was given the Gospel in order to λαλέω [(lal-eh-o) **“speak”**] — *“to talk, i.e., utter words.”* He was not trusted with GOD’s word in order to hoard it in his mind. Paul was to **herald** something of great value and of extreme importance to people — the Gospel.

How was Paul to declare this great news to man? **“not as pleasing men, but GOD”** Thayer helps with one’s understanding of the word ἀρέσκω [(ar-es-ko) **“pleasing”**] when he defines it as *“to strive to please...to accommodate one’s self to the opinions, desires and interests of others.”*

“For do I now persuade men, or GOD? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ” (Galatians 1:10).

As Paul pointed out in Galatians, if he **strove** to please man, to accommodate his words to their whims and desires, then he could not be the δούλος [(doo-los) **“servant”**] of Christ. One cannot serve both GOD and man — he **must** make a choice.

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve GOD and mammon” (Matthew 6:24).

Yet, there is a sense in which one can strive to please man (1 Cor. 9:22) — as long as he does not compromise GOD’s word. Like Paul, one should choose wisely as to whom he chooses as his master.

*“Yet in serving others in this way (1 Cor. 9:19–22 RK) he was not **pleasing men** in the same sense that he is using here, but simply using a common sense approach to win them to Christ”* (Weaver, p. 99).

Why should man please GOD instead of mankind?

Because it is **“GOD, which trieth our hearts.”** This is the same word seen above and which was translated as **“allowed.”** Here it carries the idea of One who has the right and authority to consider another acceptable — *“to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy”* (Thayer). Involved in this is a judgment day to come, which is inherently recognized in this text. Man is often heard telling another, *“You have no right to judge me.”* When one says such a thing, the one addressed is generally being told that *“Your opinion about the way I live and speak is none of your business.”* If it is just one’s opinion, then he is right in making such an assertion. Only GOD has the right to judge the rightness or wrongness of one’s actions or thoughts. If one, however, tells a person that something which he is doing is wrong with book, chapter and verse, then it is not the individual which has taken it upon himself to declare something as sin — GOD judged it to be sin and wrote it down for man through His chosen penmen hundreds of years ago.

Remember the words of Jesus in John 15:20?

“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also.”

There is a principle here which should be considered. If one today strives to help another correct his actions or words with a **“thus saith the Lord,”** and that person does not want or appreciate his concern, then the speaker will probably hear, *“You have no right to judge me.”*

“The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold; But Jehovah trieth the hearts” (Proverbs 17:3 — ASV)

GOD has declared what is right and what is wrong, and

that settles it, no matter what any human being may think.

So what did Paul, Silas and Timothy proclaim to the masses? Only what GOD wanted them to say! They did not proclaim the opinions and judgements of sinful man. They did not teach politics and man's opinions, and neither **will** any Gospel preacher! They proclaimed the word of GOD, clearly, boldly and without apology — and so must one today in order to be a faithful child of GOD. Their words and actions were not deceitful, unclean or in guile (v. 3).

“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” (2 Corinthians 4:13-14, emphasis added).

1 Thess. 2:5 “For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; GOD is witness:”

“For neither at any time were we found using words of flattery, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness, GOD is witness;” (ASV)

“For neither did we, at any time, use flattering words, or a pretext for covetousness; GOD is witness.” (TLO)

This verse could be viewed as a defense against a false accusation which had been made against Paul and his companions. However, it may be that he was instead showing a comparison between himself and the false teachers and philosophers of his time.

The words οὔτε [(oo-the) **“neither”**] and ποτέ (**“at any time”**) appear to put a double emphasis on the meaning. οὔτε means *“not too, i.e., neither or nor, by*

analogy not even” (Strong). ποτέ is defined as an “indefinite adverb, at some time, ever” (Strong). The apostle was being guided to say that this is something which was at no time done by him. **By whom is Paul being guided? By the One Who is his witness! Paul, what was it that you have never been guilty of doing?**

In verses five and six, Paul will declare three things which the Thessalonians and GOD can testify to with regard to his character. First, he did not use a certain classification of words — κολακεία [(kol-ak-i-ah) “flattering”] words. Spicq notes that there are two ways in which the word κολακεία is used: (1) One who is compliant, i.e., one who compliments someone or something out of genuine happiness. (2) One who is pejorative, i.e., “associated with the idea of deceit or lying” (Vol. 2, p. 319). He then went on to give an example of how it was used in the third century — “I ask you, the perfect asks you, do not try to fool me” (IBID). The slaves of Demos were said to “flatter, cajoles, fawns upon him, tricks him” [their master (Aristophanes, quoted by Spicq, Vol. 2, p. 320)]. Aristotle used this word and said, “There are two kinds of people who are always trying to please. The first, who wants only to make people happy, is the compliant person. The second, whose goal is to make people happy in order to profit in money or in goods that can be bought with money, is the flatterer” (quoted by Spicq, Vol. 2. p. 320). Paul did not use the word to proclaim praise as a way to fool them, seduce them, into giving him something of value. Further, he had not seduced them for anything.

Second, he had not used “a cloke of covetousness” with them. Thayer states that πρόφασις [(prof-as-is) “cloke”] means “a pretext (alleged reason, pretended cause).” It is a motive which

is “*set forth deceitfully*” (Spicq, Vol. 3, p. 204) as to why something is said or done. A good example of how it is used in the New Testament is found in Acts 27:30.

“And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour (πρόφασις) as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship.”

They were trying to deceive the people on board the ship into believing that they were merely dropping anchors in order save the ship. What they were really attempting to do was escape the doomed ship “before it was too late.” Spicq went on to say that the word has the “*nuance of lying and pretense: one acts on a hidden motive under the cover of one that is perceptible or respectable*” (IBID, p. 205). Jesus used this word to describe the scribes who made long prayers as a pretended mark of superior spirituality — hypocrites. Paul was saying he had not come to them with a mask to hide his real purpose — greed of either fortune or praise. He only came to them to provide that which led to their eternal salvation if they accepted it. He was not taking — he was giving.

For what was Paul saying he had no pretentious motive? πλεονεξία [(pleh-on-ex-ee-ah) “**covetousness**”] — “*greedy desire to have more, covetousness, avarice*” (Thayer). Spicq states that its etymological background means to “*have more, want more...Not only is πλεονεξία insatiable and excessive, it is also aggressive and does not hesitate to wrong a neighbor or gain his property through extortion*” (p. 117). Paul was reminding them that he had never taken anything in a wrong or greedy way from them.

One more phrase before moving to verse three, the third indicator of Paul’s pure character. He called GOD as his witness to what he was telling the Thessalonians

— **“GOD is witness.”** One of the definitions of the word **“witness”** found in Webster’s 1828 dictionary is *“One who knows or sees any thing; one personally present; as, he was witness; he was an eye witness.”* When one considers Webster’s definition here, he sees a picture of GOD’s watching what His people are doing and saying, **as well as** looking at the motives for what they say and do. Christians should carefully consider this and then ask themselves *What would GOD’s witness proclaim about themselves? Would GOD verify what is said and done, i.e., give His stamp of approval on those who proclaim to be His servants? Would He look into one’s heart and find pure motives for his words and actions? Or, would He proclaim as He did to those who thought they served GOD in Matthew 7:21-23 — **“I never knew you, depart from Me.”*** Another way of putting it is, *Are we pretending to be faithful servants of GOD? Remember, GOD is watching!*

Another aspect of the word **“witness”** [μάρτυς (martoos)] is shown by Strong — *“a witness (literally [judicially] or figuratively [generally]); by analogy a ‘martyr;’ – martyr, record, witness.”* Is it possible that this is another reference to the deity of Jesus? Did not this Martyr stand and watch what was done to His faithful servant Stephen? GOD was the active agent when Paul, or any of the other apostles, testified, through the agency of the miracles He performed through them. GOD is watching and active today through His providence in caring for His servants. He cares, watches and provides.

“The biblical martyr is not a mere eyewitness, simply present at a happening; he is active, called upon to tell what he has seen and heard, to proclaim what he knows” (Spicq, Vol. 2, p. 448). It should also be noted that this was not the only time

that Paul called upon GOD to be his witness. **“For GOD is my witness”** (Romans 1:9).

Paul called upon two witnesses to verify his character — the Thessalonians and the GODHEAD.

“This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established” (2 Corinthians 13:1).

“Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses” (1 Timothy 5:19).

“He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses” (Hebrews 10:28).

It is also noted that if one today calls upon GODHEAD to be his witness — he had better be sure he has said or done what he said he did or said, with the right motive.

1 Thess. 2:6 “Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.”

“nor seeking glory of men, neither from you nor from others, when we might have claimed authority as apostles of Christ.” (ASV)

“Neither sought we honor from men; neither from you, nor from others. We might have acted with authority, as Apostles of Christ;” (TLO)

The third point showing Paul’s sterling character was **“Nor of men sought we glory.”** Part of the definition of ζητέω [(dzay-the-o) **“sought”**] is *“to seek, i.e., require, demand...to crave, demand something from someone”* (Thayer). Zodhiates states that it is *“to seek after, look for, strive to find”* (p. 700). Next in the above phrase is the word δόξα [(doxa) **“glory”**], which means

“opinion, estimate, whether good or bad concerning someone...in the NT always a good opinion concerning one, resulting in praise, honour, and glory” (Thayer). Spicq states that δόξα comes from the word *“dokeo — think, admit, claim. It means a subjective appraisal, an internal judgment, made by an individual or an assembly...in Koine, especially in the inscriptions and the papyri, meaning ‘esteem, honor’”* (p. 362). *“For Josephus, doxa is opinion, conception, judgment, but especially reputation, renown”* (IBID, p. 367). When all of this is digested, it tells one that Paul was not seeking any special recognition from them. In fact, he told Christians not to **seek** this kind of praise from men.

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as GOD hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Romans 12:3).

Paul understood that he was to be involved in good works. **Why?** So that men would see his good works **and then “glorify your Father which is in Heaven”** (Matthew 6:16). Paul believed in letting **the only One** whose praise will mean anything in eternity praise him if He deemed him worthy of such. Paul did not seek honor and praise from men — **“neither of you, nor yet of others.”** Paul and his companions had never sought the praise of men, and neither should anyone today. The praise of men, at best, swiftly flees away — but GOD’s praise is truly worth seeking. As one looks at the definitions for **“glory”** above, and the context in which it is found, he will note that there are two aspects of this glory men might pursue: (1) verbal honor and praise, and (2) financial support.

“when we might have been burdensome” The word δύναμαι [(doo-nam-ahee) **“might”**] refers to being

“able to do something” (Thayer). Zodhiates states that it means *“to be able, have power”* to do something (p. 485). The word βάρος [(doo-nam-ahee) **“burdensome”**] means *“heaviness, weight, burden, trouble”* (Thayer). This word is sometimes used to describe sin and trouble as being burdensome. Paul used it here to indicate the burden of taking care of him. As teachers of GOD’s word, Paul and his fellow teachers had the right to ask for financial help. The implication also exists that the brethren had an obligation to provide them with physical assistance. **Why might one assume that Paul and his company could or should be burdensome?**

“as the apostles of Christ” It should be remembered that the word ἀπόστολος [(ap-os-tol-os) **“apostles”**] simply means *“a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders”* (Thayer). Primarily, the word is used in the Scriptures to designate the twelve whom Jesus chose to be His ambassadors. But it is also used of a select few in the Scriptures in a secondary manner (Barnabas, Timothy, Silas, James). It is used in both the primary and secondary sense in this passage, as indicated by the use of the plural — **“apostles”** (consider verse one of this letter). An apostle had been given orders which necessitated authority being given to accomplish the assigned task. In 1st Corinthians chapter nine, the apostle Paul made the case that the apostles could forbear working in order to spread the Gospel. He also made the case that they could take others with them to do the work, which implies their care and sustenance. **Do not the Scriptures teach that, if one will not work, neither let him eat (2 Thess. 3:10)?** Jesus answered this question in Matthew 10:10 when He told them not to take **“scrip for your journey,**

neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat (food – RK).”

The greatest work anyone can be involved in is the proclamation of the Gospel to a sinful world. GOD had given them the responsibility to proclaim the Gospel as the means of guiding man to salvation. It should be considered that though one is not an apostle today, all Christians have the responsibility to give that pure Gospel to their fellow men. **So how did Paul and his companions behave among them?**

1 Thess. 2:7 “But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:”

“But we were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children.” (ASV)

“but we were gentle among you, as a nurse cherishes her children-” (TLO)

“But we were gentle among you” Zodhiates states that ἡπιος [(ay-pee-os) **“gentle”**] means *“placid, gentle, mild, easy, compliant”* (p. 712). Spicq states that ἡπιος *“refers to a style of teaching and of apostolic authority, without sharpness or bitterness arising from overzealousness: St. Paul shows a motherly kindness...nor will he be intolerant in his relations with others: he will be ‘kind toward all,’ even adversaries and opponents”* (Vol. 2, p. 174). The original word here is not found in the LXX and only twice in the New Testament (here and in 2nd Timothy 2:24). Elders, teachers of the Gospel, must be congenial and mild toward all where it is possible. Yet, this does not negate the times when they must firmly take a stand against error or those who are engaged in such. **What kind of kindness did Paul exhibit toward them?**

“even as a nurse cherisheth her children” Strong states that the word θάλπω [(thal-po) **“cherisheth”**] is *“(to warm); to brood, i.e., (figuratively) to foster: cherish”*. The word τέκνον [(tek-non) **“children”**] refers to a child or children, which is used in both the singular or plural in the Scriptures. In this case, it is one who is a disciple, thus a child of his teacher without a physical relationship. Paul was stating that he had cared for the brethren at Thessalonica as if he had been a τροφός (*“a nourisher”*), like a nurse with a child. Ideally, a father and mother do not promote their own well being before that of their children. Paul is reminding them that he had not been stern with them, but had promoted their well being just as he had the well being, of all with whom he came in contact. Littrell offered the following translation of this verse, which gives the sense very well.

“But we were gentle among you as a nurse cares for her own children” (p. 16).

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if GOD peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil, who are taken captive by him at his will” (2 Timothy 2:24).

1 Thess. 2:8 “So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of GOD only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.”

“even so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were well pleased to impart unto you, not the Gospel of GOD only, but also our own souls, because ye were become very dear to us.”
(ASV)

“so, having a strong affection for you, we were well pleased to have imparted to you, not only the Gospel of GOD, but our own souls, also; because you were become dear to us.” (TLO)

Thayer states that *ἠμείρομαι* [(him-i-rom-ahee) **“affectionately desirous”**] means *“to desire, long for, esp. the longing of love.”* There can be no doubt that a strong bond had developed between Paul and the Thessalonian brethren. No doubt this bond grew because of the things that they had shared together, that is the abiding faith in Christ and the physical abuse they had received because of such. This fits well with the idea previously expressed by Paul of a nurse who cherishes her children. Consider a new mother who is separated from her newborn for a few hours. She longs to be back with that child as quickly as possible. Paul longed to be back, to be in their physical presence, as soon as possible.

“we were willing to have imparted unto you” This writer believes, based on the Greek here, that this phrase could have been better translated. Strong states that the word *μεταδίδωμι* [(met-ad-id-o-mee) **“imparted”**] means *“to give over, i.e., share.”* Zodhiates said the word means *“to share with someone, to impart, communicate.”* Further, Thayer stated the word *εὐδοκέω* [(yoo-dok-eh-o) **“willing”**] means *“to be well pleased with, take pleasure in, to be favorably inclined towards one.”* The idea then is that Paul took pleasure in sharing something with the Thessalonians because of the great affection that had developed between them. **But what did he take great pleasure in sharing?**

“not the Gospel of GOD only, but also our own souls” Thayer states that *ψυχή* [(psoo-khay) **“souls”**]

means *“the soul, the seat of the feelings, desires, affections, aversions (our heart, soul, etc.)”* To give the soul of one to another implies giving one’s life for his welfare. Paul and his companions (Silas and Timothy) were pleased to share two of the greatest things in life with them: (1) **“the Gospel of GOD”** and (2) their **“own souls.”** Why?

“because ye were dear unto us” Thayer stated that the word ἀγαπητός [(ag-ap-ay-tos) **“dear”**] means *“beloved, esteemed, dear, favorite, worthy of love.”* They were beloved because of the way they had received the Gospel, because of the way they had remained steadfast in the face of persecutions, because of the way they had cared for him and his companions, but primarily because of the love they manifested toward GOD. Thus, they were worthy of the love bestowed upon them by Paul and his companions. Paul was willing to make great sacrifices for these brethren, as seen in the next verse. In this, he was much like the Lord Whom he strove to imitate.

“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many”
(Matthew 20:28).

Like his Lord, Paul was willing to give everything for these brethren’s spiritual well being. One has to ask himself here if he is willing to sacrifice everything for the spiritual well being of those around him — wealth, power, position, family, health, yea, even one’s life. Paul’s willingness to sacrifice everything for those he desired to save is seen in Romans 9:3.

“I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.”

To be **“accursed from Christ”** meant to be eternally separated from Christ, if only all Israelites could be saved.

“Paul’s involvement here was not just academic; it was emotional as well” (Edwards, p. 56).

Note also the same idea in giving one his all as expressed in 2nd Corinthians 12:15.

“And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.”

1 Thess. 2:9 “For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the Gospel of GOD.”

“For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached unto you the Gospel of GOD.” (ASV)

“For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; that laboring night and day; that we might not be chargeable to any of you, we preached to you the Gospel of GOD.” (TLO)

Paul now called upon the Thessalonians *“to be mindful of, to remember, to call to mind”* [μνημονεύω (may-mon-yoo-o) (Thayer)] something. *What did he want them to call back into their memories?* First, their κόπος [(kop-os) **“labour”**] — *“intense labor united with trouble and toil”* (Thayer). Zodhiates states that the word is *“used to denote not so much the actual exertion which a man makes, but the weariness which he experiences from that exertion”* (p. 877). Second, their μόχθος [(mokh-thos) **“travail”**] — *“a hard and difficult labour, toil, travail, hardship, distress”* (Thayer). Paul wanted them to bring back to their memories the intense wearisomeness and hardships that he, and his fellow helpers expended for the Thessalonians’ benefit, i.e., their salvation. *What was it about their teaching which required such hard and difficult effort?*

The word **“brethren”** is quite interesting. This word

can be used in a number of ways. For instance, it may indicate a paternal relationship, a national relationship, a fraternal relationship, or (as in this case) a spiritual relationship. By using this term, Paul was placing himself in a very personal relationship with them. Further, he placed himself, Silas and Timothy in a second personal relationship, i.e., physical laborers (with his brethren, cf. Acts 18:3).

“labouring night and day” Thayer shows that the word ἐργάζομαι [(er-gad-zom-ahee) **“labouring”**] means *“to work for, earn by working, to acquire.”* This is compared to the first word **“labour,”** which speaks of the weariness which comes from **“labouring.”** Paul and his companions, considering the context, were labouring physically to acquire the funds they needed to sustain themselves. Further, they not only labored to provide what they physically needed, but they also were laboring in the Lord’s vineyard, which was **“white unto harvest”** (John 4:35). They were involved in both of these in order to provide the Thessalonians with the blessings of the Gospel — **“night and day.”** **Why labor night and day?** After all, the laborer is worthy of his hire (Luke 10:7). Paul and his company labored night and day to provide for their own physical needs and in providing the spiritual food the Thessalonians needed.

Many in society today look down on *“an honest day’s work for an honest day’s pay,”* desiring handouts when they could work. They seem to think that they are owed something for simply existing. But the Bible teaches that work is honorable, necessary, and commanded.

“For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord

Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread” (2 Thessalonians 3:11-12).

Note that there were those who did not work at all and were busybodies in other men’s affairs. **What instruction did the Holy Spirit give to those who did not work?** Mind their own business and work in order to be able to eat. In that same context, the Spirit said that if a person will not work — do not feed him — **“neither should he eat”** (2 Thess. 2:10). If one is working to support himself, he does not have time to be a busybody in the affairs of others. (A working man does not have time to go from place to place protesting this or that, or dream about ways to make a “woke” society.) **Why did Paul work?**

“because we would not be chargeable unto any of you” Paul and his companions worked night and day so that they would not be ἐπιβαρέω [(ep-ee-bar-eh-o) **“chargeable”**] or **“be heavy upon”** (Strong) any of the Thessalonians. Thayer adds that to be **“chargeable”** is **“to be burdensome.”** If indeed someone had charged the apostle of only trying to get financial gain for himself, their memories of how he had worked night and day would have caused them recognize those charges as the lies that they were. They had not **worked to gain** anything from the Thessalonians — they had **worked to give** them something.

“we preached unto you the Gospel of GOD” This is another clear statement by Paul that they had not taught a doctrine they made up. They had gotten their good news (Gospel) from GOD.

1 Thess. 2:10 “Ye are witnesses, and GOD also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:”

“Ye are witnesses, and GOD also, how holily and righteously and unblameably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe:” (ASV)

“You were witnesses, and GOD, also, in what a holy, and just, and blameless manner, we acted toward you that believe.” (TLO)

This verse begins by reminding them that they were μάρτυς [(mar-toos) **“witnesses”**] along with GOD. Zodhiates states that this word refers to *“one who has information or knowledge of something, and hence can give information, bring to light, or confirm something”* (p. 947). Paul used this word in verse five to say that GOD was his witness. In the present verse, he used it, not only to call GOD as his witness, but the Thessalonian brethren as well.

“They were the witnesses of his outward conduct, and God of the motives which actuated him in the service that he rendered” (Lipscomb, p. 28).

But of what was he calling them to be witnesses?

Of how he and his companions had γίνομαι [(ghin-om-ah-ee) **“behaved ourselves”**] when they were among them. This word is used in a variety of ways in the Scriptures, but its use here is *“implying a result, event to take place or come to pass, occur, be done”* (Zodhiates, p. 368). It might be well to point out again the real possibility that Paul had been charged by the enemies of truth of having ulterior motives when he came among them (winning converts to himself or financial gain). **So how had Paul and his fellow preachers acted while among them?**

ὁσίως [(hos-ee-occe) **“holily”**], δίκαιως [(dik-ah-yocce) **“justly”**) and ἀμέμπτως [(am-emp-toce) **“unblameably”**] Each of these words should be examined. Let one begin with ὁσίως — *“piously”*

(Strong & Thayer). Zodhiates adds the word *“sacredly...and has the connotation of piety, his actions being pure and morally clean”* (p. 1064).

The second word in this list is δικαίως. Zodhiates declares that this word means *“justly, conformable to justice; honestly, without injuring anyone; deservedly; as is fit, proper, right”* (p. 467).

The third word under consideration is ἀμέμπτως. Thayer defines this word as *“blameless, so that there is no cause for censure.”*

Paul, Silas and Timothy were devoted servants of GOD, which caused them to act piously, with honesty, according to GOD’s law which caused no harm to anyone. Thus, there was no room for anyone to censure their actions. When considering how they had lived among the Thessalonians, it is clear that they left them an example to follow, one which all Christians have a responsibility to copy. This was not a show to them. This was not a frivolous lifestyle. This was their way of life, and so it must be among Christ’s followers. GOD has always wanted His people to be holy.

“For I am the LORD your GOD: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your GOD: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy” (Leviticus 11:44-45).

“Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16).

Where did they behave themselves holily, justly and unblameably? **“among you that believe”** A believer in this context is obviously one who has heard the Gospel, believed it and obeyed it. It should also be emphasized that this is the way they behaved themselves, as should

a Christian today, **among all men**. Paul was careful to guard his influence for good among all men. He understood that he would have an influence on others, whether for good or bad. Are “we” as conscious as he was about guarding our influence for good?

“Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of GOD, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Phil. 2:14-15, emphasis added).

1 Thess. 2:11 **“As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,”**

“as ye know how we dealt with each one of you, as a father with his own children, exhorting you, and encouraging you, and testifying,” (ASV)

“As, also, you know, how we addressed every one of you as a father his own children, exhorting and comforting you;” (TLO)

In verse seven, Paul used the example of a nurse to emphasize the tender care that he had used with the Thessalonians. In this passage, he speaks of caring for them like a father would his own children. He gives three ways in which he did this.

Paul says [εἶδω (i-do)] **“ye know,”** meaning to *“get knowledge of, understand, perceive”* (Thayer). The knowledge they had was not hearsay knowledge. It was a definite, individual, personal knowledge. One should further consider the phrase **“every one of you,”** which speaks to their individually teaching of each one. **Of what did this knowledge consist?**

Thayer states that παρακαλέω [(par-ak-al-eh-o)] **“we exhorted”**] means *“to call to one’s side...to address, speak to, (call to, call upon), which may be done in the*

way of exhortation, entreaty, comfort, instruction, etc.” Zodhiates states that παρακαλέω means *“to aid, help, comfort, encourage”* (p. 1105). There can be little doubt that Paul used all of these concepts in helping these beloved brethren.

The word παραμυθέομαι (par-am-oo-theh-om-ahee) **“comforted”**] means *“to speak kindly, soothingly, to comfort or pacify”* (Zodhiates, p. 1110). When one considers the situation as it existed when Paul came to them, and the events which followed, one can see that there were probably many times when the brethren needed soothing, comforting words. It would not be easy for them to leave their old religions and the loss of friendships which probably occurred. Further, there were those who would try to persuade them to come back to the old ways. In addition to these things, there were the normal events in life which gave need for comforting words — sorrows, pain, and fear, to name a few.

The final word in this triad is παρτυρέω [(mar-too-reh-o) **“charged”**]. *“Emphatically, to testify strongly, bear honorable testimony”* (Zodhiates, p. 946). Like his Master, Paul spoke with authority and power without hesitation, urging them to obey and be faithful to the Gospel.

“And they were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes...And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth He even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him” (Mark 1:22, 27).

Note the similarity of what Paul told Timothy in 2nd Timothy 2:1-2.

“I charge thee therefore before GOD, and the Lord Jesus

Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season (when they like and when they do not like it – RK); **reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.**”

Why did Paul, Silas and Timothy speak instruction kindly and soothingly to them, with strong and powerful testimony? Because of their love for their **“children” begotten through the Gospel.**

“They had admonished them so that they would act freely, encouraged them, so that they would act gladly, and testified, so that they would act reverently” (Bengel, quoted by Hendriksen, p. 68).

They would have striven with all of their might to encourage them not to be deceived, not to be swindled out of their eternal reward by false teachers (deceivers), because of their paternal love for them.

1 Thess. 2:12 “That ye would walk worthy of GOD, Who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory.”

“to the end that ye should walk worthily of GOD, Who calleth you into His own kingdom and glory.” (ASV)

“and testifying that you should walk worthy of GOD, Who has called you to His kingdom of glory.” (TLO)

Defining the word περιπατέω [(per-ee-pat-eh-o) **“would walk”**], Strong says it means *“to tread all around, i.e., walk at large (especially as proof of ability).”* Zodhiates shows it is *“to live or pass one’s life, always with an adjunct of manner or circumstances.”* Therefore, the Spirit indicates that one is to walk in such a way as to prove something. In this case, it is to prove one’s worthiness of GOD’s call and the bestowal of something because of being found **“worthy”** by GOD. Further, it states that one can be faithful, living his life

according to GOD's word. Thayer said that ἀξίως [(ax-ee-ooce) **“worthy”**] shows *“suitably, worthily, in a manner worthy of.”* To this definition, Strong would add the idea of *“appropriately.”* To walk **“worthy”** is to live a holy life, a life fully dedicated to GOD, appropriate to His standard.

