

AN AMERICAN PASTOR SERIES

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**THE DEAD**  
*Shall*  
**RISE**

An Exposition of I & II Thessalonians

*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

I Thessalonians 4:16

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## Preface

### Matthew 18:16

*But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*

**I**T is a biblical standard that for something to be established as the truth, multiple witnesses are needed to ensure its validity. One witness should not be considered enough, especially so in areas where divine judgment is to be the result. *One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established* (Deut. 19:15).

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Deut. 19:15) To secure against injury to life or property through inadequate or false attestation, it is enacted that more than one witness must appear before anything can be established; and that, should a witness be found on trial to have testified falsely against his neighbor, he was to be punished by having done to him what he thought to have done to his neighbor (cf. Deuteronomy 17:6; Numbers 35:30).<sup>1</sup> Verse

15.—The rule in Deuteronomy 17:6, regarding accusations of idolatry, is here extended to accusations of every kind before a court of justice; a single witness was not to be admitted as sufficient to convict a man of any offence, either civil or criminal.

The reason this principle is important in the preaching of God's Word is that for those who do not believe, divine judgment is promised to come upon them.<sup>2</sup> *That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness* (II Thess. 2:12). Because God has decreed that those who believe not must come under judgment, then it is reasonable that sinners should be given the greatest evidence that what has been presented to them has its source in God—that the Word spoken is not simply the word of men<sup>3</sup> but is indeed the true Word of God, which shall also be fully

1 Deut. 17:6 *At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.*

Num. 35:30 *Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die.*

2 Mark 16:16 *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

John 3:18 *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Rev. 21:8 *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

3 Gal. 1:11–12 *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.* <sup>12</sup>*For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

I 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.*

II Tim. 3:16 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

II Pet. 1:21 *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.*

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upheld by Him. So that if the Gospel is rejected,<sup>4</sup> then it can neither be claimed nor said that God did not give ample testimony to its truthfulness.

In Jesus' ministry we see the use of multiple witnesses. Examples include Jesus sending His disciples out two by two so that each disciple would strengthen the testimony of the other regarding Jesus being God's only begotten Son and Israel's Messiah.<sup>5</sup> Three disciples—Peter, James, and John—were present at the transfiguration of Christ, enabling them to testify of the true glory of the Son of God.<sup>6</sup> Christ also proclaimed that it was not just His own witness that gave credence

to His being the Son of God but also the Father's witness to Christ's true identity.<sup>7</sup> *And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased* (Matt. 3:17). The signs, miracles, and wonders done by Jesus also confirmed His being sent by God. *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* (Acts 2:22). The same truth can be said concerning the Holy Spirit bearing testimony to the divine and supernatural ministry of Christ. *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which*

4 Matt. 13:58 *And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.*

Luke 22:67 *Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe:*

John 6:64 *But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.*

John 12:37 *But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:*

John 12:48 *He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*

Acts 28:24 *And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.*

5 Luke 10:1 *After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.*

6 Matt. 17:1–8 *And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.*

Luke 9:28–36 *And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.*

7 John 5:32 *There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.*

John 8:18 *I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.*

Acts 17:31 *Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

I John 5:9 *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.*

*proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me* (John 15:26). The apostle Paul also, in writing to the Thessalonians, opens his epistles with Silvanus and Timothy,<sup>8</sup> two other gift ministries<sup>9</sup> confirming the revelation he was about to reveal.<sup>10</sup> It is always hoped that if one witness is not sufficient to bring people to belief, then another might. *And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign* (Exod. 4:8). Revelation given twice is established. Like Pharaoh's dream that was doubled by the Lord, revelation repeated will be certainly fulfilled. *And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass* (Gen. 41:32).

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Gen. 41:32) *doubled ... twice*] This is a literal rendering. The repetition of the dream

shewed emphatically that the thing was "established," i.e. made fixed and sure, by the decree of God. Cf. Psalm 93:2, "Thy throne is established"; Hosea 6:3, "sure as the morning."

*will shortly bring it to pass*] Lit. "hasteneth to do it." Hence there is urgent need to take measures in good time to meet the crisis which is bound to come.

By these examples and others it is hoped that in the preaching of God's Word, when multiple witnesses join together testifying to the validity of a truth, there can be a great degree of confidence that what is agreed upon is the truth. Hence, when truly spiritual men speak independently yet draw the same conclusions, then it is possible to know that the same Spirit of Christ<sup>11</sup> is leading them. This is essential when entering such topics as Christ's return<sup>12</sup> and what it takes to be truly saved by God.<sup>13</sup> Thankfully, all that genuinely

8 *I 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.*

11 *II Thess. 1:1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:*

9 *Eph. 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

10 *I Thess. 4:15-17 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. <sup>16</sup>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: <sup>17</sup>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.*

11 *I Pet. 1:11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.*

12 *Matt. 16:27 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.*

*I Cor. 1:7-8 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: <sup>8</sup>Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Col. 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

*I 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: <sup>17</sup>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.*

*II Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

*Rev. 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.*

13 *John 3:3-6 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup>Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup>That which is*

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has its source in God is sure to manifest profit to those who believe it.<sup>14</sup> Thus, when God sends His Word, whether by letter,<sup>15</sup> Spirit,<sup>16</sup> or prophet,<sup>17</sup> because God is its

*born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

*Rom. 10:9-10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. <sup>10</sup>For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

*14 I Cor. 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*

*15 Rom. 15:15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,*

*I Cor. 5:11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.*

*Gal. 6:11 Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.*

*Heb. 13:22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.*

*I Pet. 5:12 By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.*

*II Pet. 3:15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;*

*I John 2:14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.*

*I John 2:21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.*

*I John 2:26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.*

*I John 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

*16 II Sam. 23:2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.*

*Isa. 59:21 As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.*

*Ezek. 2:2 And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.*

*Matt. 10:20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*

*Mark 13:11 But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.*

*John 16:13 Howbeit 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: and he will shew you things to come.*

*Acts 28:25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,*

*I Cor. 2:13 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.*

*I Cor. 12:8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;*

*17 II Kgs. 21:10 And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying,*

*Ezek. 1:3 The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him.*

*Ezek. 38:17 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them?*

*Dan. 9:10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.*

*Zech. 7:12 Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.*

*Luke 1:70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:*

*Acts 3:18 But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.*

*Acts 3:21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*

true Author, it shall prosper where sent.<sup>18</sup> This teaches us that if it is truly the Word of God that is both heard and believed, then God will do all that He has proclaimed He would.<sup>19</sup> *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 (Isa. 55:11).*

Lastly, readers will find a voluminous amount of Scripture references added to the text. This is to illustrate that not only do the author and other esteemed men of God agree on the interpretation and revelation presented, but also the scripture itself is the third and final witness

confirming the truth revealed. If men still do not believe when even multiple scriptures confirm the truth, there is little more that can be done. At this point, though rejectors of Christ's words may remain religious, the truth is that they will just seek out false teachers who will enable them to continue living in their own lusts. If a man will not hear Christ's words or allow himself to be governed by God's Spirit, then all that is left to follow is the sinful nature within himself. *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears (II Tim. 4:3).*

<sup>18</sup> Ps. 33:9 *For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.*

Hos. 6:5 *Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth.*

Eph. 5:26 *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,*

<sup>19</sup> Josh. 21:45 *There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.*

Josh. 23:14 *And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.*

I Kgs. 8:56 *Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.*

Jer. 1:12 *Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it.*

Lam. 2:17 *The LORD hath done that which he had devised; he hath fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old: he hath thrown down, and hath not pitied: and he hath caused thine enemy to rejoice over thee, he hath set up the horn of thine adversaries.*

Ezek. 12:28 *Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; There shall none of my words be prolonged any more, but the word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord GOD.*

Jas. 1:12 *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

Rom. 4:21 *And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*

II Tim. 2:13 *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.*



# Commentators

## *Notes on the Old and New Testaments*

by Albert Barnes

Albert Barnes, known as the most prolific American commentator of his generation, was born December 1, 1798, in Rome, New York. Although he wanted to study law, he instead entered the Presbyterian ministry at Princeton Theological Seminary. There he was a dedicated student, rising early in the morning and studying by lamplight at night, almost driving himself blind. Upon graduation, his first pastorate was at Morristown, New Jersey. Barnes later accepted a call to be the minister of the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, where he served for forty years and was granted the title of pastor emeritus. He later became president of the Pennsylvania Bible Society, a position he held until he died in 1870. While in Philadelphia Barnes wrote multiple commentaries, making him a household name. His works include *Notes Explanatory and Practical on the Gospels* (1832), designed for Sunday school teachers and Bible classes, and *Notes on the New Testament* (11 vols.). He published commentaries on Job (2 vols.), Isaiah (2 vols.), Daniel, and Psalms (1870, 3 vols.). By the 1920s over a million copies of his commentaries had been sold, and they are still being printed today. Charles Spurgeon said concerning this commentary, “No minister can afford to be without it.”<sup>1</sup>

## *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*

by Joseph Benson

Prominent theologian and minister Joseph Benson was born January 26, 1749, in Melmerby, England. At an early age Benson became proficient in Greek and Latin. At sixteen he joined John Wesley, a leader of the Methodist Church. Later, in 1766 at Kingswood School, Benson was appointed as a master of classics, in which he dedicated himself to studying theology and philosophy under the guidance of Wesley. Three years later he was made headmaster of Trevecca College in Wales, which he later left due to conflicting beliefs with the school becoming Calvinistic. Though Benson had many shifts in ministry and titles, such as editor of the *Methodist Magazine*, his spiritual legacy lies in his multi-volume *Commentary on the New and Old Testaments*. Joseph Benson passed onto glory February 16, 1821, at the age of seventy-two.<sup>2</sup>

1 “Albert Barnes (Theologian).” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 29 Jan. 2023, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert\\_Barnes\\_\(theologian\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Barnes_(theologian)).

“Albert Barnes.” Edited by Amy McKenna, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 20 Dec. 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Albert-Barnes>.

“Barnes’ Notes on the Whole Bible.” *StudyLight.org*, <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/bnb.html>.

2 “Joseph Benson.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 10 Apr. 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph\\_Benson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Benson).

“Books Available - Benson’s Commentary of the Old and New Testaments - Bible Commentaries.” *StudyLight.org*, <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/rbc.html>.

*Gnomon of the New Testament*

by Johann Bengel

Known best for his edition of the *Greek New Testament*, Johann Albrecht Bengel, a Greek scholar and Lutheran pietist clergyman, was born June 24, 1687. Bengel spent his early years devoted to the works of Spinoza and Aristotle while he only dabbled in religious studies. It was not until he obtained his degree that he devoted his life to theology. Even with an initial dedication to learning the Scriptures, he held many doubts, but in 1707 Bengel gave himself to ministry, which led him to one of his greatest works, twenty years in the making, *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, or *Gnomon of the New Testament*, published in 1742. Bengel's choice of the term *gnomon* was no choice of the imagination, as it is derived from the Greek as "one who knows or examines." In the English language it refers to the pin of a sundial that casts its shadow. The Gnomon was simply to be used as an index to guide others in the Scriptures rather than inputting Bengel's own words and leading by a dogmatic approach. Ten years after publishing *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, Bengel died at the age of sixty-five on November 2, 1752.<sup>3</sup>

*Bible Commentary for English Readers*

by Charles Ellicott

Charles John Ellicott, best known for his Bible commentary and as an outstanding conservative scholar in the nineteenth century, was born at Whitwell, near Stamford, England, April 25, 1819. Ellicott graduated from St. John's College in Cambridge, where he became a fellow. Later he was ordained a priest in the Church of England. After marrying Constantia Beecher he became the rector of a small country parish where he used his spare time to study and write his well-regarded commentaries on the New Testament epistles. He was quite accomplished as a divinity professor at Cambridge, dean of Exeter, and bishop of Gloucester but is best remembered for his commentaries on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon. Ellicott's other popular works include *Modern Unbelief*, *The Being of God*, and *The History and Obligation of the Sabbath*. In 1860 he was involved in a serious train accident while traveling between Cambridge and London. Though he had fractures to both legs and other injuries, it has been said that his first concern was for the academic manuscripts he was transporting, and the second was to minister to the dying passengers around him, with little thought of himself. His injuries left him with a limp; however, the railway company gratefully awarded him a silver pass for free travel between the two cities. About ten years after the accident, Ellicott was commissioned to help revise the King James Bible, a project that is regarded as one of the great works of his life. Ellicott was known for his sympathy toward others and for living a simple life. He was remembered as good-humored, kindly, pleasant, entertaining in conversation, and "a warm, outgoing person with a genuine interest

<sup>3</sup> "Johann Albrecht Bengel." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 23 May 2022, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann\\_Albrecht\\_Bengel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Albrecht_Bengel).

in people.” Ellicott resigned in March 1905 due to failing health and retired with his wife to Birchington-on-Sea, England, where he died October 15, 1905.<sup>4</sup>

*The Pulpit Commentary*

by Joseph Exell and Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones

*The Pulpit Commentary*, created by Rev. Joseph Exell (1849–1909) and Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones (January 14, 1836–November 2, 1917) is one of the largest homiletical works produced to this day with a total of twenty-three volumes compiled over thirty years. Though not much is known about the faith of the creators of this commentary, the heart and labor of love of these men can be seen in their compilation and selection of one hundred contributors filling 95,000 entries covering the Scriptures. This commentary, being one of the largest of its kind, dissects the Bible into easy-to-read yet detailed outlines, providing key points for those who study God’s Word. In addition to outlines, it provides details on biblical customs and geographical information as well as translations for key Greek and Hebrew words. This catch-all commentary is a great resource for students and ministers alike.<sup>5</sup>

*Exposition of the Entire Bible*

by John Gill

Baptist pastor and scholar John Gill was born November 23, 1697, in Kettering, England, and passed onto glory at the age of seventy-four October 14, 1771. At age twelve Gill devoted himself to the Lord and made a public profession at eighteen. He went on to become a pastor at age twenty-one. Gill held a doctor of divinity degree and is known as the first major writing Baptist theologian. Gill’s *Exposition of the New Testament* includes three volumes written between 1746 and 1748. Soon after, Gill started his *Exposition of the Old Testament*, which included six volumes written between 1748 and 1763. Preacher Charles Spurgeon esteems Dr. Gill highly for his methodical formatted sermons and ability to retain being sound and sober in his commenting—rarely being given to his imagination, thus distinguishing Gill and his excellent work on the Holy Scriptures.<sup>6</sup>

4 “Charles Ellicott.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 5 Jan. 2023, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_Ellicott](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Ellicott).

Projects, Contributors to Wikimedia. “Dictionary of National Biography, 1912 Supplement/Ellicott, Charles John.” *Wikisource, the Free Online Library*, Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 1 Jan. 2021, [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Dictionary\\_of\\_National\\_Biography,\\_1912\\_supplement/Ellicott,\\_Charles\\_John](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Dictionary_of_National_Biography,_1912_supplement/Ellicott,_Charles_John).

5 “Books Available - The Pulpit Commentaries - Bible Commentaries.” *StudyLight.org*, <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/tpc.html>.

“The Pulpit Commentary.” *Biblesoft*, <https://store.biblesoft.com/products/172-pulpitcob00035-the-pulpit-commentary.html>.

6 “John Gill (Theologian).” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 30 Dec. 2022, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Gill\\_%28theologian%29](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Gill_%28theologian%29).

“Biography of John Gill - Coming in the Clouds.” *Coming In The Clouds*, 5 Jan. 2014, <https://comingintheclouds.org/about-protestant/teachers-preachers/biography-of-john-gill/>.

## *The Dead Shall Rise*

### *Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible*

by Matthew Henry

Matthew Henry was born into a godly home October 18, 1662, in Wales. By the age of three, Henry had developed a passion for books, mainly the Bible. After deciding to pursue theology, he sometimes rose as early as four o'clock in the morning to study. He often studied his day away except for the allotted morning breakfast and worship. Though Henry explained he was always best when alone and that no company was as good as that of the book of God, he was rich in friends. Later, when Henry became a minister in Chester he wrote, "I think I can say with confidence that I do not design to take up the ministry as a trade to live by, or to enrich myself, out of the greediness of filthy lucre. No! I hope I aim at nothing but *souls*; and if I gain those, though I should lose all my worldly comforts by it, I shall reckon myself to have made a good bargain." Henry was not settled in making a name for himself, but rather he would "prefer the good word of my Master before the good word of my fellow-servants." He was invited frequently to speak and lecture. After a visit to Chester in 1713, his health declined, and then a year later he was thrown off his horse but continued to preach at Nantwich, where he succumbed to apoplexy the morning after, on June 22, 1714. His legacy is still remembered in his six-volume *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* and *Complete Commentary*, for which thirteen other ministers completed Romans through Revelation after his death. Then in 1811 the entire commentary was re-edited. Henry is also remembered for *A Communicant's Companion* and *Directions for Daily Communion with God*.<sup>7</sup>

### *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*

by Robert Jamieson, Andrew Robert Fausset, and David Brown

The *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary* was created by three theologians and scholars from across the United Kingdom: Rev. Robert Jamieson, D.D. (January 3, 1802–October 26, 1880), Rev. Andrew Robert Fausset A.M. (October 13, 1821–February 8, 1910), and Rev. David Brown, D.D. (August 17, 1803–July 3, 1897). Robert Jamieson in his early years had intended to study medicine but instead devoted himself to the work of Christ's ministry. His coauthor of the commentary, Andrew Fausset, was a man of many accolades who produced several works on biblical prophecy. Their third partner, Rev. David Brown, served as moderator of the general assembly. In 1871 these three men published a six-volume work known as *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*. This expository continues holding a high reputation due to its "scholarly rigor" and "devotional value." English preacher Charles Spurgeon commended this commentary in saying, "It is to some extent a compilation and condensation of other men's thoughts, but it is sufficiently original to claim

7 Hamilton, James. "Biographical Sketch of the Rev. Matthew Henry." *Christian Biography Resources*, <https://www.wholesomewords.org/biography/bhenry3.html>.

"Matthew Henry (1662–1714) | Reformed Theology at a Puritan's Mind." *A Puritan's Mind*, <https://www.apuritansmind.com/puritan-favorites/matthew-henry-1662-1714/>.

"Matthew Henry." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 12 Nov. 2022, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew\\_Henry#:~:text=Matthew%20Henry%20\(18%20October%201662,the%20Old%20and%20New%20Testaments.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_Henry#:~:text=Matthew%20Henry%20(18%20October%201662,the%20Old%20and%20New%20Testaments.)

a place in every minister's library: indeed it contains so great a variety of information that if a man had no other exposition he would find himself at no great loss if he possessed this and used it diligently."<sup>8</sup>

*Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*

by Heinrich Meyer

Heinrich Meyer, a German Protestant chiefly known for his *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, was born January 10, 1800, and passed away June 21, 1873. Meyer had a deep and early love for languages and studied them voraciously, which allowed him to consume English, French, Dutch, Latin, Greek, and even Gothic commentaries. Through his years as a pastor he was known for always being prepared to speak on the message of the cross. Meyer's work on the commentary started in 1829 in German. Later, in 1832, the second part of his work on the New Testament continued with Meyer writing and editing, alongside other ministerial duties. In 1846 Meyer developed a visceral affliction that caused him to struggle with his health for much of the rest of his life. Even from his sickbed, Meyer was diligent in the work he had begun, as long as the Lord preserved him to do so. Meyer understood, though, that he could not complete the commentary or complete full translations in his own strength. They were, however, completed after his death. In tribute to a man who was faithful to the end, his headstone reads, "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's" (Romans 14:8). His commentary went through a series of translations, one being an English version of twenty volumes, produced after his death throughout the years 1873–1882, and an American translation in 1884–88 in eleven volumes.<sup>9</sup>

*English Annotations on the Holy Bible*

by Matthew Poole

Matthew Poole, a renowned theologian and Bible scholar, was born in York, England, in 1624. Little is known of his early life until his admittance to Emmanuel College in Cambridge on July 2, 1645. Poole served as minister of St. Michael-le-Querne in London for a time but later worked almost solely on his biblical studies. After earning his MA at Cambridge and Oxford University, Poole wrote the *Synopsis Criticorum Bibli-*

8 "Books Available - Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible - Bible Commentaries." *StudyLight.org*, <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/jfb.html>.

"Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 9 Aug. 2022, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamieson-Fausset-Brown\\_Bible\\_Commentary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamieson-Fausset-Brown_Bible_Commentary).

"Robert Jamieson (Moderator)." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 6 Sept. 2022, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_Jamieson\\_\(moderator\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Jamieson_(moderator)).

"Andrew Robert Fausset." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 29 June 2022, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew\\_Robert\\_Fausset](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Robert_Fausset).

"David Brown (Free Church of Scotland)." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 23 Aug. 2022, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David\\_Brown\\_\(Free\\_Church\\_of\\_Scotland\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Brown_(Free_Church_of_Scotland)).

9 Meyer, Gustav. *Meyer's NT Commentary*, <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/meyer/>.

"Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 6 Feb. 2023, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heinrich\\_August\\_Wilhelm\\_Meyer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heinrich_August_Wilhelm_Meyer).

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*cum*, which condenses the views of 150 biblical critics into five volumes. Another of his works, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*, was greatly valued by both Charles Spurgeon and Jonathan Edwards. Spurgeon said of Poole, “He is a very prudent and judicious commentator, less a commentator, and more an expositor.” And in regard to Poole’s synopsis, Spurgeon found it “a marvelous collection of all the wisdom and folly of the critics.” Poole’s other published works include *The Nullity of the Romish Faith, A Blow at the Root*, and *Dialogues between a Popish Priest and an English Protestant*. Before Poole finished his commentary, he died in October 1679. His friends completed the work and published it in 1685. Today he is still considered one of the eminent Puritans of Great Britain’s biblical scholarship.<sup>10</sup>

### *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*

edited by William Robertson Nicoll

The Expositor’s Greek Testament (1897) is a highly regarded 19th-century work known for its detailed English notes that provide readers with a deeper understanding of the original Greek New Testament. Esteemed Scottish scholar Reverend W. Robertson Nicoll (1851–1923) served as editor of this rich resource for studying the language and context of the scriptures. Nicoll began in ministry as a pastor, but due to health concerns had to shift to literary criticism and editorial works. In doing so he oversaw *The Expositor*, a scholarly theological journal; *The British Weekly*, a widely-read religious newspaper; and *The Expositor’s Bible*.

Designed to aid readers in exploring the theological and linguistic nuances of the New Testament, *The Expositor’s Greek Testament* features critical analysis that has proven invaluable to students, scholars, and pastors. Its enduring significance makes it a foundational reference for those engaging with the Greek text of the New Testament.<sup>11</sup>

### *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*

edited by John James Stewart Perowne and Frederic William Farrar

*The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* is a complete commentary set published by Cambridge University Press. More than thirty theologians and biblical scholars contributed to the 57 volumes in this collection between the late 1800s and early 1900s. Each volume includes an introduction, history, original language stud-

<sup>10</sup> “Matthew Poole.” Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 21 June 2022, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew\\_Poole](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_Poole).

“Matthew Poole.” *SwordSearcher*, <https://www.swordsearcher.com/christian-authors/matthew-poole.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Guzik, David. “The Expositor’s Greek Testament.” *Enduring Word*, David Guzik <https://Enduringword.com/Wp-Content/Uploads/2021/12/Small-WEB-LOGO-500-x-250-Px-3.Png>, 17 Mar. 2018, [enduringword.com/downloads/expositors-greek-nt-vol-3/](https://enduringword.com/downloads/expositors-greek-nt-vol-3/). Accessed 09 Dec. 2024.

“The Expositor’s Greek Testament: Commentary.” Edited by William Robertson Nicoll, *Logos Bible Software*, 1 Jan. 1897, [www.logos.com/product/27219/the-expositors-greek-testament-volume-i-matthew-john-commentary](http://www.logos.com/product/27219/the-expositors-greek-testament-volume-i-matthew-john-commentary).

“The Expositor’s Greek Testament.” *StudyLight.Org*, 2022, [www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/egt.html](http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/egt.html).  
“William Robertson Nicoll.” *Author Info: William Robertson Nicoll - Christian Classics Ethereal Library*, [www.ccel.org/ccel/nicoll](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/nicoll).

ies, outlines, maps, literary analysis, and verse-by-verse commentary to provide a thorough understanding of the scriptures. Some volumes also include appendices for deeper study on topics and issues raised in the text. General editor and Anglican Bishop John Perowne exercised “limited editorial control over the writers ... being convinced that freshness and variety of treatment are more than a compensation for any lack of uniformity in the Series.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> “Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges.” *Internet Archive, Cambridge [Eng.]: University Press*, [archive.org/details/cambridgebiblef00unkngoog/page/n14/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/cambridgebiblef00unkngoog/page/n14/mode/2up).  
“Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (58 Vols.).” *Logos Bible Software*, [www.logos.com/product/8544/cambridge-bible-for-schools-and-colleges](http://www.logos.com/product/8544/cambridge-bible-for-schools-and-colleges).



# *I Thessalonians*

## *King James Version*

**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.

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

<sup>3</sup>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;

<sup>4</sup>Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

<sup>5</sup>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.

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

<sup>7</sup>So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

<sup>8</sup>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.

<sup>9</sup>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;

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

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

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:

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

<sup>7</sup> But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

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

<sup>11</sup> As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,

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

<sup>13</sup> For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye re-

ceived 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.

<sup>14</sup> 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:

<sup>15</sup> 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:

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

<sup>17</sup> 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.

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

<sup>19</sup> 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?

<sup>20</sup> For ye are our glory and joy.

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

<sup>2</sup> 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:

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

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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:

<sup>7</sup> Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:

<sup>8</sup> For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

<sup>9</sup> For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;

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

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

<sup>12</sup> And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:

<sup>13</sup> 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.

**4** 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.

<sup>2</sup> For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

<sup>3</sup> For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

<sup>4</sup> That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

<sup>5</sup> Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

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

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

<sup>10</sup> 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;

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

<sup>12</sup> That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

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

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> 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:

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

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

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

<sup>3</sup> 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.

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

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

<sup>6</sup> Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

<sup>7</sup> For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

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

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

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

<sup>13</sup> And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

<sup>14</sup> Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

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

<sup>16</sup> Rejoice evermore.

<sup>17</sup> Pray without ceasing.

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

<sup>19</sup> Quench not the Spirit.

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<sup>20</sup> Despise not prophesyings.

<sup>21</sup> Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

<sup>22</sup> Abstain from all appearance of evil.

<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

<sup>25</sup> Brethren, pray for us.

<sup>26</sup> Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.

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

<sup>28</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

## II Thessalonians

### King James Version

**1** Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

<sup>2</sup> Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>3</sup> We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

<sup>4</sup> So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

<sup>5</sup> Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

<sup>6</sup> Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

<sup>7</sup> And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

<sup>8</sup> In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

<sup>9</sup> Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

<sup>10</sup> When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

<sup>11</sup> Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:

<sup>12</sup> That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him,

according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**2** Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

<sup>2</sup> That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

<sup>3</sup> Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

<sup>4</sup> Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

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

<sup>6</sup> And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

<sup>7</sup> For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

<sup>8</sup> And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

<sup>9</sup> Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

<sup>10</sup> And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

<sup>11</sup> And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

<sup>12</sup>That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

<sup>13</sup>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:

<sup>14</sup>Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>15</sup>Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

<sup>16</sup>Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

<sup>17</sup>Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

**3** Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:

<sup>2</sup>And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

<sup>3</sup>But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.

<sup>4</sup>And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

<sup>5</sup>And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

<sup>6</sup>Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother

that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

<sup>7</sup>For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

<sup>8</sup>Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

<sup>9</sup>Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

<sup>10</sup>For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

<sup>11</sup>For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

<sup>12</sup>Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

<sup>13</sup>But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

<sup>14</sup>And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

<sup>15</sup>Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

<sup>16</sup>Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.

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

<sup>18</sup>The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

## I Thessalonians 1:1–5

*I Thessalonians 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.*

**P**AUL, Silvanus, and Timothy came to the Thessalonians with one voice, declaring to them the Word of the Lord. A *threefold cord is not quickly broken*,<sup>1</sup> and as such, three believing servants of God were a unified voice confirming the truth that would be revealed. To establish something as the truth, two or three witnesses are required. *This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established* (II Cor 13:1). Multiple witnesses were essential when elders were accused,<sup>2</sup> when men ignored reproof from a brother,<sup>3</sup> or when sinners in the Old Testament set aside the law of Moses.<sup>4</sup> This is also true when a new revelation from the Lord is brought to men. Though men may be hesitant to believe one witness, two to three provide greater confirmation of the truth.

Understanding this, Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy's joint letter to the Thessalo-

nians gave ample evidence that the Word brought to them was from the Lord. That which Paul had preached to the Corinthians of being of one mind, speaking the same thing, with no division,<sup>5</sup> was exactly the same harmony that existed between Silvanus, Timothy, and Paul himself. Ultimately unity is necessary for outreach. If it is not held by those who hold forth the Word, it will not be easily embraced by those who hear it.

*Unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.* The Holy Spirit prompted Paul to pen a letter to the Thessalonians because of Whom they were *in*. Their faith resided *in* God as their Father and *in* His Son, Jesus Christ, as their Lord. They were not like so many Jews who were merely *in* religion or so many Gentiles who loved their state of being *in* the world. Rather, for the church at Thessalonica, their place of refuge, comfort, and delight was *in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ*. This teaches us that though true Christians live in this world, they are not of it, for none can truly walk with the Father and be content with a carnal and sinful world so separate from and different than Him.<sup>6</sup>

1 Eccl. 4:12 *And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*

2 I Tim. 5:19 *Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.*

3 Matt. 18:15–16 *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.* <sup>16</sup>*But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*

4 Deut. 17:6 *At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.*

5 I Cor. 1:10 *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

6 Jas. 4:4 *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

## The Dead Shall Rise

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, I Thess. 1:1) *In God*.—Other Thessalonians were “in the world,” “in darkness,” “in their sins.” The distinctive mark of these was that they were re-united to the Father of all men; and more, re-united in Christ.

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(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Thess. 1:1) *Which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ*—Who are united to the true God and to the Redeemer; or who sustain an intimate relation to the Father and the Lord Jesus. This is strong language, denoting, that they were a true church...

Both *God the Father* and the *Lord Jesus Christ* are mentioned because men cannot truly possess one without also possessing the other, as God is seen and made visible through the Son, and no man can see the Father except through the One sent to declare Him.<sup>7</sup> Thus, it is impossible by biblical standards to hold one member of the Trinity and not hold the others. For a man to be truly saved, all three members of the godhead must be embraced. The Great Commission demands that men are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit<sup>8</sup> because they are divinely bound, and to truly believe in one will lead to belief in the other two.

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, I Thess. 1:1) *And in the Lord Jesus Christ*; these two are put together, because there is no access to God the Father, no true worship of him, no union or communion with him, and so no being in him, but through Jesus Christ. And by both they might see the blessed state they were now brought to by the gospel; being before strangers to God the Father and Jesus Christ, but now in them.

The degree in which the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are bound together is seen throughout Scripture. Hence, if Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is not a man's Lord, then God will not be his Father. And it is through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit that heavenly sonship is both gained and confirmed. *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father* (Gal. 4:6). Likewise, men will properly and rightly call God *Abba, Father*, only when Christ sends the Spirit into their hearts. This teaches us that for true salvation, the Holy Spirit must be received and Christ's lordship accepted. *Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost* (I Cor. 12:3). For any to really say that Jesus is his Lord, he must first possess the Spirit of God, as this alone confirms actual heavenly sonship.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Cor. 12:3) *And that no man can say...*—That is, that it cannot occur, or even happen, that anyone will acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah who is not influenced by the Holy Spirit. The meaning is, not that no one has physical ability to say that Jesus is Lord unless aided by the Holy Spirit, since all people can say this; but that no one will be disposed heartily to say it; no one will acknowledge him as their Lord; it can never happen that anyone will confess him as the true Messiah who has not been brought to this state by the agency of the Holy Spirit.

True salvation will always include confession of the lordship of Jesus Christ,<sup>9</sup> being

<sup>1</sup> John 2:15 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

<sup>7</sup> John 1:18 *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

<sup>8</sup> Matt. 28:19 *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

<sup>9</sup> Rom. 10:9–10 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* <sup>10</sup>*For with the heart man believeth unto*

filled with God's Holy Spirit,<sup>10</sup> and being made a son of God through Christ.<sup>11</sup> For God to rightfully be any man's heavenly Father, there must be an acceptance of Christ and a receiving of the Holy Spirit sent by Him. By these realities are men confirmed to be in the family of God, and without them they remain estranged from it.

*Grace be unto you, and peace.* This is the message that Paul and his companions hoped to impart to the Thessalonians, one of grace and peace. Grace is divine favor bestowed upon men. Because Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, God saved him.<sup>12</sup> Observe that men can hope to be saved by the Lord only when they are favored by Him. He who does not receive

divine grace cannot be saved. Romans also reveals that it is by *grace* that men are saved through faith.<sup>13</sup> Hence, even the process that God employs to save the sinner, faith,<sup>14</sup> is an act of divine grace.