In considering the word **“worthy,”** it is to be understood that no man other than Jesus has ever been totally worthy of anything GOD offers. *Why is this true?* Because **“all have sinned, and come short of the glory of GOD...For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of GOD is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”** (Romans 3:23; 6:23, emphasis added). Since all have come short of the glory of GOD, and since one deserves death the very first time he sins, then there is nothing that one can do to earn a place in GOD's kingdom. Yet, GOD can declare one *“suitable”* for His kingdom, even though he has not lived a **sinless** life. *How is this possible?* By lovingly striving with all of one's might to obey all of the commands of GOD. It is then that GOD can bestow the grace one must have in order to receive **the gift** of eternal salvation. Eternal salvation is a gift given by GOD which cannot be earned, no matter how much one may accomplish in promoting His kingdom.

While one lives on this earth, he can be included in the earthly phase of GOD's kingdom, i.e., the church. The placing of one into GOD's earthly kingdom/church is accomplished by the Lord — **“the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved”** [*“praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved”*] (ASV – emphasis added) (Acts 2:47)]. The context of Acts 2:47 should be carefully considered, concerning how

one is saved and added to the Lord's church. Those who were being saved did not simply declare they wanted to be saved, nor did they say the so-called "sinner's prayer," i.e., pray themselves through, or do any of the many things man's fertile imagination conjures up to claim salvation. Note that when they were convicted by the preaching of the apostles on that occasion, they realized there was something they **must do** in order to be delivered **"from the power of darkness"** and translated **"into the kingdom of His dear Son"** (Colossians 1:13). **So what did they do once this realization came upon them?**

"Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do" (Acts 2:37, emphasis added).

What did Peter and the rest of the apostles tell them to do? It was not the *"sinner's prayer,"* or *"just believe,"* because belief alone did not save the demons.

"Thou believest that there is one GOD; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19)

Belief is necessary, but belief alone has never saved anyone. No, Peter and the apostles told them to **"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"** (Acts 2:38). **No single action has ever saved anyone — NOT EVEN IMMERSION!** Further, the act of baptism is not the completion of multiple actions in order to reach the shores of Heaven. There is more to be done after immersion in order to enter those shores. The Bible does not say *"once saved always saved,"* as is falsely espoused by so many. The Bible does say, **"be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown"**

of life” (Revelation 2:10, emphasis added).

What is involved in being faithful unto death? Faithfulness is doing what GOD tells one to do, i.e., obeying His commands not just once — but on a continuing basis. Sometimes people seem to have the idea that simply saying they love the Lord (GOD) is being faithful. But that is not the case, because simply saying one loves the Lord does not make him faithful or eligible to be eternally saved. Listen to what GOD says about loving Him.

“Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD, and keep His charge, and His statutes, and His judgments, and His commandments, alway” (Deuteronomy 11:1, emphasis added).

“If ye love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

Jesus clearly stated that the test of whether or not one loves Him is whether or not that one keeps His commandments.

“For this is the love of GOD, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3).

When one tells his fellow man to do anything other than what GOD has said in order for him to be saved — **that person does not love GOD!**

“Who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory” It should be noted that the word for **“called”** is in the present tense. That reveals that GOD is continually calling man to **“His kingdom and glory.”** How had/does GOD call one? Does He call some but not others? If so, that would make GOD a respecter of persons. But the Bible clearly states **“that GOD is no respecter of persons”** (Acts 10:34). The only conclusion to be arrived at with this information is that GOD calls everyone to obey Him; but most refuse the

call. But how? Does He call one with a little still voice in the night, or another by some vision, or another by some earth shattering event in his life? How does the Bible say that He calls one?

“But we are bound to give thanks alway to GOD for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because GOD hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, emphasis added).

Note several things in the above passage: (1) Thanks was being given for brethren. (2) Thanks was given to GOD for what these brethren were. (3) They were beloved by the Lord for what they had done. (4) GOD had chosen them from the beginning (of time) for salvation. **How were they chosen to salvation?** (5) **“through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth”** (emphasis added). Pilate famously asked, **“What is truth?”** **What means were used to sanctify them?** Jesus said, speaking of His Father, **“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth”** (John 17:17). (6) They learned the truth through the good news (Gospel) which is the New Testament. Therefore, GOD called them into His kingdom by the Gospel given by the Spirit of GOD to the apostles. Note also that Paul claimed that those to whom he wrote were in the kingdom of GOD while they lived on this earth — **“Who (GOD, RK) hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son”** (Colossians 1:13).

But wait — that is not all. One who is called by the Gospel into obedience experiences the glorious working of GOD’s plan of salvation now, and even more so, if he remains faithful to GOD in this life — eternal glory.

1 Thess. 2:13 “For this cause also thank we GOD without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of GOD which ye heard of us, ye received *it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of GOD, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*”

“And for this cause we also thank GOD without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of GOD, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of GOD, which also worketh in you that believe.” (ASV)

“On this account, also, we give thanks to GOD, without ceasing, that when you received from us this message of GOD, you embraced not the word of men; but, as it is in truth, the word of GOD, which, indeed, works effectually in you who believe.” (TLO)

“For this cause also thank we GOD without ceasing” The word **“cause”** comes from the word δία (dee-ah), which is *“a primary preposition denoting the channel of an act”* (Strong, emphasis added). Thayer states it is *“the ground or reason by which something is or is not done...because of, for this reason.”* The word καί [(kahee) **“also”**] can be translated as; *“and, also, even, indeed, but,”* according to Thayer. The translation of εὐχαριστέω [(yoo-khar-is-teh-o) **“thank”**] is *“to be grateful, i.e., (actually) to express gratitude (towards)”* (Strong). Strong went on to give the example of saying grace at a meal. The idea of being grateful is an important aspect of a Christian’s life, especially the concept of thanking GOD for the blessings He bestows. In essence, one should be grateful for anything which is good and honorable around him, even the seemingly little things like salt, clothing, and the insects or other creatures which GOD

has created and have benefits for him which he might not understand. Naturally, the most important thing to be thankful for is the love GOD has shown one by sending His Son to make the sacrifice for his sins which he himself could not offer. In this author's estimation, the second thing for which one should be grateful is found in this text — the gift of His word, so that one can order his life in an acceptable way to GOD.

How often should gratitude be shown to GOD for His blessings? Paul said without ἀδιαλείπτως [(ad-ee-al-ipe-toce) **“ceasing”**]. Strong states that this word means *“uninterruptedly, i.e., without omission (on an appropriate occasion).”* Another aspect of this word is the idea expressed by Zodhiates with one word – *“permanent”* (p. 82). When considering these two definitions, it does not mean that Paul's prayers for them excluded all others. Thus, Zodhiates' definition comes into play, which indicates the idea that this particular subject was a permanent part of Paul's “prayer list.” **What was it that was on Paul's permanent prayer list?**

His thankfulness for their acceptance of GOD's word. **“because, when ye received the word of GOD which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men”** The word παραλαμβάνω [(par-al-am-bano) **“received”**] carries the idea of *“to join to one's self”* (Thayer). Paul was thus thankful that the Thessalonians had taken GOD's word and made it a part of themselves, i.e., the **“engrafted word”** (James 1:21). Further, he expressed his gratitude that they did not accept it as the mere teaching of a human being. They heard the word from the mouth of a man, but he was speaking the words that GOD gave him to speak. As Weaver rightly observed, *“The final test regarding*

any teaching or practice must be, is it 'from heaven or of men' (Matt. 21:23-27)" (p. 157).

"but as it is in truth, the word of GOD" Thayer tells one that ἀληθῶς [(al-ay-thoce) **"in truth"**] means *"truly, of a truth, in reality, most certainly."* Paul shows that these spoken words were most certainly the words of the Almighty GOD. This leads to the fact that the Scriptures (the word of GOD) are verbally inspired, as Paul also expressed it in 2nd Timothy 3:16-17.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

In the verse quoted above, the word θεόπνευστος (**"inspiration of GOD"**) would be better translated as *"divinely breathed"* (Strong), i.e., from the very mouth of GOD. Note also from that text the word ἐξαπτίζω [(en-erg-eh-o) **"furnished"**] — *"to finish out (time); figuratively to equip fully (a teacher): accomplish, thoroughly furnish"* (Strong). There are two thoughts to consider with this word. First is the concept of time. GOD's completed word was given at a specific time, the "end time" in which all who have lived, do live, or will live, in the Christian age.

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3, emphasis added).

Second, it fully furnishes a Christian with every thing he needs to accomplish "good works," i.e., the works which GOD has prescribed and which are not optional (2 Tim. 3:16-17). **How will this effective, complete, word of GOD reveal itself?**

"which effectually worketh also in you that

believe” GOD’s word activates itself in the life of a Christian. The word ἐνεργέω (“**effectually worketh**”) means “*to be active, efficient*” (Strong). Thayer says it is “*to be operative, be at work, put forth power...to display one’s activity, show one’s self operative.*” What Paul was showing is that these Thessalonian Christians were actively engaged in following GOD’s word. As such, their works could readily be seen by all. Further, that work was “*effective*” in accomplishing its desired goal — maintaining and growing their faith, as well as bringing others to the Christ. This would also have included their benevolent activities. This was an active congregation. Another thought from the definitions above is that GOD’s word has power. If it has power, then **IT IS NOT** a “dead letter,” as some have foolishly advocated over the years.

“For the word of GOD is quick (“living” – ASV, TLO), and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

Paul was convinced that what he had was **the word of GOD**, and so were these brethren. He was convinced that it was powerful and that it could effectively be used to pierce the heart, even the most hardened heart. The question needed today by all professing Christianity is **Are we as positive as were they?** Paul was not afraid to assert in the very strongest of language this belief, and neither should one today be ashamed to assert such.

“I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:11-12).

“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the

power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (1 Corinthians 2:13).

David Lipscomb gave a list of *“how the word works in Christians”* (Coffman, p. 30).

“By the word the new birth is effected (1 Peter 1:23).

By it the soul is saved (James 1:21).

By it we are sanctified (John 17:17; 1 Tim. 4:5).

It prevails mightily (Acts 19:20).

Like the seed (Mark 4:26-27), it has power in itself to produce.

It is living and active (Heb. 4:12).

It is like fire against that which is false (Jer. 23:29).

It is like a hammer against that which is strong (Jer. 23:29).

It is light in darkness (Psalm 119:105).

It is the sole weapon in Christian warfare (Eph. 6:17).”

1 Thess. 2:14 “For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of GOD which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:”

“For ye, brethren, became imitators of the churches of GOD which are in Judaea in Christ Jesus: for ye also suffered the same things of your own countrymen, even as they did of the Jews;” (ASV)

“For you, brethren, became imitators of the congregations of GOD which are in Judea, in Christ Jesus; because you also have suffered like things from your own countrymen, even as they have from the Jews,” (TLO)

There are several definitions regarding the word γίνομαι [(ghin-om-ahee) **“became”**] which are quite similar. For this study, Thayer’s definition will be used

— *“to become, be made.”* Through their obedience, they were indeed **made** brethren and *“imitators”* [μιμητής (mim-ay-tace) (Thayer, Strong)— **“followers”**] of other congregations which belonged to GOD.

The word ἐκκλησία [(ek-klay-see-ah) **“churches”**] was used by the Greeks to speak of an assembly of free citizens which had been called out of their homes to some public place. Further, they were not simply called out for some social event, but rather to deliberate on some important matter affecting the whole. It should also be recognized that this same term can be used in a very different way — to signify a mob. It is used in this way in Acts 19:32 by the word **“assembly.”** Indeed, Christians are free citizens of the kingdom of GOD who have been called out of the world to an assembly of believers to worship and deliberate on His word.

“churches of GOD which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus” Observe that it is impossible to be **“of GOD”** without being **“in Christ.”**

Paul referenced the fact that they had πάσχω πάθω πένθω (**“suffered”**) because of their obedient faith to Christ. πάσχω πάθω πένθω (pas-kho path-o pen-tho) means *“to experience a sensation or impression (usually painful)”* (Strong). Zodhiates offers the following definition: *“to suffer, to be affected by something from without, to be acted upon, to undergo an experience.”* Paul then went on to say that they had suffered *“in the same way”* – ταῦτά [(tow-tah) **“like things”**] as their fellow believers in Judaea. The word συμφυλέτης [(soom-foo-let-ace0 **“countrymen”**)] is *“a co-tribesman, i.e., of the same country.”* Thayer clarifies the idea even more by adding — *“one who is of the same people.”* **How had the called out in Judaea**

been treated by their co-tribesmen? They had been ridiculed, beaten, cast into prison, treated shamefully, and even murdered, because they followed the Law of Christ instead of the Law of Moses. In turning their backs on the accepted religion of their nation, they were scorned and hated. The Thessalonians had been experiencing the same sensations from their fellow countrymen, because they had abandoned established religions with their false gods. Consider what Jesus said about those who suffered for His sake, i.e., for being His disciples.

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matthew 5:11-12).

In Thessalonica, who stirred up the persecution that Paul, Silas and the brethren endured, so that the brethren escorted them out of the city by night? It was those envious Jews who stirred up the whole city against them (Acts 17:5). In the present text, Paul showed that the Jews stirred them up, but it was the Thessalonians’ fellow countrymen who did the prosecuting. Lipscomb pointed out that *“it was always the Jewish policy to persecute by means of others”* (p. 32). Then when questioned about their role in such, they could offer “plausible denial.” This was the same tactic the Jews used to murder Jesus. They stirred up Pilate to nail Jesus to the cross, to do their dirty work. Then they blamed the Roman’s for physically crucifying Jesus.

After the Sanhedrin beat the apostles and let them go, the apostles were **“rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name”** (Acts 5:41). When Christians faithfully suffer persecution in

any generation, they should recognize it not as punishment, but rather it is the mark of sonship.

Hendriksen pointed out an obvious lesson here which every Christian needs to remember.

“Whether the persecution comes from the Jews or from the Gentiles, it is ever the same in character, because at the bottom of it is the age-old warfare of the devil against ‘the Christ, the woman, and the rest of her seed’” (p. 71).

The early church in Jerusalem had been willing to suffer for Christ, and so, in this respect, the Thessalonians had shown themselves comparable to them. In every generation, Christians have had to suffer persecutions. Generally speaking, the only question is **To what degree will they suffer?** One of the hardest things for anyone to experience is when family members and friends turn against him. Christians have been suffering this hurt since the beginning, and, sadly, far too many have succumbed to that pressure and given up their reward. This author has seen too many who had been converted turn back to sin because of family. Thank GOD for those who were willing to give up family, if that is what it took, to gain the eternal reward. Again, the words of Jesus are emphasized.

“He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me” (Matthew 10:37).

1 Thess. 2:15 “Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not GOD, and are contrary to all men:”

“who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove out us, and pleased not GOD, and are contrary to all men;” (ASV)

“who both killed the Lord, and the prophets, and have greatly persecuted us, and do not please GOD, and are contrary to all

men;" (TLO)

After speaking about the persecution which the Thessalonians had suffered at the hands of their countrymen, Paul then gave a summary of what the Jews had done. He began by saying that they ἀποκτείνω [(ap-ok-ti-no) **"killed"**] the Lord (Jesus). Inspiration said the Jews killed Jesus — contrary to what modern Jews say. It might also be noted that the Jewish leaders were willing to take the responsibility for Jesus' death — **"His blood be upon us, and upon our children"** (Matt. 27:25). Further, it was Jews on the day of Pentecost who admitted they murdered Jesus. This word (ἀποκτείνω) means *"to kill in any way whatever,"* and therefore could speak of anything from accidental killing to premeditated murder. **In the Lord's case, it was premeditated murder.** It should also be considered that, over the years, great attempts have been made to exonerate the Jews of killing Jesus by their blaming it on Pilate (plausible denial). Though Pilate ordered His crucifixion, he did not want to do so. He was blackmailed by the Jews to do so (does not excuse his cowardice). **How?** By threatening to tell Caesar that Pilate was not his friend, implying that he was his enemy. The Jews demanded that he execute Jesus. The Roman soldiers may have put the nails in Jesus' feet and hands, but the Jews put Jesus on that cross — **"the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar"** (John 19:12). One is in good company in proclaiming that the Jews crucified Jesus, for Peter declared such on the day of Pentecost.

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a

man approved of GOD among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which GOD did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of GOD, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:22-23, emphasis added).

The second charge Paul brought against the Jews was that they had killed **"their own prophets"** (Old Testament prophets). A prophet was one who was moved by the Spirit of GOD to speak forth GOD's words. He was not to decide what to say. The Spirit told him exactly what to say.

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of GOD spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (1 Peter 1:21).

In Matthew 23:31, Jesus accused the Jews of His day of being those who **"killed the prophets."** He said He sent them **"prophets, and wise men, and scribes,"** and they killed, scourged and persecuted them (Matt. 23:34). And then look at the extremely sad words He pronounced against them in verse thirty-seven of that chapter.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

Because they refused the messengers He sent them, they had sealed their own doom.

Paul then said his fellow Jews had ἐκδιώκω [(ek-dee-o-ko) **"persecuted"**] **"us."** Strong defines this word as *"to pursue out, i.e., expel,"* and Thayer says it refers *"to drive out, banish...oppress with calamities."* The word **"us"** in this context could refer either to their fellow countrymen or the apostles. It is this writer's belief that it refers to the apostles.

The Spirit then led Paul to say, **“they please not GOD,”** obviously speaking of their actions of killing the Lord and the prophets, as well as persecuting **“us.”** Strong states that the word ἀρέσκω [(ar-es-ko), **“please”**], means *“to be agreeable,”* while Thayer gives it the meaning of *“to strive to please.”* Obviously, this attitude is negated by the word **“not.”** They were not agreeable, nor were they striving to please GOD. They strove to please themselves and maintain the status quo. Zodhiates says something of note here in defining the word **“please”** — *“to fit, adapt, please.”* The word “adapt” caught this writer’s attention. The Jews of which Paul spoke were not willing to adapt their thinking and actions to that which would indeed please GOD.

“and are contrary to all men” ἐναντίος [(en-an-tee-os) **“contrary”**] is defined by Strong as *“opposite; figuratively antagonistic,”* while Thayer says it is used metaphorically as *“opposed as an adversary, hostile, antagonistic in feeling or act.”* **To whom are they hostile adversaries? “to all men”** Just how are they opposed to all men? The context should be considered carefully here. They were not hostile to their fellow Jews who wished to crush Christianity and persecute Christians wherever they found them. But they were (and are) hostile to the truth Christianity advocates for all men. They do not want their fellow man to succumb to the obedience GOD requires of those who want their sins forgiven. They, indeed, are the enemies of GOD as well as to all men. This is clearly indicated in the next verse.

It should also be noted that GOD had warned them about what would happen long ago if they became unfaithful to Him.

“Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of My land

which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for My name, will I cast out of My sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations” (2 Chronicles 7:20).

GOD had warned them that their unfaithfulness would cause Him to cast away the Temple and cause them to be a **“proverb and a byword”** among all people (cf. 1 Kings 9:7). BDB states that the word *sheniynah* (**“byword”**) means a *“sharp (cutting) word, taunt”* (p. 1042). Baker/Carpenter state that *“it refers to a scornful or jeering put-down”* (p. 1179). History has generally shown that the Jews indeed have made themselves enemies of all people by the way that they have suffered during the years by both Gentiles and many who falsely claim to be Christians. **A true Christian would never persecute anyone!**

A final word here about the scathing rebuke by Paul regarding those who persecuted the prophets and murdered the Lord Jesus. Some have alleged that Paul hated his countrymen, but nothing could be further from the truth. Note the excellent comments by Weaver here.

“He loved his own people according to the flesh, prayed for them that they might be saved (Rom. 10:1), and would have given his own soul for them (Rom. 9:2-3). But for the most part their souls were hardened (Rom. 11:7). Yet Paul offered them the same gospel of salvation that he offered to the Gentiles — ‘to the Jew first, and also to the Greek’ (Rom. 1:16)” (p. 167).

1 Thess. 2:16 “Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins away: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.”

“forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved; to fill up their sins always: but the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.” (ASV)

“hindering us to speak to the Gentiles, that they may be saved; so that they fill up their iniquities always: but the wrath of GOD is coming upon them at length.” (TLO)

Thayer says the word κωλύω [(ko-loo-o) **“forbidding”**] means *“to hinder, prevent, forbid...to deny or refuse one a thing.”* Zodhiates states it is *“to cut off, weaken, and hence generally to hinder, prevent, restrain”* (p. 902). When one takes a look at the actions of the Jews, he sees that, from the very beginning they were intent on stopping the proclamation of the Gospel.

“But that it spread no further among the people, let us (Sanhedrin – RK) straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus” (Acts 4:17-18).

When one considers the mission journeys of Paul and his associates, he sees the Jews at every place as instigators, trying to stop them from preaching Christ to anyone — Jew or Gentile.

What did they want to stop them from saying? That the Gentiles could be saved, i.e., by the saving message of Jesus (also that the Law of Moses had been fulfilled and was no longer applicable). Imagine the evil intent of those not wanting the greatest blessing of all told to people. Yet, it is not hard to imagine in today’s society, where secularism has filled the hearts of so many. Try and warn them of an impending judgment where their secular ideas will be judged and watch the venom flow.

In trying to stop the spread of the Gospel to the Gentiles, what were they doing to themselves? “to fill up their sins alway” Zodhiates says that ἀναπληρώω [(an-ap-lay-ro-o) **“fill up”**] is an emphatic *“to make the measure of sin quite full, distinguishing it from pleroo*

meaning just to make it full. The word is stronger than pleroo and means to make very full, to the very end, to perfection” (p. 378). This states that they were overflowing with sin, which the next phrase in this verse verifies. ὀργή [(or-gay) **“the wrath”**], according to Strong, speaks to *“punishment: anger, indignation, vengeance, wrath.”* Weaver stated, and rightly so, that *“God’s wrath arises out of the holiness of His nature; it is the holy revulsion of His being against that which is contrary to His holiness”* (p. 175).

To whom is this anger and vengeance aimed? **“them,”** i.e., the Jews of verse fourteen. Then comes the word τέλος [(tel-os) **“uttermost”**], which Strong says is from the primary word *“τέλλω (to set out for a definite point or goal); properly the point aimed at as a limit, i.e., (by implication) the conclusion of an act or state (termination [literally, figuratively or indefinitely] result [immediate, ultimate or prophetic] purpose).”* Thayer adds clarity to what Strong said by saying, *“end, termination, the limit at which a thing ceases to be always of the end of some act or state, but not of the end of a period of time.”* Zodhiates states it is *“an end, term, termination, completion”* (p. 1376). After considering all of these definitions of the words τέλος and ὀργή, and since it is only GOD Who has the right to exercise vengeance (Rom. 12:19), one realizes that GOD’s patience had ended for these Jews which have opposed Him at every turn. Their opposition to Jesus led to the overthrow of their nation, the destruction of the Temple, and the destruction of all records of their generations. It also destroyed the priesthood which ended the possibility of the practice of the Mosaic law. What a horrible thought for anyone to have reached the end of GOD’s patience and face His wrath. For these

Jews who were determined to be in rebellion to GOD, it is simply another manifestation that they were like their forefathers — those always in rebellion to GOD.

“And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Matthew 13:14-15).

The time for healing had passed for these blind, obstinate, stubborn, and rebellious Jews.

“While previously, whenever Israel sinned grievously it had been punished, this time it is not only punished but rejected” (Hendriksen, p. 73).

Consider the **woe** of Jesus regarding the Pharisees and scribes' shutting man out of the kingdom of GOD.

“But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in” (Matthew 23:13, emphasis added).

1 Thess. 2:17 “But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.”

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

“Now, we, brethren, being separated from you for a short time, in presence, not in heart, the more abundantly endeavored, with great desire, to see your face.” (TLO)

This verse begins with a pronoun (“**we**”) which suggests that Paul, Silas and Timothy were **“taken**

from you for a short time in presence.” The word ἀπορφανίζω [(ap-or-fan-id-zo) **“taken”**] means *“to bereave wholly, i.e., (figuratively) separate”* (Strong). Zodhiates gives it the definition of *“to bereave of parents”* and then adds this interesting note — *“In 1 Thess. 2:17, as disciples deprived of a teacher, as children bereaved of their father, helpless”* (p. 235). This then carries the thought that they had to leave, but not by choice. A study of Acts chapter seventeen shows Paul and his company’s arrival in Thessalonica. Their efforts to evangelize were met with great success at first, where a few Jews accepted the Gospel, and a great number of Gentiles also accepted it. But the Jews who refused to accept the Gospel became envious of their success and set the city in an uproar with a mob. These newly converted people, in order to protect Paul, sent him by night to Berea. This explains the above phrase of the text. It also helps one to understand this word **“taken.”** It was as if a protective father had been taken away from his children, or his children taken away from him, so that he could not protect them. Paul says, *“I may have been taken from your presence, but my heart is with you.”* Today one might say, *“I cannot be in your presence but I am with you in spirit.”*

“For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ” (Colossians 2:5).

Next, probably because of the trials they were going through and the steadfastness they were exhibiting, he showed his desire to be with them. **“endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire”** σπουδάζω (**“endeavoured”**) is *“to use speed, i.e., to make effort, be prompt or earnest”* (Strong). Zodhiates adds to one’s understanding of this word by saying it

means “earnestness, diligence...to make every effort to do one’s best, to be eager” (p. 1307). What had Paul earnestly and quickly tried to do? To get back to them in person. This effort is also described as περισσοτέρως [(per-is-sot-er-oce) “abundantly”], i.e., “exceedingly, much more, more frequently, more superabundantly” (Zodhiates, p. 1151). Paul had made frequent and abundant attempts to get back to them. No doubt this was so that he could aid them in thwarting the attacks being made against them. Note also the word ἐπιθυμία (“desire”), which can be used in either a bad sense, “lust,” or as it is used here, as a “strong desire, longing” (Zodhiates, p. 627). Strong adds this, which this writer believes helps to understand this word even better — “a longing (especially for what is forbidden).” It was a strong yearning Paul had to be with the Thessalonians, of which he had made great efforts to realize. But he had been denied his longing for them by something. Hendriksen believes the use of such strong words here may have been a defence of a false charge of insinuating that their leaving the Thessalonians like they did showed a lack of concern for them. So what kept him from achieving his goal of returning to them? Was He expressing a belief that he would soon be with them again? Or was he saying that he had been with them for such a short time, but that such had not been his desire? Considering the next verse, could it be that Paul was saying that, the more Satan tried to hinder us from coming back to you, the harder we tried (Hendriksen, p. 75)?

1 Thess. 2:18 “Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.”

“because we would fain have come unto you, I Paul once and again; and Satan hindered us.” (ASV)

“Therefore, we would have come to you (even I, Paul,) once and again, but the adversary hindered us.” (TLO)

Thayer states that δῖό [(dee-o) **“Wherefore”**] is *“wherefore, on account of,”* and Strong says it is *“for which cause, therefore, on account of.”* This then points back to the suffering through persecution that they were going through, as well as his desire to be with them. There can be little doubt that he would gladly suffer with them if he could and use the time with them to strengthen their resolve as Christians.