*Peace.* Peace is that which joins things together into a whole. The word for *peace* here is #1515 *eirénē*. *HELPS Word-studies* defines it as, “(from *eirō*, ‘to join, tie together into a whole’)—properly, wholeness, i.e. when all essential parts are joined together; peace (God’s gift of wholeness).” Man in his sinful condition is broken.<sup>15</sup> His relationships with God<sup>16</sup> and other men<sup>17</sup> have been severed. For healing to begin, there must first be reconciliation, and this reconciliation begins and ends with Jesus Christ. *Therefore being*

*righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

10 Acts 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 4:31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

11 John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

12 Gen. 6:8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

II Pet. 2:5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

13 Rom. 3:22-25 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: <sup>23</sup>For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; <sup>24</sup>Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: <sup>25</sup>Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

14 Eph. 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

15 Eccl. 7:20 For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

Rom. 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Isa. 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Rom. 3:10-18 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: <sup>11</sup>There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. <sup>12</sup>They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. <sup>13</sup>Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: <sup>14</sup>Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: <sup>15</sup>Their feet are swift to shed blood: <sup>16</sup>Destruction and misery are in their ways: <sup>17</sup>And the way of peace have they not known: <sup>18</sup>There is no fear of God before their eyes.

16 Isa. 59:1-2 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: <sup>2</sup>But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

Eph. 2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

17 I Cor. 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

II Cor. 12:20 For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:

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*justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ* (Rom. 5:1). It is only through faith in the Son of God that peace with God can be entered into. Without reconciliation through the death of Christ,<sup>18</sup> true peace with God and fellowship with other believers in Christ are unattainable.

### ***I Thessalonians 1:2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;***

Paul knew that the Thessalonians' conversion and growth were due solely to God, and for this he was thankful. This teaches us that only those who truly give thanks to the Lord know Him as the source of all blessings and goodness. Whenever there is a resurgence of faith and increased love in the people of God, it is because of God. Ultimately it is the Lord Who gives and prompts an increase in His church, and this is always the case when divine attributes like faith and love become visible. Hence, whenever God's people bear spiritual fruit, you can know that the Lord is mightily involved in their lives. It is He Who makes all things grow, increase, and prosper, and without Him nothing can. *I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase* (I Cor. 3:6).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Cor. 3:6) The power is not in the naked word, nor in him that plants, nor in him that waters, nor in the

heart where it is sown, but in God. ... The seed must be sown or it will not germinate. Truth must be sown in the heart, and the heart must be prepared for it—as the earth must be plowed and made mellow, or it will not spring up. It must be cultivated with assiduous care, or it will produce nothing. But still it is all of God—as much so as the yellow harvest of the field, after all the toils of the farmer is of God. And as the farmer who has just views, will take no praise to himself because his grain and his vine start up and grow after all his care, but will ascribe all to God's unceasing, beneficent agency; so will the minister of religion, and so will every Christian, after all their care, ascribe all to God.

### ***I Thessalonians 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;***

The fact that the Thessalonians received the gospel and were willing to become subject to it revealed their willingness to allow God's power and authority over their lives.<sup>19</sup> No man will joyfully receive the gospel and at the same time reject its divine authority over himself. Whenever men place themselves in service to God and no longer live to merely please themselves, a true relationship with God has begun. The Thessalonians' work, labor, and hope proved the sincerity of their faith. Once a man truly believes, productive Christian works will follow him.

18 Rom. 5:10–11 *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.* <sup>11</sup>*And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

Col. 1:20–22 *And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.* <sup>21</sup>*And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled* <sup>22</sup>*In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight.*

19 Acts 17:1–4 *Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:* <sup>2</sup>*And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,* <sup>3</sup>*Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.* <sup>4</sup>*And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.*

*Work of faith.* “Works of faith are those to which faith prompts, and which show that there is faith in the heart.”<sup>20</sup> Men do many things not prompted by faith but rather by some selfish human motives. These will include works done to exalt self and actions done to impress others. The opposite of such carnal motivations is a *work of faith*, which has as its core trust in and reliance upon God. Faith also can be possessed only through first hearing the Word of God. *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God* (Rom. 10:17). This teaches us that it is impossible by biblical standards to engage in any truly godly work by merely desiring to do so. Hence, just as faith necessitates that God must first speak, a work of faith requires that the same Word of God must be revealed. Ultimately there is no such thing as a true work of the Lord that does not have its origination in God. Understanding this, we know that the Thessalonians performed works for God that were inspired by Him. It was God Who was working in them to will and to do of His own good pleasure,<sup>21</sup> and the Thessalonians happily responded to the influences of God’s divine Holy Spirit in their lives.

Christians were created in Christ Jesus to do good works, and those who possess sincere faith in the Father and in the Son will seek to live their lives fulfilling this divine purpose. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them* (Eph. 2:10). One of the great designs of the new birth is that God’s new sons may be led by Him to do divine works for the kingdom. True Christians also will follow the example of their Savior, Jesus Christ, in going about and doing good.<sup>22</sup> When works done are inspired and purposed by God, the good that is done will bring glory to His name.<sup>23</sup> Scripture also encourages believers to continue doing good,<sup>24</sup> as this is God’s will for their lives.

*Labour of love.* Not only was faith a catalyst for the Thessalonians’ service, but also *agape* love played a dominant role in leading them to exert spiritual labor for the Lord. When men truly love God, they are more than willing to labor for Him. Caring for His church is what Jesus instructed Peter to do when He repeatedly asked him if he had true love for Christ.<sup>25</sup> When men take on the care and

20 Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 1:3

21 Phil. 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

22 Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

23 Matt. 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

I Pet. 2:12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

24 Tit. 3:8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

Gal. 6:9-10 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.<sup>10</sup> As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Heb. 13:16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

25 John 21:15-17 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.<sup>16</sup> He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.<sup>17</sup> He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

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well-being of the people of God, it proves that they have true love for God in their hearts. But if a man does not truly love the brethren whom he can see, and is not willing to serve them, then we know he does not sincerely love either God or the Son of God, both of Whom he cannot see.<sup>26</sup>

No man can properly be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ and have God as his Father if lacking the supernatural element of divine love in his heart, simply because if love is absent, it is impossible to possess any true knowledge of God. Though men may claim they know the Lord, without love they really cannot. Just as divine love reveals that God is in men's hearts, its absence reveals that He is not. *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love* (I John 4:8).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I John 4:8) *He that loveth not, knoweth not God*—Has no true acquaintance with God; has no just views of him, and no right feelings toward him. The reason for this is implied in what is immediately stated, that “God is love,” and of course if they have no love reigning in their hearts, they cannot pretend to be like him.

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(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, I John 4:8) Yea, since love is his very nature, and that God is love, those that love (upon the account and in the way above expressed) are born of him, partake from him that excellent and most delectable nature, know him by a transformative knowledge: but they that love not, they are mere strangers to him, and never had to do with him.

It is by walking in God's love that divine law is fulfilled. *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law* (Rom. 13:10). Since God is love, when men pursue His disposition they reveal themselves as true followers of Him.

<sup>26</sup> I John 4:20 *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?*

<sup>27</sup> Gal. 5:22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*

Yet if men do not possess divine love for God and the people of God, though they may possess an abundance of other things, God's Word reveals that they are, in the end, counted by the Lord as nothing. Thus, if sincere love for God and His people is absent, then it makes no difference whatever else is done in Christ's name—it will not be accepted by God or regarded as anything worthy of divine reception. *And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing* (I Cor. 13:2).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Cor. 13:2) *I am nothing*—All would be of no value. It would not save me. I should still be an unredeemed, unpardoned sinner. I should do good to no one; I should answer none of the great purposes which God has designed; I should not by all this secure my salvation. All would be in vain in regard to the great purpose of my existence. None of these things could be placed before God as a ground of acceptance in the Day of Judgment. Unless I should have love, I should still be lost.

It is impossible for a man to be saved and have been made new through Christ if love is not the dominant force in his life, simply because all those filled with God's Holy Spirit will be taught by God to love. Love is the very first fruit of the Spirit listed,<sup>27</sup> and all those truly filled with the Spirit will have Its strong force both influencing and governing their lives. Hence, where the Holy Spirit of God truly is, the love of God will also reside. *But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another* (I Thess. 4:9).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Thess. 4:9) It is one of the first—the elementary effects of

religion on the soul, to lead us to love “the brethren”—and to do this is one of the evidences of piety about which there need be no danger of deception; compare 1 John 3:14.<sup>28</sup>

*Patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.* At the center of all true hope is the person of Jesus Christ. For the Christian, every promise of blessing, forgiveness, and being accepted by God rests on the ministry of God’s Son. There is therefore no realistic hope of entering the higher spiritual realm of God without the power, ministry, and spiritual ability of the Son of God, Who makes it available. Thus, all true hope for the Christian lies in the very One Who has called him to heaven<sup>29</sup> and now sits in heaven.<sup>30</sup> Believers are instructed to wait for the Savior,<sup>31</sup> simply because all hope of entering into heaven and the heavenly transformation<sup>32</sup> required for it is dependent on the Son of God’s power. Faith and love are thus not the only components to possessing true Christianity, but also the hope of Christ’s return is essential for the continuance in faith.

It is hope that allows the saved to endure and hope that gives confidence of greater things to come.

***I Thessalonians 1:4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.***

All Christians owe their spiritual standing of being made sons of God to divine election. The Greek word for *election* is #1589 *eklogḗ*. HELPS Word-studies defines it as a “divine selection.” Thayer’s Greek Lexicon defines *eklogḗ* as—

a. the act of picking out, choosing: σκεῦος ἐκλογῆς (the genitive of quality; cf. Winers Grammar, § 34, 3 b.; [Buttmann, 161 (140f)]), equivalent to ἐκλεκτόν, namely, τοῦ Θεοῦ, Acts 9:15;<sup>33</sup> specifically used of that act of God’s free will by which before the foundation of the world he decreed his blessings to certain persons;—ἡ κατ’ ἐκλογὴν προφεισίς, the decree made from choice (A. V. the purpose according to election.

Since none can respond to the gospel unless God has chosen them to be His own,

28 I John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

29 I Cor. 1:9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

30 I Pet. 3:22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

Col. 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Heb. 12:2 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.

Acts 7:55–56 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, <sup>56</sup>And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

Rev. 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

31 I 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.

I Cor. 1:7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

32 I Cor. 15:52–53 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. <sup>53</sup>For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

I John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Phil. 3:20–21 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: <sup>21</sup>Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

33 Acts 9:15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

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saved men must be first chosen men. Jesus said, *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me* (John 10:27). What was true of Nathanael, that Jesus knew him before his call, is likewise true of saints today. When Nathanael asked Jesus, *Whence knowest thou me?* Jesus responded that He had first seen him when Nathanael was under a fig tree. This teaches us that when men are called, Christ has previously seen them and selected them to be His own. *Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee* (John 1:48).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, John 1:48) *When thou wast under the fig-tree*—It is evident that it was from something that had occurred under the fig-tree that Jesus judged of his character. What that was is not recorded. It is not improbable that Nathanael was accustomed to retire to the shade of a certain tree, perhaps in his garden or in a grove, for the purpose of meditation and prayer. The Jews were much in the habit of selecting such places for private devotion, and in such scenes of stillness and retirement there is something especially favorable for meditation and prayer. Our Saviour also worshipped in such places. Compare John 18:2; Luke 6:12.<sup>34</sup> In that place of retirement it is not improbable that Nathanael was engaged in private devotion.

*I saw thee*—It is clear, from the narrative, that Jesus did not mean to say that he was bodily present with Nathanael and saw him; but he knew his thoughts, his desires, his secret feelings and wishes. In this sense Nathanael understood him. We may learn:

1. that Jesus sees what is done in secret, and is therefore divine.

2. that he sees us when we little think of it.

3. that he sees us especially in our private devotions, hears our prayers, and marks our meditations. And,

4. that he judges of our character chiefly by our private devotions. Those are secret; the world sees them not; and in our closets we show what we are. How does it become us, therefore, that our secret prayers and meditations should be without “guile” and hypocrisy, and such as Jesus will approve!

It is worthy of note that a man's faith in the Son of God is not the basis for being chosen but rather the *result* of it. *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you* (John 15:16). What is true of saints is equally true of apostles and other gift ministries in the church. Hence, for the body of Christ and those chosen to serve in it, divine election must precede earthly ordination.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, John 15:16) *Ye have not chosen me*—The word here translated “chosen” is that from which is derived the word “elect,” and means the same thing. It is frequently thus translated, Mark 13:20; Matthew 24:22, Matthew 24:24, Matthew 24:31; Colossians 3:12.<sup>35</sup> It refers here, doubtless, to his choosing or electing them to be apostles. He says that it was not because

<sup>34</sup> John 18:2 *And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.*

Luke 6:12 *And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.*

<sup>35</sup> Mark 13:20 *And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.*

Matt. 24:22 *And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*

Matt. 24:24 *For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*

they had chosen him to be their teacher and guide, but because he had designated them to be his apostles. See John 6:70; also Matthew 4:18–22.<sup>36</sup>

God has set the members in the body as it has pleased Him.<sup>37</sup> It is thus by divine choice and not merely human will that men are saved by the Son of God. In truth, no man can truly be saved by the Lord until he is first chosen by Him.

*I Thessalonians 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.*

Distinguishing himself from those who possessed only words as evidence of their faith, Paul reminded the Thessalonians that the gospel he preached had spiritual power accompanying it. To discern the difference between the true gospel of Jesus Christ and other religious doctrines that merely borrow Christ's name, one need only to examine if spiritual power is present or not. Practically, if those who preach the gospel do not have spiritual power in their ministries, then the Holy Spirit is not infusing them. One of the great attributes of those filled with the Holy Spirit is that divine power will enter their lives. *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jeru-*

*salem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth* (Acts 1:8). Whenever men are truly led by the Spirit of God,<sup>38</sup> it will be quite visible that God is the source of the words spoken by them, confirmed by the power of the Spirit manifesting Itself in their lives. Consequently, when the true gospel of Jesus Christ is preached, divine power will accompany it. But if men only profess Christ's name and possess no true relationship with His person, then all that is left is words, empty words, which though they may speak of the truth, prove that without spiritual power accompanying them, the Lord stands neither behind nor with them.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 1:5) In word only*—Was not merely spoken; or was not merely heard. It produced a powerful effect on the heart and life. It was not a mere empty sound that produced no other effect than to entertain or amuse; compare Ezekiel 33:32.<sup>39</sup>

*But also in power*—That is, in such power as to convert the soul. The apostle evidently refers not to any miracles that were performed there, but to the effect of the gospel on those who heard it. It is possible that there were miracles performed there, as there were in other places, but there is no mention of such a fact, and it is not necessary to suppose it, in order to see the full meaning of this language. There was great power manifested in the gospel in its leading them to break off

*Matt. 24:31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

*Col. 3:12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;*

*36 John 6:70 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?*

*Matt. 4:18–22 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. <sup>19</sup>And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. <sup>20</sup>And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. <sup>21</sup>And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. <sup>22</sup>And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.*

*37 I Cor. 12:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*

*38 Rom. 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

*39 Ezek. 33:32 And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.*

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from their sins, to abandon their idols, and to give their hearts to God...

If a man does not possess spiritual power in his ministry, you can be sure that the Lord Jesus Christ has not inspired it. If we learn anything from the study of Thessalonians, let it be this: the true gospel of Jesus Christ will always carry with it spiritual power. It is this that characterized Christ's own heavenly ministry, and it will be evident in all those baptized with the Holy Spirit today. Thus, when men come in God's name but do not possess God's power in their ministries, it is certain that they are not being led by the Holy Spirit.

The reason the gospel has power is that its source is Jesus Christ. *For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ* (Gal. 1:12). It was not from man, nor by man, that the apostle Paul brought forth the gospel, but only by and through receiving revelation from the resurrected Jesus Christ. Ultimately, then, the reason the gospel of Jesus Christ possesses spiritual

power is directly related to the power that God has given His Son. Because God has given complete authority to the Son, the gospel He sends in order to reveal Himself to the world will be accompanied by His power. *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth* (Matt. 28:18).

(*Benson Commentary*, Matt. 28:18) Dr. Whitney [states], "He to whom any office is duly committed, must have sufficient power and wisdom to discharge that office. Now to govern all things in heaven and earth belongs only to him who is the Lord and Maker of them, and therefore is known by this title, both in Scripture and by the heathen. To have power over death, and to be able to raise the dead, is to have that power which is proper to God alone: and to have power over the souls of men, and the knowledge of all hearts, belongs to God alone." Our Lord, therefore, is invested with, and exercises this authority and power, although as the Son of man, yet not as a mere man, for as such it would have been impossible for him to exercise it, but as a man in whom *dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily*.

## I Thessalonians 1:6–10

*I Thessalonians 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.*

**A**ND ye became followers of us, and of the Lord. The Greek word for followers is #3402 *mimētēs*. HELPS Word-studies defines it as “one who imitates, emulates.” From *mimētēs* we have the English word *mimic*. What separated the Thessalonians from the Corinthians is that they became followers of those who brought them the Word and did not seek to divide God’s messengers in an attempt to prove their own self-righteousness.

It is one thing to follow those in the faith who have gone before us, as God’s Word clearly instructs saints to do,<sup>1</sup> and quite another thing for men to use godly names and ministries only to cause division in the church.<sup>2</sup> Also, no man can be a true follower of God and not follow the Son of God when they hear His voice.<sup>3</sup> My

sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me (John 10:27). When men are true followers of the Lord, they will follow those heavenly ministries sent by Him. It is God Who sets and appoints ministries within the church and the spiritual rank they are to hold,<sup>4</sup> and it is the Son of God Who inspires these ministries for the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, and the edifying of the body of Christ.<sup>5</sup> The divine reason that these heavenly ministries are sent is so men are brought into a proper understanding and belief in the Son of God<sup>6</sup> and as such are grown up in the faith, thus prevented from being tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine.<sup>7</sup> This is also why not until believers are truly instructed in the Son of God will they be able to discern all false doctrines purposed to lead people away from Him. It is Christ Whom the devil has blinded men’s eyes to,<sup>8</sup> and this is often accomplished by introducing doctrines and religious movements

1 Heb. 6:12 *That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

2 I Cor. 3:4 *For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?*

3 Matt. 4:19–22 *And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.* <sup>20</sup>*And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.* <sup>21</sup>*And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.* <sup>22</sup>*And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.*

4 I Cor. 12:28 *And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*

5 Eph. 4:12 *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

6 Eph. 4:13 *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

7 Eph. 4:14 *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;*

8 II Cor. 4:3–4 *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: <sup>4</sup>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.*

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that lead people away from the simplicity that is in Christ.<sup>9</sup>

*Having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.* An illustration of this affliction and persecution is revealed in Acts 17:5–8.<sup>10</sup> Jesus had instructed His disciples that they would be hated of all men for His sake.<sup>11</sup> Servants are not above their masters; thus, all Christians must and will suffer for their Christian faith, just as Christ did in saving them. Yet neither persecution nor affliction can stop true belief of the

gospel. History has proven that when Christians are persecuted for believing the truth, it only inspires them to cling to it even more. Hence, for true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, affliction will do no more than draw them closer to the Lord. This was true of David, whose persecution only inspired greater affection for God,<sup>12</sup> and it will be true of us as well.

The Thessalonians possessed that *joy of the Lord* found in all whom Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit. *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might re-*

*9 II Cor. 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

*10 Acts 17:5–8 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. <sup>6</sup>And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; <sup>7</sup>Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. <sup>8</sup>And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.*

*11 Luke 21:17 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.*

*Matt. 10:22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. Matt. 24:9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.*

*John 15:20–21 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. <sup>21</sup>But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.*

*12 Ps. 56:1–13 Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me. <sup>2</sup>Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High. <sup>3</sup>What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. <sup>4</sup>In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me. <sup>5</sup>Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against me for evil. <sup>6</sup>They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul. <sup>7</sup>Shall they escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the people, O God. <sup>8</sup>Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book? <sup>9</sup>When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me. <sup>10</sup>In God will I praise his word: in the LORD will I praise his word. <sup>11</sup>In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. <sup>12</sup>Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee. <sup>13</sup>For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?*

*Ps. 59:1–17 Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me. <sup>2</sup>Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men. <sup>3</sup>For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O LORD. <sup>4</sup>They run and prepare themselves without my fault: awake to help me, and behold. <sup>5</sup>Thou therefore, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen: be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah. <sup>6</sup>They return at evening: they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. <sup>7</sup>Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords are in their lips: for who, say they, doth hear? <sup>8</sup>But thou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision. <sup>9</sup>Because of his strength will I wait upon thee: for God is my defence. <sup>10</sup>The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies. <sup>11</sup>Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O LORD our shield. <sup>12</sup>For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying which they speak. <sup>13</sup>Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah. <sup>14</sup>And at evening let them return; and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. <sup>15</sup>Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied. <sup>16</sup>But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble. <sup>17</sup>Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.*

main in you, and that your joy might be full (John 15:11). True joy, like peace, is a fruit of the Spirit, which has its origin in He Who imparts the Spirit. One of the proofs that God is a living God is evidenced by the spiritual joy and peace He imparts to His people. Hence, though the faith of these early believers was tested by an evil world on the outside, Christ strengthened their resolve to remain faithful to God on the inside by imparting to them His own spiritual joy.

No man who is not a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ can know or possess the spiritual joy that Christ imparts to those who have believed.<sup>13</sup> *And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost* (Acts 13:52). Through God imparting joy into His people, they are internally strengthened for the lives He has called them to live.<sup>14</sup> When men love and believe in the Father through the Son, they are filled with the unspeakable joy of heaven.<sup>15</sup> What the Father and Son are they can give, and joy is an element of Their own holy and encouraging Spirit.<sup>16</sup> This is why whenever men walk in true fellowship with the Lord, they simultaneously experience spiritual joy in their hearts, confirming also that wherever Christ truly is, His people will be filled with His joy. The fruit of true fellowship with the Father and Son is consequently the experience of being filled with spiritual joy. *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our*

*fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full* (I John 1:3–4). Because God is the source of His Word, when men through faith are exposed to it, rejoicing in the heart will be produced. *Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts* (Jer. 15:16). It is also a characteristic of those called by God to rejoice in that Word of God sent to reconcile them back to God.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Jer. 15:16) This eating of the divine words expresses also the close union between that which came from God and the prophet's own being.

How individuals receive or do not receive the Word of God gives great insight into their true character. The Jews often resisted the Word,<sup>17</sup> revealing their rejection of God's sovereignty and their unwillingness to yield to divine government. Essentially, those who reject the Word of truth spiritually demonstrate resistance to divine rule.

***I Thessalonians 1:7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.***

The Greek word for *ensamples* in Greek is #5179 *tupos*. Strong's Concordance defines it as "the mark of a blow, then a stamp struck by a die." The word is used in con-

13 Rom. 15:13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

14 Neh. 8:10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.

15 I Pet. 1:8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

16 Gal. 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

17 Acts 7:51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

II Tim. 3:8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

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nection to the nails in Christ's hand,<sup>18</sup> the example of God's judgment upon sinners,<sup>19</sup> and the pattern that the temple on earth is purposed in reflecting the real temple of God in heaven.<sup>20</sup> The force and importance of where *tupos* is used in Scripture reveals the great and lasting impression that the Thessalonians' example of faith had on the surrounding areas where Christ had also been received. That which caused the Thessalonians to be such an example of faith to those around them include the following:

1. They imitated and followed the same subjection to Christ that the apostles who had brought them the gospel of Christ possessed. The apostles were single-minded and totally devoted to the Son of God, and so were the Thessalonians, who believed their message concerning Christ as the Messiah.

2. The Thessalonians recognized that Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were servants of the Son of God. By recognizing this, they yielded their lives to Christ's authority over them.

3. The Thessalonians received the Word brought to them as the Word of God and not merely as the word of men.<sup>21</sup> Ultimately they received the gospel as the *Word of the Lord* simply because they could detect the Lord's own divine nature in it.

4. By perceiving the gospel's true source as being the Father, the Thessalonians pursued the godly and spiritual qualities of faith, love, and hope, which are themselves characteristics of Him.

5. The joy of the Holy Spirit<sup>22</sup> in the Thessalonians' hearts proved their genuine and sincere relationship with the Son of God, Whose joy they reflected.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 1:6) With joy of the Holy Ghost—*With happiness produced by the Holy Ghost. Though they were much afflicted and persecuted, yet there was joy. There was joy in their conversion—in the evidence of pardoned sin—in the hope of heaven; see the notes, Acts 8:8.<sup>23</sup> However great may be the trials and persecutions experienced in receiving the gospel, or however numerous and long the sufferings of the subsequent life in consequence of having embraced it, there is a joy in religion that more than overbalances all, and that makes religion the richest of all blessings.

***I Thessalonians 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.***

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 1:8) For from you sounded out the word of the Lord—*The truths of religion were thus spread abroad. The word rendered "sound-

<sup>18</sup> John 20:25 *The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.*

<sup>19</sup> I Cor. 10:11 *Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*

I Cor. 10:6 *Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.*

<sup>20</sup> Heb. 8:5 *Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.*

<sup>21</sup> I 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.*

<sup>22</sup> I 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.*

<sup>23</sup> Acts 8:8 *And there was great joy in that city.*

ed out” —εξήχηται *exēchētai*—refers to the sounding of a trumpet (Bloomfield), and the idea is, that the gospel was proclaimed like the sonorous voice of a trumpet echoing from place to place; compare Isaiah 58:1; Revelation 1:10.<sup>24</sup> Their influence had an effect in diffusing the gospel in other places, as if the sound of a trumpet echoed and re-echoed among the hills and along the vales of the classic land of Greece.

When men truly believe the gospel, as the Thessalonians first evidenced, they will seek to spread the gospel. They will herald and proclaim the gospel as one sounding a trumpet would do in order to signify a great event to come. This teaches us that any church, if the Spirit of Christ truly leads it, will be evangelical. Out of the abundance of the heart men speak,<sup>25</sup> so if God’s holy and fiery nature permeates a man’s soul, God’s Word must be spoken. Jeremiah is a wonderful example of how God’s Spirit living within a person compels him to speak in God’s name. So great, then, is the Spirit’s presence in the saved that they cannot help speaking of the holy God Who lives within them. Failing to do so is practically impossible. For where the Holy Spirit truly abides, the Word of God will flow out as a natural spring.<sup>26</sup> *Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay* (Jer. 20:9).

(Matthew Poole’s Commentary, Jer. 20:9)  
*Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name:* this daily

scorn and reproach which the prophet saw himself exposed unto, for preaching against the sin and wickedness of the people, was a sore temptation upon him to lay down his employment as a prophet. He did not speak this openly, but he spoke it in his heart, he had (as he confesseth) many such thoughts in his breast. But he saith he was not able to do what he thought to do, he found in his heart a constraint to go on, that when a revelation came at any time from God unto him, it was like a fire in his bones, which he must quench by uttering what God had revealed to him.

The Thessalonians preached and sought to bring others into an awareness of the *Word of the Lord* because they first had realized Its ultimate authority. The Greek word for *Lord* is #2962 *kýrios*, defined in *HELPS Word-studies* as “a person exercising absolute ownership rights” or “an owner (master) exercising full rights.” To the Thessalonians, Jesus Christ was not simply their healer, deliverer, or even simply their Savior. Instead, Jesus held the grand title of *Lord* in their hearts. Because of their faith in the Son of God, the Thessalonians yielded complete sovereignty to Him. Their lives were no longer their own, and they happily presented them to the Father as living sacrifices.<sup>27</sup> It was not merely religious duty that prompted this spiritual surrendering but faith in the reality of the power and authority God has given to the Son. When the Old Testament scriptures reference the *Word of the Lord*, it is primarily in reference to the One God had said will rule the world. The *Word of the Lord*, therefore, significational-

24 Isa. 58:1 Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

Rev. 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

25 Matt. 12:34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

Luke 6:45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

26 John 7:38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

27 Rom. 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

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ly refers to Israel's Messiah, the One Daniel prophesied would be given dominion over all kindred, races, and people. Because the Thessalonians heralded forth this *Word of the Lord*, the spiritual understanding they possessed—that Jesus was the Messiah, the One prophesied to rule the world, He Who would also be given a kingdom, glory, and dominion where-by all would serve Him—was revealed.

**Daniel 7:13–14** *I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.*

<sup>14</sup>*And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*

(Benson Commentary, Dan. 7:13–14) *I saw in the night visions, &c.*—Here is described by what means these changes were to be brought about; *behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven*—One in the shape and likeness of a man, but clothed with such ensigns of majesty and honour, (signified here by the clouds of heaven,) as showed him to be an extraordinary person, (compare Revelation 1:13; Revelation 14:14)<sup>28</sup> indeed no less than the Messiah, as the following description of him declares. As the two foregoing verses declare why the fourth beast was destroyed, this part of the vision shows by whom it was done; setting Christ forth in his judicial capacity, and describing him by that title, which, in allusion to this place, he often gave himself, namely,

*the Son of man.* He particularly alludes to this text, Matthew 26:64,<sup>29</sup> where he speaks of his *coming in the clouds of heaven*; by which expression he acknowledged himself to be the true Messiah here described, and gave a direct answer to the question there proposed to him...

*There was given him dominion, &c.*—“All these kingdoms shall in their turns be destroyed, but the kingdom of the Messiah shall stand for ever. It was in allusion to this prophecy that the angel said of Jesus, before he was conceived in the womb, Luke 1:33, *He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*

The Thessalonians knew Jesus Christ to be the long-awaited Messiah of Israel—He Who would usher in a kingdom with no end, which God alone would rule. In this kingdom the Lord's people would both serve and worship the Son of God.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Dan. 7:14) *Serve him.*—In Biblical Chaldee this word is only used of rendering Divine service or worship. The “Son of man” is therefore here spoken of as God.

Barnes' commentary also describes the dominion that “the Ancient of Days” (God) has given to the Son of Man (Jesus Christ).

*And there was given him dominion*—That is, by him who is represented as the “Ancient of days.” The fair interpretation of this is, that he received the dominion from him. This is the uniform representation in the New Testament. Compare Matthew 28:18; John 3:35; 1 Corinthians 15:27.<sup>30</sup> The word dominion

28 Rev. 1:13 *And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.*

Rev. 14:14 *And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.*

29 Matt. 26:64 *Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*

30 Matt. 28:18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. John 3:35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.*

I Cor. 15:27 *For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.*

here means rule or authority—such as a prince exercises. He was set over a kingdom as a prince or ruler.

*And glory*—That is the glory or honor appropriate to one at the head of such an empire.

*And a kingdom*—That is, he would reign. He would have sovereignty. The nature and the extent of this kingdom is immediately designated as one that would be universal and perpetual. . . . All that is necessary to be noticed here is, that it is everywhere promised in the Old Testament that the Messiah would be a king, and have a kingdom. Compare Psalm 2:1–12; Isaiah 9:6–7.<sup>31</sup>

*That all people, nations, and languages should serve him*—It would be universal; would embrace all nations. The language here is such as would emphatically denote universality. See the notes at Daniel 3:4; Daniel 4:1.<sup>32</sup> It implies that that kingdom would extend over all the nations of the earth, and we are to look for the fulfillment of this only in such a universal reign of the Messiah.

Their seeking to spread the Word of the Lord revealed that the Thessalonians were uniquely aware of the universal authority

the Father had given the Son. As with the apostles who brought the gospel to them, they knew that Jesus, Who had been crucified and raised from the dead, was the Christ. *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ* (Acts 2:36).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Acts 2:36) *Whom ye have crucified*—See Acts 2:23.<sup>33</sup> There was nothing better suited to show them the guilt of having done this than the argument which Peter used. He showed them that God had sent him as the Messiah, and that he had showed his love for him in raising him from the dead. The Son of God, and the hope of their nation, they had put to death. He was not an impostor, nor a man sowing sedition, nor a blasphemer, but the Messiah of God; and they had imbrued their hands in his blood. There is nothing better suited to make sinners fear and tremble than to show them that, in rejecting Christ, they have rejected God; in refusing to serve him they have refused to serve God. The crime of sinners has a double malignity, as committed against a kind and lovely Saviour, and against the God who loved him, and appointed him to save people. Compare Acts 3:14–15.<sup>34</sup>

31 Ps. 2:1–12 *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

Isa. 9:6–7 *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, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

32 Dan. 3:4 *Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, Dan. 4:1 Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.*

33 Acts 2:23 *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:*

34 Acts 3:14–15 *But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.*

## The Dead Shall Rise

*Both Lord*—The word “lord” properly denotes “proprietor, master, or sovereign.” Here it means clearly that God had exalted him to be the king so long expected; and that he had given him dominion in the heavens, or, as we should say, made him ruler of all things. The extent of this dominion may be seen in John 17:2; Ephesians 1:21,<sup>35</sup> etc. In the exercise of this orifice, he now rules in heaven and on earth, and will yet come to judge the world. This truth was particularly suited to excite their fear. They had murdered their sovereign, now shown to be raised from the dead, and entrusted with infinite power. They had reason, therefore, to fear that he would come forth in vengeance, and punish them for their crimes. Sinners, in opposing the Saviour, are at war with their living and mighty sovereign and Lord. He has all power, and it is not safe to contend against the judge of the living and the dead.