The word θέλω [(thel-o eth-el-o) **“would”**] is translated *“to determine”* by Strong and *“to will, have in mind, intend...to be resolved or determined, to purpose”* by Thayer. Thus, his firm desire is seen to be with them. He had already expressed this desire, so one might say that he was now doubling down, so that the brethren could understand how strongly he wanted to be with them. Now he added another word to this steady stream of powerful indicators of his attempts to be with them — μέν [(men) **“even”**]. This word is defined by Strong as *“even, indeed so...truly, verily. Often compounded with other participles in an intensive or assertive sense.”* Thayer says the word is translated *“truly, certainly, surely, indeed.”* By then adding his name to these words, he was saying, *“I, in person, would be there if I could.”* **Why could Paul not be with them at this time, even though he strongly desired such?**

“but Satan hindered us” Two words of import are found in this phrase — **“Satan”** and **“hindered.”** Σατανᾶς [(sat-an-as) **“Satan”**] means *“the accuser, i.e.,*

the devil” (Strong). Thayer states its meaning as “*adversary (one who opposes another in purpose or act), the name given to the prince of evil spirits, the inveterate adversary of God and Christ...a Satan-like man.*” Both Strong and Thayer give their first definition to indicate that this was the fallen angel — the Devil himself. But the last definition of Thayer should be kept in mind as well, i.e., that the one doing the hindering could be a human being who acts like his father — Satan.

ἐγκόπτω [(eng-kop-to) “**hindered**”] is defined as “*to cut into, i.e., (figuratively), impede, detain*” (Strong) and “*to cut into, to impede one’s course by cutting off his way*” (Thayer). Zodhiates states the word is used metaphorically — “*to impede or hinder...in the sense of delay.*” Fields states that the word “**hindered**” “*is a military term, and indicates the obstruction of an enemies progress by breaking up the road, destroying bridges, etc...a road-breaker*” (p. 80). The road to Paul’s return had been broken up, i.e., been made impassable. Also with regard to this word, the phrase “**once and again**” is important, for it indicates repeated action. The road had been broken up repeatedly. Paul and his companions did not try once, throw up their hands, and say, “*We tried, but Satan stopped us.*” Again, this shows the intensity of their desire to be with these brethren at this time. Whatever method was used to hinder their efforts, it must have been intense. The question upon this author’s mind is **How did Satan hinder them?** It could have been by placing a stipulation upon Jason by the court in Thessalonica, i.e., that his bond would be forfeited if Paul or his companions came back. Maybe Satan caused severe problems in another area, which prevented Paul from

going back. Maybe the Jews who chased Paul from Thessalonica to Berea had more influence than was previously known. At any rate, this is where the last definition of Thayer comes into play in regard to the word **“Satan”** — *“a Satan-like man.”* Though it cannot be known exactly how Satan accomplished Paul’s delay in going back (could have been a sickness), it can be known that he often used (and continues to use) human beings to accomplish his goals.

“Whenever the wicked molest us, they fight under Satan’s banner, and are his agents for harassing us. When our endeavors are directed to the work of the Lord, it is certain that everything that hinders proceeds from Satan” (Shepherd, p. 35).

Most writers believe that it would be approximately five years before Paul would see these brethren again. It is also interesting to consider that many people do not believe Satan exists, that he is simply a made-up “bogeyman” to scare people into following religious rules. Paul absolutely showed that he, an apostle taught by Jesus and inspired, **knew beyond doubt** that Satan is real.

1 Thess. 2:19-20 “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy.”

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at His coming? For ye are our glory and our joy.” (ASV)

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at His coming? You, indeed, are our glory and our joy.” (TLO)

There are several words to note here, the first of

which is ἐλπίς [(el-pece) **“hope”**]. Strong defines this as *“expectation or confidence.”* Thayer says it is *“expectation of good...joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation.”* And Zodhiates defines it as *“hope, desire of some good with expectation of obtaining it.”* This tells one that there was something Paul wanted and expected to obtain it. As the context will show, it was not something for his personal welfare, but it was something that would bring him **“joy.”**

χαρά [(khar-ah) **“joy”**] is *“cheerfulness, i.e., calm delight”* (Strong). Thayer describes this word as *“joy, gladness...the cause or occasion of joy.”* When noting Thayer’s words, the context will show that there is an occasion coming at which Paul expects joy at its occurrence. This event will bring him joy. **What is it?**

A **“crown of rejoicing.”** The word στέφανος [(stef-an-os) **“crown”**] is what is commonly called *“the crown of victory.”* This signified the victory one achieved in the Greek games. A perishable wreath was placed on the victor’s head and was later given a place of honor in his house. For the Christian, this **“crown”** represents that which will be awarded by GOD for his victory of faithfulness to the end. This crown is to be prized as greater and more important than all the crowns which one may obtain in this world. Therefore, the Lord stated, **“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown”** (Revelation 3:11).

For what does Paul **“hope?”** What will cause him such great **“joy?”** For whom does he desire the victory crown? There is no doubt that he has hope for a crown himself.

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall

give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:8).

In this context, the focus is not upon himself, but upon these Thessalonians when the Lord comes again. Paul wants to see the brethren in the ἔμπροσθεν [(pros-o-pon) **"presence"**] of the **"Lord Jesus Christ."** The word **"presence"** is *"in front of"* (Strong) and *"in front, before"* (Thayer). Thayer also added this note: *"before, denoting rank."* This might indicate that Paul had hope that they might be among the highest in rank or in rank above himself. At the very least, it means to be in the eternal presence of GOD.

"For ye are our glory and joy." *"You are the reason we glory and have joy."* When one reads these few words, he sees the pride Paul had in these brethren. They had given up their false religions, remained faithful in spite of all their persecutions, and were confidently waiting for His return and for the crown to be placed on their heads. **"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth"** (2 John 4).

1st Thessalonians Chapter Three

1 Thess. 3:1 **“Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;”**

“Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left behind at Athens alone;” (ASV)

“Wherefore, no longer concealing our anxiety, we were well pleased to be left at Athens alone,” (TLO)

The word **“Wherefore”** comes from *διό*, which means *“consequently: for which cause”* (Strong). Thayer translates it as *“wherefore, on account of,”* and Zodhiates translates it as *“for which, wherefore, therefore”* (p. 471). This word is a conjunction, which ties what he has previously said what he is about to say. **What had he just told them?** He had made strenuous efforts to come to them, but he was kept from it. Again, it is not known what kept him from making this journey.

Whatever it was, and because he could not come to them immediately, he reached a point where he could μηκέτι [(may-ket-ee) **“no longer”**] *“no further: any longer (not)”* – Strong) στέγω [(steg-o) **“forbear”**]. The word στέγω is defined as *“to roof over, i.e., (figuratively) to cover with silence”* (Strong). Thayer defined it as *“to cover over with silence...conceal...hold out against.”* Zodhiates states it is *“to cover over in silence”* (p. 1310). **What was it that Paul could no longer cover in silence, i.e., to remain silent concerning?** As seen in verse five, it is found that he could not stand not hearing how they were doing. He could not hide his concern anymore. It seems that possibly he had gone through a lengthy

period where he had not heard if they had endured, or how many had endured, or how many had remained faithful under the persecutions they were going through.

Because his love for them was so strong, he had to know how they were doing. **So what did he do about this desire?** He said that **“we thought it good”** (εὐδοκέω) to do something about their lack of knowledge. This phrase is one word in the Greek, which is defined as *“it seems good to one...think it good, choose, determine, decide”* (Thayer). Since he could not go to them personally, **“we”** (Paul, Silvanus and Timothy) had decided that Timothy would be sent back to check on them. This author does not believe this is an editorial **“we.”** He (they) determined to find out the results of his (their) work among the Thessalonians. Since Paul was now alone in Athens, it would appear that either Silvanus went with Timothy or he had been sent on another mission.

Thayer states that μόνος [(mon-os) **“alone”**] is translated *“alone (without a companion), forsaken, destitute of help. Alone, only, merely.”* When looking at the translation of this word, one cannot help feeling sadness. Paul was by himself without anyone to help him in the work that needed to be done. If the reason he could not go was because of a physical ailment, or imprisonment, what a sacrifice he was making by sending his fellow laborers on this mission. Yet, it also shows the sacrifice he was willing to make to encourage brethren and spread the Gospel.

1 Thess. 3:2 “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:”

“and sent Timothy, our brother and GOD's minister in the Gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith;” (ASV)

“and sent Timothy, our brother, and a minister of GOD, and our fellow-laborer in the Gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to exhort you concerning your faith:” (TLO)

Four things of importance are said about Timothy: (1) He was sent to them by Paul, (2) He is our brother in Christ, (3) He is a minister (servant) of GOD, and (4) He is our fellow laborer in the Gospel. These are all statements of endorsement, which would hopefully make Timothy's efforts begin more smoothly. These credentials were given to show that Timothy was a competent soldier of the cross. **But why send Timothy to the Thessalonians? Why not send Silas?** One of the ideas which is floated around is that Timothy would not be known by face to those who were troubling the brethren in Thessalonica. Conversely, Silas would have been well known to the people of Thessalonica.

Next, Paul stated the mission of Timothy, i.e., for what purpose he had sent him. First, he was sent to **“establish”** them in **“the faith.”** Strong states that στηρίζω [(stay-rid-zo) **“establish”**] is *“to set fast, i.e., (literally) to turn resolutely in a certain direction or (figuratively) to confirm.”* Thayer states it is *“to make stable, place firmly, set fast, fix, to strengthen, make firm.”* Zodhiates shows it is *“to set fast, to fix firmly.”* Timothy's job was to encourage them to continue in and make the faith they had accepted into something so firmly set in their minds that they could not be moved away from it. He was to help them firmly set fast their minds on the faith. Second, Timothy was sent to παρακαλέω [(par-ak-al-eh-o) **“comfort”**] them in their

faith. The primary application of this word is to *“call near, i.e., invite”* (Strong). Thayer adds to one’s understanding by saying it is *“to call to one’s side...to admonish, exhort, to beg, entreat, beseech.”* Zodhiates also aids one here when he says it is *“to call upon someone to do something, to exhort, admonish.”* This is more than the idea of giving comfort to a grieving person by embracing him. Timothy was sent to help the brethren in Thessalonica to embrace the faith in such a manner that they would gain comfort from the Scriptures, the faith. He was to help hold firmly to the faith.

When considering Timothy’s mission to the Thessalonians, it is seen that the very things Timothy was to do, **“establish”** and **“comfort,”** are the same things in which every Christian is to be involved. **Every** Christian needs to grow in the faith continually, and help others with less knowledge to do so, too. **Every** Christian needs encouragement to continue walking in the truth on a regular basis. **What will establish and give the comfort needed to face the hostilities which Satan stirs up against GOD’s people?** Weaver made a list of some of the things one can do to give Christians an advantage in holding their faith.

“There are certain things like reading and meditating upon the word of God (Psalm 1:2; 119:11; Acts17:11), thinking upon things that are true, just, and good (Phil. 4:8), attending the assemblies of the saints (Heb. 10:23-25), choosing good friends (1 Cor. 15:33), maintaining good works (Titus 3:8), etc. that will strengthen faith and encourage us in our Christian life” (p. 199).

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

“that no man be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that hereunto we are appointed.” (ASV)

“that no one should be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that we are appointed to them.” (TLO)

Timothy’s job was to establish and comfort the brethren at Thessalonica. **Why?** So **“that no man** σαίνω [(sahee-no) **“should be moved”**]. Thayer states that this word means *“to wag the tail”* and metaphorically *“to move (the mind of one), agreeably, to agitate, disturb, trouble.”* Zodhiates adds, *“to wag, to move to and from as dogs and other animals wag their tails in friendliness. Figuratively, to caress, flatter. In the NT figuratively to move in mind, disturb”* (p. 1273). Edwards relates the history of the word **“moved”** by saying, *“It first meant the wagging of a dog’s tail, and then it came to mean ‘to fawn upon’ and so ‘to beguile’ and ‘deceive’”* (p. 199). The Scriptures warn Christians not to be moved about by unstable thoughts, **“For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed”** (James 1:16). One is not to be like a child who can easily be swayed from one position to another.

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Ephesians 4:14).

What could cause the Thessalonian Christians to be moved from their faith to that which would instead destroy their souls? θλίψις [(thlip-sis) **“afflictions”**], a word which Strong says means *“pressure (literally or figuratively): afflicted (tion), anguish, burdened, persecution, tribulation, trouble.”* Thayer agrees that this refers to *“a pressing, pressing together”* and then

adds “*oppression, affliction, tribulation, distress, straits.*” Zodhiates added the idea of crushing or compressing something (p. 736). The goal of Timothy’s instruction and encouragement was to keep these brethren’s faith from being crushed from the pressure they were receiving from their own countrymen and the Mosaic followers.

Paul next pointed out something they should εἶδω [(i-do) “**know**”] or understand. Thayer observed that this word means “*to see, to perceive with the eyes, to perceive by any of the senses...to experience any state or condition.*” By observation, they had seen how Paul and his associates had suffered at the hands of these persecutors of which he wrote. They had seen the giving and compassionate nature they had exhibited. They themselves had also suffered, not because they did anything other than obey the Gospel message. They were not persecuted because they were murderers, thieves, et cetera. The apostles and Thessalonians were oppressed because they spoke the truth. On another occasion, Paul asked, “**Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth**” (Galatians 4:16)? Truth indeed makes enemies of those who hate truth or do not want it interfering with their lifestyle.

Thayer tells one that to be κειμαι [(ki-mahee) “**appointed**”] is used metaphorically to mean “*to be (by God’s intent) set, i.e., destined, appointed.*” Zodhiates says it means “*to lie down, be laid down.*” GOD knew that truth would not be popular with the majority of people in this world. Jesus clearly showed the antagonism of truth (light) and error (darkness).

“For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov’d.”

But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in GOD”

(John 3:20-21).

Why is truth hated by so many? Because the deeds of the wicked are exposed by it.. Truth draws a line between good and evil. Those who have become Christians love the truth, because it exposes their lives to the Gospel which led them to the cleansing of their souls. It exposes their purity to a world given to filth, in order to declare a clear contrast. It cleanses one’s soul for the purpose of living with GOD eternally. **What did Jesus say about His followers and persecution (tribulation)?**

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Christians should also remember that GOD is not the source, the instigator, of our problems from unbelievers. The evil that exists around GOD’s people is allowed to exist, but the day will come when GOD will call His people to Himself, and send the rest to a Devil’s Hell. What a sad day that will be for the antagonists of GOD in this world. It is **“a righteous thing with GOD to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you”** (2 Thessalonians 1:6). Though GOD does not instigate the tribulations Christians face for being just Christians, He does allow them, just as He did with Job and others.

Why? The Spirit through James gave the answer.

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James 1:2-4).

When Christians endure tribulations, they should remember that their faith is being tested. The same thing has been done throughout time to GOD’s people

(Consider Abel, Job, the prophets of old, and Christ Himself.). Consider Paul, when GOD told Ananias that the Lord would **“shew him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake”** (Acts 9:16). One might also consider the encouragement that Paul showed brethren by enduring the persecutions he had experienced. Yet, he continued to preach GOD's word and to live a life of faithfulness to Him.

1 Thess 3:4 “For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.”

“For verily, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we are to suffer affliction; even as it came to pass, and ye know.” (ASV)

“For even when we were with you, we foretold you that we were to be afflicted; which also happened as you know.” (TLO)

Paul had repeatedly warned the brethren that tribulations and suffering were going to happen. This would prepare the disciples to expect them, and thus they would not be surprised when they happened. Often when something happens which is not anticipated, it not only catches one off guard, but it may greatly discourage him. A warning ahead of time gives one the opportunity to prepare, especially if another outcome is expected. Jesus did the same thing with the apostles regarding His coming death.

“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth GOD service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And

these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you” (John 16:1-4).

Yet, often, though one may be warned that something will happen, it seems that when it does happen, it catches him off guard. One would do well to note that Jesus had predicted His death and resurrection. Yet, when these things happened, it took the disciples by surprise. They were shocked. They were heart broken and discouraged. The women who saw the empty tomb reported such to the apostles — **who did not believe them**. Note also a conversation Jesus had with two of these disciples after His resurrection.

“And He said unto them, What things? And they said unto Him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before GOD and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him. But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done” (Luke 24:19-21, emphasis added).

Death always seems to be something that, when it happens, one is still not quite ready for it. It should also be considered that they had expected, as seen above, that the kingdom which Jesus had spoken about would be a physical kingdom. They did not fully understand that His kingdom was not to be like the kingdoms of this earth.

“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence” (John 18:36).

The disciples at Thessalonica had been warned that tribulations would come upon Paul and them. Further, the present text affirms that they had indeed seen Paul suffer, and they themselves had also experienced it. The disciples could have thought, as have so many

over the years, how could these things be done to someone who is a faithful servant of GOD? How could these tribulations happen to those who were striving to follow the truth? Unfortunately, one may be warned about something, believe what is the truth, and yet allow his faith to falter when it does happen. Paul was concerned that such may have been the case with the Thessalonians. The old saying is true, *“To be forewarned is to be forearmed.”*

“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also” (John 15:20, emphasis added).

Those who proclaim the Gospel must warn brethren of future persecution — even when there does not seem to be the possibility of such occurring at the present time. The Lord promised that there would always be trials, troubles and persecutions. To fail to prepare the Lord’s people for such is to fail to prepare them so that they can overcome them. To be forewarned is to prepare GOD’s people for victory when such events occur.

1 Thess. 3:5 “For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.”

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

“For this reason also, no longer concealing my anxiety, I sent to know your faith; lest by some means the tempter may have tempted you, and our labor have become in vain.” (TLO)

Thayer says that one of the definitions of *διά* [(dee-

ah) **“cause”**] is *“through, the ground or reason by which something is or is not done.”* The implication, considering the context, is *“Since I could not come to you I sent Timothy.”* **Why not wait until he could go to them?**

“when I could no longer forbear” There are several words in this phrase which should be noted. Strong says that στέγω [(steg-o) **“could”**] means *“to roof over, i.e., (figuratively) to cover with silence (endure patiently).”* Thayer adds this thought: *“to cover over with silence, to keep secret.”* This obviously shows that there was some anxiety over something that he had not communicated to those around him. Something which troubled him over which he had no control. This also shows the humanity of this apostle, i.e., he was like Christians of all ages. **In what way?** Note the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 6:34.

“Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

The word μεριμνάω [(mer-im-nah-o) **“thought”**] in the above passage means *“to be anxious about,”* to which Thayer added, *“to be troubled with cares.”* Jesus said do not be anxious about tomorrow. Do not be filled with anxiety! Do not be troubled about what may happen tomorrow. He added the idea that one has enough to deal with each day that he lives. Further, Philippians 4:6 states, [**Be careful** (μεριμνάω (same word translated **“thought”** above) **for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto GOD**” (emphasis added). Christians are not to be anxious about anything! Christians are to take their concerns to GOD and leave them there. Yet, like one too often

does today, Paul was hiding the thing that was troubling him until he could not stand it any longer (μηκέτι), and he had to express his concern and do something about it. He could not seem to let go of the fear he had for the Thessalonian's well-being even though he had probably expressed that fear to the Lord in fervent prayer.

“I sent to know your faith” He had sent someone to find out what was going on with them. Further, as the next verse will show, he had sent Timothy, and Timothy had returned. **What had Timothy gone to find out about the Thessalonians? Had they been able to hold to the faith which he had delivered to them in the midst of the assaults being waged on them by the** πειράζω [(pi-rad-zo) **“tempter”**]? The word **“tempter”** and **“tempted”** are the same word in the original. *“To test (objectively), i.e., endeavor”* (Strong); *“to try whether a thing can be done...In a bad sense, to try or test one's faith, virtue, character, by enticement to sin”* (Thayer). Obviously, the term **“tempter”** refers to Satan, and the term **“tempted”** refers to what Satan had done (through his agents). Paul knew that the Devil is real, powerful and a terrible antagonist.

“and our labour be in vain” GOD has declared, **“So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it”** (Isaiah 55:11). **How could Paul speak of his efforts being in vain, when GOD said His word accomplishes what He sent it to do?** When one considers that GOD gave His word to separate those who would obey from those who disobey, then Isaiah 55:11 makes perfect sense. Paul was not saying that the declaration of GOD's word had not accomplished what GOD intended it to do. He was

indicating that if they had not remained faithful, then his time with them did not produce the results for which he had hoped. Paul wanted all men to obey the Gospel and yet recognized that not all would obey GOD's commands. He was talking about his personal efforts to convert them.

"If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Corinthians 3:15).

One should also consider a primary doctrine of Calvinism which states, *"once saved always saved,"* i.e., once saved, he cannot be lost. If Paul's work among the Thessalonians could have been in vain, and since the Spirit had directed him to speak of their **"election of GOD,"** then it shows that one who becomes the "elect of GOD" can be lost.

1 Thess. 3:6 "But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you:"

"But when Timothy came even now unto us from you, and brought us glad tidings of your faith and love, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, longing to see us, even as we also to see you;" (ASV)

"But now, when Timothy came to us from you, and gave us the good news of your faith and love, and that you have good remembrance of us at all times, ardently desiring to see us, even as we also to see you;" (TLO)

"As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country" (Proverbs 25:25).

Paul has given the reasons why he sent Timothy: (1) because he could not go there himself, and (2) because

he was so anxious for their spiritual well being. He also identified why he could not come himself: because the Tempter was hindering him. He will now state the joy he had when Timothy returned from his mission with his report.

εὐαγγελίζω [(yoo-ang-ghel-id-zo) **“good tidings”**] is the same word from which one gets the word “Gospel” — **“good news.”** When comparing the idea behind the good news of salvation, then one sees the extreme joy which would be caused by such. One can almost see the uplift that it no doubt gave Paul as he probably beamed from ear to ear. **What were the “good tidings” that Timothy brought Paul which caused such great joy?**

Four things are listed: (1) **“your faith”** They were continuing to follow the doctrine he had delivered them. (2) **“your...charity”** (love). Their love for the truth and all things good had not waned. (3) **“that ye have your good remembrance of us”** The word ἔχω [(hot-ee) **“have”**] is **“to hold”** (Strong); **“to hold one’s self to a thing, to lay hold of a thing, to adhere or cling to”** (Thayer). They were clinging to their love of Paul, because he had brought them the saving Gospel. They were clinging to their new-found hope, obviously, considering their trials, with determination not to let go of this lifeline. πάντοτε [(pan-tot-eh) **“always”**] describes the fact that they **“at all times”** (Strong & Thayer) had spoken highly of Paul, and this in turn would have caused fond memories of him. Further, the idea is that, no matter to whom they spoke (enemy or disciple), they only had good to say about Paul and his fellow-soldiers of the cross. (4) your **“desiring greatly to see us.”** Strong shows that ἐπιποθέω (ep-ee-poth-eh-o) – **“desiring greatly”**) means **“to dote upon, i.e.,**

intensely crave possession.” Thayer states it is “*to long for, desire.*”

“When men and women are sincere disciples of Christ, they will prize each other’s company above all others” (Zerr, p. 147).

One other thought just here. It is possible that, as a Christian, one might be tempted to say, “*I do not care what others think of me.*” Consider that this text clearly shows the concern Paul had that his brethren think well of him. In a sense one could say he does not care what man thinks of him. What is really important is what GOD thinks of him. But, it is important as to what the worldly man thinks of him as a Christian. Elders are to have a good report of those in a community, i.e., they are not consumers of alcoholic beverages, brawlers, trouble makers, et cetera. Christians should want people to see them in a good light, one which cannot be misconstrued by critics of “The Faith.” One needs a good reputation among those where he lives in order to have the opportunity to convert them. One who lives an evil life while professing Christianity cannot lead men to Christ — He will push them away from Christianity.

1 Thess. 3:7 “Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:”

“for this cause, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our distress and affliction through your faith:” (ASV)

“by this, brethren, we were comforted concerning you in all our affliction and necessity, even by your faith.” (TLO)

διὰ (“**therefore**”) This is a preposition which shows the channel of an action. It may be translated in a number of ways, such as, “*through...by reason of*”

(Strong). Thayer adds to one's understanding by saying, *"through, the ground or reason by which something is or is not to be done...because of, for this reason...on this account."* Paul was saying, "Because of the report **'we'** received regarding you, brethren, I am **'comforted over you all.'**"

Thayer states that the word παρακαλέω [(par-ak-al-eh-o) – **"comforted"**] means *"to call to one's side."* It is the idea of calling one close to his side to exhort him, to admonish, to console, to encourage and strengthen him. It is also used to call one close in order to instruct him. Their faithfulness to the Gospel was a great comfort to Paul, especially because of **"all our affliction and distress."** The word **"our"** could indicate either those who were with Paul at the time Timothy brought this good news, or it may include those at Corinth **and** those at Thessalonica. It is this writer's opinion that he included all of these groups in the afflictions and distresses that they were going through.

"affliction" comes from θλίψις (thlip-sis), which Strong defines as *"pressure (literally or figuratively): afflicted (-tion), anguish, burdened persecution, tribulation, trouble."* This affliction had come upon him, and them, because both pagan and Jew had rejected and attacked them both verbally and physically. Such pressure by persecutors will do one of two things to a group — cause it to split apart or bring it closer together. Generally speaking, when people are truly convinced of the rightness of their stand, it will bring them together into an ever-closer and binding relationship.

The word **"distress"** comes from ἀνάγκη (an-ang-kay) which Thayer defines as *"necessity, imposed either by the circumstances, or by law of duty regarding to*

one's advantage, custom, argument...calamity, distress, straits." Paul seems to indicate that his distress was caused by the circumstances in which they found themselves. They were all involved in fighting to maintain their faith in the midst of trials and persecutions. But Paul was also experiencing anxiety over the welfare of those young converts to the faith. When one first becomes a Christian is when he is most vulnerable to the attacks of the Tempter. Paul understood this and was so relieved that they had remained faithful and understood his concern for their welfare. They knew he had not abandoned them, and this, along with the fact of their faithfulness, revived his spirit. Their faith was demonstrated by their refusal to give up and return to their pagan way of life. Yes – faith can be seen. It is seen every time when one stands for truth against error. It is seen every time when one stands against a crowd intent on doing evil, i.e., refusing to participate in their evil works.

With regard to Paul at this specific time, one should consider where he was — Corinth. Besides the distress he felt because of his concern for the faith of the Thessalonians was the reception he had received from his own countrymen in Corinth. Further, he had faced it alone. Findley stated that the term "**distress**" almost always indicates "*external constraint, whether of circumstances or duty*" (Weaver, p. 210). Paul had written to the brethren at Rome, "**For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh**" (Romans 9:3). Paul was deeply concerned for the souls of all men and, in that passage, had particularly pointed out his fellow countrymen (Israelites). Now in Corinth, he faced his obstinate brethren again.

“And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus was Christ*. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his raiment*, and said unto them, Your blood *be upon your own heads*; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles” (Acts 18:5-6).

Going through the great disappointment he was experiencing at Corinth, one can easily see how refreshing the news from Thessalonica was which Timothy brought him.

1 Thess. 3:8 “For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.”

“for now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.” (ASV)

“For now we live, when you stand firm in the Lord.” (TLO)

Thayer states that the meaning of the word ζάω (dzah-o) – **“live”** is *“to live, breathe, be among the living.”* He then stated that, metaphorically, it means *“to be in full vigor, to be fresh, strong, efficient.”* As an adjective, it means *“active, powerful, efficacious.”* Some have given the sense of this phrase as “Now we really live. Hendriksen said that *“the thoughts crowd each other so that verse 8 is actually a combination of two ideas. a. We live if you stand fast in the Lord and b. Now we live seeing that you are standing fast in the Lord”* (p. 88). It might be remembered here that Paul was so discouraged at the opposition he had, that the Lord appeared to him to encourage him while he was at Corinth.

“Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city” (Acts 18:9-10).

What had given Paul and Silas this encouragement, this freshness of spirit, this vigor?

It was that the Thessalonians were standing **“fast in the Lord.”** Thayer states that στήκω (stay-ko – **“fast”**) is to *“stand firm, to persevere, to persist, to keep one’s standing.”* The term **“stand fast”** is a military term, meaning *“not to retreat in the face of an attack”* (MacArthur, p. 82). He would continue to encourage them to hold fast to **the faith**, to refuse to retreat in the face of the Devil’s troops. He emphasized this in his second letter to them.

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle” (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

Concerning the joy Paul was showing here, it shows that his greatest joy was seeing Christians growing and remaining faithful to the Lord. He was greatly encouraged. With regard to this, Edwards asked a pertinent question: *“When are we the most encouraged? Is it when the church makes forward strides or when our favorite sporting team wins”* (Edwards, p. 96)? From what this writer has seen over the years, the *“favorite team”* wins this battle too many times!

1 Thess. 3:9 “For what thanks can we render to GOD again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our GOD;”

“For what thanksgiving can we render again unto GOD for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our GOD;” (ASV)

“But what thanksgiving can we return to GOD concerning you, for all the joy with which we rejoice, through you, in the presence of our GOD?” (TLO)

This writer agrees with the majority of writers he has consulted, that Paul was having trouble finding the words to express his joy to GOD for the Thessalonians' faithfulness. As one beholds the blessings GOD has bestowed, especially the spiritual blessings, one often has difficulty expressing his gratitude to Him for them. **How can anyone find appropriate words to show the extent of his thanksgiving for all the blessings GOD has shown him?** Note the words of Lipscomb here.

"Only those who have suffered much know joy in its full capacity, 'as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing' (2 Corinthians 6:9-10)" (p. 41).

Weaver said that the Greek world's understanding of thanksgiving was as a debt which was owed to one's benefactor (p. 212). Though **one can never** repay the debt of gratitude for all that GOD has done for him, he ought to make every effort to thank Him. Truly, the Psalmist's question underscores this comment.

"What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me" (Psalm 116:12)?

1 Thess. 3:10 "Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?"

"night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face, and may perfect that which is lacking in your faith?" (ASV)

"Night and day, most earnestly requesting to see your face, and to supply the deficiencies of your faith." (TLO)

Paul expressed his great concern and love for the Thessalonians by specifying that he literally prayed for them night and day — daylight and darkness (not 24/7). The word **"praying"** comes from δέομαι (deh-om-ahee) and means *"to beg (as binding oneself), i.e., petition"*

(Strong). **How was Paul praying?** In 2nd Corinthians, chapter eleven, Paul spoke of the burdens he endured as a servant of Christ. Note particularly what he said in verse twenty-eight and consider it in conjunction with what is seen in the present text. All of the things listed from verses twenty-two through twenty-seven (2 Corinthians 11) were things outside of himself which caused turmoil (at times) in his mind. But then he added, **“Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches”** (v. 28, emphasis added). Like Jesus, Paul dearly loved those whom he helped to obey the Gospel, so much so that he was willing to **“very gladly spend and be spent for you”** (2 Corinthians 12:15). He was willing even to die for them (Romans 10:1). He was willing to protect them from the ugliness of sin as much as was in his power.

“exceedingly” (περισσός – per-is-sos), i.e., *“superabundant (in quantity) or superior (in quality); by implication excessive”* (Strong). Zodhiates stated it is *“generally, superabundant, abundant, much, great.”* **For what was Paul praying so superabundantly?** Two things. First, that they might see the Thessalonians faces, i.e., to see them personally. This part of his prayer would not be answered for several years. The second part of his prayer would only be answered in part until he could see them “face to face.” Second, **“and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith.”** The word **“perfect”** is from καταρτίζω (kat-artid-zo), which Strong defines as *“to complete thoroughly, i.e., repair (literally or figuratively) or adjust.”* Thayer says of it, *“to render, i.e., to fit, sound, complete...to fit out, equip, put in order, arrange adjust.”* Zodhiates added this thought: *“the fundamental is to*

put a thing in its appropriate condition, to establish, set up, equip, arrange, prepare, mend.” Spicq states that this word was used to signify a newborn whose body is *“well-put together”* or ambidextrous athletes who could strike with either hand, and Philo described it as *“a good that is balanced and truly complete”* (Vol. 2, p. 18). Paul realized that they needed more teaching, as do all in every generation, to equip them to be stronger in their faith. Therefore, he longed for the opportunity to equip them with what they needed to keep them strong as they faced persecution and trials. The truth is that no one can ever get too much exposure to **The Truth**. He can never exhaust the depths of knowledge found in that truth! *What will Paul give them?* Philo said it is *“a good that is balanced and truly complete.”* Nothing is more balanced than a Christian’s life based upon the Gospel, and nothing is more complete than GOD’s word.

Strong defined the word **“lacking”** (ὕστέρημα – hoos-ter-ay-mah) as *“a deficit; specifically poverty: that which is behind.”* Thayer says it is a *“deficiency,”* and Zodhiates says it is *“that which is wanting, want, lack”* (p. 1431). Unfortunately, most people do not realize that their greatest need is the knowledge of GOD’s word with understanding. Unfortunately, many Christians also have a great lack of the Scriptures in their daily activities. It is very understandable that these babes in Christ (Thessalonians) needed more information, information which Paul, as an apostle could provide for them. Again, no Christian can ever be satisfied with the knowledge he has of the Gospel.

“Study to shew thyself approved unto GOD, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

1Thess 3:11 “Now GOD Himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.”

“Now may our GOD and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way unto you.” (ASV)

“Now may GOD Himself, even our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, make straight our way to you.” (TLO)

Thayer says that the word translated **“GOD”** (θεός – theh-os) speaks in general of *“a god or goddess.”* His second definition is *“the Godhead, trinity,”* and his third definition is *“spoken of the only and true God.”* But then our text shows that here it is speaking of the first member of the GODHEAD — **“Now GOD Himself and our Father.”**

Then note that the second member of the GODHEAD is mentioned — **“Lord”** (ruler), **“Jesus”** (Savior), and **“Christ”** (Messiah). Considering the first part of this verse and first ten, one is to understand that Paul was petitioning the Father and the Son for something. **What was it?**

“direct our way unto you” The word **“direct”** is from καταθύνω (kat-yoo-thoo-no). Strong defines this word as *“to straighten fully, i.e., direct: guide,”* and Thayer defines it as *“to make straight, guide, direct.”* Zodhiates says it is *“to guide straight towards or upon something”* (p. 840). This word was used originally to indicate a clearing of the path for the king, i.e., to remove anything which would cause him to stumble or fall, i.e., to slow him down, to impede his progress. In the present text, it is used to signify the removal of any hindrance which would keep Paul away from the Thessalonians.

The word **“way”** comes from ὁδός (hod-os). Strong says it is *“a road; by implication a progress; figuratively*

a mode or means: journey, (high-) way.” The word **“unto”** (πρός (pros)) is *“a preposition of direction.”* It leads to or toward something. In this case, **“you,”** i.e., to the Thessalonians.

1Thess. 3:12 “And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:”

“and the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we also do toward you;” (ASV)

“And may the Lord fill you, and make you overflow with love to one another, and to all, even as we also to you;” (TLO)

The same Greek word is translated here by the English words **“make”** and **“increase.”** Strong says it is *“to do, make, or be more, i.e., increase.”* Thayer says it is to *“super-abound,”* overflow. Considering these definitions, Paul’s prayer is that they would continue to grow and even super-abound in something. That something is **“love”** (ἀγάπη – ag-ah-pay), a self-sacrificing love, looking and working for that which is best for others. This kind of love should be an excessive love, one that cannot be too excessive.

“The Christian quality of agape is never natural to man, and comes only to him who has been transformed by the power of God” (Morris, quoted by Coffman, p. 41).

He wants them to direct their love to **“another,”** i.e., the brethren. But note that they are not only to love their brethren. Their love is also to be directed *“toward all.”* This is the same idea as expressed in Galatians 6:10, in reverse order.

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

An ἀγάπη heart will always seek the best for all men, whoever they may be — the heathen of today or the saints — **even those who would make themselves a Christian's enemy.**

“I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:44-45).

Paul gave them an example of this excessive love — himself, Silas and Timothy (**“even as we do toward you”**). They had sacrificed their comfort and safety to give **all** of mankind the saving news.

“The precepts, principles, and promises of Scripture are the windows through which believers look to see God and understand His glory and will for their lives” (MacArthur, p. 89).

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Peter 1:22-23).

Consider also the way this verse began – **“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love.”** All credit for what is accomplished in a Christian belongs to the Lord. If one's love (for the right things) grows, it is because the Lord has been involved. This comes about by putting total faith and trust in Jesus and the example He gave to follow.

There is another question which is posed by this author for one's consideration. **Is it wrong to offer one's petitions (prayers) to Jesus?** Consider, in the present verse, Whom Paul petitioned for the Thessalonians'

growth in loving one another and all men. What is the role of a mediator? Is he not the go-between for two people, seeking peace between them, or one might say, petitioning another for the cause of which he has been petitioned?

“For there is one GOD, and one mediator between GOD and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5).

In 2nd Thessalonians 3:5, 16; Paul addressed the **“Lord”** in prayer and also in 2nd Corinthians 12:8. This author is not convinced that one cannot petition Jesus, or offer thanksgiving or requests to Jesus, which He then takes to His Father on one’s behalf. This is something to consider, considering how often Paul petitioned Jesus.

1 Thess. 3:13 “To the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before GOD, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.”

“to the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our GOD and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.” (ASV)

“that He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness, before GOD, even our Father, at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, with all His saints.” (TLO)

“To the end” The word **“end”** is from εἰς (ice), and is variously translated *“into, unto, to, towards, for, among”* (Thayer). Strong states that it is *“a primary preposition; to or into (indicating the point reached or entered).”* Zodhiates says εἰς has *“the primary idea of motion into any place or thing; also of motion or direction to, toward or upon any place, thing”* (p. 521). Paul was praying that they would move toward some

goal, and the goal in this text is that GOD will **“stablish your hearts.”**

“stablish” is στηρίζω (stay-rid-zo): *“to set fast, i.e., (literally) to turn resolutely in a certain direction or (figuratively) to confirm”* (Strong). Thayer adds to one’s understanding with *“to make stable, place firmly, set fast, fix...to strengthen, make firm...to render constant, confirm, one’s mind.”* Paul was asking that their **“hearts,”** i.e., their souls, might be set fast, made stable and strengthened in the faith. **Why?** So that they might be **“unblameable in holiness”** when they stand before GOD, or in His sight.

“unblameable” is from ἄμεμπτος (am-emp-tos): to be *“blameless, deserving no censure, free from fault or defect”* (Thayer). Since it is literally impossible for any human being to be free from fault — **what does this mean?** GOD can declare one to be without fault, which will deliver him from an eternity in a Devil’s Hell. This is accomplished when one strives with all of his heart to honor GOD through obedience to the best of His ability in the precepts of GOD. Then GOD will justify that person through His grace and mercy. This happens by practicing ἀγιωσύνη (hagiosune), i.e., *“moral purity”* (**“holiness before GOD”**), in thought and action. The word **“before”** is from ἔμπροσθεν (em-pros-then) — *“in the sight of”* (Thayer), *“in front of”* (Strong). All must remember that they are always in the sight of, in front of, GOD.

“Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off...For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, Thou knowest it altogether. Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in Hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost

parts of the sea; Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee” (Psalm 139:2, 4, 7-12).

There is no escape from GOD, and there should be no desire to escape His all seeing eye.

“at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints” Specifically, when is this coming going to be? At the end of time, when the Lord with His angels comes to **“take vengeance on those that know not GOD, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (2 Thessalonians 1:8). At the same time that vengeance will be brought upon the wicked, He will **“be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day”** (2 Thessalonians 1:10).

1st Thessalonians Chapter Four

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

“Finally then, brethren, we beseech and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as ye received of us how ye ought to walk and to please GOD, even as ye do walk, – that ye abound more and more.” (ASV)

“As to what remains, then, brethren, we beseech and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as you have received from us, how you ought to walk, and please GOD, you would more abound in it.” (TLO)

“Furthermore” comes from the word λοιπόν (loy-pon), which is defined by Strong as *“something remaining...besides, finally, furthermore (from), henceforth.”* Thayer defines it as *“remaining, the rest...hereafter, for the future, henceforth.”* Zodhiates states that it is *“remaining”* and is used of time, indicating from now and in the future (p. 927). In this text, it appears to carry the idea of something that should occur in the future, i.e., something encouraged to be in the future.

The Spirit then led Paul to add **“we beseech you.”** The word **“beseech”** comes from ἐρωτάω (er-o-tah-o), which is defined as *“to interrogate; by implication to request”* (Strong). Thayer defines it as *“to question, to ask, to request, entreat, beg, beseech.”* Paul was requesting something which was to be done by them in the future — from the time they received this letter into the distant future. To this he added the idea of family, those who were his brethren.

Further, Paul **“exhort”** (ed) them to do as he had pleaded and entreated. The word **“exhort”** is from παρακαλεω (par-ak-al-eh-o), *“to call to one’s side”* so as *“to console, to encourage and strengthen, to comfort... to instruct, teach”* (Thayer). Paul was calling for them to do something, as will be stated shortly. **Where is the authority for doing what he asked?** The authority behind his request is **“by”** [ἐν – *“in, by, with, etc.”* (Thayer)] **“the Lord Jesus.”** His beseeching or pleading is done with, in conjunction with, their ruler and Savior. This indicates that the Lord is constantly pleading that His servants remain faithful, doing those things He has commanded, never giving up their struggles to remain as He would have them to be.

Paul next reminded them that the Thessalonians had **“received of us how ye ought to walk and to please GOD.”** The first thing one would notice here is that one may hear instruction as to how he **“ought”** [ἔδει – *“it is necessary, there is need of, it behooves, is right and proper”* (Thayer)] to do something, but such may not translate into actions. GOD has given man the choice as to whether he serves Him or not. The word **“walk”** is from περιπατέω (peripateo), which Strong defines as *“to tread all around, i.e., walk at large (especially as proof of ability).”* Thayer states that it means *“to regulate one’s life, to conduct one’s self, to pass one’s life.”* **How did Paul desire them to regulate their lives?** Regulate their lives in such a way as **“to please GOD.”** The word **“please”** comes from the word ἀρέσκο (ar-es-ko), which Strong defines as *“to be agreeable (or by implication to seek to be so.”* Thayer adds this definition: *“to please...to accommodate one’s self to the opinions, desires, and interests of others.”* **To whom is one to accommodate his thoughts, desires**

and actions? θεός. The text then adds this thought, “so ye would abound more and more.” To “abound” is περισσεύω (per-is-syoo-o), “to exceed a fixed number of measure, to be left over and above a certain number or measure...to abound, overflow” (Thayer). The idea is to fill something up and then keep adding to it until the container overflows with what is being added to it. “To be in excess” (Zodhiates, p. 1150). To emphasize this overabundance which he desired them to attain, Paul adds “more and more” (“to a greater degree” – Thayer). Today, one might say, “I desire that you over-abound to a greater and greater degree.” The idea is that they had overflowed with something, and they were to keep on overflowing in this.

1 Thess. 4:2 “For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.”

“For ye know what charge we gave you through the Lord Jesus.” (ASV)

“For you know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus;” (TLO)

The word “know” comes from εἶδω (i-do), which is the past tense. It means to “be aware, behold... consider (have) known” (Strong). Thayer says it is “to see, i.e., to turn the eyes, the mind, the attention to anything.” Zodhiates states it is “to see with perception.” He went on to state that “the tenses derived from the meaning of εἶδω form two families, one of which has exclusively the meaning to see, the other that of to know.” In the present text, it obviously has to do with knowledge. They had come to know something by preception, by examining and practicing it. They

gave their full attention and concentration to something.

There are those who despise the idea of absolute knowledge. They claim that such does not exist; yet, in the world around them, they themselves rely upon the fact that some things are absolute. A simple illustration would be that they know that one hundred pennies makes one dollar. Further, they **know** that mathematical facts are in existence, that two pennies plus two pennies equals four pennies. They **know** that two plus two is always four! In like manner, one can know, without doubt, that some things are true and other things are false. One can know without doubt that GOD exists and that He has given man the absolute and unchanging truth by which to help him gain Heaven. Jesus emphatically stated, **“ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”** (John 8:32). Note that it is not *“might know,”* or *“possibly know.”* It is **“shall know!”** What is it that will be known by those who consider, behold, turn their minds to this something, examine the evidence carefully? The **“truth”** — the only religious truth. That truth will free one from the uncertainty of the irreligious and the pretended religions. The truth will provide him with the hope he needs to endure the heartaches and injustices of this world.

What did the Holy Spirit say they had known and continued to know? The **“commandments”** which had come from the **“Lord Jesus.”** It was the Spirit which had led Paul to deliver to them the commands which Jesus had previously spoken. Where did Jesus get what He spoke? Did He simply make up commandments on the fly? He received them from His Father: **“All things are delivered unto Me of My Father”** (Matthew 11:27).

Consider the word “**commandments**” which is from [παραγγελία (par-ang-gel-ee-ah)], which is “*a mandate: charge, command*” (Strong). Zodhiates stated that it is “*strictly used of commands received from a superior and transmitted to others*” (p. 1100). According to Hendriksen, this is a military word, i.e., “*instructions*” or “*directions*” (p. 99). The mandates, commands and instructions had previously been given to the apostle by the authority of the Messiah. Paul did not receive his authority from Jerusalem or the other apostles. Since this is the case, he was presently reminding them of their obligations to obey their (and His) commander (Jesus Christ). *Oh how often we lowly human beings need to be reminded of our responsibilities to our commander.*

It might also be considered that a recognition of authority is seen here. If one refuses to obey the authority of an apostle, he needs to understand that he is not simply in rebellion to him — **he is in rebellion to GOD**. Note also the implication: though Paul is doing the writing, it is GOD Who directs his words.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Considering the authority Paul showed behind his words, **what lesson can be learned by those who are always looking for “new truth?”** Friend, one does not need new truth, for there is no new religious truth to be had, regardless of what the Mormons or any other group may advocate. What is **constantly** needed is exhortation to **“earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”** (Jude 3,

emphasis added).

One should remind himself here of the meaning of the word **“Lord”** – (κύριος — koo-ree-os). Strong defines it as *“supreme in authority, i.e., controller.”* Thayer adds, *“he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of deciding; master, lord.”* It should be used, when speaking of Christ, with respect and honor.

Verses three through eight are an exhortation to live pure lives, especially sexually pure lives. To that end, as the poet emphasized, one must never allow himself to embrace sin.

*“Vice is a monster of such frightful mien,
That to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”*

(Poet Unknown to this writer.)

1 Thess. 4:3 “For this is the will of GOD, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:”

“For this is the will of GOD, even your sanctification, that ye abstain from fornication;” (ASV)

“for this is the will of GOD, even your sanctification, that you should abstain from whoredom-” (TLO)

For a background as to what was being practiced in Thessalonica, this writer would recommend one read the introduction to the following section of John McArthur’s commentary on 1 & 2 Thessalonians. It will definitively give one a new perspective as to why the Spirit used Paul to urge these brethren to strongly abstain from being like the world around them (Begins on page 102.). It should be emphasized, for this study, that most in that time (and today) see little or nothing

immoral about almost any kind of sexual activity — such is not considered a sin to them.

“the will of GOD” — “will” — θέλημα (thel-ay-mah) Strong defines this word as *“a determination (properly the thing), i.e., (actively) choice (specifically purpose, decree) or (passively) inclination: desire, pleasure, will.”* Thayer defined it as *“what one wishes or has determined shall be done...of what God wishes to be done by us...commands, precepts.”* There is another word which is translated **“will”** in the English translations — βούλομαι (boulomai). Zodhiates’ lexicon states that the word in the present text (θέλημα) is always used to signify GOD’s will; whereas, βούλομαι is always used of man’s will. The text then is telling one that GOD has determined that man should do something, because it is desired for his good. **But, one may ask, what is that thing which GOD desires for him, which is best for him?**

“your sanctification” “sanctification” — ἁγιασμός (hag-ee-as-mos) Strong states that this is *“properly purification, i.e., (the state) purity.”* Thayer says it is *“consecration, purification.”* Zodhiates states that it is a state in which GOD desires one to be. Another way of thinking about what GOD especially desires is that His people are to be holy, separated from the world. Though He desires compliance to this will for all of mankind, it is evident that most could care less what GOD wants. Thus, it is a behavior that GOD desires of man on his part. **What area of purity does GOD then desire for His people?** GOD desires **“that ye should abstain from fornication.”**

“abstain” — ἀπέχομαι (ap-ekh-om-ahee) Both Strong and Thayer define this word as *“to hold oneself off, i.e., refrain.”* A synonym for this would be “to

exercise self-restraint,” to absolutely not be involved in a specified area. Let one review here. GOD desires for mankind *to be purified, to keep himself pure by abstaining,* staying away from, something. **What is that something?** The specific thing under consideration in this text is fornication. **What then is fornication?**

“fornication” When this word was more commonly used in the English language in America, it was defined as *“sex between unmarried people.”* The word **“fornication”** comes from the Greek word πορνεία (por-ni-ah). Strong’s definition of this word is *“harlotry (including adultery and incest).”* Thayer defines it as *“illicit sexual intercourse...adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals, etc...sexual intercourse with close relatives...sexual intercourse with a divorced man or woman.”* He went on to say that, when the word is used metaphorically, it refers to the worship of idols. As can be seen from the definition shown above, **“fornication”** is an umbrella word which covers **any kind of sexual impurity**. It is **any** sexual activity outside of what GOD had authorized, i.e., what is found outside of the only place GOD has authorized sexual activity — **MARRIAGE**. GOD desires for His creation to be free from any sexual activity which is contrary to His expressed regulations for man’s behavior, i.e., sex outside of His definition of a legal marriage. Let one not forget that this is not a prohibition meant to keep mankind from enjoying life. This is a prohibition designed for mans, and societies, well being. It does not take a genius to look around at the world and see the many harmful effects the breaking of GOD’s commands regarding fornication have brought upon man. Let it be clearly stated — sexual immorality and holiness are polar opposites.

“Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils” (1 Corinthians 10:21).

1 Thess. 4:4 “That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;”

“that each one of you know how to possess himself of his own vessel in sanctification and honor,” (ASV)

“that every one of you should know how to possess his own body in sanctification and honor-” (TLO)

How does one avoid sexual immorality – control his passions? Proper care must be exercised by each individual to control sexual appetites and temptations — to keep himself pure.

“Because Christians today are incessantly exposed to all kinds of sights, sounds, and philosophies that tempt their fallen flesh to immoral thoughts and actions, they must know how to resist such temptations” (MacArthur, p. 106 — MacArthur believed in the false concept of “original sin,” but his thoughts here are correct other than that.).

Each person **“should know”** (εἶδω — i-do) something. Among other concepts of εἶδω (i-do), it speaks of knowledge and understanding, i.e., *“to know how, to be skilled”* (Thayer). It is not an automatic knowledge which one has, but rather something which is developed through thought, control and practice. When a Christian examines himself daily (2 Cor. 13:5), he will come to know himself in such a way as to understand both his strengths and weaknesses. One must first learn and understand his weaknesses before he can defend himself from the attacks of Satan against his purity. Likewise he must know the strengths and tools he has in order to withstand Satan. **What skill is**

one to develop because of the knowledge he has?

“how to possess his vessel” Strong defines the word **“possess”** [κτάομαι (ktah-om-ahee)] as *“to get, i.e., acquire (by any means; own): obtain, possess, provide, purchase.”* Thayer defines it as *“to acquire, get, or procure a thing for one’s self, to possess.”* It is the concept of keeping something within one’s control. Self control is being emphasized.

“The victim of sensual passion ceases to be master of his own person” (Lipscomb, p. 46).

What is to be kept in one’s possession? **“his vessel”** Thayer states that σκευος (skyoo-os – **“vessel”**) was commonly used by the Greeks as a metaphor *“for ‘body’ since Greeks thought of souls living temporarily in bodies.”* This is exactly how the Bible uses this word. There are those who try to make the word **“vessels”** to mean one’s wife, but, as Edwards pointed out, the word σκευος is never used to describe a man’s wife (p. 124). He is to keep his own passions, and thus his own actions, under control.

Man is first admonished to keep his body in **“sanctification.”** This word is from ἁγιασμός (hag-ee-as-mos), which Strong defines as *“purification, i.e., (the state) purity; concretely (by Hebraism) a purifier: holiness, sanctification.”* Thayer says it is *“the effect of consecration...sanctification of heart and life.”* Zodhiates states that this word is translated as **“holiness”** in verse seven of this chapter.

“Purity is not a momentary impulse, but a lesson, a habit” (Lightfoot, quoted by Weaver, p. 248).

It is something which must be practiced and guarded **every day** of one’s life.

Second, Christians are to keep their bodies in a state of **“honor”** which comes from the word τιμή (tee-

may). Strong defined it as *“a value...by analogy esteem (especially of the highest degree) or the dignity itself.”* Thayer states it is *“honor which belongs or is shown to one...reverence.”* Zodhiates says it is *“to pay honor, respect.”* The question then is **Who is being honored when one keep’s his body in purity?** The obvious answer is GOD (see verse one — **“to please GOD”**). One’s body is to be kept in purity in order to please GOD, to honor Him. There is also the aspect of one’s honoring his own body by keeping it pure. It is honoring the body and spirit which GOD has given him. If one is married, by keeping himself pure, he is also honoring his mate.

“One who acts honorably will not show disrespect to his own body, but neither will he demean the value of others through immoral acts” (Weaver, p. 249). Amen

1 Thess. 4:5 “Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not GOD:”

“not in the passion of lust, even as the Gentiles who know not GOD;” (ASV)

“not in the passion of lust, even as the Gentiles who know not GOD.” (TLO)

In what area of their lives are Christians to know how to maintain purity? As verse three pointed out, it is in the area of sexual purity. Now the Spirit instructs further by teaching that one is not to allow the **“lust of concupiscence”** to control him.

The word **“lust”** comes from the word πάθος (pathos), which Strong defines as *“properly suffer, i.e., subjectively) a passion.”* Thayer defines this word as *“a feeling which the mind suffers...an affliction of the mind, emotion, passion...used by the Greeks in either a good*

or bad sense.” Thayer went on to say that *“in the NT in a bad sense, depraved passion, vile passions.”* Zodhiates adds to one’s understanding of this word when he states that *“Pathos is the soul’s diseased condition out of which the various lusts spring”* (p. 1087, emphasis added). Zodhiates indicates that this passion of the mind is a disease, which in fact it is. Sin **is** a disease which eats away the soul, as a cancer does the physical body, until it is totally corrupted, until he dies.

The third word in the phrase **“lust of concupiscence”** comes from the word ἐπιθυμία (ep-ee-thoo-mee-ah). Strong defines this word as *“a longing (especially for what is forbidden)...lust after.”* Thayer states that it is a *“desire, craving, longing desire for what is forbidden, lust”* (emphasis added). Zodhiates states it is a *“strong desire, longing, lust.”* When one puts all of this together, he sees that the **“lust of concupiscence”** involves a mind which has been allowed to embrace the disease of craving that which has been forbidden by GOD. Such a one’s mind has advanced well beyond simply liking something, wishing he could have something, or longing after something — **it craves that forbidden thing**. Thus, such a mind is in the advanced stages of spiritually dying.