Jesus Christ was the Thessalonians’ Lord, and His resurrection from the dead<sup>36</sup> proved that He would one day rule all mankind. As the Son of Man and Son of God, Jesus has been granted by God the right to reign over all Adam’s descendants. Ultimately it will be the Word of God spoken by the Son of God that will be the final judge of all men. *He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day* (John 12:48).

(Barnes’ *Notes on the Bible*, John 12:48) The word that Christ has spoken, the doctrines

of his gospel, and the messages of mercy, will be that by which the sinner will be judged in the last day. Every person will be judged by that message, and the sinner will be punished according to the frequency and clearness with which the rejected message has been presented to his mind, Matthew 12:41.<sup>37</sup>

The revelation that Jesus Christ is *Lord* of all men is the genesis of true evangelism. For none will proclaim or endanger their own lives for the gospel without first believing in and submitting themselves to Him Whom God has said will rule the world. Practically, no man either can or will herald the lordship of Jesus Christ until he himself has made Jesus Lord of his own life.

*I Thessalonians 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;*

What causes men to yield their lives to serve God is their sincere love for God. This is why tradition or handed-down religious beliefs will do nothing to inspire energetic and inspired service for the Lord. Only true love and affection for Him can do that. Dead things also, whether they are lifeless religions or dumb idols, do nothing to inspire people to offer themselves as living sacrifices to God. Hence, at the core of all true Christian service lies an understanding

<sup>35</sup> John 17:2 *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

Eph. 1:21 *Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:*

<sup>36</sup> Matt. 28:5–6 *And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. Mark 16:6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.*

Luke 24:6–7 *He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.*

<sup>37</sup> Matt. 12:41 *The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.*

that God is alive and that God will reward all who diligently seek Him.<sup>38</sup>

The manner in which the Thessalonians turned to serve the Lord proved the sincerity of their faith in Him. The Greek for serve is #1398 *doouleuó*. Strong's Concordance defines it as "to be a slave, to serve." HELPS Word-studies defines the word as "properly, to serve as a slave, having all personal ownership-rights assigned to the owner; (figuratively) to willingly give over the prerogative to be self-governing." It was the manner in which the Thessalonians yielded themselves to God as His servants that revealed their true faith in Him. The gospel, therefore, made such an impact on the Thessalonians' hearts that they completely and wholly abandoned their previous lives of sin to turn and serve a living God. Therefore, whenever sinners truly believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, they

will present their own lives as living sacrifices to God. It is this sacrifice of self that proves true belief in the Father and the Son.

***I Thessalonians 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.***

A great part of Christian faith is dependent upon waiting for the Lord Jesus to return from heaven.<sup>39</sup> It is essential that Christians develop the patience to wait, simply because all things must be done according to God's eternal timetable. By waiting upon the Lord and His return, Christians reveal their total and complete subjection to Christ. Jesus often spoke of the time interval between His departure from the world and His return to it.<sup>40</sup> Believers also are encouraged to remain ready and look for Christ's coming,

38 Heb. 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

39 Jas. 5:7–8 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. <sup>8</sup>Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

Tit. 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Heb. 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

40 Matt. 25:13–30 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. <sup>14</sup>For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. <sup>15</sup>And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. <sup>16</sup>Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. <sup>17</sup>And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. <sup>18</sup>But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. <sup>19</sup>After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. <sup>20</sup>And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliverdest unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. <sup>21</sup>His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. <sup>22</sup>He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliverdest unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. <sup>23</sup>His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. <sup>24</sup>Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: <sup>25</sup>And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. <sup>26</sup>His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: <sup>27</sup>Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. <sup>28</sup>Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. <sup>29</sup>For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. <sup>30</sup>And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

## The Dead Shall Rise

since it will arrive at a time when most least expect it.<sup>41</sup>

Hardly has there been any doctrine ignored more in the church today, than the prophetic revelation that speaks of Christ's return to judge the world in righteousness. This time is the *day of the Lord*<sup>42</sup> that will be executed when Jesus Christ as God's judge returns to the world to carry out God's judgments upon it. At this day destruction is promised to come upon all who have not yielded to God's Son as God's appointed ruler of the world. The *day of the Lord* is the day of God's wrath,<sup>43</sup> whereby all who do not have Christ's blood to cleanse them of sin must give account of it themselves.

*Delivered us from the wrath to come.* God has promised a day when He will judge the world in righteousness by that man He has appointed to do so.<sup>44</sup> This day will be characterized by God's bringing divine judgment for all sin committed on the earth.<sup>45</sup> Ultimately any who have stubbornly rejected divine rule and maintain unrepentant hearts toward God for their sin will be subject to divine wrath.<sup>46</sup> The *day of the Lord* therefore has specific reference to the wrath and judgment that will come on all who have rejected heavenly rule. This rejection of God's authority is most vividly evidenced and verified in the rejection of God's Son. *And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his*

41 Luke 12:40 *Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.*

Mark 13:32 *But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*

Matt. 24:36–44 *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

<sup>37</sup>*But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.* <sup>38</sup>*For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,* <sup>39</sup>*And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.* <sup>40</sup>*Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.* <sup>41</sup>*Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.* <sup>42</sup>*Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.* <sup>43</sup>*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.* <sup>44</sup>*Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.*

42 I Thess. 5:2 *For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*

II Pet. 3:10 *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

Acts 2:20 *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come:*

43 Isa. 13:9 *Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.*

Rev. 6:16–17 *And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: <sup>17</sup>For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*

44 Acts 17:31 *Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

45 Eccl. 12:14 *For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

II Cor. 5:10 *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.*

Rom. 2:6–8 *Who will render to every man according to his deeds: <sup>7</sup>To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: <sup>8</sup>But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,*

Rev. 20:12 *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

46 Rom. 2:5 *But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;*

*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 (II Thess. 1:7–9). It is only Jesus Christ Who delivers men from God's coming wrath,<sup>47</sup> and only the Son of God Who can avert God's indignation being poured out on all who have rejected the gospel of Christ.*

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<sup>47</sup> Rom. 5:9 *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*



## I Thessalonians 2:1–9

*I Thessalonians 2:1–2 For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:*

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

THE adversity that true saints are willing to endure to preach the gospel is a testimony to the sincerity of their faith. When tribulation and persecution arise for the sake of the Word, they will not, as impostors do,<sup>1</sup> cease to hold forth the truth boldly. Thus, though Paul and his companions suffered and were shamefully treated at Philippi, this did not prohibit them from continuing to boldly hold forth the Word of the Lord. The influence and power of Christ's nature within His people undoubtedly are far greater than all the powers of darkness in this world. *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater*

*is he that is in you, than he that is in the world (I John 4:4).*

(*Benson Commentary*, I John 4:4) The Son of God, who stands at the head of that interest in which you are embarked, and who aids you by the mighty communications of his Spirit, is infinitely too strong for Satan, the great head of the apostasy, and for all his confederates. Thus, the issue of the divine government will be, that truth and virtue shall be finally victorious over error and wickedness, because God, the Patron of truth and virtue, possesseth far greater power and wisdom than the evil spirits who promote error and wickedness.

In the third stanza of his hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," Martin Luther wrote, "And though this world, with devils filled, / Should threaten to undo us, / We will not fear, for God hath willed / His truth to triumph through us."<sup>2</sup> If men are tempted to believe that Christ's power is less than Satan's, then let them consider that no devil or evil spirit ever cast out Jesus; rather, He cast *them* out.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mark 4:17 And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended*

<sup>2</sup> Duncan, Ligon. "Mark 5:1–20 Christ's Power and Authority Over Evil." *Cov Life Blog*, Covenant Life Church | Tampa, FL, 2 Feb. 2018.

<sup>3</sup> *Matt. 8:16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:*

*Matt. 8:31–32 So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. <sup>32</sup>And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.*

*Mark 9:25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.*

*Mark 16:9 Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.*

*Luke 4:35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.*

*Luke 4:41 And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.*

## The Dead Shall Rise

The spiritual realm has but one King, and it is not the god of this world.<sup>4</sup> Through Christ's name demons depart and sinners are saved. Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords,<sup>5</sup> and because of His celestial authority, those whom He chooses for heaven<sup>6</sup> will prevail. Thus, all victory for the people of God can be traced to the Spirit of Christ, Who lives within them. With respect to Jesus' current position in God's creation, the book of Revelation reveals this: *And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS* (Rev. 19:16).

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Rev. 19:16) "His name written on His vesture and on His thigh," was written partly on the vesture, partly on the thigh itself, at the part where in an equestrian figure the robe drops from the thigh. The thigh symbolizes Christ's humanity as having come, after the flesh, from the loins of David, and now appearing as the glorified "Son of man." On the other hand, His incommunicable divine name, "which no man knew," is on His head (Re 19:12),<sup>7</sup> [Menochius].

*KING OF KINGS*—Compare Re 17:14,<sup>8</sup> in contrast with Re 19:17,<sup>9</sup> the beast being in attempted usurpation a king of kings, the ten kings delivering their kingdom to him.

When men consider the events recorded in the book of Revelation, they may be tempted to become fearful of the power of the dragon, the beast, or the ungodly world governments that will align themselves with them. In these moments Christians need to remember that He Who died on the cross and was raised by God to sit at His right hand is vastly greater than all who oppose Him. The power of the Christian, therefore, lies not in his own human strength but in the divine authority given to the Son. Because Christ is supreme, His people will prevail in spiritual battle.

(Benson Commentary, I John 4:4) *Because greater is he that is in you*—Namely, the Spirit of Christ; *than he*—The spirit of antichrist; *that is in the world* . . .

It is not a Christian's flesh or natural strength that allows him to overcome but rather the fact that both the Father and the Son abide in him. *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him* (John 14:23). Because Christ is supreme and has been given divine power over all things by God,<sup>10</sup> He has also made His saved people

*Luke 11:14 And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.*

*4 II Cor. 4:4 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.*

*5 I Tim. 6:15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;*

*6 John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

*7 Rev. 19:12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.*

*8 Rev. 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*

*9 Rev. 19:17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;*

*10 Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.*

*Eph. 1:20–22 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup>Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every*

to be more than conquerors. *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us* (Rom. 8:37). All saints should realize that victory lies in the fact that Christ's Spirit is the greatest spirit in the world today. The Holy Spirit may seem to be at times only a small part in the Christian heart, but because God's presence lives within them,<sup>11</sup> the Lord's people will be made more than conquerors through Him Who loved them. Nothing and no one inferior to Christ could cause them to either depart from or desert their calling, simply because true spiritual boldness lies not in the strength of human will or the cleverness of human reasoning—but in the power and inward strengthening of the Holy Spirit. God's power causes His people to stand, and God's power enables weak men like ourselves to boldly proclaim the gospel, even when there are so many in the world who despise it. Furthermore, believers are persecuted for proclaiming the truth because those who prefer the freedom to sin have rejected God's rule. Thus, the greatest persecutors of faith will be seen to be those who most despise God's heavenly rule. Ultimately, those who cherish the right to sin will hate those who preach that God despises it.<sup>12</sup>

*name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.*<sup>22</sup> *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*

11 *Gal. 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

*Col. 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

12 *Prov. 9:8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.*

*Prov. 15:12 A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise.*

*Jer. 26:20–21 And there was also a man that prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjathjearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah.*

<sup>21</sup>*And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men, and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death: . . .*

*Acts 7:54–60 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on [Stephen] with their teeth.*<sup>55</sup> *But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,*<sup>56</sup> *And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.*<sup>57</sup> *Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,*<sup>58</sup> *And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.*<sup>59</sup> *And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*<sup>60</sup> *And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*

***I Thessalonians 2:3 For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:***

Here Paul states that their ministry was not motivated by deceit, uncleanness, or guile. The apostles' real reason for ministry lay in their sincere belief that the gospel would produce fruit in those who believed it. Because the apostles' motives were undefiled, they could openly encourage the Thessalonians to inspect their motives. In business terms, the apostles invited the Thessalonians to look at their books. They had nothing to hide, and they wanted everyone to whom they preached Christ to know this.

***I Thessalonians 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.***

It is not a right but a privilege to be trusted with the gospel. All true ministers serve at God's discretion, and they can be as easily removed from their divine positions as they were placed in them. Moreover, when God has entrusted the gospel to men of God, their sole loyalty and allegiance will always be to God. It is the Lord Who has called and saved them, and to

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Him alone their allegiance lies. Thus, it is the impostor, not the true minister, whose main objective is to please the people he oversees.<sup>13</sup> No man also is more open to corruption than he who complies with the wishes and desires of sinful men. The Old Testament figure Aaron is a clear example of this. Because of external pressure from rebellious Israel, he assisted them in making a molten calf to worship,<sup>14</sup> ultimately attributing the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt to an Egyptian idol. Because Aaron lacked sufficient godly character, he was compromised spiritually. No man can remain true to God if he can be compromised by anybody or anything apart from God's will for his life. This must include even the strong influences of his own heart.

Whenever men secretly desire the praise of other men, they will speak things that they believe will be pleasing to them. Their speech, though it may contain selected bits of the truth, will never really be the truth. In reality, those who say things to please the hearer actually speak only to please themselves. The book of Romans contains a great verse that illustrates that those who seek to fill their own bellies and satisfy their own lusts are the same who employ good words and fair speeches to deceive the hearts of the simple.

**Romans 16:18** *For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*

13 Gal. 1:10 *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.*

14 Exod. 32:1–4 *And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. <sup>2</sup>And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. <sup>3</sup>And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. <sup>4</sup>And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*

15 Col. 2:4 *And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.*

II Pet. 3:3 *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Rom. 16:18) *Serve not*—Obey not. Though they are professedly, yet they are not his real friends and followers.

*But their own belly*—Their own “lusts;” their own private interests; they do this to obtain support. The authors of parties and divisions, in church and state, have this usually in view. It is for the indulgence of some earthly appetite; to obtain function or property; or to gratify the love of dominion.

*And by good words*—Mild, fair, plausible speeches; with an appearance of great sincerity, and regard for the truth; compare Colossians 2:4; 2 Peter 3:3.<sup>15</sup> People who cause divisions commonly make great pretensions to peculiar love of truth and orthodoxy; and put on the appearance of great sincerity, sanctity, and humility.

*And fair speeches*—Greek εὐλογίας *eulogias*, eulogy, praise, flattery. This is another very common art. “Flattery” is one of the most powerful means of forming parties in the church; and “a little special attention,” or promise of an office, or commendation for talents or acquirements, will secure “many” to the purposes of party whom no regard for truth or orthodoxy could influence a moment.

*Deceive the hearts of the simple*—The minds of the unsuspecting, or those who are without guile τῶν ἀκάκων *tōn akakōn*. The apostle means to designate those who are simple-hearted, without any disposition to deceive others themselves, and of course without any suspicions of the “designs” of others. He has thus drawn the art of mak-

ing parties with the hand of a master. First, there are smooth, plausible pretences, as of great love for truth. Then, an artful mingling of attentions and flatteries; and all this practiced on the minds of the unsuspecting, drawing their “hearts” and “affections” toward themselves. Happy would it have been if the art had been confined to his own times.

to commend people if truth would admit of it, and never hesitating to declare his honest convictions about their guilt and danger. One of the principal arts of the deceiver on all subjects is flattery; and Paul says, that when preaching to the Thessalonians he had carefully avoided it. He now appeals to that fact as a proof of his own integrity.

***I Thessalonians 2:5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:***

One of the most prevalent ways of attempting to deceive is through flattery. The word *flattery*, #2850 *kolakeia*, is defined by *Strong's Expository Dictionary* as saying things “with a view to advantage or gain.” Fraudulent ministries will often use flattery to increase their religious influence. When men do not possess any true spiritual power, they must resort to flattery in order to gain religious influence. This is surely not the case for the divine ministries that Christ appoints in His church. For them, flattery and hidden covetousness are as spiritually despised as apostasy itself.

Paul emphasizes to the Thessalonians that he had not in any way used his ministerial office for financial gain. This dishonest practice was no doubt as prevalent in Paul's time as it is in ours, when men hijack spiritual positions in the church for the primary purpose of obtaining material gain for themselves. Thus, counterfeit ministers regularly make merchandise of God's people<sup>16</sup> to fulfill their own carnal desire for earthly riches. The epistle of Philippians reveals their final end and spiritual judgment: *Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things* (Phil. 3:19).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Thess. 2:5) The word here rendered “flattering”—*κολακείας kolakeias*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The meaning is, that the apostle did not deal in the language of adulation; he did not praise them for their beauty, wealth, talent, or accomplishments, and conceal from them the painful truths about their guilt and danger. He stated simple truth—not refusing

In contrast to this deceptive religious behavior are those who are sincerely sent by the Lord, who openly can call upon the Lord as a witness to their own spiritual genuineness.<sup>17</sup> This is seen with Elijah and the prophets of Baal,<sup>18</sup> with Moses and Korah,<sup>1</sup> and even with our Lord Jesus, whose earthly life<sup>19</sup> and spiritual resurrection from the dead proved that what He had proclaimed about Himself, as coming from God, could be attested

16 II Pet. 2:3 *And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.*

17 Rom. 1:9 *For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;*

II Cor. 1:23 *Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.* Phil. 1:8 *For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.*

18 I Kgs. 18:37–39 *Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.* <sup>38</sup>*Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.* <sup>39</sup>*And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.*

19 Acts 2:22 *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:*

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to by God.<sup>20</sup> *I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me* (John 8:18).

***I Thessalonians 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.***

Any who seek glory from men in Christ's church are not a blessing but rather a burden. Looking to please themselves, those who desire praise from others care not for the lasting praise that comes from God alone. It is also true that when men seek the praise of other men, they cannot sincerely believe in the Son of God—simply because when men are driven by the desire for human praise, they have abandoned all true desire of possessing real faith in Christ. Ultimately, one cannot be controlled by a carnal nature, which seeks man's approval, and at the same time grow in any real faith in the Son of God. *How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?* (John 5:44).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, John 5:44) A man cannot believe the gospel while he is wholly under the influence of ambition.

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(*Expositor's Greek Testament*, John 5:44) The Jewish inability to believe arose from their earthly ambition: πῶς δύνασθε . . . οὐ ζητεῖτε. The root of their unbelief was their earthly idea of glory, what they could win or bestow. This incapacitated them from seeing the glory of Christ, which was divine and heavenly, which men could not give or remove.

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(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, John 5:44) *How can ye believe*] The empha-

sis is on 'ye.' How is it possible, for you, who care only for the glory that man bestows, to believe on One who rejects such glory. This is the climax of Christ's accusation. They have reduced themselves to such a condition that they cannot believe. They must change their whole view and manner of life before they can do so. . . .

Whenever and wherever religious acts are performed for the sole purpose of gaining human approval, then all heavenly reward will be lost. *Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven* (Matt. 6:1).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Matt. 6:1) *To be seen of them.*—It is the motive, and not the fact of publicity, that vitiates the action. The high ideal of the disciple of Christ is to let his light shine "before men" (the self-same words are used in Matthew 5:16<sup>21</sup> as here), and yet to be indifferent to their praise or even their opinion. In most religious men there is probably a mingling of the two motives, and we dare not say at what precise stage the presence of the lower overpowers the higher. It is enough to remember that it is the little speck which may taint the whole character till it loses all its life.

How shortsighted are those who instead of seeking the highest glory, which is spiritual and originates from above, foolishly seek the shallow and dissipating fame of sinners like themselves! *Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:* (Eph. 4:18). Such also is the effect of sin, which so weakens men's mental powers that they lose the spiritual wisdom to seek heavenly glory above worldly satisfaction and advancement.

<sup>20</sup> John 5:37 *And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.*

<sup>21</sup> Matt. 5:16 *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 4:18) Nothing is more obvious than that indulgence in sin weakens the mental powers, and renders them unfit for high intellectual effort. . . . It follows, too, that as man has debased his "understanding" by sin, it is needful to make an exertion to elevate it again: and hence a large part of the efforts to save people must consist in patient "instruction."

Because sinners cannot perceive the true glory of the Lord, they are left with pursuing the temporal and fading glory of a condemned world.<sup>22</sup> In contrast to this, true believers will seek the Lord's approval, and not man's, above anything or any-one worldly.<sup>23</sup>

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, I Thess. 2:4) Ministers of the gospel are Christ's servants by office, and, as servants, they are to please their own Master. *If I pleased men*, saith Paul, *I should not be the servant of Christ*, Galatians 1:10.<sup>24</sup> And this made the apostle have regard not only to his doctrine and outward conversation, but the inward aim and intentions of his heart, as knowing God tried his heart. And expecting the reward of his labours more from God than men, he therefore sought to please God rather than men,

and approve his heart unto him. And here-in he reflects upon those false apostles that sought to please men. . . .

**I Thessalonians 2:7** *But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Thess. 2:7) *But we were gentle among you*—Instead of using authority, we used only the most kind and gentle methods to win you and to promote your peace and order. The word here rendered "nurse," may mean any one who nurses a child, whether a mother or another person. It seems here to refer to a mother (compare 1 Thessalonians 2:11),<sup>25</sup> and the idea is, that the apostle felt for them the affectionate solicitude which a mother does for the child at her breast.

Throughout the book of Thessalonians Paul reiterates his great affection for these early believers in Christ,<sup>26</sup> teaching us that when men are true ministers of the gospel, they will care for God's people as their own. Hence, even as sinners love their own, so shall those who are themselves born of God love the children of God. Consequently, if a man is born again<sup>27</sup>

22 II Tim. 4:10 *For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.*

23 I 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.*

24 Gal. 1:10 *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.*

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

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

I Thess. 3:9–10 *For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; <sup>10</sup>Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?*

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

27 I Pet. 1:23 *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

John 3:3–8 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup>Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup>That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup>Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. <sup>8</sup>The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not*

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and has God's Holy Spirit within him, his true loyalty will be to the family of God. When men also have passed from death unto life and have been saved by Christ, their love for the other children of God proves that salvation has been given to them. *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death* (I John 3:14). Practically, if divine love for the brethren is present, Christians are assured by God that they have passed from death unto life. Love for the brethren, therefore, provides the spiritual discernment regarding whom God has actually saved and whom He has not.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 3:14) He that loveth not his brother abideth in death—* He remains dead in sins; that is, he has never been converted. Compare the notes at 1 John 3:6.<sup>28</sup> As love to the Christian brotherhood is essential to true piety, it follows that he who has not that remains unconverted, or is in a state of spiritual death. He is by nature dead in sin, and unless he has evidence that he is brought out of that state, he "remains" or "abides" in it.

***I Thessalonians 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.***

Because the Thessalonians were precious in God's sight, the apostles were willing to sacrifice their own lives for them. This went beyond merely preaching the Word

*tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

28 I John 3:6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

29 Matt. 6:25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Matt. 20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Luke 12:22 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

Luke 12:13 And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

Mark 3:4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

of truth to include much personal sacrifice. Men will lay down their lives for those they truly love, and the apostles were more than willing to do so for the Thessalonians, whom they both spiritually loved and cherished.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 2:8) Not the gospel of God only—* To be willing to communicate the knowledge of the gospel was in itself a strong proof of love, even if it were attended with no self-denial or hazard in doing it. We evince a decided love for a man when we tell him of the way of salvation, and urge him to accept of it. We show strong interest for one who is in danger, when we tell him of a way of escape, or for one who is sick, when we tell him of a medicine that will restore him; but we manifest a much higher love when we tell a lost and ruined sinner of the way in which he may be saved. There is no method in which we can show so strong an interest in our fellow-men, and so much true benevolence for them, as to go to them and tell them of the way by which they may be rescued from everlasting ruin.

*But also our own souls—* Or rather "lives"—*ψυχὰς psuchas*; Matthew 6:25; Matthew 20:28; Luke 12:22, Luke 12:13; Mark 3:4.<sup>29</sup> This does not mean that the apostle was willing to be damned, or to lose his soul in order to save them, but that if it had been necessary he would have been ready to lay down his life;

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*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 3:16) The spirit which led the Saviour to sacrifice his life for the good of the church, should lead us to do the same thing for our brethren if*

circumstances should require it. That this is a correct principle no one can doubt; for:

(1) the Saviour did it, and we are bound to imitate his example, and to possess his spirit;

(2) the prophets, apostles, and martyrs did it, laying down their lives in the cause of truth, and for the good of the church and the world; and,

(3) it has always been held that it is right and proper, in certain circumstances, for a man to lay down his life for the good of others.

This selflessness of laying down one's life for others is the mark of true Christianity. It was this holy attribute that characterized Jesus, and it will be evident of all who are truly His. It is also the denial of self that proves true discipleship to the Son of God. *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me* (Matt. 16:24). It is Jesus Who first denied Himself to please the Father, and all those truly born of Him will follow His selfless spiritual example. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down*

*our lives for the brethren* (I John 3:16). It is not enough to speak words of love if we withhold the sacrifice of self that proves love. True love for God and the people of God therefore must progress beyond mere words and include personal sacrifice. If it does not, then you can be sure that it is not actually love at all.

***I Thessalonians 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.***

The degree to which Paul labored among the Thessalonians shows us the cost he was willing to pay for their continued spiritual growth. By a man's walk, not his words, is his religion proved. It had cost much for the apostles to preach the gospel to the Thessalonians. To this truth Paul called the Thessalonians to remembrance, which practically proved the sincerity of his love toward them. He, then, who joyfully and willingly labors for God and the people of God reveals the sincerity of his love for God.

## Endnote

i Num. 16:1–40 Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: <sup>2</sup>And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: <sup>3</sup>And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? <sup>4</sup>And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face: <sup>5</sup>And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow the LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. <sup>6</sup>This do; Take you censers, Korah, and all his company; <sup>7</sup>And put fire therein, and put incense in them before the LORD to morrow: and it shall be that the man whom the LORD doth choose, he shall be holy: ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi. <sup>8</sup>And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi: <sup>9</sup>Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? <sup>10</sup>And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also? <sup>11</sup>For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the LORD: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him? <sup>12</sup>And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab: which said, We will not come up: <sup>13</sup>Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? <sup>14</sup>Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up. <sup>15</sup>And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the LORD, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them. <sup>16</sup>And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the LORD, thou, and they, and Aaron, to morrow: <sup>17</sup>And take every man his censor, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the LORD every man his censor, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also, and Aaron, each of you his censor. <sup>18</sup>And they took every man his censor, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron. <sup>19</sup>And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the

congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation. <sup>20</sup>And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, <sup>21</sup>Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. <sup>22</sup>And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation? <sup>23</sup>And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, <sup>24</sup>Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. <sup>25</sup>And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. <sup>26</sup>And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. <sup>27</sup>So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. <sup>28</sup>And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. <sup>29</sup>If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. <sup>30</sup>But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. <sup>31</sup>And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: <sup>32</sup>And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. <sup>33</sup>They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. <sup>34</sup>And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. <sup>35</sup>And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense. <sup>36</sup>And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, <sup>37</sup>Speak unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning, and scatter thou the fire yonder; for they are hallowed. <sup>38</sup>The censers of these sinners against their own souls, let them make them broad plates for a covering of the altar: for they offered them before the LORD, therefore they are hallowed: and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel. <sup>39</sup>And Eleazar the priest took the brasen censers, wherewith they that were burnt had offered; and they were made broad plates for a covering of the altar: <sup>40</sup>To be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the LORD; that he be not as Korah, and as his company: as the LORD said to him by the hand of Moses.

## I Thessalonians 2:10–12

*I Thessalonians 2:10 Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:*

PAUL lists three ways he and his companions behaved among the Thessalonians: (1) *holily*, (2) *justly*, and (3) *unblameably*. All three of these divine attributes reveal different aspects of proper Christian character.

1. *Holily*. The Greek word for *holily* is #3743 *hosiós*. *HELPS Word-studies* defines it as “what is sanctioned by the Lord—properly, divinely-sanctioned and therefore worthy of reverence.” We also see *hosiós* translated in other versions as “devoutly.”<sup>1</sup> By this word Paul indicates that the apostles manifested lives of holy devotion. How a man lives reveals the true character of his being. If a man is devout in his personal and everyday life, we can know his religion is pure. The opposite of a devout and holy man is a common man. Such a man as this lives his life without any respect for the sacred Scriptures, fellowship with the Lord, internal spiri-

tual devotion, or the pursuit of holiness in his heart. Natural men are common and defiled by nature.<sup>2</sup> Those who wish to remain so will have no true love or affection for holiness. Yet without holiness no man shall see the Lord. *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord* (Heb. 12:14). It is impossible for any man to see the Lord, or have any true relationship with Him, if there is not first the pursuit of holiness. To actually see God, let alone be saved by Him, men must pursue not only peace with other men but also the divine holiness that is the Lord’s own spiritual nature. In Christian ministry the pursuit of holiness is as critical in seeing the Lord as the pursuit of faith. If either of these spiritual attributes is lacking in those searching for the Lord, then God cannot and will not be seen by the searcher.

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Heb. 12:14) *no man shall see the Lord*—no man as a son; in heavenly glory (Re 22:3, 4).<sup>3</sup> In the East, none but the greatest favorites are admitted to the honor of seeing the king (compare 2Sa 14:24).<sup>4</sup> The Lord being pure and holy, none but the pure and holy

1 CSB, NASB, NKJV, *Holman Christian Standard Bible*, etc.

2 Rom. 3:10–18 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: <sup>11</sup>There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. <sup>12</sup>They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. <sup>13</sup>Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: <sup>14</sup>Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: <sup>15</sup>Their feet are swift to shed blood: <sup>16</sup>Destruction and misery are in their ways: <sup>17</sup>And the way of peace have they not known: <sup>18</sup>There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

Rom. 3:23 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

Eccl. 7:20 *For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.*

3 Rev. 22:3–4 *And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: <sup>4</sup>And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.*

4 II Sam. 14:24 *And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king’s face.*

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shall see Him (Mt 5:8).<sup>5</sup> Without holiness in them, they could not enjoy Him who is holiness itself (Zec 14:20).<sup>6</sup> The connection of purity with seeing the Lord, appears in 1Jo 3:2, 3; Eph 5:5.<sup>7</sup> Contrast Heb 12:16<sup>8</sup> (compare 1Th 4:3).<sup>9</sup> In Mt 24:30; Re 1:7,<sup>10</sup> it is said that all shall see the Lord; but, that shall be as a Judge, not as their lasting portion and God, which is meant here. The Greek verb does not denote the mere action of seeing, but the seer's state of mind to which the object is presented: so in Mt 5:8<sup>11</sup> they shall truly comprehend God [Titmann]. None but the holy could appreciate the holy God, none else therefore shall abide in His presence.

A man's religion and the God he serves are easily visible in the life he lives. Therefore, if faith is impure, it will be very apparent in the common way in which its adherents live. All religions can be seen as either clean or unclean by the people who practice them. The apostle's life proved that his God was holy, and because of this he could live in no other way than by pursuing holiness. No religion should be deemed good if the people who practice it are not in pursuit of greater holiness. It is this that the Lord calls His people toward, and those who sincerely love Him will pursue it in their own lives. *Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy* (I Pet. 1:16).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Pet. 1:16) *Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy* ... It is a great truth, that people everywhere will imitate the God whom they worship. They will form their character in accordance with his. They will regard what he does as right. They will attempt to rise no higher in virtue than the God whom they adore, and they will practice freely what he is supposed to do or approve. Hence, by knowing what are the characteristics of the gods which are worshipped by any people, we may form a correct estimate of the character of the people themselves; and, hence, as the God who is the object of the Christian's worship is perfectly holy, the character of His worshippers should also be holy. And hence, also, we may see that the tendency of true religion is to make people pure. As the worship of the impure gods of the pagan moulds the character of the worshippers into their image, so the worship of Yahweh moulds the character of His professed friends into His image, and they become like him.