Note the expression **“even as the Gentiles.”** It is this writer’s studied belief, considering the Jews’ use of this word, that this word is a euphemism for non-Christians, i.e., unbelievers, those that follow the standards of the world which belong to the Devil. **To whom was this letter addressed?** This opinion is backed up by the next phrase, which describes these **“Gentiles”** as those **“which know not GOD.”** This

describes someone who may believe that there is a GOD, but which has determined, for the time being, not to follow His wishes for his life.

1 Thess. 4:6 **“That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.”**

“that no man transgress, and wrong his brother in the matter: because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as also we forewarned you and testified.” (ASV)

“That no man should go beyond bounds, or defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger of all such;” (TLO)

The first phrase to be noted in this verse is **“That no man go beyond”** The word **“beyond”** comes from ὑπερβαίνω (hoop-er-bahee-no), of which Strong gives this definition: *“to transcend; i.e., (figuratively) to overreach: go beyond.”* Thayer says it is *“to step over, beyond...metaphorically to overstep the proper limits.”* Zodhiates said it is *“to go or pass over a wall, mountains...figuratively, to overstep certain limits, to transgress”* (p. 1413). With this definition, one might picture someone who comes up to a low wall (boundary line) and, instead of respecting this limitation, steps over it. It can be observed that GOD has set boundaries for His creation — a line in the sand so-to-speak Yet, He has not made a wall so high that one cannot step over it, if he chooses, and enter into sin. GOD gave man the ability to choose his course, while at the same time desiring that he not cross His established boundaries.

“and defraud his brother in any matter” The first

thing noticed is the word **“and,”** a conjunction which draws two thoughts or actions together, classifying them in whatever category is being discussed (One is as bad or good as the other, depending upon the context.). The word **“defraud”** comes from πλεονεκτέω (pleh-on-ek-teh-o). Strong defines this word as *“to be covetous, i.e., (by implication) to over reach: get an advantage, defraud, make a gain.”* Thayer defines it as *“to gain or take advantage of another, to overreach.”* Zodhiates states that it is *“to have more than another, covet, take advantage, defraud”* (p. 1173). Since the context speaks of sexual sins, one is not to be covetous, i.e., one is not to take advantage of another in that which he has no right to possess. Further, he is not even to desire (covet) that which belongs to another.

“any matter” Since the context is particularly talking about sexual sin, this word is not speaking of any matter, which the added word *“any”* in the KJV falsely indicates. The ASV better translates this word as *“in the matter”* and the TLO as *“in this matter,”* either of which is in keeping with the context. The word itself [πραῖγμα (prag-mah)] is defined by Thayer as *“a matter, question, affair; specifically in a forensic sense, a matter at law, case, suit.”* Thus, it refers to the law which GOD has made (in context) with regard to sexual purity.

Why should one not “go beyond and defraud his brother?” “because that the Lord is the avenger of all such” The word **“avenger”** comes from ἔκδικος (ek-dik-os), which is defined by Strong as *“carrying out. i.e., a punisher.”* Thayer defines it as *“exacting penalty from one, an avenger, punisher,”* while Zodhiates defines it as *“executing right and justice, hence an avenger, punisher”* (p. 538). In the Law of Moses, the one who upheld justice when someone killed another,

whether it was murder or accidentally taking another's life, was the next of kin — the avenger. The text here emphasizes that it is **“the Lord”** Who will avenge those who have been taken advantage of. His vengeance will be brought upon those involved in craving and executing those cravings against another. This is the one Who is all knowing, Who Himself, kept **“his vessel in sanctification and honour”** and expects His disciples to do the same. The One Who left the perfect example of what is expected of man in the area of purity (1 Pet. 2:21) is the **“avenger.”**

“as we also have forewarned you and testified”

Paul reminds them that he had in past times **“forewarned”** them that, if they did not keep themselves pure, there was One who would avenge those who were defrauded. One who would, with perfect knowledge and justice, avenge the law which He had given mankind. Thayer says the word **“testified”** [διαμαρτύρομαι (dee-am-ar-too-rom-ahee)] means **“to testify.”** He went on to say it is **“earnestly, religiously to charge.”** This indicates that he was not simply reminding them of what he had told them before; but he was at the same time charging, or commanding, them to keep themselves under the control of GOD's laws.

1 Thess. 4:7 “For GOD hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.”

“For GOD called us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification.” (ASV)

“for GOD has not called us to impurity, but to holiness.” (TLO)

Why is there the need for an avenger? Why had Paul forewarned them, reminded them, and charged them to keep themselves pure?

“For GOD hath not called us” GOD has **“called”** man for a purpose. Anything outside of GOD’s purpose is taboo. The question arises as to how GOD has called man. Paul stated that GOD **“called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (2 Thessalonians 2:14). GOD calls man through the Gospel (His word). **For what purpose?** So that man can obtain the glory of His Son, the glory which He now has sitting at the right hand of GOD, eternal glory. He has called man to **“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called”** (1 Timothy 6:12, emphasis added). It is a **fight** which Christians **must win** in order to avoid eternal separation from the loving GOD which gave His life for them. **What kind of life does GOD require from man?**

It is a life avoiding **“uncleanness,”** i.e., refusing to be involved in any activity which renders him unclean. Before GOD. The word **“uncleanness”** comes from the word ἀκαθαρσία (ak-ath-ar-see-ah), which Strong defines as *“impurity (the quality) physically or morally.”* Thayer gives one more understanding of this word: *“in a moral sense: the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living.”* Zodhiates says it is *“uncleanness or filth in a natural or physical sense; moral uncleanness, lewdness, incontinence, in general...any unnatural pollution, whether acted out by oneself, or with another”* (p. 108). Note that these definitions focus primarily on physical actions. **But how can one keep from physical uncleanness if he does not keep his mind clean? “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he”** (Proverbs 23:7). Unclean thoughts lead to unclean actions! This is true whether it be considered in the physical or spiritual realm.

Christians are to lead lives of **“holiness”** — ἁγιωσύνη (hag-ee-as-mos). This is a life of **“purity”** (Strong), a life of **“consecration, purification”** (Thayer). When man comes to an understanding of what constitutes sin, and that there is sin in his life, he will also come to understand the need for purification. He will instinctively understand that he cannot cleanse himself, no matter how hard he tries. He simply cannot scrub away the filth he has acquired. Like David of old, he shall cry out to GOD, **“Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin”** (Psalm 51:2). Note another passage from the Psalmist here: **“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy word”** (Psalm 119:9). It is GOD’s written word by which cleansing takes place, through a washing away of sin. How is this filth washed away so that one can be pure, clean, and holy in GOD’s sight? **“And from Jesus Christ, Who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood”** (Revelation 1:5, emphasis added). When Saul of Tarsus recognized his sinful life, What did Ananias tell him to do to gain forgiveness, so that he could be declared pure and clean by GOD? **“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord”** (Acts 22:16, emphasis added). This washing away of moral filthiness can only take place in the watery grave of immersion (βαπτίζω).

1 Thess. 4:8 “He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but GOD, Who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit.”

“Therefore he that rejecteth, rejecteth not man, but GOD, who giveth His Holy Spirit unto you.” (ASV)

“Therefore, indeed, he who despises not man, but GOD, who certainly has given to us His Holy Spirit.” (TLO)

The word **“therefore”** comes from the word τοιγαροῦν (toy-gar-oon). Strong defines it as, *“truly, for then, i.e., consequently;”* while Thayer defines it as *“wherefore then, for which reason, therefore, consequently.”* Zodhiates defines it as *“by certain consequence, consequently.”* This word indicates a strong announcement regarding the injunctions just given by Paul. GOD’s purpose was for man to purify himself and remain pure through following GOD’s commands. Note the definitions of the word **“despiseth”** [ἀθετέω (ath-et-eh-o)]. Strong defines it as, *“to set aside, i.e., (by implication) to disesteem, neutralize or violate.”* Thayer says it means *“to do away with, to set aside, disregard...to thwart the efficacy of anything, nullify, make void, frustrate...to reject, to refuse, to slight.”* Zodhiates adds to one’s knowledge with *“to displace, to abrogate, abolish, get rid of”* (p. 89). The same Greek word is used in both cases, one referring to man, and the other to GOD. When anyone sets aside, does away with, refuses, or gets rid of the instructions given by Paul (the Scriptures), he does not simply show contempt toward the man and his message, but more importantly he shows contempt toward GOD. Such an individual is trying to neutralize GOD’s word and its influence upon him.

“Who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit.”

One might ask, Who is the **“us”** of this phrase? Is this speaking of the apostles who were originally given the Spirit? Or is it speaking of all who were given the

inspired instructions of the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit?

It is this writer's opinion that it is speaking of the inspired writers, both apostles and non-apostles (James, Jude, Luke). The text reveals that it was GOD Who gave the Spirit and His message to mankind. It is the GODHEAD which has provided man with the instructions given in the Scriptures. Therefore, when man rejects the Scriptures, he is frustrating the grace of GOD in his life!

“Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of His grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands”
(Acts 14:3 emphasis added).

“And now, brethren, I commend you to GOD, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32, emphasis added).

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

“But concerning love of the brethren ye have no need that one write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of GOD to love one another;” (ASV)

“But, concerning brotherly love, you have no need that I write to you, for you yourselves are taught of GOD to love one another.”
(TLO)

The word **“touching”** comes from περί (per-ee), which is defined by Strong as *“through (all over), i.e., around; figuratively with respect to.”* Thayer defined it as *“about, concerning, on account of, because of, around, near.”* Zodhiates says it is *“around, about or of, in the sense of concerning or regarding”* (p. 1141). The Spirit now gives commendation, admonishment and

instruction regarding **“brotherly love”** — φιλαδελφία (fil-as-el-fee-ah). The text indicates this as a *“fraternal affection”* (Strong), which indicates a love for those of like mind and purpose. Thayer states that *“in the NT the love which Christians cherish for each other as brethren.”* In Hendrikson’s commentary, he defined the word φιλαδελφία as *“love to the brother by birth”* (p. 404). Indeed, all Christians are brethren, i.e., brothers by birth in the grave of immersion, regardless of nationality or race. One of the central points is that one must be “in Christ” in order to have this brotherly relationship, this family relationship, with another. Brethren, today or at any time, need to consider that love is not simply to be a word or thought. It is to be expressed in actions. In fact, this author would unequivocally declare that there is no such thing as love without corresponding action.

“In the second century, the scoffing writer, Lucian, in speaking about Christians, declared, ‘It is incredible to see the ardor with which the people of that religion help each other in their wants. They spare nothing. Their first legislator has put it into their heads that they are all brethren’” (Fields, p. 109).

When one considers **“brotherly love,”** he needs to understand, that in the time this letter was written, it was a *“dog eat dog”* world. Love of brethren, if it existed at all, was found only in blood relationships.

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34-35).

“ye need not that I write unto you” This phrase indicates that there was not a specific need at this time for him to write about **“brotherly love,”** i.e., there were no specific **“contentions”** between brethren such as existed at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:11-14).

“for ye yourselves are taught of GOD to love one another.” It is not man who teaches another to love his brethren in Christ. Note the subtle way in which GOD is given the credit for the teaching in the Scriptures on love or any other subject.

“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him” (1 John 2:9-10, emphasis added).

Since Jesus is the light of the world (John 1:9; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46), it is no stretch to say that the above passage could be read as **“in Christ”** (**“in the light”**). If someone claims to be living in Christ and hates his brother, he is actually living in the darkness which belongs to Satan.

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, Who is the image of GOD, should shine unto them” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

The light GOD gives to man reveals and dispels the darkness and ignorance of sin.

The phrase **“love one another”** is to be a reciprocal action. It is not enough for one person in Christ to love his fellow Christians. Congregations are to be composed of individuals who all love all other individuals in GOD’s family. Unlike the topics discussed above this verse (**“lust of concupiscence,” “uncleanness”** — vv. 5, 7), the love GOD desires for his people to have is pure, clean, wholesome. It is to be a love which constantly desires the best for his fellow Christian (and his fellow man). It is a love that is thus sacrificial. As MacArthur well stated, this is not a **“love”** *“motivated by supernatural appearance, emotional attraction, or sentimental relationship”* (p. 118).

1Thess. 4:10 “And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;”

“for indeed ye do it toward all the brethren that are in all Macedonia. But we exhort you, brethren, that ye abound more and more;” (ASV)

“And, indeed, you do it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia: but we exhort you, brethren, still to abound,” (TLO)

The affirmation is given of their love, which was being shown unto all the brethren in Macedonia. No doubt this information was given to Paul by Timothy upon his return from Thessalonica (1 Thess. 3:6). **To whom had they extended their love?** To **“all the brethren.”** They made no distinctions between their brethren in social standing, *“rich and poor, educated and uneducated, or in any other ways”* (Edwards, p. 127).

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).

Note also that the brethren in Thessalonica were encouraged to **“increase more and more”** in their love for their brethren. The word **“increase”** comes from περισσεύω (per-is-syoo-o). Strong states that this word means *“to superabound (in quantity or quality), be in excess, be superfluous.”* Thayer states that it is *“to exist or be at hand in abundance; to be great (abundant).”* Zodhiates says it is *“to be in excess, exceed in number or measure. In the NT, to be or have more than enough”* (p. 1150). One of the keys here is the idea that there is always room for improvement and for growth. All need to encourage each other to further

growth in the Lord in every area and especially in love for one another.

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen” (2 Peter 3:18).

Consider another thought as to why their love should continue and expand super-abundantly among the brethren. That love toward one another was a badge of ownership.

“O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me. And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17:25-26).

1 Thess. 4:11 “And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;”

“and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your hands, even as we charged you;” (ASV)

“and earnestly study to be quiet; and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you:” (TLO)

This passage gives another command for Christians: **“And that ye study to be quiet.”** The word **“study”** in the text carries a different meaning to modern readers than does the Greek. This word comes from φιλοτιμέομαι (fil-ot-im-eh-om-ahee), which Strong defines as *“to be fond of honor, i.e., emulus (eager or earnest to do something): labour, strive, study.”* Thayer gives a lengthy meaning of this word: *“to be fond of honour, to be actuated by love of honour, from a love of honour to strive to bring something to pass...to be ambitious, to strive earnestly, make it one’s aim.”* Citing

1st Thessalonians 4:11 for its meaning, Zodhiates states that it means *“to make something an ambition”* (p. 1448). When considering these definitions, one comes to understand that the Spirit is commanding Christians to strive for honor by pursuit in a particular area of his life. *For what should a Christian ambitiously strive to obtain?*

“to be quiet” The word **“quiet”** often means to do something quietly or not to speak at all. But note this original word’s meaning, for it refers to a particular quietness to be observed. ἡσυχάζω (hay-soo-khad-zo), **“to be quiet,”** means *“to keep still (intransitively), i.e., refrain from labor meddlesomeness or speech”* (Strong). Thayer gives more understanding to this word when he said it is *“to keep quiet...to lead a quiet life, said of those not running hither and thither, but stay at home and mind their business.”* Zodhiates says it is *“to be quiet, live quietly”* (p. 714). When considering these definitions, one sees that he is not to be a busybody running around snooping into, or inserting himself into, the private business of another. Another way of saying this is *“Mind your own business, because you have enough on your plate to keep you busy.”*

“Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matthew 6:34).

The above thought is confirmed in the next phrase under consideration — **“and to do your own business.”** The words **“your own business”** come from ἴδιος (id-ee-os), which Strong says means *“pertaining to self, i.e., one’s own; by implication private or separate.”* Thayer states it is *“pertaining to one’s self, one’s own, belonging to one’s self.”* Zodhiates adds to the understanding of this word by stating that it

means *“properly one’s own. As pertaining to a private person and not to the public; private, particular, individual”* (p. 755). This reinforces the concept of taking care of one’s private business and staying out of the private business of others, something those which are prone to gossip need to understand and heed.

“But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters”
(1 Peter 4:15).

What is one to do?

“work with your own hands” The idea is to keep one’s self busy doing his own work. If everyone did this, keeping himself particularly busy in working to control himself, his family’s business, and engaging in the Lord’s work, he would have more than enough to keep himself out of the “private” business of others. GOD expects His servants to be **“fruitful in every good work”** (Col. 1:10), but that cannot be accomplished by being busybodies. A Christian’s work involves providing physically for himself and his own family. It involves work in order to have the ability to help others who are not GOD’s children (Eph. 4:28). It also involves minding the souls of his own family, the souls of others, and in general, the Lord’s work. Further, note that this was not a suggestion: **“as we commanded you.”** *If one follows these instructions, what will be the results?*

1 Thess. 4:12 “That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.”

“that ye may walk becomingly toward them that are without, and may have need of nothing.” (ASV)

“that you may walk decently toward them who are without, and

may have need of nothing.” (TLO)

The Spirit says there are two results of one doing his own work and minding his own business. First he will walk εὐσχημόνως (yoo-skhay-mn-ocē), i.e., *“decorously: decently, honestly”* (Strong; Zodhiates, p. 685); *“in a seemly manner, decently”* (Thayer). Zodhiates added that synonyms for this word are *“honorably, honestly, well.”* Thus, one is to understand that his life is to be lived in an honorable and honest manner. Not only should this kind of life be viewed by GOD as being such, but those **“without”** should also observe him as being honorable and honest. Further, such behavior on the part of Christians will bring honor to GOD.

“That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him” (John 5:23).

“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise GOD, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen (1 Timothy 1:17).

Who are those “without?” They are those who are outside the body of Christ, i.e., non-Christians. One of the greatest hindrances in expanding the Lord’s kingdom in a community are Christians who do not mind their own business and who do not have an honest and honorable reputation.

But there is also a second benefit to doing one’s own work and minding his own business — that **“ye may have lack of nothing.”** Zodhiates states that the word ἔχω (ekh-o), **“have,”** means *“to have, to hold, i.e., to have and hold, implying continued possession”* (p. 692). **What is the most important thing to have in one’s possession? Is it not eternal salvation? χρεία [(khri-ah),**

“lack”] Strong defined this word as *“employment, i.e., an affair; also (by implication) occasion, demand, requirement or destination.”* Thayer defined it as *“necessity, need, duty, business.”* Zodhiates states that it means *“use, usage, employment, act of using. In the NT metonymically, i.e., which one is employed, an employment, affair, business...of personal need, want”* (p. 1480). The word **“nothing”** comes from μηδείς μηδεμία μηδέν (may-dice may-dem-ah may-den). Strong says this word means *“not even one (man, woman, thing),”* while Thayer says it means *“nobody, no one, nothing.”* Zodhiates states that it means *“not even one, no one, i.e., no one whoever he may be”* (p. 980). The Spirit is showing that this is the kind of behavior which will win the respect of others. The world of that time was involved in taking from others, i.e., taking advantage of others. Sounds a lot like American society today. It may be grudging respect given by the world, nevertheless such a work ethic and treating others fairly will bring respect, at least from some. And it is toward those “some” who may at least be influenced to listen to the Gospel, or possibly obey it, that one’s work must be aimed. But one must also consider the influence such behavior would have on brethren.

MacArthur stated that manual labor among the Greeks was considered as debasing; therefore, they did not do any of it, but assigned their slaves to do it. Such is not the case in the church. Paul told the Thessalonians that working with one’s hands is honorable. Note the words of the Spirit in 2nd Thessalonians 3:10-11 on this subject.

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

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

The commands of the present text, combined with those in Second Thessalonians, seem to indicate that, once some of the Thessalonians became Christians, they did not feel the need to work. Perhaps, as suggested by some, they had the idea, that once they became free in Christ, they owed no responsibility to their masters to continue working. Note that it is when they were idle that they spent their time as busybodies (1 Thess. 3:10-11). Coming back to the present text, one can see the Spirit's anticipation of this problem, and rightly so. As Christians, one is not to depend on others for a livelihood, when he can himself work to provide for his own needs. If any man can work (Christian or non-Christian), he is expected by GOD to provide for himself, his family and those who are not capable of providing for themselves. GOD does not endorse laziness or moochers in any society. It would seem the text in 2nd Thessalonians three was needed, because they did not listen to Paul in the present text.

“For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat” (2 Thessalonians 3:10, emphasis added).

“It is very plain that a lazy man is not a true Christian” (Zerr, p. 149).

“Diligent labor in that which is good that one may supply his own needs and those of his family, be able to pay his debts, act honestly toward others, and have to give to those who need is the law of God” (Lipscomb, p. 53).

“A person who says, ‘I do not care what people think,’ does not have the Christian spirit. Paul certainly showed that we are to care about what others think in order to ‘win’ their respect and ultimately win some of them to Christ...1 Corinthians 9:22”

(Edwards, p. 129).

“That person who through indolence or lack of application finds himself continually in need of assistance from others is, in fact, a parasite” (Coffman, p. 50).

“Best, well says that ‘the whole thought here is illuminated by Gal. 6:3, 5: the believer never lets himself be a burden to others; he always seeks to help others with their burdens’” (Quoted by Weaver, p. 273).

1 Thess. 4:13 “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.”

“But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope.” (ASV)

“Now, I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them who sleep; that you may not be grieved, even as the others, who have no hope.” (TLO)

“But I would not have you to be ignorant” The word **“ignorant”** [ἄγνοέω (ag-no-eh-o)] means *“not to know (through lack of information or intelligence)”* (Strong). Thayer adds that it can mean *“to err or sin through mistake, to be wrong.”* Zodhiates shows the meaning as *“not to recognize or know”* (p. 73). As can be seen, there are a number of ways a person can be ignorant. It should be considered that ignorance is not an excuse for being involved in sin, or not doing what is right in GOD’s eyes. To illustrate how dangerous ignorance can be, one may be walking in a forest or jungle and come upon a viper that is hidden from his sight. Vipers are one of the most dangerous types of snakes, with a lethal bite. If one, in ignorance of its

presence, walks near it, he will probably be bitten. Ignorance with regard to the serpents presence will not shield him from being bitten. The same is true in religion. Ignorance of GOD's commands will not shield one from the consequences of Satan's deadly fangs. The conclusion of these thoughts is that *ignorance is no excuse for violating GOD's commands.*

Note that the text is warning **“brethren”** about being ignorant, without knowledge, understanding, or recognition. Although the same thoughts about ignorance would also appertain to those who are ignorantly in the grasp of Satan, such is not the subject here. This text deals with a particular subject about which he does not want the brethren to have a lack of understanding. The subject under consideration is **the death of Christians before the Lord comes.**

“concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.”

The Spirit begins this instruction with a comparison between two groups — Christians who died and non-believers who died (those **“without hope”**). The word **“sleep”** [κοιμάω (koy-mah-o)] can refer to the rest one's body needs and gets when he slumbers, or, as in this text, it can be used as a euphemism for the separation of body and soul, i.e., death.

The word **“sorrow”** is from λυπέω (loo-peh-o), which Strong defines as *“to distress; reflexively or passively to be sad.”* Thayer states that it is *“to make sorrowful; to affect with sadness, cause grief, to throw into sorrow.”* Zodhiates adds, *“to grieve, afflict with sorrow.”* In context, this indicates that the Thessalonians were in distress or grieving over their brethren who had deceased. Grief shared over a friend or relative's death is not the issue here. What is under

consideration is that they were grieving over these brethren as if they had died without hope. The Spirit is saying that they should not grieve over brethren who died as if they now had no hope. **What could cause them to do this?** Nothing except a belief that one had to be alive when the Lord returns to participate in the glories of Heaven. The context leads this writer to consider that this was the belief that at least some at Thessalonica had come to accept. Otherwise, **Why the need for Paul to write these words of comfort?**

1 Thess. 4:14 “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will GOD bring with Him.”

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will GOD bring with him.”
(ASV)

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again; so, also, them who sleep, will GOD, through Jesus, bring with Him.”
(TLO)

The belief (faith) which bears on this subject is **“that Jesus died and rose again.”** This is a faith which is to sustain Christians, to give them the hope that they need to overcome the evils of this world. Of this verse, Marshall said that *“GOD will treat those who died trusting in Jesus in the same way He treated Jesus Himself, namely by resurrecting them”* (Quoted by MacArthur, p. 128). The resurrection of Jesus is in fact the proof that the faithful of all ages will be raised at His coming. Note the following passages on this subject.

“GOD hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power” (1 Corinthians 6:14).

“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is

written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” (2 Corinthians 4:13-14).

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming” (1 Corinthians 15:22-23).

In the above passage (1 Cor. 15:22-23), note several things. (1) Because of Adam, all physically die. (2) In Christ, all (believers) will be made alive (a future date). (3) There is an order to these resurrections: Christ first, then those who belong to Christ. (4) Jesus has already risen. (5) Those who belong to Him, in all ages, will be raised at His coming. Who is GOD going to bring with Jesus? The saints who had previously lived, and those who are alive at His coming.

1 Thess. 4:15 “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.”

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep.” (ASV)

“Besides, this we affirm to you, by the word of the Lord, that we, the living, who remain at the coming of the Lord, shall not anticipate them who are asleep.” (TLO)

This passage begins with an assurance or strong affirmation of what is about to be said — “**this we say.**” The word “**say**” comes from the Greek λέγω (leg-o). Strong gives the definition of this word as “*properly to lay forth, i.e., figuratively relate.*” Thayer says it means

“to say, to speak; affirm over, maintain...to point out with words, intend, mean, mean to say.” Zodhiates states that it is *“to lay before...to put forth, propound”* (p. 913). In the last passage, the Spirit let them know that, in essence, there is going to be a general resurrection. The emphasis of such was to proclaim that the living in Christ, when He comes, will have no advantage over those who died before His coming.

Consider then the authority behind the Spirit’s words here, **“by the word of the Lord.”** GOD has proclaimed it; therefore, it is fact, regardless of what has erroneously been taught about events to come by false teachers — **it will be just as He said.** The phrase, **“the word of the Lord,”** announces what is said here as a prophetic utterance given to his spokesman, to then be delivered to man, specifically in this case, to Christians.

What has been affirmed by the strong, unchanging word of the Lord? **“we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep”** The Spirit informed the Corinthian’s; **“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed”** (1 Corinthians 15:51). In neither of these passages is reference made to the Lord’s coming in Paul’s lifetime or in that of any of those to whom the epistles were written. They are simply a direct statement that any who were alive at the time of His coming would be caught up to be with the Lord. It might be added that **caught up** is not the same as remain with Him in His “earthly kingdom.” One cannot be caught up and remain at the same time. Note also that the time of the Lord’s coming is specified with events which will take place at that time.

“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump:

for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality” (IBID, vv 52-53).

These events will not be drawn out. They will be instantaneous – **“the twinkling of an eye”** — and will be joined not only with the raising of the dead, but a great trumpet shall be sounded.

“So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (IBID, v. 54).

The word **“prevent”** is interpreted in the ASV as **“precede”** and in the TLO as **“anticipate.”** The Greek word here is φθάνω (fthan-o), which Strong states means **“to be beforehand, i.e., anticipate or precede.”** Thayer says it means **“to come before, precede, anticipate...to reach, attain to.”** The thought being expressed is that neither the living or dead saints will have any advantage in meeting the Lord. It must be observed that this context (and that in the Corinthian letter) speaks directly to the fact that there will be an instantaneous bodily resurrection of all.

Zerr (p. 149) gave an interesting observation of truth here which is worth one’s meditation. He pointed out that both this passage and that of First Corinthians chapter fifteen show that Christianity will still be alive on earth when the second coming arrives. Thus, true Christianity is not going to perish from this earth as long as this world exists.

1 Thess. 4:16-17 “For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of GOD: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which

are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of GOD: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (ASV)

“for the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the Arch Angel, and with the trumpet of GOD. And the dead in Christ shall rise first; afterward we, the living, who remain, shall, at the same time with them, be instantly taken up in clouds, to join the Lord in the air; and so we shall be for ever with the Lord.” (TLO)

The particular order for the events of the coming of Jesus for His saints at the last day is given in these verses. (1) The Lord will descend from Heaven, and He will do so with a shout. (2) The voice of the archangel will be heard. (3) The trumpet of GOD will be sounded. (4) The dead in Christ will arise from the dead. (5) Those who are alive at His coming will join those who have previously died. (6) Both will ascend to meet the Lord in the air (not on earth). (7) From that point on, those in Christ will be with Him in Heaven (not on earth) for eternity. Note that any concept of a millennial reign on earth is destroyed by this passage. This would also imply, at least to this author, that judgment will be instantaneous for all, not a long drawn out, i.e., one by one

Jesus told His listeners something else about the time of the last day in Matthew 16:26-27.

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in

the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works.”

Not only are the dead in Christ going to be resurrected, but the dead in Satan will be raised too. **For what purpose?** The judgment day.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*” (2 Cor. 5:10).

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Peter 2:9).

1 Thess. 4:19 “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

“Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” (ASV)

“Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.” (TLO)

The word **“wherefore”** [ὥστε (hoce-the)] means **“so that. Inasmuch that, so then, therefore, wherefore”** (Thayer). A conclusion is reached, or one might better say a concluding admonition is given.

The word **“comfort one another with these words”** **“comfort”** is from the word παρακαλέω (par-ak-al-eh-o), which has been noted before. It is to call another to one’s side for the purpose of consoling, encouraging, and strengthening him. They were to use the information just given regarding the resurrection and the coming of the Lord to encourage one another not to lose faith, to fortify their hope. They were to encourage one another to **“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses”** (1 Timothy 6:12). **Why?** Because it is

impossible for GOD to lie!

“That by two immutable things, in which *it was impossible for GOD to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us*” (Hebrews 6:18, emphasis added).

There is a surety about their hope which Christians (then and now) should mention and discuss to/with one another on a regular basis.

First Thessalonians

Chapter Five

1Thess. 5:1-2 **“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.”**

“But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that aught be written unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.” (ASV)

“However, concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write to you: for yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night.” (TLO)

“But of the times and the seasons” At first glance, one might wonder what the difference is between **“times”** and **“seasons.”** The word **“times”** comes from χρόνος (khron-os), which Strong defined as *“a space of time”* and Thayer defined it as *“time either long or short.”* Zodhiates states that *“this word perceives time quantitatively as a period measured by the succession of objects and events and denotes the passing of moments”* (p. 1487). The word **“seasons”** comes from καιρός (kahee-ros), which Strong defines as *“an occasion, i.e., set or proper time.”* Thayer says it is *“a measure of time, a larger or smaller portion of time, hence: a fixed and definite time, the time when things are brought to crisis, the decisive epoch waited for.”* Was the Spirit anticipating a question of curiosity based upon what had just been said about the dead and the resurrection, and when this would happen? If so, it reminds one of John's vision in Revelation 6:10, when

he **“saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of GOD.”** Those who had suffered martyrdom were asking how long before GOD avenged their deaths. Man has always shown curiosity about the time when events and things might take place. In the present text, it was not a question of would the resurrection take place but of when would it take place.

“brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.” Paul addressed them with the affectionate term ἀδελφός (ad-el-fos), **“brother.”** They were brethren in Christ, of the same godly family of all who have submitted themselves in obedience to the Lord. He said that they had no **“need”** (*“necessity”* – Thayer), because they already knew the answer.

“For yourselves know perfectly” He said, *“You have knowledge, all the knowledge you need, concerning these events.”* Notice that the knowledge they had was **“perfectly”** suited to their need. The word **“perfectly”** comes from ἀκριβῶς (ak-ree-boce), which Thayer defined as *“exactly, accurately, diligently.”* There appears to be a mild rebuke in these words.

“Sometimes wonder about facts which, deep down in their hearts, they really know accurately” (Hendriksen, p.122).

Of what did they have accurate knowledge?

“that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.” How does a thief come? In stealth, secretly, using camouflage and the darkness as a cloak to hide his identity, for the purpose of catching the unprepared householder by surprise. When the Lord does come, He will not try to hide His presence, but He will catch the disobedient by surprise through the speed with which He comes. He will **“descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of GOD”** (1 Thessalonians 4:16). This

will happen so quickly that there will be no time to repent, i.e., change one's mind from one of disobedience to obedience.

What is **“the day of the Lord?”** It is not a time when GOD takes a special interest in the affairs of the world, as Walvoord and Zuck postulate (and all others who believe in a millennial advent). It is the day of judgment, when the world will be burned into absolute nothingness!

“For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of GOD the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Peter 3:5-7, emphasis added).

All who believe that **“the day of the Lord”** is a paradise on earth will be sadly, and horribly, disappointed by their religious schemes. Further, one should consider that all those who teach millennial schemes are saying that GOD lied when He told man what the second coming will be like.

Since the Lord will come unannounced and unexpectedly, it behooves everyone to be ready for that coming every millisecond of his life. **“Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments”** (Revelation 16:15). Further, if a Christian could know when the Lord was coming, would it give him any advantage? Considering that question, is it possible that such knowledge would be a temptation to slack off in one's obedience? Consider how many over the years have been heard to say, “I have plenty of time to ‘straighten up’.” Again, **“for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh”** (Matthew 24:44).

“The secret things belong unto the LORD our GOD”
(Deuteronomy 29:29).

1 Thess. 5:3 “For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”

“When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall in no wise escape.” (ASV)

“When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” (TLO)

The word εἰρήνη (“**peace**”) is equivalent to the Hebrew “*Shalom*,” which indicates more than the simple idea of a lack of hostility. It means “*security, safety, prosperity, felicity*” (Thayer). The word “**safety**” comes from ἀσφάλεια (as-fal-l-ah), meaning “*security*” (Strong); “*firmness, stability...security from enemies and dangers, safety*” (Thayer). The idea seems to be that, when some would say that everything is all right, there is no danger or impending danger, that GOD says everything is **not** alright; the danger is real and imminent.

“then sudden destruction cometh upon them”

The word “**sudden**” is from αἰφνίδιος (aheef-nid-ee-os), meaning “*non apparent; unexpected*” (Strong). Thayer states that it is “*unexpected, sudden, unforeseen.*” Zodhiates adds to one’s understanding by saying, “*sudden, unexpected, unforeseen, something that one cannot anticipate nor understand how it happened*” (p. 104). Something that can happen unexpectedly and raise such astonishment can be either good or harmful.

In the present text, the unexpected thing is ὄλεθρος (ol-eth-ros), **“destruction.”** Strong says of this word, *“ruin, i.e., death, punishment: destruction.”* Note that the range of thought here goes all the way from punishment to death and everything in between. The Scriptures give a number of examples of such, two of which will suffice to illustrate the unexpected nature of punishment and also death as a result of punishment. The first would be **“Elymas the sorcerer,”** who was riding high as an advisor to Sergius Paulus. Everything was apparently going well for him, until his opposition to GOD’s appointed messengers suddenly brought down the anger of GOD. He suddenly, immediately, and unexpectedly became blind, so that he could not guide himself around the room or anywhere else. Instead, he had to try to get someone to lead him (Acts 13). The second example is that of the people of Noah’s day, who mocked the message of Noah. Certainly none of those people on the outside of the ark expected to die that day. They were going about their everyday pursuits when Noah entered the ark and GOD shut the door. Nevertheless, their expectation that this day was going to be like all the rest was shattered.

“They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:27).

Consider the words following the above passage just a few verses later — **“Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed”** (Luke 17:30). No other day of destruction will be like that one, i.e., when the Lord shall come in judgment. Everything that GOD has physically created will no longer exist for even another second. Unfortunately, being predicted by

GOD, people at that time will not be prepared for that event, being lost for eternity unnecessarily. **What a tragedy!**

The example of unexpected tragedy given in the immediate text is **“as travail upon a woman with child.”** It will happen just as quickly as a pregnant woman’s water breaks, signaling the onset of the birth of her child. Again, the pain and agony spoken of in the text is far greater than that of childbirth. Further, those caught by surprise at the Lord’s coming **“shall not escape”** any punishment due for disobeying GOD.

The word ἐκφεύγω (**“escape”**) means *“to flee out”* (Strong); *“to flee out of, flee away...to seek safety in flight”* (Thayer). This word is used to signal someone fleeing out of the presence of another. When the Lord returns, **there will be no place to hide from Him!**

“Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not GOD, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8).

“The drunkard will have his cup at his lips, the swearer his oath in his mouth, the murderer his gun in his hand, and some in the act of adultery” (Fields, p. 131).

What a horrible day for the lost. Just because one does not see or acknowledge the danger does not mean it does not exist. Note the words of the Spirit through Peter.

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of GOD the heavens were of old, and the earth

standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:3-9).

The destruction of the world by the flood is the evidence that GOD can and will destroy the disobedient, i.e., ungodly.

What is this destruction? In his second letter to the Thessalonians, the great, swift, and unexpected destruction is described as **“everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power”** (2 Thessalonians 1:9). In Mark 9:43-48, Jesus three times described the place where the ungodly will live for eternity as **“the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”**

1 Thess. 5:4 “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.”

“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief:” (ASV)

“But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should come upon you like a thief.” (TLO)

The first word to look at here is **“darkness.”** This word comes from σκότος. Strong defines it as, **“Obscurity (literally or figuratively): darkness.”** Thayer

says it is *“darkness...Metaphorically of ignorance respecting divine things and human duties, and the accompanying ungodliness and immorality, together with their consequent misery in hell.”* Zodiates says it is *“darkness...Spiritual darkness, implying misery and damnation, sin and misery”* (p. 1298). The context clearly shows the idea of ignorance. **To what were they not in ignorance?** The judgment day, the day of reckoning. The Thessalonians, and Christians of any generation, often wonder and speculate with regard to when the judgment will be. That was not true with Paul. Paul clearly states that the important thing to consider is not the date. What is important is that one be ready whenever that unexpected time comes. Their (and our) understanding provides the knowledge needed to know that GOD is true, that He cannot lie, and that He has set a time for judgment. Therefore, be ready at any moment to meet that judgment!

Speaking of the judgment, the Scriptures are replete with mentions of the suddenness with which the judgment day will come.

“Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh”

(Matthew 24:42-44).

There will be no signs that that day is near. There will be no twenty-four notice of its imminence. That day will come as suddenly as a well-camouflaged copperhead which springs out upon its victim, injecting its venom of destruction. **Did the reader cringe at the thought of a copperhead biting him? Does he cringe at the idea of not being ready when that great day comes?**

The second word to be observed in this study is the word καταλαμβάνω (“**overtake**”). Strong states that it means “*to take eagerly, i.e., seize, possess.*” Thayer says it means “*to lay hold of so as to make one’s own, to obtain...to seize upon, take possession of.*” Zodhiates defines it as “*to lay hold of, seize, with eagerness, suddenness*” (p. 834). “*Do not let ignorance cause you to be taken by surprise when that time of judgment comes.*” Further, because they did not live in the realm of darkness (ignorance), there was no excuse for not being prepared. Those living sinful lives outside of Christ often delude themselves into believing there is no such thing as a future judgment. **Do not be one of them!**

“For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of GOD the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Peter 3:5-7, emphasis added).

There is **absolutely** no excuse for Christians not to be prepared for the judgment. This writer would also affirm that, if one would keep this knowledge of a future judgment **ever** in the front of his mind, it would greatly enhance his ability to defeat the temptations which daily come upon him. **For those who preach the word, including this author, how often do they emphasize to their audiences the dreadfulness of not being prepared for that day?**

Paul also gives Christians an encouraging thought. This will be a day of victory and celebration, because they believed and obeyed — no bad surprise!

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

“for ye are all sons of light, and sons of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness;” (ASV)

“You are all sons of light, and sons of day: we are not sons of night, nor of darkness.” (TLO)

Why should a Christian not be caught unprepared when the judgment day comes? Because he is of the day. Therefore, like physical light, his path is lit to reveal the dangers of living a sinful life. He has allowed the light of GOD’s word to guide him through the obstacles of life. He has prepared and looked forward to that day.

The contrast between Christians (light, day) and non-Christians (night, darkness) is stark. They are polar opposites in the way they think and live. For the Christian, there is a standard for his life upon which he can rely. Whereas the non-Christian has no standard. For the non-Christian, it is a life of doing whatever he likes, whatever feels good at the moment, what he can get away with, and what is the majority opinion. In short, it is the broad way which GOD warns against one’s taking (Matt. 7). The unbeliever’s world is one of ignorance, sin and rebellion.

On the other hand, Christians live in a world of knowledge, sanctification, hope and obedience. His is a structured life. Jesus said, **“I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life”** (John 8:12). Not only did Jesus say He was the light and that those who followed Him did not live in darkness, but He also proclaimed that His disciples were light (reflected His

light). **“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid”** (Matthew 5:14). He further said in that same text what the purpose of being light was. **“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven”** (Matthew 5:16). Christians are to be light shiners in order to bring glory to GOD.

“Believers are not in intellectual darkness, because they know the truth (John 8:32; 1 Tim. 4:3; 2 Peter 1:12; 1 John 2:21; 2 John 1); nor are they in moral darkness, because they practice the truth (John 3:21; 3 John 11)” (MacArthur, p. 157).

It might also be contrasted a thief who is afraid of the light because it reveals his evil activities, the Christian welcomes the light because it reproves, corrects and instructs him in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It reveals his motives to be clean and pure. It guides him in doing what GOD says is right and good.

“This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that GOD is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:5-7).

Why are Christians **“children of light?”** Because they are born again, i.e., they have been begotten by the word of GOD.

“Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures” (James 1:18).

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of GOD: and every one that loveth Him that begat loveth Him also that is begotten of Him” (1 John 5:1).

As Littrell put it, the *“conception has taken place”* (p. 46), when one believes the word of GOD. Now he has to continue to be nourished by that Gospel so as to

reach maturity (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Note that the maturity process can be stopped at any time through a regression to unbelief or a failure to complete the initial acts of obedience where the new birth takes place (Acts 2:38).

"In languages like Hebrew, to be a 'son of' something meant to be characterized by that thing. Thus being a 'son of light' meant being characterized by light" (Edwards, p. 175).

"Both the Hebrews and Greeks used this way of showing 'that a person or group of people participated in something or were in a close relationship with something'" (Green, quoted by Weaver, p. 236).

1 Thess. 5:6 "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."

"so then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober." (ASV)

"Therefore, let us not sleep, even as others; but let us watch and be sober." (TLO)

The word **"sleep"** is from the Greek word καθεύδω (kath-yoo-do). Strong says the word means *"to lie down to rest, i.e., to fall asleep."* Thayer states that metaphorically it means *"to yield to sloth and sin; to be indifferent to one's salvation."* Zodhiates states that it means *"to sleep...to be spiritually asleep, i.e., secure and unconcerned in sin, or indolent and careless in the performance of duty"* (p. 796). Because one is a child of light, he should be ever vigilant so that he is not overcome by sin. One can be too confident in his salvation, which can lead to slothfulness instead of guarding against sin. Paul is saying they should not be unconcerned about their salvation as are those who have no hope.

Instead of unconcern for sin in one's life, he should be on guard against sin. The word **"watch"** is from γρηγορεύω (gray-gor-yoo-o), which Strong defines as *"to keep awake, i.e., watch: be vigilant, watchful."* Thayer says it is *"to watch; metaphorically give strict attention to, be cautious, active."* He then added, *"to take heed lest through remission and indolence some destructive calamity suddenly overtake one."* Zodhiates states that it means *"to arise, arouse. To watch, to refrain from sleep...it denotes attention to God's revelation or to the knowledge of salvation; a mindfulness of threatening dangers which, with conscience earnest and alert mind, keeps it from all drowsiness and all slackening in the energy of faith and conduct"* (p. 384). Another way of putting all of this is, *"Do not become complacent in your faith. Be ever watchful that you do not let your salvation drift off in the tides of sin which are ever beating against your ship of faith."*

The spirit then shows that, instead of being negligent toward one's salvation, he should be **"sober."** The word **"sober"** is from νήφω (nay-fo), which Strong defined as *"to abstain from wine, i.e., be discreet: be sober, watch."* Thayer defined this word as *"to be sober, to be calm and collected in spirit...to be temperate, dispassionate, circumspect."* Zodhiates says this word means *"to be sober-minded, watchful, circumspect"* (p. 1011). Even though the word does not apply to alcoholic beverages here, nevertheless there is a lesson to be learned from such. Scientists and medical authorities state that the very first drink (even sip) immediately begins to knock out the control center of the brain. When the control center is impaired or knocked out, the person imbibing will do and say things

he normally would not do or say. Therefore, considering the context, Christians should be careful to guard against the mind's being polluted and deceived by sin. One cannot properly watch against the influences of sin if he allows himself to sleep, i.e., be unconcerned about protecting his soul against the evil one. One must constantly be on guard for the "sappers" of Satan's army who are striving to sneak past his perimeters of defense.

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

"For they that sleep sleep in the night: and they that are drunken are drunken in the night." (ASV)

"For they who sleep, sleep in the night; and they who get drunk, get drunk in the night." (TLO)

Both of the English words "**night**" come from the same Greek word — νύξ (noox). The context shows that this word indicates those who are involved in sin, the indolent with regard to the faithful practice of Christianity. It is "*the time for deeds of sin and shame, the time of moral stupidity and darkness,*" (Thayer). Zodiates states that "*metaphorically it means a time of moral and spiritual darkness*" (p. 1020). The text and context lead this writer to think that the Spirit is speaking of the sphere in which those of the "**night**" are living. It would seem that they are so involved in sin that they are blinded to the light which could free them from their shackles. Those who are careless with their souls are the wicked who will be caught by surprise on the day of reckoning. It should also be considered that in the time in which this text was written, it was disgraceful for one to be drunken (intoxicated) in the

daytime.

Most writers consider the words of this verse to be literal, whereas those which preceded it often have metaphorical applications. It also appears that it was a universally accepted truth that those who became intoxicated did so at night. Thus, as several writer's pointed out, Peter's defence of the apostles in Acts 2:14-15 would have been accepted by those who heard his words. The apostles, by universal application of that time, were not drunken as they proclaimed GOD's message.

1 Thess. 5:8 "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation."

"But let us, since we are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation." (ASV)

"But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation." (TLO)

"But let us, who are of the day, be sober" The word νήφω ("**sober**") has already been noted in verse six. It carries the idea of being calm, collected and temperate. Involved in this is also the idea of being vigilant and watchful, as the context testifies.

"putting on the breastplate of faith and love" How can a Christian protect himself against the wiles of Satan? The present text gives one way of doing this by clothing ourselves with a layer of protection. The words **"putting on"** come from ἐνδύω (en-doo-o), which means *"sinking into a garment; to invest with clothing (literally or figuratively)"* (Strong); *"to sink into (clothing),*

put on, clothe one's self" (Thayer); *"to sink, go in or under, to put on"* (Zodhiates, p. 587). **What garment is one to sink into for the protection he needs from this world of sin?**

A θώραξ ("**breastplate**") — *"the chest, i.e., (by implication) a corslet: breastplate"* (Strong); *"a breastplate or corset consisting of two parts and protecting the body on both sides from the neck to the middle"* (Thayer); *"a breastplate or armour covering the body from the neck to the thighs. It consisted of two parts, one covering the front and the other the back"* (Zodhiates, p. 750). It is to be noted that this was an instrument of protection in physical combat to protect the vital organs (heart, lungs, stomach, et cetera) of a soldier. In the present text, it is used metaphorically as a protection, primarily of the spiritual heart, of the soldier of Christ. **What is the composition of this breastplate for the heart?** In this text, its fabric is composed of "**faith and love.**" Faith, among other things, revolves around GOD and what He has done for those who will accept Him. Belief that He means what He says in all matters and that the reward He promises for faithfulness is there. Belief that His Son's blood will and has washed away the sin in a penitent's heart so that eternal salvation will be his. Love again centers around GOD for all that He has done for His lowly creation and radiates all around that creation. It is a love which is with all of one's being, so that he is able and willing to give his life for the GOD he serves.

What helps protect a Christian from the slings and arrows of GOD's arch enemy? "an helmet, the hope of salvation**"** The περικεφαλαία (per-ee-kef-al-ah-yah) is a compound word meaning *"encirclement of the head, i.e., a helmet"* (Strong); *"a helmet, metaphorically*

the protection of the soul which consists in (the hope of) salvation” (Thayer); *“a headpiece, helmet”* (Zodhiates, p. 1146). For the physical body, it was like a *“steel pot”* used for the purpose of protecting the soldier’s brain. The helmet of this text is to be put on to protect the home of the soul, the spiritual brain. It is the ἐλπίς [(el-pece) **“hope”**], the confident expectation that one has of living eternally with GOD in Heaven.

1 Thess. 5:9 “For GOD hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,”

“For GOD appointed us not into wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,” (ASV)

“For GOD has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we may live together, with him.” (TLO)

“For GOD hath not appointed us to wrath” The first thing of import here is τιθημι (tith-ay-mee) — **“appointed.”** It means *“to set, fix, establish; to set forth; to establish, ordain”* (Thayer); *“to set, put, place, lay. Particularly, to set, put or place a person or thing”* (Zodhiates). An “appointment” is not a spur-of-the-moment decision. For example, a judge dies in office, and the governor must choose someone to replace him. The governor will look at various candidates and carefully evaluate their credentials. **Why?** Because it is an extremely important decision which must be made. His appointment will impact the lives of many and may determine the welfare of hundreds of thousands. GOD, in His infinite wisdom, no doubt, weighed the options for man’s eternal welfare. It was, therefore, not in the best

interest of mankind for him to suffer wrath. Yet, the element of justice could not be eliminated from GOD's plan. Since GOD gave man the element of free choice, there had to be consequences for man's actions if he chose to defy GOD.

The second word of import in the above phrase is the word ὀργή (or-gay) — **“wrath.”** This word is defined by Strong as *“desire...violent passion; by implication, punishment: anger, indignation, vengeance, wrath.”* Thayer says that it is *“anger exhibited in punishment...of punishments inflicted by magistrates.”* *“Wrath, anger as a state of mind...Aristotle says that orge, anger, is desire with grief”* (Zodhiates, p. 1055). Of interest is the concept put forth by Aristotle. It shows something which every honest Bible student recognizes. The fact that are those who will one day suffer the wrath of GOD, i.e., the violence of His punishment, is not something which will please GOD. It is something which He must do from a sense of justice; otherwise, He would not be GOD, i.e., not a just GOD. The eternal punishment of the wicked is not something to gloat about, but rather should be that which causes grief. This concept is clearly seen in a proclamation GOD made during the days of Ezekiel.

“As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel” (Ezekiel 33:11, emphasis added)?

There is another aspect of this which should be considered — *How do Christians feel when evil people suffer death? Are they like GOD, or do they rejoice when someone like Ben-laden suffers death? Do they consider that those like him have a soul which is just as precious to GOD as is theirs? Does one try to camouflage his glee by publicly saying “justice was*

served” while inwardly feeling “good enough for him?” As a Christian, one should mourn the eternal condition which the unrighteous shall suffer! The judgment day is coming, and it is a day of gladness **only** for the faithful.

“For the wrath of GOD is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of GOD is manifest in them; for GOD hath shewed it unto them” (Romans 1:18).

“Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of GOD upon the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 5:6).

Who hath GOD not appointed for the wrath to come? The context clearly shows that it is His faithful servants — children of light.

“but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” The word **“to”** is εἰς, which describes “in order to” be put in the position of being granted salvation in this text. This fits well with Acts 2:47, where **“the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved”** (emphasis added). The word περιποίησις (per-ee-poy-ay-sis), **“obtain,”** is *“acquisition; by extension preservation...purchased possession”* (Strong). Thayer says it is *“a preserving, a preservation; possession, one’s own property; an obtaining.”* Zodhiates says it is *“to acquire, purchase”* (p. 1149). GOD’s servants have been acquired and preserved for salvation by **“our** (the faithful) **Lord** (Ruler) **Jesus** (Savior) **Christ** (Messiah).” This indicates, to this writer, that the **“Lord Jesus Christ”** protects those who belong to Him from the wrath which will be exhibited to the rebellious on the judgment day. What a marvellous and humbling thought this should be to Christians.

Consider something else of importance here about the word **“obtain.”** This passage is a strong statement, not only that salvation may be obtained, but also that this gift of GOD can be maintained and held onto by Christians. Of course, the opposite is also true. It may be given up by the Christian and only by the Christian.

“by our Lord Jesus Christ” Salvation is a gift which the GODHEAD specifically gave to mankind through, and only through, Jesus’ giving His blood for such on the cross. There is nothing else, nor no one else, which can provide the forgiveness needed by sinful man.

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

No mere human being has the power or purity which Jesus had which can save him. The offering of the Old Testament had no power to remove sins.

“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4).

If one owned everything to be found in this world, this solar system, all the solar systems — he would not have enough to pay for salvation.

“Those who obtain this salvation and glory do so according to the appointment and calling of God on condition of a willing response to that calling through Jesus Christ” (Lipscomb, p. 66).

Consider the words of Morris here, as quoted by Coffman on page sixty-four of his commentary.

“Whoever thinks he can smile at God’s wrath will never praise him eternally for his grace. One of the things which gave salvation so much meaning to NT Christians was that they were sure of the wrath of God, and knew that Christ had rescued them from a terrible fate.”

1 Thess. 5:10 “Who died for us, that, whether we

wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.”

“Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.” (ASV)

“Who died for us” Christ Jesus provided the means and opportunity for salvation to those who will accept His work, mercy and grace. There is no other who could have accomplished what He did! He died in our place! Truly, He is the μονογενής, the only one of His kind.

“He has made Him, Who knew no sin, a sin-offering for us; that we might become the justified of GOD, by Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

“Who Himself bore away our sins in His own body, on the tree; that we, being freed from sins, should live to righteousness; by Whose stripes you are healed” (1 Peter 2:24).

“that, whether we wake or sleep” Here one cannot help but think back to the text and context of 1 Thessalonians 4:18. It is obvious that the thoughts of being alive when the Lord comes or having died and being awakened from the grave are under consideration. Either way, the text shows that those who did not sleep (day people), those who prepared for the judgment, those who belonged to the Lord, would experience the same result.

“we should live together with Him” For His faithful disciples, Jesus promised **“Let not your heart be troubled...In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you”** (John 14:1-2, emphasis added). This is an eternal house, an eternal home, where all of the splendor of Heaven is found. It is a place where the sorrows of this world will no longer exist

— **“there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away”** (Revelation 21:4). It is the place where the redeemed of all time can revel in the company of the angels who did not desert their post, but especially the GODHEAD.

“Christ suffered in order to remove the sin which separates us from Him so that we might be reconciled to Him (2 Cor. 5:18-19) and live with Him forever (4:17)” (Edwards, p. 179).