2. *Justly*. The Greek word for *justly* is #1346 *dikaíōs*. *HELPS Word-studies* defines it as "judicially approved (approved by God); justly, uprightly." For men to walk in union with the Lord, they must walk not only holy before God but also uprightly and with much integrity toward other men. A just man will have a strict code of conduct concerning others. Only when we love our neighbors as ourselves<sup>12</sup>

5 Matt. 5:8 *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*

6 Zech. 14:20 *In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls before the altar.*

7 1 John 3:2-3 *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup>And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

Eph. 5:5 *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

8 Heb. 12:16 *Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.*

9 1 Thess. 4:3 *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:*

10 Matt. 24:30 *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

Rev. 1:7 *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.*

11 Matt. 5:8 *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*

12 Gal. 5:14 *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

Jas. 2:8 *If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:*

are our dealings with them fair, equitable, and generous. We should not underestimate how righteous our dealings with other men must be if we are to properly fellowship with the Lord and live lives pleasing to Him. A righteous and godly man must necessarily deal thoughtfully and charitably not only with the people of God but also with any who are not.<sup>13</sup> Of Moses' Ten Commandments,<sup>14</sup> six deal with how believers are to conduct themselves with other men. Therefore, to walk and remain in God's will requires a righteous walk among others, simply because he who sins against his neighbor ultimately sins against God.<sup>15</sup> David proved this when he realized that his sin against Uriah, through taking Bathsheba to be his own<sup>16</sup> and having Uriah killed,<sup>17</sup> was a

sin against heaven itself. *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest* (Ps. 51:4). Though David's sin might be viewed as merely against man, it was really against God. This is why if men do not conduct themselves righteously, justly, lovingly, and generously before other men, they should not think that they are in any way walking worthy of the Lord. Sinning against our fellow man is equal to sinning against God Himself.

3. *Unblameably*. The Greek word for *unblameable* is #274 *amemptós*. *Strong's Concordance* defines it as "faultlessly—blameless, unblameably," meaning "blameless, free from fault or defect."<sup>18</sup> The apos-

*Rom. 13:9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

13 *Gal. 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

14 *Exod. 20:1–17 And God spake all these words, saying, <sup>2</sup>I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. <sup>3</sup>Thou shalt have no other gods before me. <sup>4</sup>Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup>Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; <sup>6</sup>And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. <sup>7</sup>Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. <sup>8</sup>Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup>Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: <sup>10</sup>But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: <sup>11</sup>For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. <sup>12</sup>Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. <sup>13</sup>Thou shalt not kill. <sup>14</sup>Thou shalt not commit adultery. <sup>15</sup>Thou shalt not steal. <sup>16</sup>Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. <sup>17</sup>Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*

15 *II Sam. 12:9, 13 Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. . . . <sup>13</sup>And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.*

16 *II Sam. 11:2–4 And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. <sup>3</sup>And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? <sup>4</sup>And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. <sup>17</sup>II Sam. 11:15–17 And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. <sup>16</sup>And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were. <sup>17</sup>And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.*

18 *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, #273 amemptos*

He was fully aware that to bring others out of their sinful lives, his own spiritual life needed to be blameless. It is this irreproachable character that is essential for ministerial office,<sup>19</sup> and all who seek it must understand the gravity of its importance.

*I Thessalonians 2:11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,*

First, Paul listed how he behaved while among the Thessalonians; now he lists how he behaved *toward* them. He *exhorted, comforted, and charged* every one of them, *as a father doth his children*. The special role that the apostle maintained among the Thessalonians was that of a *father*, one through whom the Thessalonians had been begotten unto Christ. We should always hold in special affection those who have played a key role in our regeneration and baptism of the Holy Spirit. For though there are many instructors in Christ, there are few who both father and assist in helping people become begotten of God. These rare ministers should be highly valued in Christ's church and esteemed greater than mere instructors of the gospel, simply because their genuine care for the people of God is also greater. How a father loves and cares for his own cannot be compared to those who only instruct in the faith. There is a great difference between fathers and instructors, just as there is a difference between one who brings forth a child and one who academically instructs him. Moreover, since the new birth is the ultimate purpose in Christian ministry,<sup>20</sup> leading

men to receive the Holy Spirit should be valued as the most important service for God. Because of this, those whom God has purposed to be spiritual fathers have a higher authority in Christ's church. Their work is the most important work, and as such, Paul is not ashamed to exert his fatherly authority toward the Thessalonians whom he has begotten, through his own divinely appointed ministry, given by Christ. *For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel* (1 Cor. 4:15).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, 1 Cor 4:15) *For though ye have ten thousand instructors*. Though you may have or though you should have. It matters not how many you have, yet it is still true that I only sustain the relation to you of spiritual father, and whatever respect it is proper for you to have toward them, yet there is a special right which I have to admonish you, and a special deference which is due to me, from my early labors among you, and from the fact that you are my spiritual children.

*Instructors*—Greek: *pedagogues*; or those who conducted children to school, and who superintended their conduct out of school hours. Hence, those who had the care of children, or teachers (in general). It is then applied to instructors of any kind.

*In Christ*—In the Christian system or doctrine. The authority which Paul claims here, is that which a father has in preference to such an instructor.

*Not many fathers*—Spiritual fathers. That is, you have but one. You are to remember that however many teachers you have, yet that I alone am your spiritual father.

<sup>19</sup> 1 Tim. 3:2 *A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;*

<sup>20</sup> John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

John 3:5 *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

*In Christ Jesus*—By the aid and authority of Christ. I have begotten you by preaching his gospel and by his assistance.

*I have begotten you*—I was the instrument of your conversion.

In Christ's church the greater a man's position, the greater he should exert himself in humbling himself and caring for those over whom Christ has given him responsibility. Thus, the greater a man's spiritual rank in the body of Christ, the more he should condescend to a position of service toward those chosen by Christ. It is this standard that Jesus set for those given spiritual gifts and abilities, that the greater a person's possession of talents, gifts, and position in spiritual ministry, the more he should live as a servant to those whom Christ has saved. *But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant* (Matt. 23:11).

(Benson Commentary, Matt. 23:11) *But he that is greatest among you, &c.*—If any one among you would in reality be greater than another, let him be the more condescending, kind, and ready cheerfully to serve others in love. . . . Thus Paul, who knew his privilege as well as duty, though *free from all*, yet made

himself *servant of all*, 1 Corinthians 9:19.<sup>21</sup> And our Lord frequently pressed it upon his disciples to be humble and self-denying, mild and condescending, and to abound in all the offices of Christian love, though mean, and to the meanest; and of this he set a continual example. *Whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be humbled, &c.*—It is observable that no one sentence of our Lord's is so often repeated as this: it occurs with scarcely any variation at least ten times in the evangelists.

God provides His gifts for the spiritual edification of His people.<sup>22</sup> Whatever spiritual gifts and endowments of spiritual powers He gives,<sup>23</sup> recipients should use such graces to both serve and edify others. The only true authority that God has given His ministers in the church is that which is purposed for edification,<sup>24</sup> the same spiritual edification that all Christians are divinely directed to pursue in their interactions and fellowship with others.<sup>25</sup>

*Every one of you.* The apostle possessed a specific and personal love for each and every one of the Thessalonians. Not one of them was forgotten; not one of them was beyond his loving recognition. True ministers, therefore, will conduct personalized ministry wherein the congregation

21 I Cor. 9:19 *For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.*

22 Eph. 4:10–12 *He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)*<sup>11</sup> *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*<sup>12</sup> *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:* 23 I Cor. 12:7–10 *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*<sup>8</sup> *For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;*<sup>9</sup> *To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;*<sup>10</sup> *To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:*

I Cor. 12:28 *And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*

24 II Cor. 13:10 *Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.*

25 Rom. 14:19 *Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*

I Cor. 14:12 *Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.*

Eph. 4:16 *From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

I Thess. 5:11 *Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.*

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never becomes more important than the individuals who make it up.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I Thess. 2:11) *every one of you*—in private (Ac 20:20),<sup>26</sup> as well as publicly. The minister, if he would be useful, must not deal merely in generalities, but must individualize and particularize.

How children are raised can directly affect what they become, and this is certainly true in raising God's people. To a true minister, every member of Christ's flock is precious. Therefore, each should be exhorted, comforted, and charged so that he progresses toward the high calling given him in Christ. Merely loving God's people is not enough for ministerial service if one does not exhort the saints to live a holier life, comfort them when they are in need, and challenge them to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 2:11) *How we exhorted*—That is, to a holy life.

*And comforted*—In the times of affliction.

*And charged*—Greek, "testified." The word testify is used here in the sense of protesting, or making an earnest and solemn appeal. They came as witnesses from God of the truth of religion, and of the importance of living in a holy manner. They did not originate the gospel themselves, or teach its duties and doctrines as their own, but they came in the capacity of those who bore witness of what God had revealed and required, and they did this in the earnest and solemn manner which became such an office.

*I Thessalonians 2:12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.*

Here the apostle gives the reason he *exhorted, comforted, and charged* the Thessalonians as *a father doth his children*. It was so they might *walk worthy of God*. Thus, if a person has been called by Christ, then walking worthy of the Lord should be his greatest aim.<sup>27</sup> Grace does not dispel the need for proper Christian behavior but rather increases it.<sup>28</sup> The invitation to become a son of God is the highest of heavenly calls. Therefore, it is essential that all Christians be exhorted to walk in a way worthy of the holy God Who has called them. The call to heaven is both serious and grave and should be responded to with the greatest effort. As Matthew Henry said, "Religion, if worth anything, is worth every thing."<sup>29</sup> Thus, if a man is called by the Son of God, he should seek to walk worthy of the glory and kingdom he has been called to. The apostle Paul understood this and exerted great effort not to abuse the divine grace given to him but rather to pursue the heavenly prize that lay before him. *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus* (Phil. 3:14).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Phil. 3:14) *Of the high calling of God*—Which is the end or result of that calling. God has called us to great and noble efforts; to a career of true honor and glory; to the obtainment of a bright and imperishable crown. It is a calling which is "high," or "upward"—(ἀνω *anō*)—that is, which tends to the skies. The calling of the Christian is from heaven, and to heav-

26 Acts 20:20 *And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,*

27 Eph. 4:1 *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*

Col. 1:10 *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

28 I Cor. 15:10 *But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*

29 Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, II Thess. 1:5–10

en; compare Proverbs 15:24.<sup>30</sup> He has been summoned by God through the gospel of the Lord Jesus to secure the crown. It is placed before and above him in heaven. It may be his, if he will not faint or tire or look backward. It demands his highest efforts, and it is worth all the exertions which a mortal can make even in the longest life.

*Called you unto his kingdom and glory.* The kingdom of God is that kingdom in which God will rule His people through His Son. It is a kingdom of *glory* worthy of our greatest effort to walk worthy of. The kingdom of heaven is also the possession of the Son of God.<sup>31</sup> It is He Whom God has purposed should rule the world to come, and He alone Who provides men access into it.

The Greek word for *glory* is *dóksa*.

(*HELPS Word-studies* #1391) (from *dokeō*, ‘exercising personal opinion which determines value’)—*glory*. 1391 /*dóksa* (‘*glory*’) corresponds to the OT word, *kabo* (OT 3519, ‘to be heavy’). Both terms convey God’s infinite, intrinsic worth (substance, essence).

[1391 (*dóksa*) literally means “what evokes good opinion, i.e. that something has inherent, intrinsic worth” (J. Thayer).]

The definition of *glory* might not initially arouse the reader’s attention, but when we realize that man in his fallen condition has no intrinsic value or worth, or any real *glory*, then the word takes on a unique and more special meaning. Sinners, who have fallen short of the *glory* of God, have in fact lost any reason that God

should think well of them. The stain of sin makes those who are born of it<sup>32</sup> and who have committed it, unworthy of possessing any true heavenly worth. For this reason, sinners are through themselves unworthy of receiving any true praise from God because of their being born in sin and personally committing it in their own lives.<sup>33</sup> They are below that which is worthy of heavenly *glory*, so that without God’s divine intervention none could be found worthy of entering God’s presence. *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God* (Rom. 3:23).

(*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, Rom. 3:23) *For all have sinned*—This was the point which he had fully established in the discussion in these chapters.

*Have come short*—Greek, “Are deficient in regard to;” are lacking, etc. Here it means, that they had failed to obtain, or were destitute of.

*The glory of God*—The praise or approbation of God. They had sought to be justified, or approved, by God; but all had failed. Their works of the Law had not secured his approbation; and they were therefore under condemnation.

Because sinners have fallen short of God’s *glory*, they retain no intrinsic value or worth before God. Just as Jesus said that the *flesh profiteth nothing*,<sup>34</sup> those of the flesh are practically devoid of any true heavenly worth themselves. Therefore, for sinners to have any righteous standing or value in heaven, they must first be

30 Prov. 15:24 *The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.*

31 II Pet. 1:11 *For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

32 Ps. 51:5 *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

33 Rom. 5:12 *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

Eph. 2:3 *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

34 John 6:63 *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

## The Dead Shall Rise

cleansed of their sin<sup>35</sup> and then given a holy and new nature totally distinct from it.<sup>36</sup> In short, sinners must be changed by Christ's Spirit and Christ's power in order that they may be worthy of heaven and eternal union with God. If a man is not made righteous<sup>37</sup> and holy through Jesus Christ,<sup>38</sup> then he has no realistic hope of sharing with God in eternity. Heaven is for holy and divine beings, not for any who possess as their only nature that which has been passed on from sinful Adam.<sup>39</sup> Consequently, for unholy and unrighteous men to be made fit for heaven and worthy of God, they must first be

transformed and made new creatures through spiritual regeneration.<sup>40</sup> It is by being made new, through the blood and spiritual baptism of Christ,<sup>41</sup> that a man's past is overcome and a new heavenly future is given to him. *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new* (II Cor. 5:17). When a man is born again<sup>42</sup> and made a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ,<sup>43</sup> the door is opened for heavenly glorification. Ultimately, spiritual adoption, whereby sinners are made sons of God through Jesus Christ, is what gives the hope of fu-

35 *I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

*I John 1:7 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.*

*Acts 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*

*John 13:8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.*

36 *II Peter 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

37 *Rom. 5:19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

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

*II Cor. 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

38 *John 17:19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*

*Heb. 10:10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

39 *I Cor. 15:45-48 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.<sup>46</sup> Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.<sup>47</sup> The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.<sup>48</sup> As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.*

40 *Tit. 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

*I Cor. 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

41 *Matt. 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*

*Acts 1:5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, 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.*

42 *I Pet. 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

*John 3:3-7 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.<sup>4</sup> Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.<sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.<sup>7</sup> Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

43 *John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

ture glorification. Because God's adopted children have been given God's own holy and spiritual nature,<sup>44</sup> it is fitting that His own spiritual inheritance should be theirs. Inheritance is a right because of relationship, and because Christians are given the same holy nature as Christ, God promises that they will share eternally in His heavenly inheritance. Hence, those who are God's children are God's heirs, which gives them the right to partake in the glory of heaven. Because of their being adopted by God through the Son of God,<sup>45</sup> spiritual inheritance has now become the Christian's right. Thus, just as earthly sons are recognized as their fathers' heirs, so are heavenly sons also reckoned as heirs of God's heavenly kingdom. All sons are heirs, and the children of God are no different. All also who have been made joint-heirs with Christ will

be glorified when Christ's own full glorification is revealed to the world. *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together* (Rom. 8:17).

*(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Rom 8:17)* One characteristic of the son is that he is his father's heir. So it is with the Christian. He, too, has an inheritance—an inheritance of glory which he will share with Christ. But he must not be surprised if, before sharing the glory, he also shares the sufferings.

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*(Benson Commentary, Rom. 8:17–18)* heirs of God—Heirs of the heavenly inheritance, and by the redemption of their bodies, being made immortal like God, they shall enjoy that inheritance.

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<sup>44</sup> Eph. 4:24 *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*  
<sup>45</sup> Eph. 1:5 *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*



## I Thessalonians 2:13–18

*I Thessalonians 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.*

No other verse so clearly explains why the Thessalonians were such a model church. Their faith grew into love, and their love grew into hope.<sup>1</sup> They became examples to all other believers throughout Macedonia and Achaia,<sup>2</sup> and from them sounded out the Word of the Lord, which proclaims Jesus as Lord.<sup>3</sup> All this happened because they received the Word of God spoken to them *not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God.*<sup>4</sup>

*(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Rom. 10:17) Before men can believe, there must be something for them to believe. That something is the word of God, which we preach and they hear.*

If men do not believe in the divinity of the Scriptures<sup>5</sup> or the prophecy brought

forth from them,<sup>6</sup> they cannot have true faith in God. It was the preached Word that the apostles brought to the Thessalonians that produced their conversion, just as it is the preached Word,<sup>7</sup> coupled with the written Word today, that saves men. *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls* (Jas. 1:21).

It is faith that indicates whether a man is humble enough to come under God's government or whether he has chosen to reject it. By faith and/or unbelief we can determine who has accepted God's sovereignty as well as any who have rejected it. By God's Word the hearts of men are revealed, and by It are the thoughts and intents of the soul brought to the surface. *For the word of God is quick, 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* (Heb. 4:12). None can be exposed to the true Word of God and not

1 *I 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;*

2 *I Thess. 1:7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.*

3 *I 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.*

4 *Rom. 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

5 *II Tim. 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

6 *II Pet. 1:20–21 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. <sup>21</sup>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.*

7 *Rom. 10:14–15 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? <sup>15</sup>And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

subsequently have their own inner feelings and motives revealed in the process.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Heb. 4:12) *And is a discerner of the thoughts*— ... It is true that God searches the heart, and knows the thoughts, but that is not the truth which is prominent here. It is, that the thoughts and intents of the heart are brought out to view by the Word of God. And can anyone doubt this? see Romans 7:7.<sup>8</sup> Is it not true that people are made to see their real character under the exhibition of the truth of God? That in the light of the Law they see their past lives to be sinful? That the exhibition of truth calls to their recollection many long-forgotten sins? And that their real feelings are brought out when the truth of God is proclaimed? Men then are made to look upon their motives as they had never done before, and to see in their hearts feelings whose existence they would not have suspected if it had not been for the exhibition of the truth. The exhibition of the truth is like pouring down the beams of the sun at midnight on a dark world; and the truth lays open the real feelings of the sinner as that sun would disclose the clouds of wickedness that are now performed under cover of the night. Many a man has a deep and fixed hostility to God and to his gospel who might never be sensible of it if the truth was not faithfully proclaimed. The particular idea here is, that the truth of God will detect the feelings of the hypocrite and self-deceiver. They cannot always conceal their emotions, and the time will come when truth, like light poured into the soul, will reveal their unbelief and their secret sins.

*Received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God.* Because of

their astute spiritual perception, the Thessalonians realized that the gospel Paul and his companions brought to them had its origin not in man but in God. Knowing that the gospel was from above and sent from God prompted them to believe it. Because the Thessalonians believed that the Word preached to them had its source in God, they heartily and with great joy received its message. Thus, at the center of all true belief lies the internal confidence that the Word of God can be trusted because of its spiritual nature and divine source. This made the Thessalonians' faith unique, and it also distinguishes those called by Christ today. Jesus' sheep recognize His voice<sup>9</sup> and perceive that it comes from God, and upon hearing it they will seek to obey His commands.

Jesus said that His words were both Spirit and life, and this statement is true concerning the entirety of the gospel: *The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life* (John 6:63b). The words of Christ contain the life and presence of God. Just as God breathed into Adam's nostrils to bring life into his organic body, so too has God brought forth life from the words of God's Son. For this reason the Bible is vastly different from any secular book ever written. Since it originated in God, His spiritual life remains present within it. In truth the Word of God is supernatural in every respect. Because it is given to us by God's own person, it contains His own spiritual power.

Nothing is more impactful, moving, or transformative than the Word of God, the

<sup>8</sup> Rom. 7:7 *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

<sup>9</sup> John 10:27 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:*

John 10:1–5 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup>But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. <sup>4</sup>And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.*

same Word that at creation brought forth all things, material and living.<sup>10</sup> God's Word produced light out of darkness,<sup>11</sup> and by God's Word both the heavens and earth were created.<sup>12</sup> All that is both natural and celestial in the known universe can be traced back to a living and spiritual God, Who through His own spoken Word created all forms of life and matter. *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork* (Ps. 19:1).

(*Benson Commentary*, Ps. 19:1) The Hebrew, מְסַפְּרִים, *mesapperim*, is literally, *they tell*, or, *preach*, the glory of God. And this language of the heavens is so plain, and their characters are so legible, that all, even the most barbarous nations, that have no skill either in languages or letters, are able to understand and read what they declare. *The firmament*—Or, *the expansion*, all the vast space extending from the earth to the starry heavens, and especially the atmosphere, comprehending that fluid mixture of light, air, and vapours, which is everywhere diffused about us; and to the influences of which are owing all the beauty and fruitfulness of the earth, and all vegetable and animal life: all these by their manifold and beneficial operations, as well as by their beauty and magnificence, *show his handiwork*—As Creator, Preserver, and

Governor. The excellence of the work discovers who was the author of it, that it did not come by chance, nor spring of itself, but was made by a Being of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness.

The Scriptures are a window into the higher spiritual realm, where God lives and maintains His being. Thus, by God's Word and His Holy Spirit an entirely different realm is open to man: the spiritual, heavenly, and celestial world, where God; His Son, Jesus Christ; and all divine beings abide. *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel* (Heb. 12:22–24). This text reveals what faith in God opens to sinners like ourselves: a breathtaking snapshot of heaven and the wonders of believing souls who have gone before us, abiding with the Son of God even now. God is the God not of the dead but of the living,<sup>13</sup> and His spiritual realm

10 Gen. 1:11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

Gen. 1:14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

Gen. 1:20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

Gen. 1:24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

Gen. 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

11 Gen. 1:2–3 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup>And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

12 Gen. 1:6–10 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. <sup>7</sup>And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. <sup>8</sup>And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. <sup>9</sup>And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. <sup>10</sup>And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called the Seas: and God saw that it was good.

13 Matt. 22:32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

## The Dead Shall Rise

is where the spiritual lives of the holiest who have ever walked the earth now maintain residence.

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, Heb. 12:22) *But ye are come unto mount Zion*: this is not literally to be understood for the mount on which the city of David was built, for that was as visible and touchable as Mount Sinai, to which it is opposed; but that mount which is higher than the highest, as high as heaven itself, Hebrews 12:25 9:24 John 3:13;<sup>14</sup> where is the most orderly government of God for holiness, Micah 4:7;<sup>15</sup> whence all good gifts and gospel blessings are conveyed to the church, of which these believers were members, Isaiah 8:18 28:16 59:20 Revelation 14:1.<sup>16</sup>

*And unto the city of the living God*; of which the living God is the Builder and Maker, and wherein he dwelleth, where nothing but life is, and whence Christ's voice giveth life to dead souls, enabling them to live a life of holiness to God, as Psalm 46:4,5 48:1,8 87:3 Isaiah 40:14 John 5:25.<sup>17</sup> To distinguish this from any earthly city or corporation, it is said to be

*the heavenly Jerusalem*, its original, nature, and end being all heavenly; a fruitful place, whence believers are made partakers of the most spiritual influences for holiness; where there is nothing carnal, terrible, deadly, barren, but all causal and productive of holiness issueth thence, Isaiah 42:1–25,65:17–19, 66:10 John 17:24 Galatians 4:26 Revelation 3:12, 21:2,10.<sup>18</sup>

*Mark 12:27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.*

*Luke 20:38 For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.*

*14 Heb. 12:25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:*

*Heb. 9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:*

*John 3:13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*

*15 Mic. 4:7 And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.*

*16 Isa. 8:18 Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.*

*Isa. 28:16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.*

*Isa. 59:20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.*

*Rev. 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.*

*17 Ps. 46:4–5 There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. <sup>5</sup>God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.*

*Ps. 48:1 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.*

*Ps. 48:8 As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah.*

*Ps. 87:3 Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.*

*Isa. 40:14 With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?*

*John 5:25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.*

*18 Isa. 42:1–25 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. <sup>2</sup>He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. <sup>3</sup>A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. <sup>4</sup>He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. <sup>5</sup>Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: <sup>6</sup>I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; <sup>7</sup>To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. <sup>8</sup>I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to*

And to an innumerable company of angels; in which city are many excellent inhabitants with whom believers are incorporated, and to whom they have relation, as myriads of angels, who are ministering spirits under the gospel, as under the law, full of holiness, power, agility, and endowments, fit for their work and end; who, though for number are thousands and millions of them, Psalm 68:17

103:20 104:4 Acts 7:53 Galatians 3:19 Revelation 5:11,<sup>19</sup> yet are all fulfilling their Lord's pleasure in every place, as ordered by him. Their ministrations of the law was terrible in flaming fire, but of the gospel, most sweet and gracious, Luke 2:13,14.<sup>20</sup> At Sinai they ministered externally and sensibly, affecting senses; but from Zion they minister spiritually, to hearts, Matthew 4:11 Luke 22:43 Psalm

*graven images.* <sup>9</sup>Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. <sup>10</sup>Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. <sup>11</sup>Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. <sup>12</sup>Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands. <sup>13</sup>The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. <sup>14</sup>I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once. <sup>15</sup>I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools. <sup>16</sup>And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them. <sup>17</sup>They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye are our gods. <sup>18</sup>Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. <sup>19</sup>Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD's servant? <sup>20</sup>Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not. <sup>21</sup>The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable. <sup>22</sup>But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore. <sup>23</sup>Who among you will give ear to this? who will hearken and hear for the time to come? <sup>24</sup>Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. <sup>25</sup>Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart. Isa. 65:17–19 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. <sup>18</sup>But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. <sup>19</sup>And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. Isa. 66:10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her:

John 17:24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

Gal. 4:26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Rev. 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Rev. 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Rev. 21:10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

19 Ps. 68:17 The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.

Ps. 103:20 Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.

Ps. 104:4 Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:

Acts 7:53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

Gal. 3:19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

Rev. 5:11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

20 Luke 2:13–14 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, <sup>14</sup>Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

## The Dead Shall Rise

91:11,<sup>21</sup> resisting evil spirits ministering wickedly. Their ministry little effectual under the law; but under the gospel, saving, Acts 7:53 Hebrews 1:14 Revelation 19:10.<sup>22</sup> Their former ministration temporary and ceasing, but this everlasting, till they bring all their trust into Abraham's bosom, Luke 16:22.<sup>23</sup> They are promoting holiness by God's sending things to us by them, and by their observing the goings and doings of Christians, whether holy or not, 1 Corinthians 11:10,<sup>24</sup> and giving an account of the success of their ministry towards them, as to this end, Matthew 18:10.<sup>25</sup> And the neglect of this means to help our pursuing holiness, will God require, Hebrews 2:2.<sup>26</sup>

*Which effectually worketh also in you that believe.* When a man believes in the Word of God, he will see the Word proved to be of God by the personal witness of what it accomplishes in his life. The Greek word for *effectually* is #1754 *energēō*. HELPS *Word-studies* describes it as “(from 1722 /en, ‘engaged in,’ which intensifies 2041 /*érgon*, ‘work’)—properly, energize, working in a situation which brings it from one stage (point) to the next, like an electrical current energizing a wire, bringing it to a shining light bulb.”<sup>27</sup> God's Word will prove itself to be divine by its ability to move things, even men's hearts, from one point to another. This includes the conversion of sinners, the healing of diseased bodies, the bringing of peace to a trou-

bled soul, or any other situation whereby God's power transforms either man or creation itself. He who believes the Word will receive personal proof of God's existence through the spiritual power experienced in his life. Practically, no one can sincerely believe in the Word of truth and not spiritually experience the mighty power of God in the process.<sup>28</sup>

Conversely, to those who do not believe the gospel, its power will remain hidden, simply because God rewards none who instead of exercising faith in Him are content to live in spiritual unbelief. *And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief* (Matt. 13:58).

*(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Matt. 13:58) He did not many mighty works there.*—In St. Mark the language is stronger, “He *could* do no mighty works there.” The wonder-working power was not absolute and unconditioned, but depended on the faith of those who came to Him. Without that, the will and the power were alike thwarted.

By this we can see that both faith and unbelief have consequences. While faith in the Word reveals the Lord to men, unbelief estranges them from Him and all deliverance offered through the higher spiritual realm. Ultimately, how the Word

21 Matt. 4:11 *Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.*

Luke 22:43 *And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.*

Ps. 91:11 *For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*

22 Acts 7:53 *Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.*

Heb. 1:14 *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*

Rev. 19:10 *And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

23 Luke 16:22 *And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;*

24 1 Cor. 11:10 *For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.*

25 Matt. 18:10 *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.*

26 Heb. 2:2 *For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;*

27 HELPS *Word-studies*

28 Isa. 55:11 *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.*

of God, spoken by the Son of God, is received will determine a man's entire spiritual destiny. For none can truly be saved by God who do not embrace the very Word of God purposed to save them.<sup>29</sup>

***I Thessalonians 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:***

What befell the Thessalonians by their being persecuted is the very same thing that

the churches of God in Judea had experienced. Christ's own people had sought His crucifixion,<sup>30</sup> and one of His chosen disciples, Judas, betrayed Him, delivering Him into the hands of evil men.<sup>31</sup> This teaches us that a man's own house and countrymen will often seek to do more evil to him than even strangers. *And a man's foes shall be they of his own household* (Matt. 10:36).

(Bengel's *Gnomen*, Matt. 10:36) A man shall have them of his household—his relations, servants, and acquaintances—for enemies, if he believes in Me; see Micah 7:6.<sup>32</sup>

29 I Pet. 1:23 *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lieth and abideth for ever.*

Ps. 107:20 *He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.*

Rom. 1:16 *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.*

30 Matt. 26:3–4 *Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, <sup>4</sup>And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him.*

Matt. 27:22–25 *Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. <sup>23</sup>And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. <sup>24</sup>When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. <sup>25</sup>Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children* Mark 15:9–14 *But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? <sup>10</sup>For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy. <sup>11</sup>But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. <sup>12</sup>And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? <sup>13</sup>And they cried out again, Crucify him. <sup>14</sup>Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.*

John 11:47–53 *Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. <sup>48</sup>If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. <sup>49</sup>And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, <sup>50</sup>Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. <sup>51</sup>And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; <sup>52</sup>And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. <sup>53</sup>Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.*

31 Matt. 26:14–16 *Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, <sup>15</sup>And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. <sup>16</sup>And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.*

Matt. 26:47–50 *And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. <sup>48</sup>Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. <sup>49</sup>And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him. <sup>50</sup>And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus and took him.*

Luke 22:2–6 *And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people. <sup>3</sup>Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. <sup>4</sup>And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. <sup>5</sup>And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. <sup>6</sup>And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.*

32 Mic. 7:6 *For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.*

## The Dead Shall Rise

Even as Paul penned the letter to the Thessalonians, he was himself suffering persecution from the Jews at Corinth. Whenever the gospel is believed, it will produce great antagonism and consternation in those who have rejected it. It is not enough for sinners to reject the gospel without also persecuting those who proclaim its message. Those who do evil hate the light, simply because through that light their own evil deeds are made known. *For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved* (John 3:20). Whenever sinners willfully and knowingly engage in evil, they will hate the light of the gospel, which exposes it. Ultimately the gospel and righteousness itself will be hated, because they reveal and reprove the nature of evil men. This began with Cain and Abel,<sup>33</sup> was evidenced in the persecution of Jesus, and continued up to Paul's time.<sup>34</sup>

***I Thessalonians 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:***

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, I Thess. 2:14) It is an undesigned coincidence, that Paul at this time was suffering persecutions of the Jews at Corinth, whence he writes (Ac 18:5, 6, 12);<sup>35</sup> naturally his letter would the more vividly dwell on Jewish bitterness against Christians.

We should never underestimate hatred for Christ and the gospel.<sup>36</sup> So great, then, is the sinner's hate of light that he will often resort to killing another in an attempt to extinguish it. This was the condition of the Jews in Jesus' day, when because of unbelief, violence ensued, first toward faith and then toward other men.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Thess. 2:15) *And are contrary to all men*—They do not merely differ from other people in customs and opinions—which might be harmless—but they keep up an active opposition to all other people. It was not opposition to one nation only, but to all; it was not to one form of religion only, but to all—even including God's last revelation to mankind; it was not opposition evinced in their own country, but they carried it with them wherever they went. The truth of this statement is confirmed, not only by authority of the

33 Gen. 4:8 *And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.*

34 Acts 14:19–20 *And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.* <sup>20</sup>*Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.* Acts 16:37 *But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.* II Cor. 11:23–26 *Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.* <sup>24</sup>*Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.* <sup>25</sup>*Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;*

35 Acts 18:5–6 *And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.* <sup>6</sup>*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 18:12 *And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,*

36 John 15:18 *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*

John 7:7 *The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.* Matt. 24:9 *Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.*

Luke 6:22 *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.*

apostle and the uniform record in the New Testament, but by the testimony borne of them in the classic writers. This was universally regarded as their national characteristic, for they had so demeaned themselves as to leave this impression on the minds of those with whom they had contact. Thus Tacitus describes them as “cherishing hatred against all others.”