1 Thess. 5:11 “Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.”

“Wherefore exhort one another, and build each other up, even as also ye do.” (ASV)

“Wherefore, comfort one another, and edify each other, even as also you do.” (TLO)

As noted above, the ASV states *“exhort one another,”* which is simply another way to say **“comfort yourselves together.”** Christians are to call one another to each other in order to comfort or exhort one another (a reciprocal action). Everyone needs the comfort and encouragement others may give, but especially is this true of Christians, because they live in a world where almost everyone has made himself an enemy by his choice to be GOD’s enemy.

“edify one another” οἰκοδομέω (oy-kod-om-eh-o)
— **“edify”** Strong states that this is *“to be a house builder, i.e., construct or (figuratively) confirm.”* Thayer said it is *“to build a house, erect a building,”* which he also states to include *“to rebuild, repair.”* He then went on to record that it is *“to promote growth in Christian wisdom, affection, grace, virtue, holiness,*

blessedness...and piety." When considering the concept of a building, a house, i.e., a spiritual building, it is to be understood that it is to be a building fit as a dwelling place for the Spirit of GOD. This is confirmed in passages such as 1 Corinthians 3:16 — **"Know ye not that ye are the temple of GOD, and that the Spirit of GOD dwelleth in you?"** Therefore, this temple, which is one's body (1 Cor. 6:19), is to be built and maintained in a holy manner — **"Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy"** (1 Peter 1:16). Thus it is that Christians are to be **"an holy nation,"** which is designed to **"show forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light"** (1 Peter 2:9).

Next, note the encouragement and praise that the Spirit gave them — **"even as also ye do."** The Thessalonians were busy, not in tearing each other down, but rather in encouraging each other, building each other up, in the most holy faith.

"In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2:21).

This shows the great need brethren have for one another in addition to the encouragement the Lord gives in His word. Christians are to make each other stronger, day by day, in the Lord. **How is this accomplished?**

"add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election

sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:5-11).

As Lipscomb pointed out, this will cause a Christian to **“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth”** (Colossians 3:2). Thus, he will be looking out for the good of his brethren in all things.

1 Thess. 5:12 “And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;”

“But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;” (ASV)

“Now, we beseech you, brethren, to acknowledge them who labor among you, and who preside over you in the Lord, and instruct you;” (TLO)

Verse eleven concluded a discussion on the coming of Christ and the judgment. Paul had given reasons for them to comfort one another and continue to do so. Because it is so important never to give up, never allow themselves to be deceived, always looking ahead to the goal, he next pleaded with them to do something which would help them complete their journey to Heaven.

“to know them” The phrase **“To know”** is from εἶδω (i-do). Strong states that this is a primary verb which means *“to see, to know...be aware, behold, consider, have known, look (on), perceive.”* Thayer says that it means *“to see...to know, i.e., get knowledge of, understand, perceive...to have regard for one, cherish, pay attention to.”* Zodhiates states that it means *“to see...to know...to be acquainted with...to perceive, be aware of, understand.”* The concept is that the Spirit wants Christians to be thoroughly acquainted

with something, or in this case, someone. Such knowledge would protect them from the deceiver, the con-man, the evil servant of Satan. **Who was to have this knowledge?** There are two groups here, in this scribe's view, as shown in the comments below.

“which labour among you” This would refer to those who labored teaching the Gospel, if the two groups under consideration here are as this author believes. The word **“labour”** comes from κοπιᾶω (kop-ee-ah-o) — *“to feel fatigue; by implication to work hard: labor, toil, be wearied”* (Strong). Thayer says it is *“to grow weary, tired, exhausted (with toil or grief).”* Zodhiates says it is *“to be worn out, weary, faint”* and that it is used *“in an absolute sense”* (p. 877). This would be talking about anyone who might come to them for the purpose of teaching the brethren and expending great energy in his efforts. Again, this writer believes that this would apply to Paul, Barnabas and those with them who had given their all to provide the good news to them. But notice a second group to which this would apply.

“and are over you in the Lord” It is this author's contention that this would apply specifically to the apostles at this time, but would later transfer to the elders of the church, when the church was set in order. The key phrase for this consideration is **“in the Lord.”** The word **“Over”** is from προϊστημι (pro-is-tay-mee) — *“to stand before, i.e., (in rank), maintain, be over, rule.”* Thayer says it is *“to set or place before; to set over; to be over, to superintend, preside over; to be protector or guardian; to care for, give attention to.”* Zodhiates says it is *“to cause to stand before, to set over...to preside, rule”* (p. 1220).

“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double

honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine” (1 Timothy 5:17, emphasis added)

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of GOD, which He hath purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).

All of the definitions of the word used in this text fit well with the office of an elder. He has been *“set over,” “to superintend,” “to protect”* the flock, to *“preside,”* and to *“rule”* over the flock.

But then, note what the teacher and the elders are to do — **“admonish”** them. This word is from *νοουθετέω* (noo-thet-eh-o) — *“to put in mind, i.e., (by implication) to caution or reprove gently: admonish, warn”* (Strong). Thayer simply says it is *“to admonish, warn, exhort,”* to which Zodhiates also agrees as to its meaning. Consider this word as used by Paul in Acts 20:31 — **“Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”** This shows the kind of care and concern he had for brethren — exhaustive labor on their behalf, the same as expressed in this text. This should remind one that, as a Christian, he is here, not on a vacation, but to labor for the Lord and His cause. Further, this labor, if properly done, is exhausting. The day of rest comes later, when the toil of this world for the Lord is completed. It is interesting that, in the account of the rich man and Lazarus, Lazarus was seen in the bosom of Abraham (Luke 16:23), said position signifying a place of rest. John said he **“heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow**

them” (Revelation 14:13, emphasis added).

1 Thess. 5:13 **“And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.”**

“and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.” (ASV)

“and to esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake. Be at peace among yourselves.” (TLO)

“And to esteem them very highly in love” The word **“esteem”** comes from ἡγέομαι (hayg-eh-om-ah-ee). In Zodhiates' Greek Lexicon, he translated the above phrase as *“to regard them as very highly deserving of love”* (p. 708). Walvoord and Zuck translate this as *“hold them in the highest regard”* (p. 707). Note a similar admonition given in First Timothy 5:17.

“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.”

When considering the above thoughts, this means that members of a congregation need to have great respect for their leaders. **Why? Because they simply hold an office? No! How can one respect someone he does not know?** Respect is something which is earned by one's deeds, actions and words.

Why are leaders to be highly (over abundantly) respected and loved? “for their work's sake” The office of the eldership is not an honorary position. It is not like handing someone a degree when he has not accomplished the academic qualifications for that degree. The respect they receive comes from others because of their work in the Lord's service. The work of

elders is the most important work there is on earth. They are to guide the flock of GOD with all reverence for His will. But again, this respect (honor) is not to be given to a “do-nothing elder,” but rather to one who gives great effort into providing the spiritual needs of the flock of GOD.

What will the high esteem earned and given to elders accomplish among Christians? They will “**be at peace among yourselves.**” Why? Because rebellion will not be the attitude in the flock for its leaders. Perhaps Arndt and Gingrich have the correct understanding of this phrase, rendering it, “*keep the peace among yourselves*” (p. 226).

1 Thess. 5:14 “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.”

“And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all.” (ASV)

“Moreover, we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, comfort the faint-hearted, support the weak, be of a long-suffering disposition toward all.” (TLO)

“No one enjoys being told he is wrong or being warned about something he is doing. Warning many people merely makes them stubborn. But Christians should both expect and appreciate warnings and exhortations that are given from God’s word by sincere people who are more advanced in the faith than they are” (Fields, p. 141).

Four admonitions are now seen in this verse which will help all Christians to walk a good life. He entreats the brethren first of all to, “**warn them that are unruly.**” The word “**warn**” comes from νοουθετέω (noo-thet-eh-o) — “*to put in mind, i.e., (by implication) to caution or*

reprove gently: admonish, warn” (Strong); *“to admonish, warn, exhort*” (Thayer; Zodhiates, p. 1017). In the Corinthian letter, Paul wrote, **“I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you”** (1 Corinthians 4:14). In both cases, it is noted that the admonitions were given because of great concern for their spiritual well being, their spiritual health. It is like the concern a father has for his children to help them be and do the right thing. In every age, preachers and elders are to warn the brethren about dangerous thinking and actions. These exhortations to right thoughts and actions are not given out of anger, but because of great love for the brethren’s souls. This writer believes MacArthur gives good insight into the meaning of **“admonish.”**

It *“connotes putting sense into one’s head, or alerting him of the serious consequences of his actions”* (p. 177).

In the present text, exhortations are to be given to the **“unruly.”** This word comes from ἄτακτος (at-aktos) — *“unarranged, i.e., (by implication) insubordinate: unruly”* (Strong); *“Disorderly, out of ranks (often so of soldiers)...deviating from the prescribed order or rule. This word was used in Greek society of those who did not show up for work”* (Thayer); *“disorderly, irregular (1 Thess. 5:14), neglectful of duties”* (Zodhiates, p. 285). They were to encourage one another not to neglect their duties as Christians. They were not to be slothful in their Christian conduct, but rather to show up for the work at hand. They are not to walk out of step from the doctrine (Note that it is not said, “Do not walk out of step with human traditions.”). This is another exhortation which shows that a Christian must guard against deviating from GOD’s prescribed instructions.

Next is the admonition to **“comfort the**

feeble-minded.” The word **“comfort”** comes from παραμυθέομαι (par-am-oo-theh-om-ahee) — *“to relate near, i.e., (by implication) encourage, console: comfort”* (Strong); *“to speak to, address one, whether by way of admonition and incentive, or to calm and console”* (Thayer); *“to speak kindly, soothingly, to comfort or pacify”* (Zodhiates, p. 1110). Note the gentleness found in this word, the opposite of harshness. This gentleness is to be shown to the **“feeble-minded.”** **Who is a feeble-minded person?** The Greek word is ὀλιγόφυχος (ol-ig-op-soo-khos), which is defined as *“little spirited, i.e., faint hearted”* (Strong); *“fainthearted”* (Thayer); *“fainthearted, fretful, worried”* (Zodhiates, p. 1036). Synonyms for this word are *“cowardly, terrified and terror-stricken”* (Zodhiates). In some commentaries, this word is translated *“small-souled.”* These may be Christians who have not grown enough to have the needed strength required in some area (probably persecution in this context). Those who are **“fainthearted”** are the timid, fretful and worried ones who tend to be afraid to step out in faith. They need lots of encouragement until they can acquire the strength needed to enable them truly to walk by faith.

The third admonition is to **“support the weak.”** The word **“support”** comes from the Greek word ἀντέχομαι (an-tekh-om-ahee), which translates *“to hold oneself opposite to, i.e., (by implication) adhere to; by extension to care for: hold fast to support”* (Strong); *“to keep oneself directly opposite to any one, hold to him firmly, cleave to, paying heed to him”* (Thayer); *“to support”* (Zodhiates, p. 190). The idea might be illustrated by a loved one who is in danger of drowning and is being held onto by another who will not let him slip away from his grasp.

The second word of import here is **“weak,”** which translates from the word ἀσθενής (as-then-ace). The lexicons give it the following meanings — *“strengthless...more feeble, impotent, sick, without strength, weak”* (Strong); *“weak, infirm, feeble”* (Thayer); *“without strength, powerless”* (Zodhiates, p. 274). These brethren are the most susceptible to sin and the deceptions of Satan. It could apply to those who are new Christians and, thus, are most likely to be deceived and intimidated into going back to their old life of sin. **What should a person who realizes he is weak and possibly about to engage in sin do?** Call upon his brethren for the support he needs not to go backwards into sin. **What should a stronger brother do when he sees his fellow brother’s danger?** Go to him, cleave to him, firmly give him strength to help him keep from sinking in the quicksand of sin.

*“The word for **weak** has a variety of uses in the New Testament. It is used of those who are weak physically (Matt. 25:43-44; Luke 10:9; Acts 4:9; 5:15-16; 1 Cor. 11:30; 2 Cor. 13:4), those who are spiritually weak, due either to scruples over different matters (Rom. 14:1f; 15:1; 1 Cor. 8:7f) or susceptible to temptation and sin (Rom. 4:19; 5:6; 8:3, 26; 1 Cor. 2:3; 2 Cor. 12:5), or those who are economically weak (1 Cor. 1:26-29)”* (Weaver, p. 362).

Next, an admonition is given to all — **“be patient toward all.”** The word **“patient”** comes from μακροθυμέω (mak-roth-oo-meh-o), which is defined as *“to be long spirited, i.e., forbearing or patient: bear (suffer) long, be longsuffering, have long patience...endure”* (Strong); *“to be of long spirit, not to lose heart...to be patient in bearing the offenses of others, to be mild and slow in avenging, to be longsuffering, slow to anger, slow to punish”* (Thayer); *“to suffer long, be long-suffering, as opposed to hasty*

anger or punishment" (Zodhiates, p. 939).

Why is patience or longsuffering so important in the church? Ask a faithful elder who truly cares about the Christians under his rule. Or ask the preacher who strives to provide the proper food for a congregation where he labors. Paul has basically given the answer in this context. There will always be those in a congregation who are unruly, feebleminded, and weak. Further, some of these will show little interest in growing as they should. Others, like physical sheep, will be easily distracted by the world and wander back into danger. Others will not know how to find their way to the food and water they need, exactly like physical sheep. That is why the church in every era needs strong shepherds who are not afraid to lead the sheep to the pasturage and living water they so desperately need — even when rebelling against being led there.

"Christians must learn to be patient, forbearing, persevering, not easily discouraged in helping all men in their weakness and trials" (Lipscomb, p. 70).

Something to consider here is the forgiveness which patience requires. Because of weakness, the sheep will often transgress GOD's laws. **What does one do when such happens over and over again? Get frustrated and give up; get frustrated and write the individual off as "unsaveable?"** **NO**, he encourages the weak and stands ready to forgive — **NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES THE WEAK SIN**. With time, he will hopefully be able to rejoice when the weak no longer practices those sins of weakness. **Is that not what Jesus taught in Matthew 18:21-22?**

"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."

Brethren should remember that they have not achieved the strength they now possess (no matter how little or great) overnight. Patience is a manifestation of love (1 Cor. 13:4-5).

1 Thess. 5:15 “See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.”

“See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but always follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all.” (ASV)

“Take care that no one return evil for evil to any one, but always pursue what is good, both toward one another and toward all.” (TLO)

“See that none render evil for evil unto any” The word **“render”** is from the word ἀποδίδωμι (ap-od-ee-doo-mee) — *“to give away, i.e., up, over, back (in various applications): deliver (again), give (again), re (pay)”* (Strong); *“to requite, recompense in a good or a bad sense”* (Thayer). The word **“evil”** is from κακός (kakos) — *“worthless, i.e., (subjectively) depraved or (objectively) injurious: bad, evil, harm, ill, noisome, wicked”* (Strong); *“of a bad nature, not such as it ought to be...troublesome, injurious, pernicious, destructive, baneful”* (Thayer); *“bad, worthless externally. Of a soldier, cowardly...one who is evil in himself and, as such, gets others in trouble”* (Zodhiates, p. 809). The idea is, *“Do not repay evil to another because he has rendered evil to you.”* In considering the idea expressed by Zodhiates, to render evil to another because he has done some evil to you is to act like a cowardly soldier. When someone has done evil toward another, the easy thing for the attacked one is to strike

back at him, to seek revenge. The difficult thing, the action befitting a soldier of Christ, is to render good toward the offender. Note what GOD says about vengeance in Deuteronomy 32:35.

“To Me *belongeth* vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in *due* time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.”

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

“but ever follow that which is good” **“ever”** is from πάντοτε (pan-tot-eh) — *“every, when, i.e., at all times: always”* (Strong); *“at all times, always, ever”* (Thayer). **“follow”** is from διώκω (dee-o-ko) — *“ensue, follow (after), given to (suffer)”* (Strong). Used as a metaphor *“to pursue, to seek after eagerly, earnestly endeavor to acquire”* (Thayer); *“to pursue, prosecute, persecute, but also to pursue in a good sense”* (Zodhiates, p. 474). The word **“good”** comes from ἀγαθός (ag-ath-os) — *“benefit, good (-s things), well”* (Strong); *“good, pleasant, agreeable, joyful, happy...excellent, distinguished...upright, honorable”* (Thayer); *“good and benevolent, profitable, useful”* (Zodhiates, p. 62). Instead of looking to do some evil toward another, instead of seeking revenge for some slight or “supposed slight,” Christians are always to be looking to do good. Notice that the idea is not that they wait for an opportunity to do good which happens to come their way. Christians seek opportunities to good things, excellent and beneficial things to **all men**. **But to whom are these excellent things to be done? Is it just those who do good to them?**

“both among yourselves, and to all” Christians

are to be involved in doing good, looking for opportunities to do honorable, excellent and benevolent things to all men. But especially unto their brethren — **“the household of faith.”**

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10).

1 Thess. 5:16 **“Rejoice evermore.”**

“Rejoice always;” (ASV)

“Rejoice always.” (TLO)

The word **“Rejoice”** comes from χαίρω (khah’ee-ro) — *“to be full of ‘cheer,’ i.e., calmly happy or well off...be well”* (Strong); *“to rejoice, be glad...to rejoice exceedingly...to be well, thrive...in salutation, hail”* (Thayer); *“to rejoice, be glad”* (Zodhiates, p. 1464). The word **“evermore”** comes from πάντοτε (pan-tot-eh) — *“ever when, i.e., at all times: always”* (Strong); *“at all times, always, ever”* (Thayer). Zodhiates added to the definitions above by declaring that a synonym for the word is *“perpetually”* (p. 1094).

“The secret of true joy is to avoid trying to be happy, and just go on quietly doing our work and service. Then happiness will come to us without our looking for it” (Fields, p. 144).

GOD gives every Christian many reasons to be joyful, happy and calm in spirit no matter what he may face in this life. Christians have no reason always to go around with a sad countenance. The storms of sin may be attacking from every direction, yet, Christians have a calm assurance that these tests of life cannot remove him from the love of Christ and the eternal reward for faithfulness.

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with GOD through our Lord Jesus Christ: By Whom also we

have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of GOD” (Romans 5:2).

This does not overlook or dismiss the idea that there will be sorrows, distresses and disappointments in this life.

“To respond with joy in the midst of sufferings is to take pleasure in knowing that faithfully enduring such things pleases God” (Beale as quoted by Weaver, p. 366).

These emotions and feelings will come to all, yet the joy in Christ not only brings comfort to the soul, but replaces those negative emotions. This comes through the assurance GOD gives each one in His word. Christian, remember, ***“I cannot necessarily control what happens around me, but I can learn to control my emotions and life; and overcome any event in this world through Jesus.”*** GOD is on our side!

“A joyful Christian is more concerned about glorifying God than about avoiding temporal difficulties. He thinks more of his spiritual riches and eternal glory than he does any present pain or material poverty” (MacArthur, p. 185).

1Thess. 5:17 “Pray without ceasing.”

“Pray without ceasing.” (ASV)

“Pray without ceasing.” (TLO)

To pray is to offer supplications to GOD through the Lord Jesus Christ, and like all acts of worship, each one is very important. The word **“ceasing”** comes from the word ἀδιαλείπτως (ad-ee-al-ipe-toce) — *“uninterruptedly, i.e., without omission”* (Strong); *“without intermission, incessantly, without ceasing”* (Thayer). One should consider a passage in Philippians 4:6 which helps to understand the comprehensive nature of the present word under consideration here.

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto GOD” (emphasis added).

This is not saying that one is to be involved in prayer 24/7. It is pointing out that regular prayer is an essential part of Christianity.

“He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1).

It is that in which a Christian should be able to engage at a moment's notice, when a special need arises. It teaches that prayer should be a vital portion of one's daily activities, not something he practices when he lays his head down for slumber. Prayer is a recognition of dependency upon GOD for all of His blessings and protection with which he is abundantly blest.

“These all unanimously persevered in prayer, with the women, and with Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren” (Acts 1:14 — TLO, emphasis added).

“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude” (Acts 6:4-5; see 1 Thessalonians 3:10).

In his commentary on this verse, MacArthur gave ten items for which Christians ought to pray. This list is by no means comprehensive, but it is offered for the reader's consideration in abbreviated form with amendments.

1. The desire to glorify GOD.
2. Desire for fellowship with GOD.
3. Desire for GOD to meet his daily needs.
4. Ask for wisdom.
5. Deliverance from trouble.
6. Relief from fear and worry.
7. Express gratitude (for all GOD has done and will do – RK).
8. Freedom from guilt of sin.
9. Concern for the lost.
10. Desire for spiritual growth.

Littrell gave this partial list of recommended prayer

activity.

1. Pray
 - a. if afflicted.
 - b. for providential help.
 - c. in faith.
 - d. for peace in God.

Lipscomb made the following interesting observation regarding the instruction of this verse.

“Certainly it is not an easy practice to begin, that of praying without ceasing. It is so natural for us not to pray that we perpetually forget and undertake this or that without God. But surely we get reminders enough that the omission of prayer is a mistake” (p. 71).

This emphasizes the need for Christians constantly to be aware of the presence of GOD and their need for communion with Him.

1 Thess. 5:18 “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of GOD in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

“in everything give thanks: for this is the will of GOD in Christ Jesus to you-ward.” (ASV)

“In everything give thanks; for this is the will of GOD, by Christ Jesus, concerning you.” (TLO)

“In every thing give thanks” The word **“thanks”** comes from εὐχαριστέω (yoo-khar-is-the-o) — *“to be grateful, i.e., actually to express gratitude (towards)”* (Strong); *“to be grateful...give thanks”* (Thayer); *“thankful, grateful, well-pleasing. To show oneself grateful, to be thankful, to give thanks”* (Zodhiates, p. 687). This word is used with reference to GOD or to man. Gratitude is one of the keys to Christianity and ought to be shown to all men for their favors or favorable treatment. But, more importantly, it must be shown to GOD from a full heart of thanksgiving for all

that He has done for mankind. Especially is this true of Christians, who not only receive the blessings shed upon all men (sunshine, rain, etc.), but especially for the spiritual blessings found in Christ and His blood sacrifice.

“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name” (Psalm 100:4).

“for this is the will of GOD” The word **“will”** is from θέλημα (thel-ay-mah) — *“a determination, i.e., choice...inclination: desire, pleasure, will”* (Strong); *“what one wishes or has determined shall be done...of what God wishes to be done by us; commands, precepts”* (Thayer). It is GOD’s desire, His determination, that His creation be thankful, that it show gratitude for what He has done **“in Christ Jesus concerning you.”** This admonition includes when things are going well or in times of adversity — be thankful. Considering the context as a whole, Paul appears particularly to be addressing the persecutions they were enduring or facing. Jesus told His disciples, **“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake”** (Matthew 5:10-11, emphasis added). The term **“Blessed”** is translated in some versions as *“happy”* (TLO, YLT). This involves always rejoicing (v. 16), praying ceaselessly (v. 17), and continually expressing thankfulness in all circumstances (v. 18).

“It is spiritually abnormal for Christians to be unthankful” (MacArthur, p. 189).

Note an example of this found when the apostles were beaten by the Sanhedrin.

“And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name” (Acts 5:41, emphasis added).

Paul told the Colossian brethren that they were to be involved in **“giving thanks to GOD and the Father by Him...Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving”** (3:17; 4:2).

It should always be remembered by Christians that there will be times of anxiety, stress, tribulation and heartache. It is during those times that they should especially turn to GOD in thankfulness, for He has provided everything needed to overcome these things. A Christian’s heart should be filled to overflowing for the blessings GOD has given. Such a heart can overcome any adversity life throws at it.

“Give thanks in every thing (that happens to you), for (doing) this is the will of God for you in (your service to) the anointed one, Jesus” (Translation and paraphrase by Fields, p. 145).

It is not enough to be thankful for the blessings GOD gives, but that thanksgiving should also be expressed to Him. Consider Luke 17:12ff. Jesus saw ten lepers in a village who asked for His mercy. Jesus sent them to the priests, and as they were going to them, they discovered that they were healed.

“And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified GOD, And fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine” (Emphasis added)?

One can be relatively sure that the other nine were thankful for the healing they received — but only ONE returned to express his thankfulness. Interestingly, the text points out that he was a Samaritan, which implies that the others were Jews, “the chosen people.” Failure to give thanks for all of GOD’s blessings makes one a failure as a Christian.

“let the peace of GOD rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful” (Colossians 3:15, emphasis added).

Let those who are Christians remind themselves that in all occasions, all circumstances, whether good or bad, they are to be thankful to GOD.

“I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need” (Philippians 4:12).

1 Thess. 5:19 **“Quench not the Spirit.”**

“Quench not the Spirit.” (ASV)

“Quench not the Spirit.” (TLO)

The word **“Quench”** is from the word σβέννυμι (sben-noo-mee) — *“to extinguish: go out, quench”* (Strong); *“to extinguish, quench...metaphorically to quench, to suppress, stifle, of divine influence”* (Thayer); *“to quench, extinguish...figuratively to dampen, hinder, repress, as in preventing the Holy Spirit from exerting His full influence”* (Zodhiates, p. 1283). A cross-reference here is found in Ephesians 4:30: **“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of GOD, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”** The word **“grieve”** in this verse comes from the Greek word λυπέω (loo-peh-o) — *“to distress; reflexively or passively to be sad: cause grief, grieve, be in heaviness, (be) sorrow (ful), be (make) sorry”* (Strong); *“to make sorrowful; to affect with sadness...to grieve, offend”* (Thayer); *“to grieve, afflict with sorrow, or passively, to be grieved, sad, sorrowful...with the meaning of to cause grief, offend”* (Zodhiates, p. 929).; *“We grieve when we love and the depth of our grief is proportional to the depth of our love...When God*

grieves for us, it is an expression of his love”
(Google).

How does one “grieve” the Spirit of GOD? When he quenches the Spirit, i.e., when he extinguishes the influence of the Spirit in his life, when he hinders and represses the Spirit’s work through the Scriptures, and when he does not do his best to interpret the Scriptures. Another way of putting it is when he refuses to accept and obey the Spirit’s directions for his life. Quench fleshly desires, not the Spirit.

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of GOD. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:1-2).

What in general terms causes one to quench the Spirit this? Pride.

In a preface to this verse, MacArthur wrote some excellent thoughts concerning the bad (evil - RK) effects which false views and beliefs regarding the Holy Spirit has had on “Christians.” This writer would encourage students of the Scriptures to consider his thoughts carefully. In order to give one a taste of what he wrote, the first sentence of his lengthy paragraph is given here.

“The church’s de-emphasis of the Holy Spirit’s working through the Word has also led to a pronounced lack of spiritual discernment” (p. 192).

He then went on to list six major points of destruction this has caused among those who deem themselves to be students of the Scriptures. Well worth the read!

Translation and paraphrase of this verse: *“Do not quench (and put out the fire of) the (Holy) Spirit”* (Fields, p. 145). If Christians lose their “fire,” they will be like the coal separated from the fire, which soon cools and eventually becomes cold and useless to its purpose. The coals gathered together help keep each other hot,

thus, doing the job they were supposed to accomplish. Therefore, let the Spirit, through the word, keep one “hot” in service to the King. Do not resist the Spirit’s work (Acts 7:51).

“Christians can quench the Spirit by disobeying the word of GOD, by living sensual lives, by ignoring their (Scripture trained – RK) consciences, and by disregarding the counsel of those who are led by the Spirit” (Fields, p. 147).

“The cares, riches and pleasures of life choke out the word and quench the Spirit. The blessed can be put out by the cold drizzle of worldliness, by the heavy blanket of selfishness, or by the companionship of evil people” (Coffman, p. 69).