In Christ’s day the Jews as a people had corrupted themselves. Though they had previously been chosen by God,<sup>37</sup> they had abandoned His path of righteousness. And though some in the Jewish nation would be saved, the vast majority were purposed for destruction. The sacking of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70 initiated this divine judgment,<sup>38</sup> which Jesus also foretold when He revealed the upcoming destruction of the temple in Jerusalem.<sup>39</sup> Understandably those who commit violence will reap as they have sown,<sup>40</sup> and Jerusalem and its inhabitants bear testimony of this being true. *And as*

*he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down (Mark 13:1–2).*

(Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Mark 13:2) The temple was constructed of white marble, and the blocks were of a prodigious size. Josephus says that these stones were, some of them, 50 feet long, 24 feet broad, and 16 feet in thickness.

*And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck,*

37 Gen. 17:7–8 *And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.* <sup>8</sup>*And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.*

Exod. 6:7 *And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.*

Exod. 19:5–6 *Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: <sup>6</sup>And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*

Deut. 4:20 *But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day.*

Deut. 7:6 *For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.*

38 “Siege of Jerusalem, (70 CE), Roman military blockade of Jerusalem during the First Jewish Revolt. The fall of the city marked the effective conclusion of a four-year campaign against the Jewish insurgency in Judaea. The Romans destroyed much of the city, including the Second Temple.” (britannica.com)

39 *Matt. 23:36–38 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.* <sup>37O</sup>*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!* <sup>38</sup>*Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.*

*Luke 19:41–44 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, <sup>42</sup>Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. <sup>43</sup>For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, <sup>44</sup>And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.*

40 *Gal. 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

*Job 4:8 Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.*

*Hos. 8:7 For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk; the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.*

## The Dead Shall Rise

*in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled* (Luke 21:20–24).

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Mark 13:2) *there shall not be left*] Though now they seem fixed in their places for eternity. And even as He said, less than forty years afterwards, “Zion was ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem became heaps, and the mountain of the House as the high places of the forest” (Micah 3:12). Titus himself was amazed at the massive buildings of Jerusalem, and traced in his triumph the hand of God (Jos. Bell. Jud. vi. 9. 1).<sup>41</sup> At his departure after the capture of the city, he left the tenth legion under the command of Terentius Rufus to carry out the work of demolition, and Josephus tells us (Bell. Jud. vii. 1. 1)<sup>42</sup> that the whole inclosing walls and precincts of the Temple were “so thoroughly levelled and dug up that no one visiting the city would believe it had ever been inhabited.”

***I Thessalonians 2:16 Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.***

Sin grows until it must be divinely dealt with. When the Jews sought to prevent the Gentiles’ salvation after crucifying God’s Son, the Lord’s wrath was ready to be revealed. Their sin had progressed too far, and divine judgment would no longer be held back.

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, I Thess. 2:16) Their hindrance of the

Gospel preaching to the Gentiles was the last measure added to their continually accumulating iniquity, which made them fully ripe for vengeance.

Though God’s longsuffering toward sin is extensive, it is not indefinite. Thus, if sin is not ultimately repented of, then the execution of divine wrath is God’s final way of dealing with it.<sup>43</sup>

(*Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers*, I Thess. 2:16) *For. . .* “The Jews have been working up to the rounded perfection of their sin; but (they had not much left to do) the wrath burst suddenly upon them to its uttermost.” The word for “is come” (which should be the simple preterite “came”) is the same as that used in Matthew 12:28, Luke 11:20,<sup>44</sup> of a sudden, unexpected apparition. “The wrath” is the wrath from which Jesus is delivering us (1 Thessalonians 1:10),<sup>45</sup> and it had already come upon the Jews, though its outward manifestation in the destruction of Jerusalem was not to come yet awhile. The particular moment at which St. Paul means that the wrath “came” must have been the moment of their final rejection of the Messiah.

***I Thessalonians 2:17–18 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.***

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

Paul does not say how he was delayed in coming to the Thessalonians, only that Satan was the reason for his failure to come. One can rarely preach the Word of truth

41 Josephus’ “The Jewish War” (Bellum Judaicum), Book 6, Chapter 9, Section 1

42 Josephus’ “The Jewish War” (Bellum Judaicum), Book 7, Chapter 1, Section 1

43 Rom. 2:5 *But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;*

44 Matt. 12:28 *But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.*

Luke 11:20 *But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.*

45 I 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.*

without at the very same time coming into contact with the high and dark spiritual forces that despise It. What this teaches us is that not only do sinners despise the truth,<sup>46</sup> but evil spirits equally do as well. God's Word is as foul and distasteful to Satan as the evil that Satan does is to God. No creature also despises the truth more than the one who from the earliest days of creation has sought to prevent men from believing it.<sup>47</sup> Because Satan wishes to possess the worship God receives,<sup>48</sup> he seeks to turn men away from Him. Satan's intent in Genesis was purposed to bring doubt upon God's Word so that he could lead Adam and Eve to rebel against God's commandments. To accomplish this, both deception and lies were needed, teaching us that ultimately believers wrestle not against mere flesh and blood,<sup>49</sup> and this is most evident when the truth is spoken and devilish forces seek to turn men away from it.<sup>50</sup> Practically, the greatest threat to Satan's deception and his evil influence over men is the Word of truth and the light of the gospel—simply because if the gospel of Jesus Christ is tru-

ly believed, then the power Satan holds over men will be lost.<sup>51</sup> For this reason the god of this world will exert great effort to blind men to the truth that reveals Christ's victory over the great deceiver of man.<sup>52</sup> *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* (II Cor. 4:4).

Just as it is important to believe in the Word of truth, it is also essential to believe in how Satan's aim is to blind men to it.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, II Cor. 4:4) *Hath blinded the minds of them which believe not*—Of all who discern no beauty in the gospel, and who reject it. It is implied here:

That the minds of unbelievers are blinded; that they perceive no beauty in the gospel. This is often affirmed of those who reject the gospel, and who live in sin; see the 2 Corinthians 2:13 note; Matthew 23:16–17, Matthew 23:26 notes; Luke 4:18 note; John 9:39; John 12:40 notes; Romans 11:7 note.<sup>53</sup> The sense is, that they did not see the spiritual

46 Amos 5:10 *They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.*

Isa. 30:10 *Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits:*

Jer. 36:23 *And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth.*

47 Gen. 3:1–5 *Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*

<sup>2</sup> *And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: <sup>3</sup>But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. <sup>4</sup>And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: <sup>5</sup>For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

48 Matt. 4:8–10 *Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; <sup>9</sup>And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. <sup>10</sup>Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

49 Eph. 6:12 *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

50 Mark 4:14–15 *The sower soweth the word. <sup>15</sup>And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.*

51 John 10:28 *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

II Thess. 3:3 *But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.*

52 Rev. 12:9 *And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

53 II Cor. 2:13 *I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.*

## The Dead Shall Rise

beauty and glory of the plan of redemption. They act in reference to that as they would in reference to this world, if a bandage were over their eyes, and they saw not the light of the sun, the beauty of the landscape, the path in which they should go, or the countenance of a friend. All is dark, and obscure, and destitute of beauty to them, however much beauty may be seen in all these objects by others.

Just as it was Satan who hindered Paul in coming to the Thessalonians, so it is the same *god of this world* who has, through the process of blinding *the minds of them which believe not*, prohibited true sight of the glory of Christ.

*II Corinthians 4:4 (NIV) The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

It is not merely a knowledge of the Son of God that men are blinded to, but Satan has also blinded men to the true glory of the Son.

It is the *glory* of the Son of God that Satan most attempts to blind men to, simply because if Christ cannot be truly seen, then men cannot actually be saved. It also makes little to no difference what men believe in the Scriptures if they do not believe in the spiritual truth that relates to the present glory of Jesus Christ.<sup>54</sup> Ultimately, it is first the knowledge of, and then faith in, the glorified Son of God that Satan most desires to keep men ignorant of. There is a great war that exists between the Son of God and the devil; thus, just as Jesus appeared to destroy the works of the devil<sup>55</sup> and to cast him out of his reign in this world,<sup>56</sup> so does Satan attempt to keep men blind to the true glory of Christ and His redemptive work in the world. In the end, Jesus Christ is set against the devil and his evil deeds, just as the devil is set against the Christ and His holy mission.

Ultimately Satan hindered Paul, but he could not alter Paul's ability to strengthen the Thessalonians' faith and further instruct them in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Greater was He, Who was in Paul<sup>57</sup> and

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*Matt. 23:16–17* Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!<sup>17</sup> Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

*Matt. 23:26* Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

*Luke 4:18* The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

*John 9:39* And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

*John 12:40* He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

*Rom. 11:7* What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

*54 Heb. 1:3* Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:

*I Pet. 1:21* Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

*55 I John 3:8* He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

*56 John 12:31* Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

*57 I John 4:4* Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

Who had called him into ministry<sup>58</sup> than he who was in the world. Because of this, though the devil might for a short time hinder Paul's efforts to spread the gospel, he could not prevent its final victory. What this teaches us is that though the devil may delay the spread of the truth, he has absolutely no power to prevent it.<sup>59</sup> Consider as well that if Paul had actually come to the Thessalonians in person, then

he would have had no reason to pen this wonderful epistle to them. Consequently, God allowed Satan to hinder Paul, even as he allowed Satan to do certain things in Job's life,<sup>60</sup> in order that a greater spiritual purpose could be accomplished—practically confirming that God works all things, even things that men might at first perceive as evil, to accomplish the good pleasure of His own good and divine will.<sup>61</sup>

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58 Acts 26:13–17 *At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.*<sup>14</sup>*And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*<sup>15</sup>*And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.*<sup>16</sup>*But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;*<sup>17</sup>*Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,*  
59 Acts 6:7 *And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.*

Acts 19:20 *So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.*

60 Job 1:13–19 *And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:*<sup>14</sup>*And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:*<sup>15</sup>*And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*<sup>16</sup>*While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*<sup>17</sup>*While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*<sup>18</sup>*While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:*<sup>19</sup>*And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

Job 2:7 *So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.*

61 Eph. 1:11 *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*



## I Thessalonians 2:19–3:8

*I Thessalonians 2:19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?*

**P**AUL reveals here his great hope for the Thessalonians, that those whom God had given him to care for would be found abiding in Christ at His coming. This was the apostle's hope, and it would ultimately be his joy and crown of rejoicing at Christ's return since it is purposed to be the salvation of God's people that will be accounted as the minister's crown. This spiritual hope is what prompts servants of the Lord to abandon their own personal freedom so that others might be saved—knowing that at Jesus Christ's return, if God's people are fully welcomed into His presence and received into heaven, then all the spiritual labor done in Christ's name will be proven to have been worth it.

The spiritual degree to which the apostle was willing to sacrifice personal freedom to *gain the more* unto Christ's name and thus *save some* is recorded in I Corinthians.

*I Corinthians 9:19–25 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.*  
<sup>20</sup> *And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;*  
<sup>21</sup> *To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God,*

*but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.*

<sup>22</sup> *To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*

<sup>23</sup> *And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.*

<sup>24</sup> *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.*

<sup>25</sup> *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*

The effort to win others to Christ is compared to a great contest in which a contestant holds the hope of gaining a crown of victory and honor for his efforts. Such games were common in the apostle's time and can be likened to our Olympics, in which individuals train for long hours and many years to gain praise, recognition, and respect for their accomplishments. Yet for the Olympian this energy is exerted for a mere corruptible crown, one that will quickly fade away and be forgotten. The apostle sought a different reward than this, an eternal crown given by Jesus Christ at His coming. This crown and emblem of spiritual achievement is said to be everlasting. Like all things of God, everything in God's everlasting kingdom is eternal in nature. This undoubtedly includes rewards given for fruitful Christian service. The Scriptures list five heavenly crowns through which God will recognize believers for

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their faithful service to Himself. They are the crown of rejoicing, as in I Thessalonians 2:19; the incorruptible crown<sup>1</sup>; the crown of righteousness<sup>2</sup>; the crown of glory<sup>3</sup>; and the crown of life.<sup>4</sup> Each one of these crowns reveals a distinct blessing that will be awarded to those found faithful in their service to God.

1. The crown of rejoicing is the crown that ministers of the gospel will receive when those whom they have pastored are found worthy of Christ at His coming. This celestial crown is a selfless crown, simply because it is directly related to not merely pursuing one's own walk of being found worthy of the Lord but also possessing sufficient spiritual love for the brethren that they also may be found accepted by Christ at His coming. This crown is referred to as a crown of rejoicing because great spiritual joy will be experienced when those we have hoped to be saved by Christ actually are.

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, I Thess. 2:19)

Here the apostle gives the reason of his desire to see them. He first calls them his hope; that is, the master of his hope, that among others they should be saved in the day of Christ. Secondly, his joy: he at present rejoiced in their ready and sincere receiving the gospel preached by him. Thirdly, his crown of rejoicing, which signifies the triumph and height of joy: and seeing he mentions the presence and coming of Jesus Christ, he looks to the crown that he should receive at that day, which he speaks of, 1 Corinthians 9:25;<sup>5</sup> and these Thessalonians, among others, would

help to make up this crown of rejoicing to him. And in the words we may observe an eminent gradation, as also that the crown of ministers will arise not only from Christ, but from their people also.

2. The incorruptible crown is the crown that will be given when men are willing to sacrifice their own lives and forfeit personal freedom in order that others might be saved. *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible* (I Cor. 9:25). There is nothing of more worth in heaven than the saving of a man's soul, and thus those willing to exert the effort and undergo the sacrifice of self in order that others might be saved will receive a crown of heavenly recognition that will never fade away. That which Christians run for is of so much more worth and has so much greater and lasting value than what those of the world labor to attain. The world passes away,<sup>6</sup> and as such all worldly deeds on her will suffer the same doomed fate, if not rooted in God and the eternal heavenly realm.

3. The crown of righteousness is the crown promised to be awarded to those whom the righteous one, Jesus Christ, designates as righteous at His return. A characteristic of these saved ones is that they will love Jesus Christ's appearing. *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*

1 I Cor. 9:24–25 *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.* <sup>25</sup> *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*

2 II Tim. 4:8 *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.*

3 I Pet. 5:4 *And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*  
4 Rev. 2:10 *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

5 I Cor. 9:25 *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*

6 I John 2:17 *And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

appearing (II Tim. 4:8). The crown of righteousness is also the spiritual reward that will be given to those who have struggled for the gospel's advancement, who have been faithful to their calling and not deterred in keeping the faith. The righteous throughout Scripture are spoken of as being rewarded by God.<sup>7</sup> Hence, those who pursued God's righteousness while on earth<sup>8</sup> will be rewarded with a crown of righteousness after their entrance into heaven. Just as pursuing unrighteousness will be punished, so shall the pursuit of righteousness be rewarded. The crown of righteousness therefore is that distinct heavenly recognition that will be given to all those who because of their love for the Lord pursued His righteousness. This crown is pursued to recognize when believers have remained faithful to Christ's calling throughout their lives and faithfully finished the spiritual course that God has called them to. It is an eternal and everlasting crown designating and

recognizing faithful Christian service and loyalty to God.

Jesus' return in glory will spark different reactions in different people. Those who love Christ will rejoice; those who have rejected him will both fear and mourn.<sup>9</sup> In Jesus' earthly ministry, when sinners recognized His spiritual power and authority, fear often filled them.<sup>10</sup> This fear will be greatly magnified in sinners when Jesus returns to this world to execute the judgment of God.<sup>11</sup> Hence, in contrast to those who love Christ's appearing will be those who because of choosing sin will greatly fear it.

4. The crown of glory is that heavenly crown directly related to the feeding and care of Christ's flock.<sup>12</sup> *And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away* (I Pet. 5:4). To feed the flock is to take the oversight of those who are the Lord's sheep.

7 Prov. 11:18 *The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward. Prov. 13:21 Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repayed.*

8 Matt. 6:33 *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

I Tim. 6:11 *But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.*

9 Matt. 24:30–31 *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup>And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

Rev. 1:7 *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.*

10 Mark 11:18 *And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.*

Luke 5:26 *And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.*

Luke 7:16 *And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.*

Luke 8:35 *Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.*

11 John 5:22 *For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:*

Acts 17:31 *Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

Ps. 96:13 *Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.*

12 I Pet. 5:2 *Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;*

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All sheep are prone to go astray,<sup>13</sup> and the Lord's people are no different. Thus, there remains a heavenly reward for spiritual leaders who because of their love for their Master have assumed the task of caring for and tending to the Lord's flock. This shepherding must never be motivated because of monetary gain, which undoubtedly would cancel out any spiritual reward. Ultimately all reward for Christian service must be willingly performed because of love and not merely religious duty or monetary gain. Any also who are given authority over Christ's people are commanded to be examples to the flock and not lords over it.<sup>14</sup> If these conditions are met, then glory, yea, a crown of glory, awaits all true ministers of the gospel who have yielded their lives to Christ, proven also by caring for His own.

*(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, I Pet. 5:4) A crown of glory that fadeth not away.*—It might perhaps be more closely, though less beautifully, represented by the glorious crown of amaranth, or the amaranthine crown of glory. Amaranth is the name of a flower which, like our immortelles, does not lose its colour or form. St. Peter immediately adds "of glory," lest we should think too literally of the wreath of immortelles.

The gospel of Jesus Christ, for both its members and its ministers, is a gospel of glory. By this it is meant that beyond the

sufferings of this life there awaits eternal and everlasting glory<sup>15</sup> for those who instead of serving themselves served the Lord of glory. Peter knew that he would be a partaker of his Lord's glory, as will all who follow Peter's path of personal sacrifice in order to care for the children of God. *The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed* (I Pet. 5:1). It is love for Christ that compels a man to both feed and care for Christ's people. It was also this standard of caring for His sheep that Jesus set for Peter to prove true love for Himself.<sup>16</sup>

5. The crown of life is given to those who remained faithful to their religion though having it tried. *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him* (Jas. 1:12). When men truly love the Lord, there is no worldly temptation that can separate them from Him. For these faithful men a crown of life is promised. It is also sincere love for the Lord that allows a man to pass all tests and trials in this life that are purposed to separate him from God and heavenly things. It is also true that when men possess no true love for Jesus Christ, then there is nothing to prevent them from yielding to worldly

13 Isa. 53:6 *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

I Pet. 2:25 *For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*

14 I Pet. 5:3 *Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock.*

15 Rom. 8:18 *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

II Cor. 4:17 *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;*

I Pet. 5:10 *But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

16 John 21:15–17 *So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. <sup>16</sup>He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. <sup>17</sup>He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

temptation—teaching us that when any do not sincerely love the Lord, there is nothing to prevent them from the spiritual temptation to turn away from God’s will for their lives.

*I Thessalonians 2:20 For ye are our glory and joy.*

(Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 2:20) ... the joy of a minister in the day of judgment will be measured by the amount of good which he has done, and the number of souls which he has been the means of converting and saving; 1 Thessalonians 2:19.<sup>17</sup> It will not be the honor which he has received from people; the titles which they have conferred on him; the commendation which he has received for eloquence or talent, or the learning which he has acquired, but it will be found in the number of those who have been converted from the error of their ways, and in the evidence of the good which he did on the earth. And will not the same thing be substantially true of all others who bear the Christian name? Will it then be a source of joy to them that they were richer than their neighbors; or that they were advanced to higher honors; or that they had a more splendid mansion, or were able to fare more “sumptuously?” The good that we do will be remembered certainly with pleasure in the day of judgment: of how many other things which now interest us so much can the same thing be said?

Few rewards in heaven can compare to the ones that Christ gives to those who have sacrificed their lives for the conversion of His people. Since it is a selfless undertaking, it will be rewarded with exceeding glory. Similar to Jesus Himself, Who died for the sins of others and then

was granted power and authority over all things, God will fairly compensate all who have forfeited much for the cause of Christ. God’s judicial fairness demands that He reward everyone and everything that has been done both in His name and for His cause.<sup>18</sup>

The Scriptures state that *he that winneth souls is wise*.<sup>19</sup> Nothing is more precious on this earth than a human soul, and nothing is more worthy to sacrifice for than the sinner’s salvation. For this reason, all works done for God and His people will follow His people upon their entrance into heaven. It is thus the promise of Scripture that when men enter into heaven, their good and sincere Christian works will follow them. *And I 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* (Rev. 14:13).

(Benson Commentary, Rev. 14:13) the words, *τα εργα αυτων ακολουθει μετ’ αυτων*, properly signify, *their works follow with them*, or follow them immediately; that is, the fruit of their works; they reap this, in some measure, immediately on their admission into paradise. Observe, reader, their works do not go before, to procure for them admittance into the mansions of joy and glory, but they follow or attend them when admitted.

While evil men and their works will be burned,<sup>20</sup> good men and their divinely inspired works will remain and accompany them when they depart from this earth. It is a unique characteristic of Jesus’ ministry that He has promised His fol-

17 I Thess. 2:19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

18 Heb. 6:10 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.

19 Prov. 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.

20 II Pet. 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

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lowers that their fruit will remain, just as His own has. *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you* (John 15:16). Because Christ is eternal, all heavenly inspired works done in His name will likewise extend throughout eternity and be remembered. This is a promise of the gospel, which will one day be proven as a truth of the gospel.

*I Thessalonians 3:1–2 Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;*  
<sup>2</sup> *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:*

Because Paul was unable to return to Thessalonica as he had hoped, he did the next-best thing—he sent in his place a *brother*, a *minister of God*, and a *fellow-labourer* in the gospel.

*Brother.* Timothy was a brother, one who, like the Thessalonians, had been begotten of God through his belief in the Savior. Timothy also shared the same love and affection for God’s people as the apostle Paul.<sup>21</sup> Hence, the apostle refers to Timothy as *my own son in the faith*. Because Paul had raised Timothy in the faith<sup>22</sup> and because Timothy possessed the same spiritual love for the brethren as Paul, Paul likened him as his Christian son.

(*Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers*, I Tim. 1:2) *My own son in the faith.*—Timothy was St. Paul’s very own son. No fleshly relationship existed between the two, but a closer and far dearer connection. St. Paul had taken him while yet a very young man to be his companion and fellow-labourer (Acts 16:3).<sup>23</sup> He told the Philippian Church he had no one like-minded (with Timothy) who would care for their affairs. He wrote to the Corinthians how Timothy was his beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who would put them in remembrance of his ways in Christ.

Religious bonds are the strongest bonds when faith in God’s Son and the Holy Spirit forms them. Spirit is thicker than blood, and spiritual ties are greater than earthly ones, so that if men share the same heavenly Father and are bound together by the same Holy Spirit, great spiritual love and loyalty will exist between them. And just as we innately and internally love our earthly family, so shall we possess even greater love and loyalty to our heavenly family.<sup>24</sup>

*Minister of God.* Jesus had purposed Timothy for Christian ministry. The title *minister of God* is a weighty one, yet due to his exemplary spiritual life, Timothy rightfully deserved it. God’s will is also the reason for the appointment of all true ministers. Since no one can properly hold a position in the body of Christ unless Christ first ordains him for it, we know that Timothy was chosen by the Lord to carry on His work. Because the Lord sets the members in His body as it pleases Him,<sup>25</sup> all offices in the church must conform to His own divine will. Ul-

21 Phil. 2:19–20 *But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.* <sup>20</sup>*For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.*

22 I Tim. 1:2 *Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.*

23 Acts 16:3 *Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.*

24 I John 3:14a *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.*

I John 4:21 *And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.*

25 I Cor. 12:18 *But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*

timately, it is God Who chooses men for ministry;<sup>26</sup> it cannot be they themselves. Jesus chose the twelve apostles, and He likewise chooses all purposed to serve in Christian ministry today. It is the Son of God, Who is the direct source for every true minister's appointment. Because also it is Jesus Who chooses men for ministry, He will equip them with sufficient spiritual power and wisdom to be effective in it.<sup>27</sup> *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ* (Eph. 4:11–13).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Eph. 4:11) *He gave.*—In the original “He” is emphatic—He and He alone, as the ascended Head of humanity. The word “gave,” instead of the more obvious word *set*, or *appointed* (used in 1 Corinthians 12:28<sup>28</sup>), is, of course, suggested by Ephesians 4:8.<sup>29</sup> They who are ministers of His gifts are themselves gifts from Him to the Church.

*Fellowlabourer.* Those whom Christ has called to serve Him will, as in Nehemiah's day, be given the mind to work. *So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work* (Neh. 4:6). Just as Paul, who was shown divine grace and responded by laboring more than all those around him,<sup>30</sup> so shall those whom Christ has ordained today likewise labor just as strongly for the gospel's advancement. It is also through laboring for God that our love for Him is proved. But if men do not labor and are unwilling to expend personal sacrifice for the gospel, then it is unrealistic to conclude that they possess any true genuine affection or love for its Author.

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

One of Paul's initial reasons for sending Timothy was so that the Thessalonians would not be moved from their faith because of the persecutions directed against them.<sup>31</sup> The main objective also of devilish religious persecution is to produce spiritual apostasy in those who are be-

26 John 15:16 *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

27 Matt. 10:1 *And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.*

Mark 3:14–15 *And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,*<sup>15</sup> *And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils:*

Luke 10:19 *Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.*

Luke 21:15 *For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.*

Eph. 3:7 *Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.*

28 1 Cor. 12:28 *And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*

29 Eph. 4:8 *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*

30 1 Cor. 15:10 *But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*

31 1 Thess. 2:14–16 *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: <sup>15</sup>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: <sup>16</sup>Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.*

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ing persecuted. This was Satan's intent in persecuting God's servant Job,<sup>32</sup> and the evil one continues the same pattern today. Therefore, whenever there is spiritual persecution toward the church, its main intent is to pressure those in it to depart from the faith. *And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended* (Mark 4:16–17).

(Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Mark 4:16–17) *afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.* As soon as any small degree of trouble comes upon them, and especially when there is a hot persecution of the professors of religion, because of the Gospel

they have embraced; such hearers are stumbled at these things, and cannot bear the loss of any thing, or endure any thing severe for the sake of the word they have professed a pleasure in; and therefore, rather than suffer, they relinquish at once their profession of it.

Ask a man to endure long hours at work for his own gain, and he will gladly spend himself, but ask him to suffer for Christ's name and the extension of the gospel, and rarely will he joyfully respond to do the same. It is also by divine appointment, and not mere chance, that the children of God will need to undergo affliction. This is God's will for their lives and must preclude their being received into glory. Every saved soul, therefore, that is purposed for heaven will entail some form of persecution and suffering along the way.<sup>33</sup> This was certainly the case with the apostle<sup>34</sup> and the Thessalonian saints he

32 Job 1:8–11 *And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? <sup>9</sup>Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? <sup>10</sup>Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. <sup>11</sup>But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.*

Job 2:3–7 *And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movest me against him, to destroy him without cause. <sup>4</sup>And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. <sup>5</sup>But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. <sup>6</sup>And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. <sup>7</sup>So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.*

33 Matt. 5:11 *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.*

Phil. 1:29 *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; I Pet. 5:10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

34 II Cor. 11:23–30 *Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. <sup>24</sup>Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. <sup>25</sup>Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; <sup>26</sup>In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; <sup>27</sup>In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. <sup>28</sup>Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. <sup>29</sup>Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? <sup>30</sup>If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.*

II Cor. 12:10 *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*

Phil. 3:8–11 *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, <sup>9</sup>And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: <sup>10</sup>That I may know him, and the power of*

was writing to, and so shall it be similarly true for any who follow Jesus today. This is what the Lord Jesus revealed to the apostle Paul concerning the long and arduous walk before him, and it will likewise be experienced in those who walk in his footsteps today. *For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake* (Acts 9:16).

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Acts 9:16) how great things he must suffer for my name*—that is, Much he has done against that Name; but now, when I show him what great things he must suffer for that Name, he shall count it his honor and privilege.

The greater the responsibility that Jesus gives a man to testify for the truth, the more vehemently sinners will set themselves against him. Yet even in the midst of religious persecution, saints should remember that though Christ's enemies are numerous and the pain they seek to inflict is real, the Lord (and the strength He imparts to His people) is greater.<sup>35</sup> It was this reality that the Lord revealed

to Joshua, and it is applicable to all who have the Spirit of the true Joshua (Jesus Christ) living in them today. *There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee* (Josh. 1:5). Because Christ is both with<sup>36</sup> and in His people,<sup>37</sup> no worldly force is able to actually overcome them. It is also not merely human strength that allows believers to continue in faith in the midst of persecution, but rather the power of God's Spirit within them. Ultimately the Lord is the strength of His people's hearts,<sup>38</sup> and time will prove that His presence is more than sufficient to sustain their ability to endure all that has been purposed for their lives. *My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever* (Ps. 73:26).

*(Benson Commentary, Ps. 73:26) My flesh and my heart faileth*—I find, by sad experience, my own weakness and inability to encounter such temptations, and bear, with becoming patience and resignation, such troubles, as I frequently meet with; yea, I find myself a frail, dying creature, that shall

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*his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; <sup>11</sup>If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*

<sup>35</sup> *I John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

*Phil. 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

<sup>36</sup> *Deut. 31:6 Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*

*Deut. 31:8 And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.*

*Josh. 1:9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.*

*Ps. 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

*Matt. 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

*Heb. 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

<sup>37</sup> *John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

*Col. 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

<sup>38</sup> *Hab. 3:19 The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.*

*Ps. 18:1–2 I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. <sup>2</sup>The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*

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shortly return to the dust. Both my flesh and heart, my body and soul may, and, unless supported by God, will soon fail. *But God is the strength of my heart*—I have found him so; I do find him so, and hope I ever shall. As if he had said, Though I have no strength in myself, I have it in God, my never-failing refuge, to whom I will trust as long as I live.

The apostle knew that if the Thessalonians' faith did not faint, then Christ would not fail in strengthening them. Through their genuine and sincere faith in the Lord, Jesus would prove Himself as the real strength of their lives. *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us* (Rom. 8:37).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Rom. 8:37) *We are more than conquerors*—We gain the victory. That is, they have not power to subdue us; to alienate our love and confidence; to produce apostasy. We are the victors, not they. Our faith is not destroyed; our love is not diminished; our hope is not blasted. But it is not simple victory; it is not mere life, and continuance of what we had before; it is more than simple triumph; it augments our faith, increases our strength, expands our love to Christ. The word used here is a strong, emphatic expression, such as the apostle Paul often employs (compare 2 Corinthians 4:17),<sup>39</sup> and which is used with great force and appropriateness here.

*Through him ...* —Not by their own strength or power.

The strength that lies in the Christian is that of his Savior. Because Jesus overcame the world, He gives His people the same spiritual strength and ability to do the same. *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be*

<sup>39</sup> II Cor. 4:17 *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;*

<sup>40</sup> John 16:11 *Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*

John 12:31 *Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*

John 13:31 *Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.*

*of good cheer; I have overcome the world* (John 16:33).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, John 16:33) *But be of good cheer: I have overcome the world.*—The pronoun is strongly emphatic, "I have Myself overcome the world." He speaks of the assured victory as though it were already accomplished. (See Note on John 16:11 and John 12:31; John 13:31.)<sup>40</sup> Here is the reason why they should take courage and be of good cheer. He is the Captain of their salvation, and has already won the victory. The enemies they fear, the world in which they have tribulation, are already captives following in the Conqueror's train. They themselves have pledges of victory in and through His victory.

***I Thessalonians 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.***

(*HELPS Word-studies*, I Thess. 3:4) [*tribulation* #2346] *thlibō* (the root of 2347 *thlip-sis*, reflecting an original "b"/*bēta*)—properly, rub together, constrict (compress), i.e. pressed together; (figuratively) oppressively afflict (distress), i.e. like when circumstances "rub us the wrong way" that make us feel confined (hemmed in); restricted to a "narrow" place.

Satan's ultimate aim is to apply so much spiritual pressure on saints that they feel restricted and tempted to believe that there remains no real avenue or path for them to escape. The reality, though, is that there is no temptation from which God will not provide an avenue for escape. *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 (I Cor. 10:13).

**I Thessalonians 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.*

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, I Thess. 3:5) *The tempter.*—See Matthew 4:3.<sup>41</sup> The word and the tense in the Greek imply, not only that it is his character to tempt, but that it is his constant *occupation*.

In a few short verses the apostle used two titles to define his spiritual opponent: first it was *Satan*<sup>42</sup> and now it is *the tempter*. Both titles are connected to the subtlety of the devil. The devil tempted our first parents to sin against God,<sup>43</sup> and through the same subtlety Satan regularly attacks their descendants today.

**I Thessalonians 3:6** *But now when Timothy 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:*

Paul knew that the Thessalonians were faithful in Christ through the spiritual characteristics they continued to evidence in their lives, which included (1) their *faith*, (2) their *charity*, and (3)

their *good remembrance* of the apostles. By these credible evidences the apostle knew that the devil's purpose to discourage them and turn them from the faith had failed. It is also the fruit of the Spirit,<sup>44</sup> which are what faith and love actually are, that reveals that men are continuing to be led by the Spirit. Hence, whenever the fruits of love and faith are seen in Christians' lives, we have these as proof that they are both being led and strengthened by the Holy Spirit. When also believers maintain good remembrance of those who have brought them the Word, we see proof of their remaining faithful to it—as none can truly love the Word of God and not love those who are both critical and essential in assisting them to understand Its spiritual message.<sup>45</sup>

**I Thessalonians 3:7** *Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:*

Whenever believers stand fast in the Lord, they inspire and encourage others to do the same. Few things are more comforting to spiritual leadership than when those who have been espoused to Christ prove themselves as true Christians, by remaining loyal to Him.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 3:7) *We were comforted over you*—See the notes, 2 Corinthians 1:3–7; 2 Corinthians 7:6–7.<sup>46</sup>

41 Matt. 4:3 *And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.*

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

43 Gen. 3:1–5 *Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? <sup>2</sup>And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: <sup>3</sup>But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. <sup>4</sup>And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: <sup>5</sup>For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

44 Gal. 5:22–23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, <sup>23</sup>Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

45 Acts 8:30–31 *And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou redest? <sup>31</sup>And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.*

46 II Cor. 1:3–7 *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; <sup>4</sup>Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in*

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The sense here is, that their steadfastness was a great source of comfort to him in his trials. It was an instance where the holy lives and the fidelity of a people did much, as will always be the case, to lighten the burdens and cheer the heart of a minister of the gospel. In the inevitable trials of the ministerial office there is no source of comfort more rich and pure than this.

***I Thessalonians 3:8 For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.***

What gave Paul, Silas, and Timothy increased reason for living was the steadfastness of those to whom they had imparted the gospel—teaching us that the minister's life is so closely tied to that of

the Lord's people, he can only rejoice and find life worth living when those he has espoused to Christ continue growing in even greater faith in Him. It is this fruit of the minister's labor that makes his earthly life worth living.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 3:8) The meaning here is, that Paul now enjoyed life; he had that which constituted real life, in the fact that they acted as became Christians, and so as to show that his labor among them had not been in vain. The same thing here affirmed is true of all faithful ministers of the gospel. They feel that they have something that may be called life, and that is worth living for, when those to whom they preach maintain a close walk with God.*

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*any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. <sup>5</sup>For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. <sup>6</sup>And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. <sup>7</sup>And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.*

*II Cor. 7:6–7 Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; <sup>7</sup>And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.*

## I Thessalonians 3:9–4:6

*I Thessalonians 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;*

Joy, spiritual joy—and there is no other kind—is directly linked to the heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Properly referred to as a fruit of the Spirit,<sup>1</sup> its source is God and the higher spiritual realm. With respect to the Father, Scripture states, *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost* (Rom. 15:13). In respect to the Son, Christ said, *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full* (John 15:11). Union with both the Father and Son is what allows a believer access to the spiritual joy of which Jesus spoke. This union, from which joy springs, comes when the believer abides both in Christ’s Spirit and Christ’s commandments.<sup>2</sup>

The specific *joy* spoken of here is not merely that which is experienced by possessing fellowship with God and with His Son but also the spiritual joy felt and enjoyed when other believers have turned to and now walk in fellowship with the Father as well. This joy is directly related to the happiness and contentment spiritu-

ally experienced when others remain and stand fast in their faith in God. Thus, the joy spoken of is not simply the joy men feel when they walk with the Father and Son but also the joy experienced when other believers do the same. Jesus spoke of this same joy in heaven when even one sinner repents. *I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance* (Luke 15:7).

(Barnes’ *Notes on the Bible*, Luke 15:7) *Likewise joy . . .* —It is a principle of human nature that the “recovery” of an object in danger of being lost, affords much more intense joy than the quiet “possession” of many that are safe. This our Saviour illustrated by the case of the lost sheep and of the piece of silver. It might also be illustrated by many other things. Thus we rejoice most in our health when we recover from a dangerous disease; we rejoice over a child rescued from danger or disease more than over those who are in health or safety. We rejoice that property is saved from conflagration or the tempest more than over much more that has not been in danger. This feeling our Lord represents as existing in heaven. “Likewise,” in like manner, or on the same principle, there is joy.

*In heaven*—Among the angels of God. Compare Luke 15:10.<sup>3</sup> Heavenly beings are thus represented as rejoicing over those who repent on earth. They see the guilt and danger

1 Gal. 5:22–23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*<sup>23</sup> *Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

2 John 15:9–11 *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.*<sup>10</sup> *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.*<sup>11</sup> *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

3 Luke 15:10 *Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.*

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of people; they know what God has done for the race, and they rejoice at the recovery of any from the guilt and ruins of sin.

*One sinner*—One rebel against God, however great may be his sins or however small. If a sinner, he must perish unless he repents; and they rejoice at his repentance because it recovers him back to the love of God, and because it will save him from eternal death.

***I Thessalonians 3:10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?***

Having been blessed by what he had heard concerning the Thessalonians' spiritual faithfulness, the apostle now prays to God that he could see them face to face. His purpose for personal contact was so that he could contribute even more fully to

what they might be lacking in their faith. As with the Romans, Paul felt he could impart some spiritual gift<sup>4</sup> that would strengthen and confirm the Thessalonians' spiritual walk. A study of Paul's prayers also reveals that he did not pray for so many things as believers do today. He did not pray for his own wealth, abundance, success, or well-being; rather, his prayers centered on the greater realities of the Christian life.<sup>5</sup> In regard to the Thessalonians, as he did with the Corinthians, Paul prayed that he might add and contribute to their most holy possession—their faith and their response to God's call given to them through Christ.<sup>6</sup> It is important to note as well that all believers, regardless of their spiritual genuineness, have areas of spiritual lack. For this deficiency Christ's ministers, led by the Holy Spirit, are required to both perfect and

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 1:11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

<sup>5</sup> Rom. 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

Eph. 1:15–18 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

<sup>16</sup>Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; <sup>17</sup>That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

<sup>18</sup>The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

Eph. 3:14–19 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>15</sup>Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, <sup>16</sup>That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; <sup>17</sup>That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup>May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; <sup>19</sup>And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Phil. 1:3–6 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup>Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, <sup>5</sup>For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; <sup>6</sup>Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

Phil. 1:9–11 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;

<sup>10</sup>That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.

<sup>11</sup>Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Col. 1:9–12 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; <sup>10</sup>That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; <sup>11</sup>Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; <sup>12</sup>Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

II Thess. 1:11–12 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: <sup>12</sup>That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Phlm. 4–6 I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, <sup>5</sup>Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints; <sup>6</sup>That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

6 I Cor. 1:9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

restore what is lacking in believers' faith.<sup>7</sup> A reoccurring theme in Paul's letter to the Thessalonians is that though they possessed many divine qualities, the apostle nevertheless encouraged them that more spiritual growth could be gained. This was true of their love,<sup>8</sup> their pleasing God,<sup>9</sup> their holiness of life,<sup>10</sup> and their walking worthy of the Lord.<sup>11</sup> Paul's message to the Thessalonians also included an exhortation for them to pursue greater watchfulness in respect to Christ's return.<sup>12</sup> What this teaches us is that when it comes to walking more righteously before God, there is always room for advanced spiritual growth in areas such as faith, love, and hope. The sincerity of a man's faith in Christ and his love for Him therefore is not spiritually sufficient if there remains a need to be more fully transformed into Christ's image.<sup>13</sup> The degree of spiritual transformation needed may differ from individual to individual and from church to church, but there is still

always room for putting on more of the mind of Christ<sup>14</sup> and the divine creation that after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.<sup>15</sup>

Once a man is born again of incorruptible seed<sup>16</sup> and has received God's spiritual nature as a gift from Him, the next step is to put on and walk in this nature.<sup>17</sup> It is the Spirit of God that enables a man to be transformed to then possess a completely new and holy heart. It is for this purpose that the Spirit is sent, that believers, once filled with God's Spirit, would gain the ability to keep God's commandments.<sup>18</sup> Scripture speaks of this transformation as putting on the *new man*, that spiritual nature, in the form of the Holy Spirit, which is given to the believer by Jesus Christ.<sup>19</sup> *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness* (Eph. 4:24). The *new man* spoken of here is the Holy Spirit, Whom God imparts to all<sup>20</sup> who have made Je-

7 Eph. 4:11–12 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; <sup>12</sup>For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 8 I Thess. 4:9–10 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. <sup>10</sup>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;*

9 I 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.*

10 I Thess. 4:7 *For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.*

11 I Thess. 2:12 *That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.*

12 I Thess. 5:6 *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*

13 Rom. 8:29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

14 Phil. 2:5 *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

I John 2:6 *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

15 Eph. 4:24 *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

16 I Pet. 1:23 *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lieth and abideth for ever.*

17 Col. 3:10 *And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:*

Gal. 5:25 *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

18 Ezek. 11:19–20 *And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: <sup>20</sup>That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.*

Ezek. 36:26–27 *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup>And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*

19 John 16:7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

20 Gal. 4:6 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

## The Dead Shall Rise

sus Christ Lord of their lives.<sup>21</sup> This holy nature is not only of God but is also *like* God. It contains the same righteousness and holiness as that of its sender. It is the possession of this spiritual, righteous, and holy nature that provides hope of future glorification.<sup>22</sup>

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 4:24) *After God*—κατὰ Θεὸν *kata Theon*. In respect to God. The idea is, evidently, that man is so renewed as to become "like" God, or the divine image is restored to the soul. In the parallel passage in Colossians Col 3:9,<sup>23</sup> the idea is expressed more fully, "renewed in knowledge after 'the image' of him that created him." Man, by regeneration, is restored to the lost image of God; compare Genesis 1:26.<sup>24</sup>

*Is created*—A word that is often used to denote the new birth, from its strong resemblance to the first act of creation; see it explained in the notes on 2 Corinthians 5:17.<sup>25</sup>

*In righteousness*—That is, the renewed man is made to resemble God in righteousness. This proves that man, when he was made, was righteous; or that righteousness constituted a part of the image of God in which he was created. The object of the work of redemption is to restore to man the lost image of God, or to bring him back to the condition in which he was before he fell.

***I Thessalonians 3:11 Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.***

In Christian ministry, as in all other areas of one's life, whatsoever is not of faith is sin.<sup>26</sup> Hence, before anything is begun in God's name, God must first command that it be done. This is why the apostle prays for the Lord's direction as he fully knows that without divine guidance being given, nothing done by human will or fleshly desire could produce profitable spiritual results. Thus, for the true minister of Christ, before his feet can walk, he must first have been given revelation on where to walk.

For those who truly seek to be led by the Spirit of God, it cannot be either human emotion or reason that is leaned upon. To trust in either of these is to trust in self instead of God. *He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered* (Prov. 28:26).

(*Benson Commentary*, Prov. 28:26) *He that trusteth in his own heart*—In his own wisdom and counsels, his own strength and sufficiency, his own merit and righteousness, or the good opinion he hath of his own abilities, natural or acquired, neglecting or slighting the advice of others, or the counsel of God; *is a fool*—And shall receive the reward of his folly, namely, destruction. *But whose walketh wisely*—Distrusting his own judgment, and seeking the advice of others, and especially of God, as all truly wise men do; *he shall be delivered* ...

21 Rom. 10:9–10 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* <sup>10</sup>*For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

22 Col. 1:27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

23 Col. 3:9[–10] *Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;* <sup>10</sup>*And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:*

24 Gen. 1:26 *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

25 II Cor. 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

26 Rom. 14:23 *And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*

To actually walk and be led by the Spirit of God, it is essential that human understanding is not leaned upon. Trusting in self is far different than trusting in God. *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding* (Prov. 3:5). Because men have not the natural ability to know the proper path to walk, then divine revelation is necessary, to stay in God's will for their life. *O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps* (Jer. 10:23). The ways and proper paths to take in this life are not in man. It is not within himself to know what direction to go or even why he should go there. This is the reason the unredeemed are spoken of as lost.<sup>27</sup> They do not know their true spiritual condition or how to properly navigate toward God's will for their lives.

In contrast to those who need God's direction on where to move are false prophets, who prophesy and move according to their own minds.<sup>28</sup> Ultimately he who trusts in self actually reveals that he has no real and sincere faith in Christ. For no one can truly trust in himself and his own human thinking and understanding and at the same time possess any real confidence or trust in the Lord—sim-

ply because trusting in self and trusting in God are two contrary actions of the human heart.

***I Thessalonians 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:***

It is the Lord Who produces the increase of divine and godly love in His people. It was also this spiritual love that the apostle initially praised the Thessalonians for possessing in chapter one. *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* (I Thess. 1:3). In true Christianity, faith and love are the two great evidences of religious piety. Knowledge of God by itself accounts for nothing if love and faith are not at the center of the believer's heart. It is also not merely religious tradition<sup>29</sup> or church attendance that proves that God is sincerely leading a man. Hence, if a man does not have faith and love on the inside of his heart, then it makes little difference what religious activity is practiced on the outside. It is also revealed in Scripture that the end of God's commandment, or the end of God's will for one's life, is possessing *charity out*

<sup>27</sup> Matt. 18:11–14 *For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.* <sup>12</sup>*How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?* <sup>13</sup>*And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.* <sup>14</sup>*Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.*

<sup>28</sup> Luke 15:4–7 *What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?* <sup>5</sup>*And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.* <sup>6</sup>*And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.* <sup>7</sup>*I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.*

<sup>28</sup> Jer. 14:14 *Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.*

<sup>29</sup> Jer. 23:16 *Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD.*

<sup>29</sup> Matt. 15:1–3 *Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, <sup>2</sup>Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.* <sup>3</sup>*But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?*

## The Dead Shall Rise

of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and a faith unfeigned, as stated in I Tim. 1:5: *Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.* In short, if a man manifests charity out of a pure heart, maintains a good conscience in his Christian walk, and possess sincere faith in Jesus Christ, then he has practically fulfilled God's will for his life.

Love is singled out in the Scriptures as the greatest and most enduring attribute, even above faith and hope. *And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity* (I Cor. 13:13). Love is deemed by the Lord as the greatest, simply because it is divine love that makes up God's own holy nature and character.<sup>30</sup> Because God is love and God is eternal, love will never vanish away.<sup>31</sup>

(*Benson Commentary*, I Cor. 13:13) *The greatest of these, therefore, is love*—The greatest, because the most durable, and also for divers other reasons: as, 1st, *Faith* and *hope* are graces chiefly suited to our fallen state, and intended to raise us from our fall: love was in man in his state of innocence and perfection, and was then his chief excellence, as it now is, and ever has been, the chief excellence of angels. 2d, *Faith* and *hope* are only means of salvation: love is the end to which these means are intended to bring us. 3d, *Faith* and *hope* may be termed selfish graces; particularly the latter is such, having our own interest in view: love is generous, disinterested, noble, and carries us out beyond ourselves. 4th, *Faith* and *hope* are human: love is divine; it exists, always has existed, and ever will exist, in God himself, in whom the former graces can have no place, and is in him his highest glory.

30 I John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

I John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

31 I Cor. 13:8 Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

32 I John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

33 John 2:25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

If men do not possess divine love, then we know that they have not yet been saved and still abide in death.<sup>32</sup> Thus, though sinners may deceive other men about whether they sincerely love the Lord and fellow believers, they cannot deceive the Son of God, Who knows all that is within man,<sup>33</sup> including whether true love lives in the heart. *But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you* (John 5:42).

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, John 5:42) You pretend a great deal of religion, and do many things out of love to God, and a zeal for the glory of God; but though you can cheat others, yet you cannot deceive me: I, that search the heart, and try the reins, and am a witness to your actions, know that, whatsoever you pretend, the true love of God dwelleth not in you; and that is the reason why you do not receive me.

If a man lacks true love or charity in his heart, no matter what else he possesses, God views his entire religion as vain and ultimately profitless. It was this great truth and reality that the apostle sought to impart upon the Corinthians when it was merely knowledge that they valued over love. *And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing* (I Cor. 13:2).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Cor. 13:2) *I am nothing*—All would be of no value. It would not save me. I should still be an unredeemed, unpardoned sinner. I should do good to no one; I should answer none of the great purposes which God has designed; I should not by all this secure my salvation. All would be in vain in regard to the great purpose of my

existence. None of these things could be placed before God as a ground of acceptance in the Day of Judgment. Unless I should have love, I should still be lost.

It is not possessing the gift of prophecy or perceiving divine mysteries or the accumulation of biblical knowledge that produces true piety. This is accomplished solely by possessing the divine *love* that is representative and characteristic of God's own holy nature. Consequently, the lack of a man's love proves that he has no true relationship with God or the higher heavenly spiritual realm—that he is not a son of God and God is not his Father. Practically, love is the distinguishing mark of Jesus' true disciples,<sup>34</sup> teaching us that he who does not love cannot actually be of Christ.

***I Thessalonians 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.***

Love covers a multitude of sins,<sup>35</sup> and love for God and the children of God will give a man boldness when Jesus returns to initiate the Lord's day of judgment.<sup>36</sup> For this reason the apostle encourages the Thessalonians to increase and abound in divine

love, simply because this would establish their hearts unblameable at Christ's coming. By pursuing God's love and genuinely seeking to walk in it, God's law would be fulfilled, and any fear of coming under the judgment of Him could be removed.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 3:13) To the end he may stablish your hearts—That is, "may the Lord cause you to increase in love 1 Thessalonians 3:12,<sup>37</sup> in order that you may be established, and be without blame in the day of judgment." The idea is, that if charity were diffused through their hearts, they would abound in every virtue, and would be at length found blameless.*

*Unblameable—See the 1 Thessalonians 1:10 note; Philipians 2:15; Philipians 3:6 notes; Hebrews 8:7 note; compare Luke 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:23.<sup>38</sup> The meaning is, so that there could be no "charge" or "accusation" against them.*

Practically nothing will prepare a Christian's heart more for the arrival of the Son of God than when it is God's love that has been pursued in the life. Consequently, it is the pursuit of love that will allow a man to possess both boldness and confidence at the day of the Lord. *Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world* (1 John 4:17).

34 John 13:35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

35 1 Pet. 4:8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

36 1 John 4:17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

37 1 Thess. 3:12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:

38 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.

Phil. 2:15 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. 3:6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

Heb. 8:7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

Luke 1:6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

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.

## The Dead Shall Rise

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:17) *That we may have boldness in the day of judgment*—By the influence of love in delivering us from the fear of the wrath to come, I John 4:18.<sup>39</sup> The idea is, that he who has true love to God will have nothing to fear in the day of judgment, and may even approach the awful tribunal where he is to receive the sentence which shall determine his everlasting destiny without alarm.

*Because as he is, so are we in this world*—That is, we have the same traits of character which the Saviour had, and, resembling him, we need not be alarmed at the prospect of meeting him.

When believers are truly walking in God's love and have chosen to be led by it in their lives, all fear and trepidation of having to undergo heavenly judgment for remaining in sin will be removed. Perfect love casts out fear,<sup>40</sup> and perfect love for God and His people casts out all fear of being judged by God. Knowing they have kept Jesus' commandment to love<sup>41</sup> provides believers great confidence that they will stand the test of His inspection of their lives. Fear also—and we speak not of godly fear<sup>42</sup> but only that frightening fear in which sinners are afraid of God's judgment—reveals the fact that divine love is still lacking in the heart. Ultimately, where God's love abides, fear cannot, simply because love contains sufficient

spiritual power to cast out all tormenting fear in the human heart. But it is worthy of note as well that he who retains fear of being judged by God proves that love remains an unfinished work in himself—simply because where pure and sincere love for God and His people resides, fear cannot. *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love* (I John 4:18).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:18) *There is no fear in love*—Love is not an affection which produces fear. In the love which we have for a parent, a child, a friend, there is no fear. If a man had perfect love to God, he would have no fear of anything—for what would he have to dread? He would have no fear of death, for he would have nothing to dread beyond the grave. It is guilt that makes people fear what is to come; but he whose sins are pardoned, and whose heart is filled with the love of God, has nothing to dread in this world or the world to come. The angels in heaven, who have always loved God and one another, have no fear, for they have nothing to dread in the future; the redeemed in heaven, rescued from all danger, and filled with the love of God, have nothing to dread; and as far as that same love operates on earth, it delivers the soul now from all apprehension of what is to come.

*But perfect love casteth out fear*—That is, love that is complete, or that is allowed to exert

39 I John 4:18 *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*

40 I John 4:18 *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*

41 Mark 12:30–31 *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.* <sup>31</sup>*And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*

John 13:34 *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

I John 3:23 *And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.*

I John 4:21 *And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.*

I John 5:2–3 *By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.*

<sup>3</sup>*For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*

42 Prov. 9:10 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.* Prov. 19:23 *The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.*

its proper influence on the soul. As far as it exists, its tendency is to deliver the mind from alarms. If it should exist in any soul in an absolutely perfect state, that soul would be entirely free from all dread in regard to the future. ...

*He that feareth, is not made perfect in love—*  
He about whose mind there lingers the apprehension of future wrath, shows that love in his soul has not accomplished its full work.

***I Thessalonians 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.***

True piety demands that men not only hear God's Word but also seek to walk obediently in it. *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves* (Jas. 1:22). It is the walk of the Christian, and not simply what he hears of the truth, that produces a life pleasing to the Lord. Hearing by itself profits absolutely nothing if what is heard is not believed and then obeyed and walked in. Consequently, it is not simply a man's professed faith that saves him but also his walk of obedience that proves his faith as actually genuine. *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone* (Jas. 2:17). It is obedience to the truth that is the actual proof that a man walks with God and has believed His Word. It is not a mere profession of faith that disregards the need for spiritual obedience. This faith the scripture accounts as dead, meaning that God has no respect for it at all. Like

anything dead, it does not have the power to save, nor is it pleasing to the Lord.

***I Thessalonians 4:2 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.***

The commandments that Paul had previously delivered to the Thessalonians came by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is He Who had commissioned Paul for Christian service,<sup>43</sup> and it was He Who continued to give the apostle direction as to how those called to Himself should walk, after through Himself they were made the children of God.

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I Thess. 4:2) by the Lord Jesus—*by His authority and direction, not by our own. He uses the strong term, "commandments," in writing to this Church not long founded, knowing that they would take it in a right spirit, and feeling it desirable that they should understand he spake with divine authority. He seldom uses the term in writing subsequently, when his authority was established, to other churches. 1Co 7:10; 11:17; and 1Ti 1:5 (1Th 4:18,<sup>44</sup> where the subject accounts for the strong expression) are the exceptions. "The Lord" marks His paramount authority, requiring implicit obedience.

***I Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:***

If any desire a true place in heaven, they must pursue spiritual holiness and sanctification while on this earth. The Greek word for *sanctification* is #38 *hagias-mós*. HELPS *Word-study* defines it as "(a

43 Acts 9:15 *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:*

44 I Cor. 7:10 *And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:*

I Cor. 11:17 *Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.*

I Tim. 1:5 *Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:*

I Thess. 4:18 *Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

masculine noun derived from 40 /*hágios*, ‘holy’)—sanctification (the process of advancing in holiness); used of the believer being progressively transformed by the Lord into His likeness (similarity of nature).” It is God’s will that the believer, in order that he may progress in sanctification, abstain from fornication. Also, no true Christian should deceive himself to believe that he can continue in fornication and at the same time maintain true holiness of life. What this also reveals is that how men live, either spiritually or carnally, greatly affects their holiness and ultimately whether heaven will be theirs or not. *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God* (I Cor. 6:9–10).

(*Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary*, I Cor. 6:9–11) Men are very much inclined to flatter themselves that they may live in sin, yet die in Christ, and go to heaven. But we cannot hope to sow to the flesh, and reap everlasting life.

Fornication is listed by the apostle as that specific sin that is against the body. *Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body* (I Cor. 6:18).

(*Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers*, I Cor. 6:18) *Flee fornication.*—These last three verses of the chapter<sup>45</sup> contain a sol-

emn exhortation to purity, arising out of the previous argument.

*Without the body.*—The word “body” is still to be understood as used of the whole “human nature,” which is spoken of in 1 Corinthians 6:19<sup>46</sup> as the temple of the Holy Ghost. Other sins may profane only outer courts of the temple; this sin penetrates with its deadly foulness into the very holy of holies—

“It hardens a’ within, and petrifies the feelings.”

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

Whatever nature rules men, either the flesh or the Spirit,<sup>47</sup> reveals the nature they are actually of. If it is the flesh that leads, and especially sexually, then it is also the flesh that controls. *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?* (Rom. 6:16). Understandably, the body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. Thus it was never purposed by God that the body should live to satisfy itself.

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, I Cor. 6:13) *Now the body is not for fornication*] St Paul is led, by the importance he attaches to this point, to treat it first. The abominable licentiousness of heathen cities in general, and of Corinth in particular (see Dean Stanley’s note on 1 Corinthians 6:12)<sup>48</sup> had led to a general conviction that the body was for fornication. St Paul contradicts this, and most emphatically proclaims

45 I Cor. 6:18–20 *Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.* <sup>19</sup>What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? <sup>20</sup>For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.

46 I Cor. 6:19 *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

47 Rom. 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

48 I Cor. 6:12 *All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*

that what was always permitted among heathens, and even in some cases enjoined as a religious rite, was distinctly in itself *an unlawful act*, not excusable on the plea of necessity, which he had admitted in the case of meats, nor, like them, a question of “nicely calculated less or more,” but contrary to the laws laid down by God for man, and calculated to deprive men of the blessings of the Resurrection.

*but for the Lord*] i.e. Jesus Christ. The body is not formed to serve a purely material end, but is the instrument of the spirit, and its end the glory of God, through Christ.<sup>49</sup>

**I Thessalonians 4:5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:**

The Greek word for *concupiscence* is #3806 *pathos*. *HELPS Word-studies* defines it as “‘having strong feelings’—properly, raw, strong feelings (emotions) which are not guided by God (like consuming lust).” Those who are actually guided by the Lord will not be guided by the strong emotions and desires of the flesh—simply because anyone guided by their natural, carnal, and fleshly instincts proves that they have not yet been filled with God’s Holy Spirit. For it is only those who *do not know God* and who have not been given the Spirit of God, who continually are led by the sensual nature of the flesh.<sup>50</sup> *These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit* (Jude 1:19). The Greek work for *sensual* is #5591 *psychikos*. *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word as

properly, *soulish*, i.e. what is natural, as it relates to physical (*tangible*) life alone (i.e. apart from God’s inworking of faith).

5591 /*psychikós* (“natural”) typically describes the *natural* (“lower”) aspect of humanity, i.e. behavior that is “more of earth (carnality) than heaven.” 5591 (*psychikós*) then sometimes stands in contrast to 4152 /*pneumatikós* (“spiritual”)—the higher, spiritual aspect of humanity that develops through faith (4102 /*pístis*).

**I Thessalonians 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.**

The matter referred to committing fornication is compared to defrauding another. To cheat, take advantage of, and commit fornication is not only to sin against oneself<sup>51</sup> but also to commit sin against another.

(*Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers*, I Thess. 4:6) *Defraud his brother*.—The original word implies a rapacious dishonesty, of which any person is guilty who gives the rein to his lusts, especially the adulterer. The substantive formed from it is usually translated covetousness, and is generally thought to be used in this special sense in Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5.<sup>52</sup> When all men are brethren the sin becomes worse.

*Because that the Lord is the avenger of all such*. The Lord rules His church, and this is never more evident than when punish-

49 I Cor. 6:13 *Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.*

50 Gal. 5:19–21 *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

51 I Cor. 6:18 *Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.*

52 Eph. 5:3 *But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;*

Col. 3:5 *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:*

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ment is brought against any who sin in it.<sup>53</sup> That the Lord is an *avenger* means that He will both respond to and deal with sins like fornication when they are committed in Christ's body. The Greek word for *avenger* is #1558 "*ékdikos*—someone executing a just judgment, carrying out what is right which can include administering punishment for the wicked."<sup>54</sup> Fornication is such a notable sin in Christ's church that it will entreat God to deal with it directly. Because God is just,<sup>55</sup> He cannot turn a blind eye to sin. This undoubtedly includes

even sins committed by the saved, who are themselves members of Christ's body. It was this great truth, that the Lord is an avenger of sin, that the apostle forewarned and testified to the Thessalonians, that if sin was committed in Christ's church, and especially so in regard to fornication, then God would deal with it directly. No doubt, the same revelation is true today, though many infer that sexual immorality is not sin, and that God does not even count it as such. To believe this nonsense is to endanger being saved at all.

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53 1 Pet. 4:17 *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*

54 HELPS Word-studies, 1 Thess. 4:6

55 Deut. 32:4 *He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.*

Job 37:23 *Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.*

Ps. 89:14 *Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.*

Ps. 98:9 *Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.*

Job 34:12 *Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.*

## I Thessalonians 4:7–13

*I Thessalonians 4:7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.*

WHILE it is true Christians are called to liberty,<sup>1</sup> they are also called to holiness. Thus, it is a great distortion to infer that Christ gives anyone the right to sin—that grace covers a carnal and sensual life, that holiness does not need to be pursued, and that men can be saved without it. This is, of course, not true since God has declared that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord* (Heb. 12:14).

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Heb. 12:14) no man shall see the Lord—no man as a son; in heavenly glory (Re 22:3, 4).<sup>2</sup> In the East, none but the greatest favor-*

ites are admitted to the honor of seeing the king (compare 2Sa 14:24).<sup>3</sup> The Lord being pure and holy, none but the pure and holy shall see Him (Mt 5:8).<sup>4</sup> Without holiness in them, they could not enjoy Him who is holiness itself (Zec 14:20).<sup>5</sup> The connection of purity with seeing the Lord, appears in 1Jo 3:2, 3; Eph 5:5.<sup>6</sup> Contrast Heb 12:16<sup>7</sup> (compare 1Th 4:3).<sup>8</sup> In Mt 24:30; Re 1:7,<sup>9</sup> it is said that all shall see the Lord; but, that shall be as a Judge, not as their lasting portion and God, which is meant here. The Greek verb does not denote the mere action of seeing, but the seer's state of mind to which the object is presented: so in Mt 5:8 they shall truly comprehend God [Tittmann]. None but the holy could appreciate the holy God, none else therefore shall abide in His presence.

It is a great perversion of the truth when Christ's redemptive work is used as a spiritual excuse by sinners to remain living in

1 Gal. 5:1 *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*

Rom. 8:21 *Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

II Cor. 3:17 *Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

2 Rev. 22:3–4 *And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: <sup>4</sup>And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.*

3 II Sam. 14:24 *And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face.*

4 Matt. 5:8 *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*

5 Zec. 14:20 *In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls before the altar.*

6 I John 3:2–3 *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup>And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

Eph. 5:5 *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

7 Heb. 12:16 *Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.*

8 I Thess. 4:3 *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:*

9 Matt. 24:30 *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Rev. 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.*

uncleanliness. *For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another* (Gal. 5:13).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Gal. 5:13) *An occasion to the flesh.*—Do not, under the name “liberty,” give way to sensual excesses.

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(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Gal. 5:13) *Only use not liberty* . . . The idea is, “You are called to liberty, but it is not liberty for an occasion to the flesh. It is not freedom from virtuous restraints, and from the laws of God. It is liberty from the servitude of sin, and religious rites and ceremonies, not freedom from the necessary restraints of virtue.” It was necessary to give this caution, because:

(1) There was a strong tendency in all converts from paganism to relapse again into their former habits. Licentiousness abounded, and where they had been addicted to it before their conversion, and where they were surrounded by it on every hand, they were in constant danger of falling into it again. A bare and naked declaration, therefore, that they had been called to liberty, to freedom from restraint, might have been misunderstood, and some might have supposed that they were free from all restraints.

(2) it is needful to guard the doctrine from abuse at all times. There has been a strong tendency, as the history of the church has shown, to abuse the doctrine of grace. The doctrine that Christians are “free;” that there is liberty to them from restraint, has been perverted always by Antinomians, and been made the occasion of their indulging freely in sin. And the result has shown that nothing was more important than to guard the doctrine of Christian liberty, and to show exactly what Christians are freed from, and what laws are still binding on them. Paul is, therefore, at great pains to show that the doctrines which he had maintained did not lead to licentiousness, and did not allow the indulgence of sinful and corrupt passions.

***I Thessalonians 4:8*** *He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.*

No one can spurn God's spiritual command that His people should be holy<sup>10</sup> without at the same time showing contempt for the Lord Himself. The Greek word for *despise* is #114 *atheteó*. *Strong's Concordance* defines it as “to do away with what has been laid down, set aside.” Its usage is “I annul, make of no effect, set aside, ignore, slight; I break faith with.” If a man sets aside that which has its origin in God, then he both ignores and sets aside God Himself. Consequently, no man should think that he can *set aside*, *ignore*, and *make of no effect* God's commandments, and not in the process despise the Lord, Who sent them. This is undoubtedly true in regard to abstaining from sexual immorality.