1 Thess. 5:20 **“Despise not prophesyings.”**

“despise not prophesyings;” (ASV)

“Despise not prophesying.” (TLO)

The word **“Despise”** comes from the word ἐξουθενέω (ex-oo-then-eh-o), which Strong defined as *“contemptible, despise, least esteemed, set at nought.”* Thayer defined it as *“to make of no account, despise utterly.”* Zodhiates states it is *“to bring to naught; to despise, treat with scorn...contemptible.”* *“belittle or treat with indifference”* (Zerr, p. 152).

The word **“prophesyings”** comes from the word προφητεία (prof-ay-ti-ah), which Strong defined as *“prediction (scriptural or other).”* Thayer gave a more comprehensive understanding of this word, stating that it is *“a discourse emanating from divine inspiration and declaring the purposes of God, whether by reproof and admonishing the wicked, or comforting the afflicted, or revealing things hidden; especially by foretelling future events...used in the New Testament of the utterances of Old Testament prophets.”* Webster’s

1828 Dictionary defined it as *“the act of foretelling or of preaching.”* *“A person who speaks forth...He is a ‘forth-teller,’ and not necessarily (though sometimes also) a ‘fore-teller”* (Hendriksen, p. 139).

In considering the meanings given for these words, it is first seen that they are quite comprehensive, involving several ideas. Paul warns against viewing the prophecies with contempt, i.e., viewing them as something which is vile and worthless. He warns them not to hold in contempt the teaching found in them. To view something with contempt would lead one to despise and hate that thing. **What was it Paul commanded should not be viewed in this way?**

Do not despise **“prophesyings.”** This word is more inclusive than, say, the word “prophet.” This word is used to designate the prophetic office, i.e., one inspired by GOD to proclaim His will to man. But it is far more than that. When the words “prophecy” and “prophesying” are used today, the common public thinks of them, first and foremost, as indicating the foretelling of some future event. Again, the word of this text can be used in this way. More importantly to today’s audience, the word is used to indicate the teaching of a revealed message from GOD. Zodiates showed that prophecy is also connected to visions.

“What is revealed in the Book of Revelation is called a prophecy seven times (Rev. 1:3; 11:6; 19:10; 22:7, 10, 18, 19). It is a series of visions seen by a prophet and related to others by him” (p. 1243).

As noted earlier, this particular word is used to designate the office of a prophet. Question: **Can someone be a prophet today?** Before one answers this question, he should go back to the definitions seen above. When they are studied carefully, he can see that one can indeed be a prophet today. **BUT**, in saying

that, a clear distinction must be made as to what kind of prophet he can be. Today, one cannot hold the prophetic Biblical office of a prophet, for he does not get his message directly from GOD as did they. Nor can he have the powers given and used by them, which GOD gave them. Yet, since the original word here also indicates the impartation of GOD's message to mankind, one can be a prophet today. **How?** Because he has the GOD-breathed Scriptures. When he thus uses that GOD-given word to teach and instruct people, he is acting as a prophet. **CAUTION:** One should probably not go around claiming he is a prophet, because of the misrepresentation it will lead to by the general public and even members of the Lord's church. But one should understand the word used in this text and its applications.

Consider for a moment what one would miss by diminishing the importance of **"prophesyings"** as seen in 1st Corinthians 14:3. **"he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort."** Consider also that this would show a great disrespect for the GODHEAD Who gave these messages. **"Quench not the Spirit,"** Who got His message from the Son, Who got His message from the Father!

"as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things" (John 8:28).

"when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak" (John 16:13).

This brings up another **very important point**. When a modern-day prophet (teacher) arises, claiming to proclaim the good news of the Scriptures, **Should one simply accept his words as truth? NO!!!** The GOD-

breathed Scriptures say, **“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try (“prove” - ASV) the spirits whether they are of GOD: because many false prophets are gone out into the world”** (1 John 4:1). Note further another use of the word **“prophecyings,”** as seen in the above verse. One can pretend to be a spokesman for GOD and yet proclaim those things which are false and will lead one astray. Today, one cannot have the miraculous ability of **“discerning of spirits”** (1 Cor. 12:10), but he has the discerning word of GOD to use in order to try (test) the teachers which come to him. **EVERY** teacher’s words should be tested by the standard GOD gave — even if he has for a long time been known as a faithful proclaimer of GOD’s word. GOD not only gave 1st century Christian’s the ability to determine whether a speaker spoke His word or not — He has given modern scholars the same ability through the written word. Further, no teacher should ever become annoyed, insulted or enraged because someone checks his words by the standard GOD gave. Man must have a healthy respect for GOD’s revelation.

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time (Old Testament – RK) by the will of man: but holy men of GOD spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (1 Peter 1:20-21, emphasis added).

“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, GOD shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, GOD shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18-19, emphasis added).

Therefore, the next verse logically comes into play.

1 Thess. 5:21 “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

“prove all things; hold fast that which is good;” (ASV)

“Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good.” (TLO)

“Prove” comes from the word δοκιμάζω (dok-im-ad-zo). *“To test (literally or figuratively); by implication to approve: allow, discern, examine”* (Strong). Thayer fills the meaning out by saying, *“to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as metals...to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy.”* Zodhiates adds, *“tested, approved. To try, prove, discern, distinguish, approve. It has the notion of proving a thing whether it is worthy or not”* (p. 475). The Spirit says that something is to be examined, scrutinized, to show its trustworthiness. **What does one do when he scrutinizes something?** He very carefully examines it. Note also that Thayer said it was to prove whether or not something is *“genuine.”* The text has just said to **“Despise not prophesyings.”** One cannot help but considered those of Berea, who were declared to be more noble than those of Thessalonica. **Why were they so?**

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

Two things should be noted here for the purpose of the present study. (1) They were ready to listen. They were not afraid to consider something they were told, even if it might at first sound strange to them. (2) **Why were they not afraid to consider what was said?** Because they had a standard by which they could test, examine, and determine whether something was worth

considering further — **“the Scriptures.”** Further, the implication was that they were willing to spend the time carefully scrutinizing what was said in comparison with what was proven to be true. That is exactly what Christians are instructed to do in the present text. Too many, in every generation, will not spend time learning GOD’s word, which is evident in the lack of time they have for a sermon beyond twenty minutes, and often, in their failure (refusal) to attend Bible classes and meetings. **What are Christians taught to scrutinize, carefully examine, in order to determine the genuineness thereof?**

“all things” One must, in order to be a faithful servant of GOD, examine the whole of anything in order to determine its value. Since the context is dealing with Christianity and, in particular here, the doctrine, it is mandatory to determine the genuineness of anything one is taught, hears or sees regarding religion [Consider here movies like the Ten Commandments (which was full of error), or pictures which often portray Adam and Eve eating an apple.].

“Everything permits no exceptions; it includes every issue and idea that might confront believers” (MacArthur, p. 199).

This command would also eliminate the gullible and lazy response of some who say, *“My preacher says this or that, so it must be true.”* The Bible says one is to **“Prove all things”** (emphasis added).

“They must let a prophet speak, and they must give ear to what he says, but they must also prove all things” (Weaver, p. 375).

(Remember that the concept of prophesying is also the idea of teaching — a prophet, a teacher.)

“If we relax a constant watchfulness and a free discussion of all practical principles taught, before we are aware of it the faith of the church will be perverted by false teachings, and its life corrupted by sinful practices” (Lipscomb, p. 74 – emphasis)

added).

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith” (1 Peter 5:8-9).

Another thought regarding this command to **“prove all things”** should be considered. This author has often heard people, even some members of the church, say that one should engage in everything before he discards something as being bad (evil). This is not only a false, Devil-oriented claim — **it is pure stupidity**. One does not have to drink alcohol to know how evil it is. He can simply observe the terrible results of such in society, when the inhibitions it causes to the brain are observed (murder, theft, rape, death on the highways, the destruction of marriages, child abuse, destruction of property, et cetera). One does not have to drink arsenic in order to know it kills. One does not have to try out fornication to know its evil effects on society and families. The context deals with that which has been presented as the work of the Spirit for doctrine and life.

“And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve (δοκιμάζω) things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of GOD” (Philippians 1:9-11).

After one has examined what has been presented to him, what is he to do?

“hold fast that which is good” The command to **“hold fast”** comes from the word κατέχω (kat-ekh-o). *“To hold down (fast) in various applications: have hold (fast) keep (in memory)...possess, retain, seize on, stay, take, withhold”* (Strong). Thayer gives the following definitions: *“to hold back, detain, retain...from going*

away...to check a ship's headway, i.e., to hold or head the ship. To hold fast, keep secure, keep firm possession of." "To hold down (fast)" indicates the capture of something that one does not want to escape from him. One has come to possess something which he considers so valuable that he is not willing to take the chance that it will get way from him. Once one's examination of what he hears or sees has determined the value (good or bad) of the information, the implication is cast away the bad, for it is evil, but hold on tightly to what is good.

"After the disciples have applied the scripture test, they are to accept and hold fast to everything that passes inspection" (Zerr, p. 152).

The word **"good"** comes from καλός (kal-os), which Strong defined as *"properly beautiful but chiefly (figuratively) good (literally or morally), i.e., valuable or virtuous (for appearance or use)...better, fair, good (ly), honest, meet, well, worthy."* Thayer uses these words of definition: *"beautiful, handsome, excellent, eminent, choice, surpassing, precious, useful, suitable, commendable, admirable...good, excellent in its nature and characteristics, and therefore well adapted to its ends."* The end to be obtained, the only goal worth achieving, is the eternal salvation offered through the Lord Jesus Christ. Man should then grab hold of this well adapted gift GOD has given him and hold onto it like a drowning man would hold to a lifeline thrown to him from the ship of faith.

"Embrace it, practice it, and teach it to others" (Edwards, p. 189).

Once one has this most awesome and excellent gift, what should be his course of action?

1 Thess. 5:22 "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

“abstain from every form of evil.” (ASV)

“Abstain from all appearance of evil.” (TLO)

Because the spiritual man has tested all things and determined that which is good, it will lead him to **“Abstain”** from something. The word **“Abstain”** comes from ἀπέχομαι (ap-ekh-om-ah-ee), which Strong defined as *“to hold oneself off, i.e., refrain: abstain”* (Thayer gives the same definition.). Zodhiates says it is *“to keep oneself from. To abstain or refrain”* (p. 213). The idea is to refuse to get involved with or do something. Considering the context, it means to keep oneself pure, holy and walking by the commandments of the Lord.

From what will a Christian **“Abstain?”** **“all appearance of evil”** Strong defines the word **“appearance”** as *“a view, i.e., form (literally or figuratively): appearance, fashion, shape, sight.”* Thayer says it is *“the external or outward appearance, form figure, shape...form kind.”* Zodhiates says it is *“the act of seeing, the thing seen, external appearance sight...it refers to the visible appearance of things which are set in contrast with that which directs faith, meaning that the believer is guided not only by what he beholds, but by what he knows to be true though invisible”* (p. 507). As far as a translation of this word, the ASV gives the better rendering in this author’s view — *“every form of evil.”* One should not get as close to the cliff edge of sin in order to see how close he can come without falling into the canyon of sin. The idea, it seems to this author, is that one is to stay as far away from sin as it is humanly possible. When he does this, he shows others by example how to avoid the clutches of Satan. Thus,

he will not entertain for a moment the thought of what pleasure he might get from such an activity. **Why?** In part, because of the influence he will have on others by his choices. In his commentary on The Thessalonian Epistles, Hiebert made the following thought-provoking observation.

“While believers should abstain from actions which will knowingly offend others, it is not always possible to abstain from everything which may appear evil to a narrow and foolish judgment” (Quoted by Walcoord/Zuck, p. 709).

This principle is true whether one speaks of doctrine or the affairs of life. For instance, this author thoroughly enjoys most kinds of music. But though the sounds of an orchestra would be pleasing at Carnegie Hall, they are not pleasing in a worship service. **Why?** Because GOD has specified the kind of music He wants in worship — **vocal**. The place from which the melody of the music is to come is also specified — the heart (Eph. 5:19) — NOT from some mechanical instrument! This is a matter of doctrine. Further, on the ball field, a shout of excitement can be encouraging to one’s fellow teammates and be perfectly pleasing to GOD. But denigrating shouts toward one’s competitors are not pleasing, for it is not treating them with the respect which is due to all of one’s fellow man. Just so — the use of instrumental instruments in worship is a vile sound in the ears of GOD.

Sometimes, in order to hold one’s self away from something, he must run from it. A good example of this would be Joseph, when he ran from the evil actions and desires of Potiphar’s wife. **“Flee fornication”** (1Corinthians 6:18). But sexual sins are not the only things from which one should flee. Christians are to **“flee from idolatry”** (1 Cor. 10:14), flee from **“the love of money”** (1 Timothy 6:11-12), **“Flee also youthful**

lusts” (2 Timothy 2:22), et cetera. Whatever form evil may take, Christians must flee from it. Remember — **“Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you”** (James 4:7). **From what are Christians to hold themselves away?**

“evil” This word comes from πονηρός (pon-ay-ros), which Strong defined as *“hurtful, i.e., evil.”* Thayer adds, *“bad, of a bad nature or condition...in an ethical sense: evil, wicked, bad.”* Zodhiates says it is *“labor, sorrow, pain. Evil in a moral or spiritual sense, wicked, malicious, mischievous...evil which corrupts others, evil-disposed, malevolent, malignant, wicked”* (p. 1149). One of the things learned from the above definitions is that evil is active. It is never passive. Evil is hurtful and painful in its consequences. It is mischievous in its deceitfulness, promising what it cannot deliver. It corrupts the soul like a cancer. It is malevolent, i.e., evilly disposed toward others, wishing them injury and misfortune.

“Paul’s exhortation was a general call for believers to discern truth from error, good from evil, righteousness from sin, and a command to shun any of the negative teachings, influences, or behaviors that would displease God” (MacArthur, p. 200).

Let one consider a theory which the KJV has caused any number of people to believe. The theory basically says, *“Avoid or shun everything which gives a resemblance of evil.”* The fallacy in the argument revolves, in part, upon the lack of consideration of how one’s mind has been trained. Paul dealt with this concept in 1st Corinthians chapter eight. There were those among the Christians who would not eat certain foods, because their prior training said that eating these foods was an act of worship. While Paul taught that he would not personally partake of such for fear of causing his weak brother to sin, he also strongly taught that

there was nothing inherently evil in partaking of those foods. Because something might appear to be wrong in the eyes of some does not make it wrong or sinful. (Many today think it is evil to discipline children corporally, but that does not make it so.) Further, just because the world or society condemns something does not make it wrong or sinful. Do not misunderstand the comments just made — for every Christian has the responsibility to avoid evil. He has the responsibility to avoid what GOD has declared is evil. One might also consider the condemnation, as an example, of a young mother traveling on a lonely road at night with her two infant children. Her car breaks down. She needs help. Her cell phone battery is dead, and the only sign of life is a bar. **Should a person jump to conclusions if they happened to drive by as she walked in the door of the bar?**

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

“And the GOD of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (ASV)

“And may the GOD of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your whole person, the spirit, and the soul, and the body, be preserved unblameable, till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (TLO)

This verse begins the farewell of this letter to the called out in Thessalonica. The terms **“peace”** and **“sanctify”** have already been discussed in this commentary, so they will not be re-examined here.

Note that the wish of the Spirit and Paul was that peace and sanctification would be **“wholly”** granted to them. The word **“wholly”** comes from the word ὀλοτελής (hol-ot-el-ace), which Strong says means *“complete to the end, i.e., absolutely perfect.”* Thayer agrees with this, saying it is to be *“perfect, complete in all respects.”* It is a compound word from holos (*“all, the whole”*) and telos (*“completion”*). Thus, it refers to *“all of the whole, completely or entirely”* (Zodhiates, p. 1039). If one has all of something — there is no more to be had.

Note also the *“triune”* nature of man which is presented — **“spirit and soul and body,”** i.e., an affirmation that there are three parts to man. This has been illustrated in the past by noting an apple, which is composed of three separate but combined elements, all of which are necessary to be an apple — the skin and the meat and the core. In the present case, **“spirit”** signifies the life-giving force of an individual; **“soul,”** the eternal aspect of the individual; and **“body,”** the physical part of his being. Without these three parts, one is not a human being. It might be pointed out that animals have spirit and body — but no soul. Having a soul is what separates human beings from all other living things in this world. In the text under consideration, note the word **“whole.”** It comes from the word ὀλόκληρος (hol-ok-lay-ros), defined by Strong as *“complete in every part, i.e., perfectly sound (in body): entire whole.”* Thayer adds this to one’s understanding: *“complete in all its parts, in no part wanting or unsound, complete, entire.”* Zodhiates says it refers to the *“whole, having all its parts, sound, perfect.”* He went on to add, *“that which retains all that was initially allotted to it and wanting nothing for its wholeness”* (p. 1038). This probably signifies the

condition man was in before he sinned. In the text under consideration, it probably means much more, i.e., the regaining of the condition lost due to one's sins, returning to the eternal completeness gained through the cleansing blood of Christ.

“preserved blameless” The word **“preserved”** comes from τηρέω (tay-reh-o) which means *“to guard (from loss or injury properly by keeping the eye upon...by implication to detain (in custody; figuratively to maintain...hold fast”* (Strong). Thayer adds to these thoughts, *“to attend to carefully, take care of...to guard...metaphorically to keep one in the state in which he is.”* Zodhiates says it refers to *“a warden, guard. To keep an eye on, watch, and hence to guard, keep, obey”* (p. 1380). One is to keep his spirit, soul and body from the defilement of sin. He is to guard himself carefully from the loss of the prize (stephanos – **“crown of life”**) held out to him by the GODHEAD (Revelation 2:10). He is to detain himself, as it were, under lock and key from sin. This is further emphasized by the word **“blameless”** — ἀμέμπτως (am-emp-toce) — *“faultlessly: blameless, unblameably”* (Strong); *“blameless, so that there is no cause for censure”* (Thayer). To be sure, every human being who has reached the age where he understands right from wrong — sin from righteousness — cannot stand before GOD as a perfect, unblemished soul. But because of GOD's grace and mercy, because of the blood of Christ, he can be considered by GOD on that day as **“blameless.”** **How long is one to maintain this guarding watchfulness of his soul?**

“unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” This guarding watchfulness is to be done until his time on earth is at an end, which is implied here by the coming

of Jesus for His saints — the end of time.

1 Thess. 5:24 “Faithful is He that calleth you, Who also will do it.”

“Faithful is He that calleth you, Who will also do it.” (ASV)

“Faithful is He who has called you; Who also will do it.” (TLO)

The Spirit assures the Thessalonians that the One they placed their trust in is trustworthy. He can do whatever He has promised, and He **will do** what He has promised. Therefore, Christians need not fear putting their trust in the Creator and His promises. When pressures come for one to follow the world, and they will come, Christians have the ability to refuse them and continue trusting GOD.

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but GOD is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

“But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil” (2 Thessalonians 3:3).

Since GOD calls one by His word (the Gospel – 2 Thess. 2:14), it is by His word that He provides man a way to escape. Paul said that he was not ashamed to have suffered many things as a Christian and then added the following proclamation.

“for I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day” (2 Timothy 1:12).

However, it must be understood that GOD will not unequivocally keep a Christian. This is a conditional promise based on one’s accepting the Gospel and continuing in faithfulness to Him to the end of his earthly

life.

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)” (Hebrews 10:23).

GOD does His part without failure. Fallible man must then do his part to receive eternal sanctification.

1Thess. 5:25-26 “Brethren, pray for us. Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.”

“Brethren, pray for us. Salute all the brethren with a holy kiss.” (ASV)

“Brethren, pray for us. Salute all the brethren with a holy kiss.” (TLO)

“Brethren, pray for us” The word **“Brethren”** has a family connotation. Christians are part of the family of GOD, and they all need the support of one another. Therefore, Paul had the right to expect **all of his brethren** to petition GOD on his behalf. If that be the case with Paul, it is the case with all Christians, i.e., all have the need and right to expect petitions for them to be made to the Father through Christ by their brethren.

Second, notice the unselfish nature of Paul’s request. He did not say, *“Pray for me.”* He said, **“pray for us.”** He was concerned not only for self, but for the well being of his fellow laborers, for the need they had for encouragement and strength to continue their efforts. There is also a recognition of their insufficiency, i.e., they could not succeed by their own efforts alone. They needed the backing of their brethren rendering whatever support they could. Paul understood the sufficient nature of GOD.

“And such trust have we through Christ to GOD-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of GOD” (2 Corinthians 3:4-

5).

He had full trust in the abilities of GOD and the aid of such in his life. Note several areas where Christians' prayers for each other are very important. There is the need for knowledge; for wisdom in applying that knowledge; for wisdom in how one walks daily, i.e., the way one interacts with those around him; that one's priorities are in line with GOD's priorities; for spiritual strength; for health, and the list goes on and on.

If the inspired apostle Paul needed the prayers of the brethren on his behalf, consider how much more the "average" Christian needs them.

"And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel" (Ephesians 6:19).

"Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to GOD for me; That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints" (Romans 15:30-31).

"Withal praying also for us, that GOD would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak" (Colossians 4:3-4).

"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all *men* have not faith" (2 Thessalonians 3:1-2).

"Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly" (Hebrews 13:18).

James also believed in the power of prayer — **"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth**

much” (James 5:16). Therefore, Paul requested their prayers.

Another reason for seeking brethren’s prayers is found in the fallible nature of man. Simply being a Christian does not shield one from going astray any more than it would an apostle (See Galatians chapter two with regard to Peter.). Paul understood that any Christian can fall from grace contrary to the fanciful theories of men.

“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1Corinthians 10:12).

(v. 26) **“Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.”**

“Greet” is from the word ἀσπάζομαι (as-pad-zom-ahē), meaning *“to enfold in the arms, i.e., (by implication) to salute (figuratively) to welcome: embrace, greet, salute, take leave”* (Strong). Thayer defined it as *“to draw to one’s self...to salute one, greet, bid welcome, wish well to...to receive joyfully, welcome.”*

Zodhiates says it is *“to embrace, to salute, transitively spoken of those who meet or separate”* (p. 276). From the studies of this word, to greet someone was not simply the idea of saying “Hello” or “Welcome.” It involved embracing one, and as Zodhiates pointed out, this was done whether welcoming someone or when they parted company. It is the idea of warmly greeting (or saying farewell) to another.

The word **“all”** (πας) is inclusive of everyone who is specified none are to be left out or ignored. In the present text, it is all who are brethren, i.e., members of the Lord’s body, the called out ones, who are to be warmly greeted. None are to be rejected from this warm and affectionate greeting. **How are brethren to be greeted warmly?**

“with an holy kiss” Kissing often signifies the

passionate kiss, a sexually passionate kiss, in the present age. This kind of kiss is something which is only appropriate between a husband and his wife. **Since the greeting was to be warm toward brethren who were loved by each other, what kind of kiss was the Spirit requiring here?** It was to be a **“holy kiss,”** not a sexual one (**There is a difference.**). In the society of Paul’s day, it was common to greet someone with a hug and a kiss on the cheek, or on both cheeks.

“There is reason to believe that, as a rule, men only thus greeted men, and women women” (Fields, p. 154).

A ἅγιος (**“holy kiss”**) may be a *“physically pure, morally blameless”* kiss (Strong), or it can be lecherous, i.e., impure. Today, it is not uncommon to greet someone with a hug or a handshake. These can be either pure or impure, just as a kiss can be pure or impure. **How can a hug/handshake be done in a impure way?** By holding the one being hugged longer than he should be held. Full frontal hugs can all too frequently lead one to impure thoughts or actions. Most women have at one time or another in their lives experienced a hug or handshake which made them feel uncomfortable (by someone’s taking advantage of such physical contact). Christians should never encourage such. This writer has tried to make it his practice never to hug or shake someone’s hand in what could be interpreted by the one hugged as being inappropriate. Thus, he tries hard never to hug a member of the opposite sex with a full frontal hug, but rather with that which cannot be misinterpreted by either the one being hugged or by a bystander (A side hug is OK.). If it is possible, a Christian **will always try** to avoid having his/her actions be misinterpreted.

“Erotic kissing is never referred to in the Bible, except possibly in Song of Solomon 1:2, and in that place the couple was

unquestionably married" (Fields, p. 155).

Note also the admonition to purity by Paul in 1st Timothy 5:1-2.

"Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity."

Purity, then, is a hallmark of Christianity and is to be practiced in every action and thought.

Consider also this question: **Why would any man or woman be happy about a member of the opposite sex kissing his/her mate on the lips?** Yet, this is commonly allowed at weddings — even by Christians. Considering the above passage (1 Tim. 5:1-2), **Would it be an act of purity for one to kiss his mother or father on the lips, or for brothers and sisters to kiss each other on the lips?** Only by a pervert! (This writer is thinking, as he wrote these words, of an elder who was in the habit of kissing his daughters the same way he kissed his wife.)

1 Thess. 5:27 "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren."

"I adjure you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the brethren." (ASV)

"I solemnly charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren." (TLO)

The phrase **"I charge"** comes from the word ὀρκίζω (hor-kid-zo). Strong defines it as *"to put to oath, i.e., make swear; by analogy to solemnly enjoin: adjure."* *"To force to take an oath, to administer an oath to"* (Thayer). Zodhiates says it means *"to put to an oath, make to swear"* (p. 1058). The idea of "promise" would also be a good way to render this, except that, as noted

in the definitions above, this would appear to be a most solemn promise. One might also add that any promise one makes is to fulfilled in the eyes of GOD. It would further be noted that this charge **“by the Lord”** also heightens the solemnness of responsibility to fulfill the promise made.

The **“charge”** is that **“this epistle (letter – RK) be read unto all the holy brethren.”** Since this letter, evidently due to the providence of GOD, is found in the canon of the Scriptures, it would be this writer’s contention that it was not only to be read to all of the Thessalonians, but to all men for all time. Hendriksen thought the phrase **“to all”** in this admonition may have indicated that, when those who were being disorderly heard that a letter had arrived from the apostle, some might absent themselves in order to avoid correction. If he is correct, then any who were not in the congregation would individually be sought out to hear his message. At any rate, everyone in every congregation, then and now, is to know what GOD has said in His holy Word.

“And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea” (Colossians 4:16).

The word **“read”** is from ἀναγινώσκω (an-ag-in-oce-ko) and indicates that it was to be read **out loud**. This could have been a necessity, because there was only one copy, and to avoid the tediousness of carrying it from one person to another. Or it could very well have been because many of them were illiterate. This writer prefers the latter explanation. It should also be considered that inspiration shows that there are blessings found in reading and hearing the Scriptures, as well as in obedience to what is read and heard.

“Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is at hand*” (Revelation 1:3).

1 Thess. 5:28 “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.”

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.” (ASV)

“The favor of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.” (TLO)

Paul now wished for the favor/kindness/goodwill (“**grace**”) of GOD to be shown toward them. Note that it is the grace of “**our**” (inclusive of all) Who is our Ruler (“**Lord**”) our Savior (“**Jesus**”) and our Anointed One (“**Christ**”) “**Amen**” — the best known word in the English language (Thayer) — “Let it be so!” The term “**Grace**” is a summation of all that is provided in Christ.

“The benediction of ‘grace’ is found at the end of every one of Paul’s letters (including Hebrews). It is not found at the close of the letters by Peter, Jude, James or John. The book of Revelation, however closes with a benediction of grace” (Fields, p. 156).