***I Thessalonians 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.*

The apostle transitions from one of the strongest desires of the flesh, fornication, to the strongest evidence of the Spirit: love. Here Paul again takes up the importance of pursuing love. God had taught the Thessalonians to love, and the fact that they possessed it proved their obedience to the gospel. Because God had inspired these early Christians to love, it became unnecessary for Paul to teach it again. Instead, he encouraged them to increase in manifesting this divine and holy fruit in their lives.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, I Thess. 4:9) *Ye need not.*—A sweet rhetorical figure, by which men are encouraged to the performance of a duty in which they are not perfect, by the praising of their imper-

10 *1 Pet. 1:16* *Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

fect attempts: a specimen of that “courtesy” which is a part of “brotherly love.”

There is no greater evidence that men and women have been taught by God than when love manifests itself in their lives. By *love* Jesus said men would know who were His true disciples,<sup>11</sup> and by *love* we can know if a man has passed from death unto life.<sup>12</sup> Love is therefore one of the great indicators of true Christianity, and if a man does not possess God’s love, he should not assume himself Christian at all. By abiding in God’s love, believers are assured that they are no longer born simply of this world but have now passed from death unto life. Love is also that divine quality that proves a man genuinely knows God and has had personal contact and relationship with Him. *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God* (I John 4:7). The contrast to holding sincere and genuine love for God and His people is when men love the world, which is ultimately connected to a love of self. *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him* (I John 2:15).

*(Benson Commentary, I John 2:15) If any man love the world—Esteem, desire, or pursue it, or any thing in it, inordinately, so as to place his happiness in the enjoyment of it; the love of the Father is not in him . . .*

Practically, love for the world and love for God cannot coexist. If the world is loved, God will not be. If God is embraced and cherished, the world cannot be. Thus, for

every man there will be one great choice in his life: will he love a holy God, or will he love a carnal and fleshly world, completely contrary to Him?

***I Thessalonians 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;***

The exhortation by the apostle to the Thessalonians is that though they had been taught of God to love, still they were to seek to increase in it more. Love is such a high spiritual quality that there always remains opportunity to grow in it more. The more believers are led by God’s holy and divine Spirit, the more they will practically manifest divine love in their lives.

*(Matthew Poole’s Commentary, I Thess. 4:10) Neither love, nor any other grace, is made perfect at once; even those that are taught of God.*

To pursue love and seek to increase in it is to pursue the very nature that God is.<sup>13</sup> No sincere Christian could properly say that he has loved to the great extent that Jesus Christ has commanded all Christians to love, which is as He loved.<sup>14</sup>

***I Thessalonians 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;***

God’s will for those saved by Him is to study to be quiet and do their own business. Meddling in others’ affairs is the complete opposite of love. There is

11 *John 13:35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

12 *I John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*

13 *I John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

*I John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

14 *John 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

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enough spiritual improvement that needs to be done in our own lives without adding on excessive time given to discover and point out the perceived faults in others. There is also enough lack in our own faith without looking for deficiencies in others. Thus, to truly pursue God's love, meddling,<sup>15</sup> quarreling, and being a busybody<sup>16</sup> should be, and must be, avoided. Not doing this reveals not the faults of others but rather only the faults lying within ourselves. For he who looks for and seeks to expose sins in other men actually reveals that he walks carnally himself. To be overly consumed with other men's shortcomings, or at least perceived ones, reveals that we think ourselves free from any. Thus, for the true Christian, life should consist of seeking to live a quiet and peaceful life wherein the main emphasis is doing one's own business and working with one's own hands and therefore not meddling in the business and affairs of others.

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, I Thess. 4:11) *study to be quiet*—Greek, “make it your ambition to be quiet, and to do your own business.” In direct contrast to the world's ambition, which is, “to make a great stir,” and “to be busybodies” . . .

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(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, I Thess. 4:11) *Do your own business.*—Not merely was each individual to do his own work, but the whole Church was to refrain

from interfering ostentatiously with other Churches.

***I Thessalonians 4:12 That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.***

When believers tend to their own affairs and work with their own hands, walking honestly toward those who are without, God's promise is that they will live without lack. Hence, by pursuing love, focusing on our own spiritual growth, and living respectfully with other men, the Lord's promise is that we will suffer no lack in our own lives, instructing us that how people conduct themselves among their fellow men, both in and outside the church, will greatly affect how God cares for them.

***I Thessalonians 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 I would not have you to be ignorant.* The Bible speaks of many things of which men can be ignorant: the Lord's righteousness,<sup>17</sup> the mystery of Israel's rejection until God's appointed time for their restoration,<sup>18</sup> the reality that many are called but few are chosen,<sup>19</sup> the gifts of the Spirit,<sup>20</sup> Satan's devices,<sup>21</sup> and here, God's glorious *hope*. The language Paul uses in his instruction to the Thessalonians, that

15 *Prov. 20:3 It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling*

16 *I Tim. 5:13 And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.*

17 *Rom. 10:3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

18 *Rom. 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*

19 *I Cor. 10:1–5 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; <sup>2</sup>And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; <sup>3</sup>And did all eat the same spiritual meat; <sup>4</sup>And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. <sup>5</sup>But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.*

*Matt. 22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen.*

20 *I Cor. 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.*

21 *II Cor. 2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.*

they should *sorrow not, even as others which have no hope*, is strong so that his point may be made perfectly clear, that the future of an unsaved man is vastly different than that of a saved one. For Christians there is realistic, sure, and promised hope after death, but for those who have no true relationship with the Son of God, there is nothing of the sort. This truth was evidenced when the two thieves were crucified with Jesus on the crosses, and one was saved but the other was not.<sup>22</sup> Hence, two men can die at the very same time, at the very same place, and in the exact same manner yet explicitly have two totally different futures. For this reason Christians should not grieve as do non-Christians, to whom natural death brings much sorrow, which cannot be avoided. This is because those who have true sincere relationship and connection to God's second Adam, Jesus Christ, now possess His eternal life. For Christians, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. Therefore, if a man has Christ in him,<sup>23</sup> though his physical body is destined for death because of sin,<sup>24</sup> his spirit will live because of righteousness. Because the Spirit is of God and because the Spirit is after God,<sup>25</sup> then the man's spirit will live beyond the death of the body. Hence, if the Spirit of God lives within us, God's life will forever manifest itself through us. And just as the body is dead because of sin, so is the Spirit life

because of righteousness. *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness* (Rom. 8:10).

(Benson Commentary, Rom. 8:10–11) *And if Christ be in you*—Namely, by his Spirit dwelling in you: where the Spirit of Christ is, there is Christ: *the body is dead*—το μὲν σῶμα νεκρὸν, *the body indeed is dead*, devoted to death; for our belonging to Christ, or having Christ in us, does not exempt the body from undergoing the sentence of death passed on all mankind; *because of sin*—Heretofore committed; especially the sin of Adam, by which death entered into the world, and the sinful nature derived from him; *but the Spirit is life*—The soul is quickened and made alive to God; and shall, after the death of the body, continue living, active, and happy;

Whether or not a man's soul continues to live after his physical body dies rests upon whether or not he possesses the Spirit of righteousness. It is this righteous Holy Spirit that provides for eternal life, without which men can expect only death. Thus though the natural body must return to the dust from which it was made,<sup>26</sup> the spirit is said to return to God, because its source is God.<sup>27</sup> Each world, the natural and the spiritual, consists of two completely different materials. Because of this, the natural body, whether alive or dead, cannot without transformation enter the higher spiritual realm, which is God's habitation. For this reason, to save

22 Luke 23:39–43 *And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.* <sup>40</sup>*But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?* <sup>41</sup>*And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.* <sup>42</sup>*And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.* <sup>43</sup>*And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

23 Col. 1:27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

24 Heb. 9:27 *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

25 Eph. 4:24 *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

26 Gen. 2:7 *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

Eccl. 3:20 *All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.*

Gen. 3:19 *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

27 Eccl. 12:7 *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*

## The Dead Shall Rise

a man from death, Christ must impart to him a new spiritual nature that is suited for habitation in the heavens—a nature higher than that fleshly nature passed on from Adam. *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive* (I Cor. 15:22). The contrasting forms of life, both natural and spiritual, are detailed in the book of I Corinthians.

***I Corinthians 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.***

From the first Adam sinners have derived their natural, physical, and carnal natures. From the last Adam, Jesus Christ, God has made it available to possess a new holy and spiritual nature, which gives hope of eternal life. This life is not natural; rather, it is spiritual and descends from above. Its source is God; its sender is the Son of God.<sup>28</sup> Those of the *last Adam*, who have been born again,<sup>29</sup> or born from above, are made living spirits by Christ. Thus, just as the first Adam genetically passed natural life to his progeny, so does Jesus Christ, the second Adam, impart eternal and spiritual life<sup>30</sup> to His descendants. The nature derived from Adam was purposed for soul life, purposed for the earth and earthly habitation. The eternal nature made available through God's second Adam, Jesus Christ, is spiritual

and purposed for heavenly habitation. Thus, just as Adam was made a living soul at his creation, so was Christ revealed to be living Spirit after His resurrection. Hence, the heavenly nature that Jesus Christ imparts to those born of God, through faith in Himself is the same spiritual life that animated Christ's own body at His resurrection.

(*Benson Commentary*, I Cor. 15:45) Christ is called Adam, because believers receive their sanctified, spiritual nature, and their immortal bodies, from him, (see Ephesians 5:32.)<sup>31</sup> just as mankind have derived their corrupted nature and mortal bodies from the first Adam.

***I Corinthians 15:46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.***

Adam's creation by God was a natural one. All the elements used in Adam's bodily formation came from this world and the natural realm. Adam was the first of an earthly race of men who would populate and expand over a physical and organic world. The Lord prepared a bountiful earthly garden for Adam's residence,<sup>32</sup> which He purposed for his blessing and sustained physical life. Hence, just as Adam was the first of all born of the flesh, so is Jesus Christ the spiritual first, and Head of all those born of the Spirit.<sup>33</sup>

28 *John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

*John 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

29 *John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

30 *John 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

31 *Eph. 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

32 *Gen. 2:8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.*

*Gen. 2:15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.*

33 *Eph. 1:22–23 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, <sup>23</sup>Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

*I Corinthians 15:47 The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.*

Adam's body was comprised of the earth, from the dust and matter that made it up; in contrast, the origin of the second Adam, Jesus Christ, is said to be from above and from the higher spiritual realm of heaven.<sup>34</sup> Jesus' words to the Pharisees who did not believe He was the Son of God reveal the great gulf that lies between the natural realm and the higher spiritual realm. *Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world* (John 8:21–23). The reason Jesus said that those who did not believe on Him could not go where He was soon to depart to was that their only life was from below, thus of the earth. They were natural in origin, and as such they were not suited for eternal and heavenly habitation. This is true for all those born merely of flesh and blood. For he who is born only of the flesh is unable and will be restricted from entering the kingdom of God.<sup>35</sup> This is why it is not until a man is born again, born of the Spirit<sup>36</sup> and born from above, that there exists true hope for entering heaven—since Jesus

instructed Nicodemus that for a man to enter the higher, holy, and spiritual realm of God, he must first be born again, that is, born of the Spirit and born of the actual holy and divine nature that God is.<sup>37</sup> *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God* (John 3:3).

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 3:3) Except a man*—This is a universal form of expression designed to include all mankind. Of "each and every man" it is certain that unless he is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. It includes, therefore, men of every character and rank, and nation, moral and immoral, rich and poor, in office and out of office, old and young, bond and free, the slave and his master, Jew and Gentile. It is clear that our Saviour intended to convey to Nicodemus the idea, also, that "he" must be born again. It was not sufficient to be a Jew, or to acknowledge him to be a teacher sent by God that is, the Messiah; it was necessary, in addition to this, to experience in his own soul that great change called the "new birth" or regeneration. . . .

*The kingdom of God*—Either in this world or in that which is to come—that is, heaven. See the notes at Matthew 3:2.<sup>38</sup> The meaning is, that the kingdom which Jesus was about to set up was so pure and holy that it was indispensable that every man should experience this change, or he could not partake of its blessings. This is solemnly declared by

*Col. 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

*Eph. 4:15–16 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: <sup>16</sup>From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

*34 John 3:13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*

*John 6:38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*

*35 I Cor. 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*

*36 John 3:5–6 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup>That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

*37 John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

*38 Matt. 3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

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the Son of God by an affirmation equivalent to an oath, and there can be no possibility, therefore, of entering heaven without experiencing the change which the Saviour contemplated by the “new birth.”

***I Corinthians 15:48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.***

Just as believers must share in the weakness, deficiencies, and death of the first man, Adam, likewise they are promised to share just as equally in the glory of the second Adam, Jesus Christ.<sup>39</sup> The connection to the second Adam, Jesus Christ, is not less than the connection to the first man, Adam. Therefore, just as certainly as men must physically die because of their relationship to the first man, so too does the same certainty exist of believers sharing eternal life with Jesus Christ, God's second Adam.

***I Corinthians 15:49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.***

In all ways, those born of the first Adam have been made to share in his fleshly image and earthly destiny. Equally true and just as certain is that those born of God's second Adam, Jesus Christ, will share in His heavenly image and eternal destiny.

The Greek word for *image* is *eikōn*. The word means not merely “resemblance” but rather “replication.”

(*HELPS Word-studies*, #1504) *eikōn* (from 1503 */eikō*, “be like”)—properly, “mirror-like representation,” referring to what is very close in resemblance (like a “high-definition” projection, as defined by the context). Image (1504 *eikōn*) then exactly reflects its source (what it directly corresponds to). For example, Christ is the very image (1504 *eikōn*, supreme expression) of the Godhead (see 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15<sup>40</sup>).

“1504 (*eikōn*) assumes a prototype, of which it not merely resembles, but from which it is drawn” (R. Trench). 1504 (*eikōn*) then is more than a “shadow”; rather it is a replication (F. F. Bruce, *Hebrews*, 226; see also Lightfoot at Col 3:10 and 2:21).

Natural men are the same as their forefather, earthly Adam, not only on the outside but also in their inner beings, where sin lives.<sup>41</sup> What natural and earthly Adam was, those born of him share in completeness and totality. This same principle also holds true if a man is born again through Christ. Because Christ is a living Spirit and has life within Himself, He passes a portion of that which He is to those who believe upon Him. This will eventually end in being transformed into the same image as the Savior. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is* (I John 3:2). For those then born of God through the Savior, God's promise is that they will one day be made to share in Christ's own holy image. Because they have been given the nature of Christ,

39 Col. 1:27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

40 II Cor 4:4 *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;*

Col 1:15 *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:*

41 Eccl. 9:3 *This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.*

Jer. 17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*

Matt. 15:18 *But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.*

there is now hope of one day being transformed into Christ's own heavenly image.



## I Thessalonians 4:14–16

*I Thessalonians 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.*

CHRISTIANITY has a criteria for salvation that no other religion does: that for a man to be saved by God, he must believe that God raised Jesus from the dead. *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation* (Rom. 10:9–10). As Romans reveals, salvation requires two essential elements: first, a confession of Jesus Christ's lordship; second, a sincere and genuine belief that God raised His Son from the dead. All heavenly salvation rests on these two great spiritual realities, without which no man can be saved. Hence, for God's salvation to be given, the penitent must make Jesus Christ his Lord and possess a solid and sure belief that God raised Jesus from the dead.

*Even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.* Based on the truth that God raised Jesus from the dead, Paul proceeds to reveal even more revelation concerning those who have died while in Christ. The new revelation brought forth is that at Jesus Christ's return God

will bring with Him the souls of the saved ones now in heaven.

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, I Thess. 4:14) *Will God bring with him*; and though their resurrection is not expressed in the text, yet it is implied in this saying. By God is meant, as some understand here, the Son of God, who is to come from heaven, 1 Thessalonians 1:10,<sup>1</sup> and who will bring the spirits of just men, made perfect in heaven, with him, and unite them to their bodies, which cannot be done without their resurrection: whereby the apostle gives another argument against excessive sorrow for the saints departed, they shall return from heaven again with Christ at his coming.

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(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, I Thess. 4:14) If the question be asked from whence God will bring the dead along with Christ, it must be answered, from Paradise, and the persons brought must be the disembodied *spirits*; for in 1 Thessalonians 4:16<sup>2</sup> this coming of the Lord with the saints is the signal for the dead—*i.e.*, the *bodies*—to rise.

For those who have believed in the Son of God and have made Jesus Christ their Lord, their justified souls will return with the Savior to be clothed with new bodies. From the grave, then, Jesus will transform what was previously His people's earthly, decayed bodies into heavenly bodies, equipped for permanent habitation in heaven. This bodily resurrection is intended to be a great part of Christ's

<sup>1</sup> I 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.*

<sup>2</sup> I Thess. 4:16 *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

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own glorification, when the souls who have been saved return to the earth and through Christ's power new spiritual bodies are given to them.

To understand the process of this future salvation, we must first identify what three elements make up a man's being. Paul lists these in I Thessalonians 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.* Generally speaking, when Scripture speaks of what man is comprised of, it reveals his being either flesh or spirit, the flesh as both the body and soul of man, the Spirit as the divine nature given to man by God. Yet here in Thessalonians there is a distinction between the soul and the spirit of a man.

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I Thess. 5:23) All three, spirit, soul, and body, each in its due place, constitute man "entire." The "spirit" links man with the higher intelligences of heaven, and is that highest part of man which is receptive of the quickening Holy Spirit (1Co 15:47).<sup>3</sup>*

In the unspiritual, the spirit is so sunk under the lower animal soul (which it ought to keep under) that such are termed "animal" (English Version. "sensual," having merely the body of organized matter, and the soul the immaterial animating essence), having not the Spirit (compare 1Co 2:14; see on [2447]1Co 15:44; [2448]1Co 15:46-48; Joh 3:6).<sup>4</sup> The unbeliever shall rise with an animal (soul-animated) body, but not like the believer with a spiritual (spirit-endued) body like Christ's (Ro 8:11<sup>5</sup>).

Every man possesses all three elements—body, soul, and spirit—which comprise his total being. He has a body of the earth,<sup>6</sup> he has a soul like those of the beasts of the field,<sup>7</sup> and he has a spirit. What is unique, though, in a Christian, someone who has believed upon the Son of God, is that he is given the *Holy Spirit*, a divine Spirit directly related to and connected with Christ's own resurrected being. This supernatural and holy nature is everlasting because its source is He Who can never die again<sup>8</sup> and now lives forever. There is thus a distinction between the spirit of man<sup>9</sup> and the Holy Spirit, given to men by the Son of God.<sup>10</sup>

3 I Cor. 15:47 *The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.*

4 I Cor. 2:14 *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

I Cor. 15:44 *It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

I Cor. 15:46-48 *Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. <sup>47</sup>The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. <sup>48</sup>As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.*

Joh 3:6 *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

5 Rom. 8:11 *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

6 Gen. 2:7 *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

7 Gen. 2:19 *And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.*

8 Rom. 6:9 *Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.*

9 Job 32:8 *But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.*

Zech. 12:1 *The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.*

I Cor. 2:11 *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.*

10 Joh 20:22 *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:*

***I Thessalonians 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.***

By using the words *we say unto you by the word of the Lord*, the apostle Paul assures the Thessalonians that what he is about to reveal to them concerning both the living and dead at Christ's return has its source in the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The Son of God had given this new revelation to the apostle Paul, and now he would reveal it to the Thessalonians. The gist of the revelation is this—that there is no real advantage of being alive at Christ's second coming, simply because the dead will be changed before the living. Hence, before the living are given new bodies by the Lord Jesus at His return, the dead will have already received and attained theirs. In simple terms, the bodily transformation of the dead will occur prior to the living having their temporal bodies changed.<sup>11</sup> At this glorious time, when Jesus returns to the earth to assume the authority that God has given Him,<sup>12</sup> it will be more advantageous for the bodies of those who have previously fallen asleep in Christ than for the saints still alive at His return. Thus, whereas one might easily believe that being alive at the Son of God's return could have advantage over having died before it, in reality it is the bodies of the souls of those who have already ascended into heaven that will be changed first. It was this truth that the apostle sought to make abundantly clear to the Thessalonians.

11 *Phil. 3:21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

12 *Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Eph. 1:20–21 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup>Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:*

13 *Matt. 24:30–31 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup>And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Thess. 4:15) *Shall not prevent them which are asleep*—Shall not precede; anticipate; go before. . . . The meaning here is, that they who would be alive at the coming of the Lord Jesus, would not be “changed” and received up into glory before those who were in their graves were raised up. The object seems to be to correct an opinion which prevailed among the Thessalonians that they who should survive to the coming of the Lord Jesus would have great advantages over those who had died. What they supposed those advantages would be—whether the privilege of seeing him come, or that they would be raised to higher honors in heaven, or that they who had died would not rise at all, does not appear, nor is the origin of this sentiment known. It is clear, however, that it was producing an increase of their sorrow on the death of their pious friends, and hence it was very important to correct the error. The apostle, therefore, states that no such disadvantage could follow, for the matter of fact was, that the dead would rise first.

***I Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:***

The Lord Jesus' return from heaven to earth will initiate and commence His giving new bodies to both those previously dead and those alive at His coming. Jesus spoke of a time when all the people of the earth would see Him coming in the power and glory of God.<sup>13</sup> It is this coming of the Lord in the clouds that Daniel spoke prophetically about in reference to the Son of Man: *I saw in the night visions,*

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*and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him (Dan. 7:13).*

*(Benson Commentary, Dan. 7:13) behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven—One in the shape and likeness of a man, but clothed with such ensigns of majesty and honour, (signified here by the clouds of heaven,) as showed him to be an extraordinary person, (compare Revelation 1:13; Revelation 14:14,<sup>14</sup>) indeed no less than the Messiah, as the following description of him declares.*

The Scripture here lists three things marking Christ's heavenly entrance into this world: First, there will be heard a shout. Second, this loud and reverberating exclamation is said to be the voice of the archangel. Third, the trump of God,

which was sounded in Israel to mark all solemn events and gatherings of its people,<sup>15</sup> will be blown. Hence, both the shout of the archangel and the trump of God will signal that a great event is about to commence—Christ's second appearance on the earth. Whereas before the Son of God came in the flesh<sup>16</sup> to save man, now He returns in the glory of the Father to rule man and execute divine justice upon the earth.<sup>17</sup> The heavenly sounds are meant to draw people's attention upward, for it is from heaven that Jesus will appear. It will be at this moment that all the world will recognize the Son of Man, Jesus, as the Son of God, the Christ. Never before has the earth, the entire earth, heard the trump of God, which caused the Israelites to shrink in fear at Mount Sinai.<sup>18</sup> Never before has the voice of the archangel been so loud

14 Rev. 1:13 *And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.*

Rev. 14:14 *And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.*

15 Exod. 19:13 *There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.*

Num. 10:4 *And if they blow but with one trumpet, then the princes, which are heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee.*

Isa. 27:13 *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.*

Lev. 25:9 *Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.*

16 John 1:14 *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

I Tim. 3:16 *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

I John 4:2 *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:*

17 Rev. 19:11–16 *And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. <sup>12</sup>His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. <sup>13</sup>And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. <sup>14</sup>And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. <sup>15</sup>And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. <sup>16</sup>And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*

Matt. 25:31–32 *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: <sup>32</sup>And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:*

18 Exod. 19:16–19 *And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. <sup>17</sup>And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. <sup>18</sup>And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because*

and dramatic that not even one person will not recognize it as coming from the higher realm of God. So great will this shout be that accompanies Jesus' return to the earth that it will awaken and call from the grave the bodies of those saved spirits, purposed to be a part of Christ's triumphant processional parade.

If one should ask why such a public and universal display of Christ's glory is needed, then consider that Jesus was first publicly humiliated: He was mocked, put to shame, and lifted up on the cross by the Romans for all men to see. Thus, just as Jesus was openly and publicly humiliated, so now will He be likewise publicly and universally glorified. At this time also all faith in the Son of God will be spiritually vindicated. *Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven* (Acts 1:11).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Acts 1:11) (2) it is proper that he should come to vindicate his people, and raise them up to glory. Here they have been persecuted, oppressed, put to death. Their character is assailed; they are poor; and the world despises them. It is fit that God should show himself to be their friend; that he should do justice to their injured names and motives; that he should bring out hidden and obscure virtue, and vindicate it; that he should enter every grave and bring forth his friends to life.

(3) it is proper that he should show his hatred of sin. Here it triumphs. The wicked are rich, and honored, and mighty, and say, Where is the promise of his coming? 2 Peter 3:4.<sup>19</sup> It is right that he should defend his cause. Hence, the Lord Jesus will come to guard the avenues to heaven, and to see that the universe suffers no wrong by the admission of an improper person to the skies.

(4) the great transactions of redemption have been public, open, often grand. The apostasy was public, in the face of angels and of the universe. Sin has been open, public high-handed. Misery has been public, and has rolled its deep and turbid waves in the face of the universe. Death has been public; all worlds have seen the race cut down and moulder. The death of Jesus was public: the angels saw it; the heavens were clothed with mourning; the earth shook, and the dead arose. Jesus was publicly whipped, cursed, crucified; and it is proper that he should publicly triumph—that all heaven rejoicing, and all hell at length humbled, should see his public victory. Hence, he will come with clouds—with angels—with fire—and will raise the dead, and exhibit to all the universe the amazing close of the scheme of redemption.

There is no day that a true believer of Jesus Christ looks forward to more than this one, the Lord's day, when his faith in God's Son will be both justified and vindicated. For at this time the very faith that was maligned and reproached in the world will be revealed publicly as the only faith that saves men.

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*the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.* <sup>19</sup>*And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.*  
19 II Pet. 3:4 *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.*



## I Thessalonians 4:17–5:5

*I Thessalonians 4:17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

THE Christian's hope is to be with Christ, and this hope will be fulfilled when Jesus returns to the earth to have the redeemed meet Him in the air. Because living saints have maintained faith in the Son of God, their reward will be that they are caught up to meet Him in the air. The manner in which believers will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air is first seen in Enoch, whom the Scriptures state walked with God *before* God took him. *And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him* (Gen. 5:24). What started with Seth, when men began to call upon the Lord,<sup>1</sup> found its fulfillment in Enoch and his exemplary walk with the Lord.

The reward for Enoch's faith and spiritual obedience to God was his being lifted from the earth while still alive: *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God* (Heb. 11:5). Such a man was Enoch,

who because of his unique confidence and trust in the Lord, proven by his walking in God's will for his life, was miraculously lifted up into heaven. There is no greater reward for faith than this, which is to be miraculously caught up into heaven, and even Christ's apostle Paul pursued such a spiritual end to his life: *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus* (Phil. 3:14).

*(Pulpit Commentary, Phil. 3:14) I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; rather, with the best manuscripts, unto the prize. The first preposition, "towards," expresses the aim; the second, "unto," the end of the race. The high calling; the upward, heavenward calling. God is calling us all upward, heavenward, by the voice of the Lord Jesus, who is the Word of God. Comp. Hebrews 3:1,<sup>2</sup> "Partakers of the heavenly calling." The words, "in Christ Jesus," are to be taken with "the high calling." It is God who calls: he calls us in the person of Christ, by the voice of Christ, "Come unto me."<sup>3</sup> "It was his will that thou shouldst run the race below; he gives the crown above. Seest thou not that even here they crown the most honored of the athletes, not on the racecourse below, but the king calls them up, and crowns them there" (Chrysostom).*

In recorded history rapture is rare, purposed only for the godliest of men.<sup>4</sup> The

1 Gen. 4:26 *And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.*

2 Heb. 3:1 *Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;*

3 Matt. 11:27–28 *All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*<sup>28</sup> *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

4 II Kgs. 2:11 *And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*

future rapture of present-day saints shows us the monumental work the Son of God has accomplished for His people—whereby through His own sacrificial life and death He makes men worthy of heavenly habitation. The basis for the Christian's being raised into heaven, in contrast to Enoch's translation, is found not in his own personal walk of obedience but rather in Christ's finished work to redeem him.<sup>5</sup> For Enoch it was his individual walk with the Lord that formed the reason for his translation; for the Christian it is Christ's obedience that forms his.

Before being caught up to heaven to meet Jesus in the air, a man must be found to have become a son of God while on earth. Heaven is not for every man but only for those who by faith have believed in God's Son. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name* (John 1:12). To receive Christ is to receive Him as God has declared Him to be. It is to receive and accept the authority that God has given His Son over all

mankind,<sup>6</sup> as Lord of all. This verse places emphasis on *the Lord* and thus repeats it in order to draw attention that it is *the Lord* Jesus Christ, the Ruler of both heaven and earth,<sup>7</sup> Whom the saved are miraculously raised to meet. The rapture of Christ's people is also very directly tied to what Jesus prayed for concerning what would be His disciples' reward for their faith in Him. Previously none have ever been allowed to see the full glory of either God<sup>8</sup> or the Son of God, but those raised to meet Jesus in the air will have an unobstructed view of both. It was also this being with Himself that Jesus prayed, that those given to Him by the Father should partake of. *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world* (John 17:24). Jesus' prayer brings us to two revelations: (1) that Jesus purposed that those given to Him by God should be with Him where He is and (2) that one of the great reasons Jesus prayed that the saved will be raised to heaven is

5 Gal. 4:4–5 *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,* <sup>5</sup>*To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

Tit. 2:13–14 *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;* <sup>14</sup>*Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

6 John 17:2 *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

Eph. 1:21 *Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:*

Acts 2:36 *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

7 Phil. 2:9–11 *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:* <sup>10</sup>*That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;* <sup>11</sup>*And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

8 Exod. 33:18–20 *And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.* <sup>19</sup>*And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.* <sup>20</sup>*And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.*

Exod. 16:10 *And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.*

Exod. 24:16–17 *And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud.* <sup>17</sup>*And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.*

I Kgs. 8:10–11 *And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD,* <sup>11</sup>*So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.*

that they might behold the eternal glory that is now Christ's.<sup>9</sup> In Paul's revelation to the Thessalonians, the revelation of the believer's rapture is the answer to Christ's prayer.

*(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, John 17:24) That they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.—Comp. Note on John 17:22.<sup>10</sup> That we are to think of the future glory of the divine-human nature of Christ, is shown by the addition of the words, "which Thou hast given Me." The pre-incarnate glory of the Son was of His divine nature only, and is not, therefore, spoken of as given to Him, nor could it be given to those who believe in Him (John 17:22). That with which the Father has glorified the Son, is "the glory which He had with the Father before the world was" (John 17:5),<sup>11</sup> but it is the Son of man who is glorified with it, and therefore it is that human nature is made capable of receiving it.*

True believers in Christ will be raised from the earth by being *caught up*. This indicates that it will be through no ability of their own that they will be raised to meet the Lord in the air but rather by Christ's heavenly might and power exerted upon them. As the word implies, being *caught up* will be both sudden and unexpected.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 4:17) Shall be caught up—The word here used implies that there will be the application of external force or power by which this will be done. It will not be by any power of ascending which they will themselves have; or by any tendency of their raised or changed bod-*

ies to ascend of their own accord, or even by any effort of their own will, but by a power applied to them which will cause them to rise.

The closeness established on earth between Jesus and His people<sup>12</sup> will reach its purposed end when both the living and the dead are eternally joined to the Savior. Some have speculated that the reason the saved will join Christ in the air is that the earth cannot contain such a great number of redeemed ones being gathered together for such occasions as the church's salvation and the world's final judgment.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 4:17) The world would not be spacious enough to contain all the assembled living and dead, and hence the throne of judgment will be fixed in the ample space above it.*

This rapture, as I Corinthians reveals, will transpire in the twinkling of an eye: *Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 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* (I Cor. 15:51–52). The trumpet, as seen in I Corinthians and I Thessalonians, as well as in many other records in Scripture, is attached to the Lord's return and will herald the Lord's people to their final gathering. Here the trump of God signals the Lord's chosen to assemble themselves before Jesus in heaven. Its ultimate purpose is to summon the saved to inherit their spiritual

9 Matt. 25:31 *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:*

10 John 17:22 *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 11 John 17:5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

12 John 15:4 *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

John 17:23 *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

John 6:56 *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*

destiny.<sup>13</sup> However, it will not be upon a mountain that the Son of God will come down to reveal Himself to mankind, as the Lord previously did with Israel.<sup>14</sup> Instead, Jesus will appear in heaven, and by the spiritual power given to Him by God, He will raise His people to meet Him in the air. The contrasting meetings of God descending to the earth to meet Israel to now the church's being powerfully raised to meet its Savior mark a change of administrations, signifying that all that is earthly is to be replaced by all that is heavenly. Note that *change* is the optimal word to define the events that will transpire with the return of the Son of God. Here it is the changing of His people's bodies, but many other things will also be transformed at this time. The entire world order will transition from human governmental authority to divine spiritual authority.<sup>15</sup> No longer will the descendants of the first Adam function according to their own human will, which has always resisted God's sovereignty over them. Fallen man, as we know him now, has lost both the right and responsibility to be given stewardship over anything. Hence, a new race of men, created in the image and likeness of God's Son,<sup>16</sup> will replace him. This new race of man created

by God will forever remain loyal to Him through faithfully keeping His laws and adhering to His commandments.<sup>17</sup> Many other Old Testament prophecies will be fulfilled at this future time, but the Christian's spiritual transformation provides great insight into the celestial glories and spiritual changes to come.

Another potential reason that the rapture takes place in the clouds is so the saved are removed from the earthly judgments to come. *And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come* (I Thess. 1:10). That believers are instructed to wait for God's Son from heaven to deliver them from wrath reveals that it will be the personal appearance of Jesus Christ that will directly provide for their protection from it. Hence, before the day of the Lord comes and God's wrath is poured out upon the world,<sup>18</sup> those chosen for heaven will have departed from the earth. The trumpet also marks the beginning of the day of the Lord, and once it is sounded, the world will have to endure the Lord's long-promised wrath of God. Both events—the raising of the saints and the wrath of God being poured out upon the world—will be supernatural

13 Matt. 24:31 *And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

14 Exod. 19:11 *And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.*

Exod. 19:20 *And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.*

15 Rev. 11:15 *And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

16 Col. 3:10 *And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:*

17 Ezek. 36:26–28 *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup>And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. <sup>28</sup>And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.*

18 II Pet. 3:10 *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

Rev. 6:16–17 *And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: <sup>17</sup>For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*

and a testament to Christ's divine power. *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* (II Pet. 3:7). Because of its wickedness, the first world, as observed in the time of Noah, was destroyed by water;<sup>19</sup> the one we live in now, of which I Peter speaks, is promised to be destroyed by fire. Whereas water covered the earth, now it is revealed that fire will consume it.

(*Benson Commentary*, II Pet. 3:7) *are kept in store*—Τεθησαυρισμενοι εισι πυρι τηρουμενοι, *are treasured up and preserved for fire*; that is, preserved from a deluge for the purpose of being burned. Therefore the earth is not always to remain, but is to suffer a destruction even more terrible than the former; at the *day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men*—The day when God will judge the world, and punish the ungodly with everlasting destruction.

The Greek word for *ungodly* is #765. *HELPS Word-studies* defines it as “*asebēs* (an adjective which is the negation of 4576 /*sébotomai*, ‘to respect’)—properly, lack of reverence (‘without due respect’), i.e. failing to honor what is sacred—especially in the outward (ceremonial) sense.” God demands reverence and respect for

what is sacred. When men do not respect or have a high regard for that which is holy, they prove themselves ripe for divine judgment. The two greatest sins in man, aside from blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,<sup>20</sup> are unbelief<sup>21</sup> and ungodliness.<sup>22</sup> These sins are committed directly toward a holy God, and as such they are worthy of divine judgment. The Scriptures also teach us that now—that is, even today, before this great day of God's judgment—a portion of God's anger is being revealed in the earth. *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness* (Rom. 1:18). If men refuse to believe that divine judgment for sin will come in the future, they need only to observe a small amount of God's wrath being revealed toward the ungodly and unbelieving in the present.

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Rom. 1:18) This Wrath of God, Revealed against All Iniquity, Overhangs the Whole Heathen World.

Whereas today God's wrath and anger are measured—at Jesus' return, marking the day of the Lord, the Lord's anger will not be measured. It is from this final judgment of God, upon the unsaved and

19 Gen. 6:17 *And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.*

20 Mark 3:29 *But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:*

21 John 3:18 *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Heb. 3:12 *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*

II Thess. 2:12 *That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

Heb. 3:17–19 *But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? <sup>18</sup>And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? <sup>19</sup>So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

22 Ps. 1:6 *For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.*

II Pet. 2:5 *And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;*

II Pet. 3:7 *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.*

Jude 1:15 *To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.*

## The Dead Shall Rise

unbelieving, that Jesus came to save men from.<sup>23</sup> Just as Lot was delivered from Sodom and Gomorrah and led out by angels from the place where God's judgment was to fall,<sup>24</sup> so shall the Lord Jesus redeem the righteous and lift them up into heaven before the Lord's vengeance is revealed upon those who have refused to obey the gospel of His Son. *And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the 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* (II Thess. 1:7-9).

*And so shall we ever be with the Lord.* Once raptured by the Son of God, the saved will never again be separated from Him. It is common today for those who possess the Holy Spirit that any separation from

God, no matter how brief, causes pain to the soul. Whether because of personal sin or simply the trials of life, nothing disturbs and causes inner consternation more than when spiritual fellowship with the heavenly Father is damaged and needs repair. However, once the believer is literally joined to the Lord Jesus, all such fear will be removed as every Christian's heart will remain at peace because of its close proximity to the Lord of peace.<sup>25</sup> In God's presence is fullness of joy,<sup>26</sup> and this joy will be exceedingly experienced once the saved are joined to Christ in heaven.

### *I Thessalonians 4:18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

There can be no comfort, nor any sustainable hope, regarding good expectations for the dead if while living they did not have a personal relationship with the Son of God. Before there can be true comfort when facing either one's own death or the

23 Rom. 5:9 *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.* I 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.*

24 Gen. 19:12-26 *And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: <sup>13</sup>For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it. <sup>14</sup>And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. <sup>15</sup>And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. <sup>16</sup>And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. <sup>17</sup>And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. <sup>18</sup>And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my LORD: <sup>19</sup>Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: <sup>20</sup>Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. <sup>21</sup>And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. <sup>22</sup>Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. <sup>23</sup>The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. <sup>24</sup>Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; <sup>25</sup>And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. <sup>26</sup>But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.*

II Pet. 2:6-7 *And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; <sup>7</sup>And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:*

25 II Thess. 3:16 *Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.*

26 Ps. 16:11 *Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

death of those the person loves, a man must be found in Christ<sup>27</sup> and Christ in him.<sup>28</sup> It is also worthy of note that before the Son of God's entrance into the world, mankind knew little to nothing of the concept of spiritual immortality. *But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:* (II Tim. 1:10). Today, because of the revelation given to Paul by the Lord Jesus,<sup>29</sup> we know much more. And it is this knowledge of future events that has been purposed to bring comfort to the sons of God, even when their earthly lives, and the lives of those they love, cease.

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, II Tim. 1:10)* Before the Gospel revelation from God, man, by the light of nature, under the most favorable circumstances, had but a glimmering idea of the possibility of a future being of the soul, but not the faintest idea of the resurrection of the body...

***I Thessalonians 5:1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.***

Regarding the time of the advent and the rapture of the saints, the apostle now states that it makes no real difference as to when these things will take place but

only that they will. Not surprising, people can very easily become distracted concerning when something will be, though instead they should concern themselves only with the fact that it *will* be.<sup>30</sup> Human curiosity, though common, is not a heavenly virtue. The secret things belong unto the Lord,<sup>31</sup> and that which He determines should remain hidden cannot be discovered by human effort. Jesus' words to His disciples before His ascension, reveal where the believer's proper focus should be while patiently waiting for Christ's return to the earth.

***Acts 1:6–8 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?***

<sup>7</sup> ***And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.***

<sup>8</sup> ***But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.***

The disciples sought to know about the future restoration of Israel; instead, Jesus directed them to a very near event, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.<sup>32</sup> Hence, instead of speculating as to the timing of future events, like

<sup>27</sup> Phil. 3:9 *And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:*

<sup>28</sup> Rom. 8:10 *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

Col. 1:27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

<sup>29</sup> Gal. 1:11 *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.*

<sup>30</sup> Matt. 24:36 *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.* Mark 13:32 *But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*

*Acts 1:7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.*

<sup>31</sup> Deut. 29:29 *The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

<sup>32</sup> Acts 2:1–4 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. <sup>2</sup>And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup>And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each*

Israel's restoration, true believers should pursue receiving the Holy Spirit, manifesting Its power, and testifying to the reality of the Son of God and His resurrection by God. It is also the Holy Spirit and the spiritual power associated with It, that are the best witnesses of Jesus' resurrection from the dead—simply because it is Jesus Who promised to breathe into His followers the Holy Ghost. *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost* (John 20:22).

***I Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.***

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, I Thess. 5:2) *The day of the Lord.*—Here “the Lord” (as usual in the New Testament) means Jesus Christ; and this day can mean nothing else than the great day of His return to judgment. The expression is taken from the Old Testament, where, of course, it does not primarily mean what we call “the Day of Judgment,” but the set time which God has fixed for any great visitation. Thus in Joel 2:1,<sup>33</sup> et seq., it means the time appointed for the plague of locusts; in Ezekiel 13:5,<sup>34</sup> generally, any day when God visits His people; in Joel 3:14,<sup>35</sup> the fixed time for vengeance to be taken upon the heathen for persecuting the Church; which, in Isaiah 2:12<sup>36</sup> (a passage largely influenced by recollections of Joel), seems to widen into a general day of judgment for mankind.

The *day of the Lord* is that day when Jesus Christ will be openly manifested to the world. It will come unexpectedly upon the unsaved, *as a thief in the night*. It will understandably be both surprising and frightening to those living in sin. The *day of the Lord* in Scripture is the future time referred to as *the Revelation of Jesus Christ*.<sup>37</sup> Like the book of Thessalonians, the Book of Revelation reveals that Jesus will come with clouds. *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen* (Rev. 1:7). Jesus' return and His appearance to the world will cause many to wail. This wailing will originate from those who have rejected God's sovereignty and have now become fully aware that divine judgment is ready to be revealed upon them. All the previous rejoicing of sinners will cease once they realize that God's authority has returned to rule the world through the person of His Son. What a contrast this is to when Jesus was crucified and His followers mourned and wept for His death!<sup>38</sup> Here a completely opposite scene is described, for now it is sinners who will wail and bemoan the sight of the Lord Jesus, and not those who have believed in Him. How different also are the ungodly from the saints: whereas unbelievers rejoice when sin spreads, saints rejoice when God's authority appears to remove it.

*of them. <sup>4</sup>And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

<sup>33</sup> Joel 2:1 *Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;*

<sup>34</sup> Ezek. 13:5 *Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD.*

<sup>35</sup> Joel 3:14 *Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.*

<sup>36</sup> Isa. 2:12 *For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:*

<sup>37</sup> Rev. 1:1 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:*

<sup>38</sup> Mark 16:9–10 *Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. <sup>10</sup>And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.*

(Benson Commentary, Rev. 1:7) *Shall wail because of him*—For terror and pain, if they did not wail before by true repentance; even all who have rejected his government and opposed his interest, shall lament the fatal opposition, by which, instead of prevailing in the least against him, they have only effected their own destruction. In this verse is prefixed the great moral, which the whole book is designed to illustrate; namely, that though there should be great opposition made against the cause and kingdom of Christ, yet it should be utterly in vain, and his kingdom should triumph in the most illustrious manner, so that all who opposed it should have the greatest reason to mourn.

Note that the unrighteous and the ungodly will wail *because of him* (Jesus). This is because the actual sight of Jesus coming in glory will awaken in even the dullest of men the arrival of the authority of God. The great majority of this world has always rejected divine rule. But at Jesus' return this practice will eternally cease.

***I Thessalonians 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.***

Before the Lord's judgment comes upon this world, the world will imagine itself in both *peace and safety*. But consistent with Jesus' unexpected return to the earth and believers being instantaneously caught up to meet Him in the air, so also will be the abrupt and sudden destruction of the ungodly—revealing that both deliverance and justice will be swift. Ultimately the Lord will not hesitate in redeeming the saved, nor will He delay in executing His wrath upon any who are not. All

fates have been settled, all choices made, and no time is needed before justice is served. In short, the world has waited long enough for this glorious day,<sup>39</sup> and it need not wait any longer.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 5:3) *And they shall not escape*—That is, the destruction, or punishment. They calculated on impunity, but now the time will have come when none of these refuges will avail them, and no rocks will cover them from the "wrath to come."

Because sinners have believed themselves wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight, they are blinded to their final end. Hence, there is no one more ignorant of Christ's return than he who has believed himself humanly wise. It is for these, the proud of heart, that heavenly punishment is purposed. *Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!* (Isa. 5:21).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Isa. 5:21) *Wo unto them that are wise ...*—This is the fifth crime specified. It refers to those who are inflated with a false opinion of their own knowledge, and who are, therefore, self-confident and vain. This is expressly forbidden; Proverbs 3:7:<sup>40</sup> 'Be not wise in thine own eyes;' compare Proverbs 26:12.<sup>41</sup>

*In their own eyes*—In their own opinion, or estimation.

*And prudent*—Knowing; self-conceited. This was, doubtless, one characteristic of the times of Isaiah. It is known to have been strikingly the characteristic of the Jews—particularly the Pharisees—in the time of our Saviour. The evil of this was,

(1) That it evinced and fostered "pride."

39 Rom. 8:22–23 *For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

40 Prov. 3:7 *Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.*

41 Prov. 26:12 *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.*

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(2) That it rendered them unwilling to be instructed, and especially by the prophets.

As they supposed that they were already wise enough, they refused to listen to others.

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(*Pulpit Commentary*, Isa. 5:21) *Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes.* The fifth woe. Self-conceit is the antithesis of humility; and as humility is, in a certain sense, the crowning virtue, so self-conceit is a sort of finishing touch put to vice. While a man thinks humbly of himself, there is a chance that he may repent and amend. When he is “wise in his own eyes,” he does not see why he should change.

*They shall not escape.* Just as Adam and Eve hid<sup>42</sup> in an attempt to avoid giving account for their sin, and yet the Lord found them,<sup>43</sup> so shall those who have resisted divine rule also attempt to flee from divine judgment yet not be able to. The earth, though vast in human estimation, is small to the Lord, so that when God’s righteous judgment is brought upon it, there will be found no place for sinners to either hide or escape His wrath. Whereas the unrighteous once freely sinned and moved upon the earth without any thought of divine intervention, now the earth has become their prison. *They shall not escape* is forceful, simply because there will be no place for sinners to avoid spiritual accountability. And though they will wish that the hills could cover them,<sup>44</sup> this hope, like the lives they lived, shall similarly be in vain.

***I Thessalonians 5:4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.***

Because God has illuminated the saved through the Spirit of the Lord given to them, this upcoming day of judgment, though it will come quickly, will not come unexpectedly since all true believers will be neither surprised nor frightened that the day of the Lord has begun. Because God has shined His light in believers’ hearts, the future of this world is no longer hidden. *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ* (II Cor. 4:6).

(*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, II Cor. 4:6) ... this verse teaches the fact, that the minds of Christians are illuminated. They are enabled to see things as they are. This fact is often taught in the Scriptures; see 1 John 2:20; 1 Corinthians 2:12–15.<sup>45</sup> They have different views of things from their fellow-men, and different from what they once had. They perceive a beauty in religion which others do not see, and a glory in truth, and in the Saviour, and in the promises of the gospel, which they did not see before they were converted.

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

42 Gen. 3:8 *And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.*

43 Gen. 3:9–10 *And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? <sup>10</sup>And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.*

44 Hos. 10:8 *The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us.*

Luke 23:30 *Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.*

45 I John 2:20 *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

I Cor. 2:12–15 *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. <sup>13</sup>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. <sup>14</sup>But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. <sup>15</sup>But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.*

Every son of God, every child of God, is a child of light—first, because the light of God in the form of the Holy Spirit fills his heart, and second, because his eyes have been illuminated both to God and to the higher spiritual realm. Ultimately, Christian minds have been enlightened,<sup>46</sup> whereas things previously hidden are now spiritually observable and able to be be-

lieved. By instructing the Thessalonians that they were *the children of light* and *the children of the day*, the apostle sought to remove any fear they might have concerning the day of the Lord. This fear, the apostle revealed, was reserved only for those who by freedom of will have chosen darkness over light.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Eph. 1:18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

<sup>47</sup> John 3:19 *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*



## I Thessalonians 5:6–19

*I Thessalonians 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*

**T**HE Greek word for *sleep* is #2518 *katheudó*. When used figuratively, it means, as *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* defines it, “to yield to sloth and sin, and be indifferent to one’s salvation: Ephesians 5:14;<sup>1</sup> I Thessalonians 5:6.” When men are asleep to the spiritual realm, they cannot perceive and are not aware of the opportunity for salvation or of future judgment for sin.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Thess. 5:6) In this passage there is an allusion to the fact that persons not only sleep in the night, but that they are frequently drunken in the night also. The idea is, that the Lord Jesus, when he comes, will find the wicked sunk not only in carnal security, but in sinful indulgences, and that those who are Christians ought not only to be awake and to watch as in the day-time, but to be temperate. They ought to be like persons engaged in the sober, honest, and appropriate employments of the day, and not like those who waste their days in sleep, and their nights in revelry.

The opposite of spiritual sleep is vigilance to hearing God’s voice and avoiding the danger of disobedience and rejection of God’s commandments. A spiritually watchful man is aware of the dangers of sin and warns others of divine judgment.

*Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me* (Ezek. 3:17). Conscious of the possibility of being found unapproved and suffering the Lord’s wrath, the watchman will apply himself first by preparing for the Lord’s arrival and second by warning others of potential judgment.

*I Thessalonians 5:7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.*

If a man lives in sin, his sin will keep him asleep and separate him from any true awareness of the Lord and future judgment for sin. Like an intoxicated man who does not know where he has been the previous night or what he has done, so are those who are unprepared for Christ’s return, equally as ignorant of their sinful state and the coming judgment for sin. God’s Word clearly reveals that the soul that sins will die,<sup>2</sup> yet those who sleep in the night know nothing of the great consequences they will reap by choosing such as a manner of living. A spiritually sleeping and drunken man also has no real awareness of Jesus Christ or the exalted position of the Son of God because he does not possess the spiritual ears and eyes to perceive Him. (*According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and*

1 Eph. 5:14 *Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*

2 Ezek. 18:20 *The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.*

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ears that they should not hear;) unto this day (Rom. 11:8).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 11:8) *The spirit of slumber*—The spirit of slumber is not different from slumber itself. The word "spirit" is often used thus. The word "slumber" here is a literal translation of the Hebrew. The Greek word, however *κατανύξεως katanuxeōs*, implies also the notion of compunction, and hence in the margin it is rendered "remorse." It means any emotion, or any influence whatever, that shall benumb the faculties, and make them insensible. Hence, it here means simply insensibility.

Oblivious to God and the higher spiritual realm, those in sin are totally unaware of the wrath of God promised to all who remain in it.

***I Thessalonians 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.***

Just as in verse 6, in which the believer is exhorted to *watch and be sober*, now he is instructed to put on as defensive armor the *breastplate of faith and love* and the *helmet, the hope of salvation*, which will prepare him for the day of the Lord. The contrast to being drunk and sleeping in the night is the pursuit of faith, love, and the hope of salvation. By these spiritual qualities Christians prove themselves to be of the day and connected to the realm of the Holy Spirit. It is also worthy of note that the spiritual qualities that the apostle encourages the Thessalonians to pursue and add to their lives are not qualities the

unsaved can possess since he who does not have the Spirit cannot grow in qualities solely derived from it. Hence, if men are devoid of these divine qualities, even if they are religious, it is certain that they remain dead in sin<sup>3</sup> and ignorant to the Holy Spirit, from which faith, love, and hope originate.<sup>4</sup> The result of this is to remain carnally minded, which ultimately separates men from any chance of eternal life and peace. *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace* (Rom. 8:6).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 8:6) *For to be carnally minded*—Margin, "The minding of the flesh." The sense is, that to follow the inclinations of the flesh, or the corrupt propensities of our nature, leads us to condemnation and death. The expression is one of great energy, and shows that it not only leads to death, or leads to misery, but that it is death itself; there is woe and condemnation in the very act and purpose of being supremely devoted to the corrupt passions. Its only tendency is condemnation and despair.

*Is death*—The penalty of transgression; condemnation and eternal ruin; Note, Romans 5:12.<sup>5</sup>

*But to be spiritually minded*—Margin, "The minding of the Spirit." That is, making it the object of the mind, the end and aim of the actions, to cultivate the graces of the Spirit, and to submit to his influence. To be spiritually minded is to seek those feelings and views which the Holy Spirit produces, and to follow his leadings.

*Is life*—This is opposed to death in Romans 8:5.<sup>6</sup> It tends to life, and is in fact real life. For

<sup>3</sup> Eph. 2:1 *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*

Col. 2:13 *And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;*

<sup>4</sup> Gal. 5:22–23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, <sup>23</sup>Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

<sup>5</sup> Rom. 5:12 *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

<sup>6</sup> Rom. 8:5 *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.*

to possess and cultivate the graces of the spirit, to be led where he would guide us, is the design of our existence, and is the only path of happiness.

It is only when sinners are tired of their flesh and the unholiness and uncleanness of it that the desire for holy things will enter the heart and a search for God will start. This journey undoubtedly begins with the pursuit of faith.

*Faith.* The first quality the apostle lists for the Thessalonians to manifest is that which produces peace with God. *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ* (Rom. 5:1). Man in his fallen state is at war with the Lord, and the Lord with him.<sup>7</sup> Hence, it is only when faith in God is desired that men prove themselves willing to come under divine government since no man would seek to believe if he had not already determined that he would yield to the One in Whom he is seeking to believe. Thus, by the pursuit of faith men prove themselves willing to hear God's voice and follow His commandments. At its core, faith is an act of submission to divine rule and government.

*Love.* If any do not love, they do not know God.<sup>8</sup> This is true because love is the highest form of piety and the very essence of true religion. Thus, not until men are acquainted with and manifest divine love in their hearts and lives can we know that they are truly born of God and possess fellowship with Him. *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God* (I John 4:7). It is love that is the strongest evidence of the new birth, and it is love that proves a man truly born of God.

So also because God is love, any who do not love cannot know Him and categorically have not become His own. The absence of love reveals that men remain estranged from God, simply because love is what God is. *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him* (I John 4:16). There is no greater evidence of pure and holy religion than when divine love is manifested in the Lord's people. Jesus said that men would know who were His true disciples by the love they held one for one another. *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another* (John 13:35). Love is therefore that spiritual test that reveals if a man is a true son of God or if he merely panhandles Christ's name. Ultimately every true child of God will be taught by God to love, and there is no exception to this rule. *But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another* (I Thess. 4:9).

*Hope of salvation.* He who has faith in the Lord and has obeyed His commandment to love will anticipate and long for his full salvation. Just as critical as faith and love are to the human heart, equally as important is *hope*. Christian doctrine therefore should never be deemed complete until the hope of Christ's return dominates the believer's heart as much as faith and love are purposed to manifest itself in their lives. It is also only when faith, love, and hope are possessed that Christian doctrine is complete. Whatever a man hopes for is what he will navigate toward. If it is carnal hopes, he is proved to be a carnal man. But if his hope is the Son of God, he is proved to be a spiritual man, one who possesses a sincere love

<sup>7</sup> Rom. 8:8 *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

Jas. 4:4 *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

<sup>8</sup> I John 4:8 *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

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for God, manifested by anticipation for Christ's return.

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, 1 Thess. 5:8) Faith, hope, and love, are the three pre-eminent graces (1 Th 1:3; 1 Co 13:13).<sup>9</sup> We must not only be awake and sober, but also armed; not only watchful, but also guarded. The armor here is only defensive; in Eph 6:13–17,<sup>10</sup> also offensive. Here, therefore, the reference is to the Christian means of being guarded against being surprised by the day of the Lord as a thief in the night. The helmet and breastplate defend the two vital parts, the head and the heart respectively. "With head and heart right, the whole man is right" [Edmunds]. The head needs to be kept from error, the heart from sin.*

***I Thessalonians 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,***

*Obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.* If a man truly desires to obtain salvation, then he must realize that he can gain it solely through faith in Jesus Christ—simply because it is through the Son of God that God saves men. Ultimately there is no other way to enter heaven apart from responding to God's call in Christ, which implores the unsaved to be reconciled to

God.<sup>11</sup> It is through Jesus Christ that God has called men to Himself, and there is no true reality of abiding with God apart from faith in Christ. It is through Him that salvation is offered to sinners and only through Him that eternal life can be gained. Because the Thessalonians had believed in Jesus Christ, their appointment was not to suffer God's wrath but to obtain the salvation offered through God's Son. Hence, they did not need to fear being judged by the Lord because their destiny was now to be saved by Him. It is the very same God Who saves men if they believe as the God Who brings divine wrath if they do not. The true Christian's appointment is not to wrath but to be saved from it by the Son.

***I Thessalonians 5:10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.***

To *live together* with the Son of God is the Christian's hope. Charles Spurgeon said that if Christ died for you, then He will not forget you.<sup>12</sup> It also makes no difference whether believers wake or sleep, or are dead or alive, because those whom Christ died for are purposed to live with Him.<sup>13</sup> In John 17 Jesus' prayer<sup>14</sup> directly

<sup>9</sup> *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;*

*1 Cor. 13:13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*

<sup>10</sup> *Eph. 6:13–17 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. <sup>14</sup>Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; <sup>15</sup>And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*

<sup>16</sup>*Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. <sup>17</sup>And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:*

<sup>11</sup> *II Cor. 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

<sup>12</sup> "God's Memorial Of His People" (No. 3441), published Jan. 14, 1915

<sup>13</sup> *John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

<sup>14</sup> *John 17 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: <sup>2</sup>As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. <sup>3</sup>And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. <sup>4</sup>I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. <sup>5</sup>And now, O Father, glorify thy name with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. <sup>6</sup>I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. <sup>7</sup>Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. <sup>8</sup>For I have given unto them the*

preceded His crucifixion and death. In this prayer we observe how it was the Son of God's desire that all who believed upon Him would one day ultimately behold Him and be with Him where He now is. *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world* (John 17:24). The ones spoken of, whom Jesus says God has given Him, are those who have believed the record that God has given of His Son.<sup>15</sup> It is they who are promised sight of Christ's glory, and they who are promised to live together with Him. Hence, those who have believed the re-

cord that God has given of His Son are promised to live eternally with the Son of God, Who presently sits in heaven.<sup>16</sup> This, no doubt, included the Thessalonian believers to whom Paul was writing. None also can freely give themselves to Jesus Christ until first they have been chosen to be His possession.

The glory referenced that Christians will be able to behold is the glory of God, which will be seen to be bodily housed in the Son of God. It is similar to the beatific vision that Peter, James, and John observed when Jesus was transfigured before them.<sup>17</sup> This is the reward of faith, and all who have sincerely believed upon Je-

*words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.* <sup>9</sup>*I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.* <sup>10</sup>*And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.* <sup>11</sup>*And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.* <sup>12</sup>*While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.* <sup>13</sup>*And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.* <sup>14</sup>*I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.* <sup>15</sup>*I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.* <sup>16</sup>*They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.* <sup>17</sup>*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.* <sup>18</sup>*As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.* <sup>19</sup>*And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.* <sup>20</sup>*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;* <sup>21</sup>*That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* <sup>22</sup>*And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:* <sup>23</sup>*I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.* <sup>24</sup>*Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.* <sup>25</sup>*O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.* <sup>26</sup>*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.*

<sup>15</sup> I John 5:11-13 *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* <sup>12</sup>*He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.* <sup>13</sup>*These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

<sup>16</sup> Col. 3:1 *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*

<sup>17</sup> Luke 24:50-51 *And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.* <sup>51</sup>*And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.*

Heb. 8:1 *Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;*

Eph. 1:20 *Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,*

<sup>17</sup> Matt. 17:1-8 *And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,* <sup>2</sup>*And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.* <sup>3</sup>*And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.* <sup>4</sup>*Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.* <sup>5</sup>*While he yet spake, behold, a bright*

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sus Christ will be partakers of it. For true believers will see and behold the fullness of the godhead dwelling bodily in God's Son. This celestial glory that saints will be privileged to ultimately observe will be the result of having faith in Christ. Hence, only those who have believed upon the Son of God will be given full sight of the fullness of the Godhead, dwelling bodily in Him. *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily* (Col. 2:9).

(*Benson Commentary*, Col. 2:9–10) *For in him dwelleth—Inhabitheth, κατοικει, continually abideth; all the fulness of the Godhead—Believers may be filled with all the fulness of God, Ephesians 3:19;<sup>18</sup> but in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead, the most full Godhead, Colossians 1:19;<sup>19</sup> bodily—Really, substantially. The very substance of God, if one might so speak, dwells in Christ in the most full sense. “It is plain,” says Dr. Doddridge, “that the Godhead is an anglicism equivalent to Deity. . . . I assuredly believe, that as it contains an evident allusion to the Shechinah, in which God dwelt, so it ultimately refers to the adorable mystery of the union of the divine and human natures in the person of the glorious Emmanuel, which makes him such an object of our hope and confidence, as the most exalted creature, with the most glorious endowments, could never of himself be.”*

***I Thessalonians 5:11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.***

When love is sufficiently strong, it cannot be broken, and this is especially true regarding Christ's love for those He has called to Himself to be a partaker of heav-

en's blessings. It is because of love for His people that Christ died, and this love cannot be interrupted until they ultimately share with Him in His own glory. The comforting message that the Thessalonians were to share with one another was that whether alive or dead, or awake or asleep, all would collectively live with the Savior. *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one* (John 17:22).

***I Thessalonians 5:12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;***

True ministers of the gospel are heavenly gifts whom Christ has given for the purposes of the church's edification.<sup>20</sup> Because the Son of God has placed these spiritual ministers in the church, it is a great affront to His spiritual authority if their divine appointment is not spiritually respected. To be subject to the Son of God requires that men freely become subject not only to Jesus' words and the Holy Spirit but also to those heavenly ministries both ordained and sent by Christ for the church's edification. It is through these divine ministries that Christ governs His people and when necessary, admonishes them. Without the heavenly ministries of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers both overseeing and functioning in the church, believers would be tossed to and fro, carried about with many false and misleading doctrines, doctrines that would not lead to a greater faith in and knowledge of the Son of

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*cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. <sup>6</sup>And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. <sup>7</sup>And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. <sup>8</sup>And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.*

<sup>18</sup> Eph. 3:19 *And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

<sup>19</sup> Col. 1:19 *For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;*

<sup>20</sup> Eph. 4:11–12 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; <sup>12</sup>For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

God<sup>21</sup> but are actually intended to lead people away from Him. *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* (Eph. 4:14).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 4:14) *Tossed to and fro*—κλυδωνιζόμενοι *kludōnizomenoi*. This word is taken from waves or billows that are constantly tossed about—in all ages an image of instability of character and purpose.

*And carried about with every wind of doctrine*—With no firmness; no settled course; no helm. The idea is that of a vessel on the restless ocean, that is tossed about with every varying wind, and that has no settled line of sailing. So many persons are in regard to religious doctrines. They have no fixed views and principles. They hold no doctrines that are settled in their minds by careful and patient examination, and the consequence is, that they yield to every new opinion, and submit to the guidance of every new teacher. . . . No man can be useful who has not settled principles. No one who has not such principles can inspire confidence or be happy, and the first aim of every young convert should be to acquire settled views of the truth, and to become firmly grounded in the doctrines of the gospel.

When children are young, they are most vulnerable to deception. This is especially true concerning those who, though born of God, remain spiritually immature. Just as an infant will place virtually anything into his mouth, whether it is dangerous or not, so new believers, because of their lack of proper spiritual instruction,

can easily be deceived to receive false doctrines that will not strengthen and settle them but actually create greater instability in their lives. The devil's playground is often within the church, where also through planting tares amongst the wheat,<sup>22</sup> false doctrines are introduced. Whenever also these false doctrines are received into the church, saints will be led away from the simplicity of religion that is found in Christ. *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ* (II Cor. 11:3).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, II Cor. 11:3) *But I fear*— . . . The mention of this seems to have suggested to him the fact that the first woman was deceived and led astray by the tempter, and that the same thing might occur in regard to the church which he was so desirous should be preserved pure. The grounds of his fear were:

- (1) That Satan had seduced the first woman, thus demonstrating that the most holy ones were in danger of being led astray by temptation; and,
- (2) That special efforts were made to seduce them from the faith. The persuasive arts of the false teachers; the power of philosophy; and the attractive and corrupting influences of the world, he had reason to suppose might be employed to seduce them from simple attachment to Christ.

Just as there are true ministers in Christ's church, so also are there an equal amount of, if not more, imposters sent by Satan to deceive the elect,<sup>23</sup> imposters who stealth-

21 Eph. 4:13 *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

22 Matt. 13:25 *But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.*

23 Matt. 24:24 *For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*

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ily come in Christ's name<sup>24</sup> yet have no true relationship with Him.<sup>25</sup>

*I Thessalonians 5:13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.*

It is God's will that those spiritual gift ministers whom Christ has set in His church are held in the highest regard—that they are honored and loved because of the labor they faithfully exert toward the gospel's advancement. All Christian works are to be respected, and none more so than those spiritual ministers who labor because of love to both spread the gospel and care for those already in it. It is also true that these divine ministers should not be merely esteemed but also *highly* esteemed because of the selfless labor of love they exert through both imparting and advancing the believers' faith and trust in God's Son.

*(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, I Thess. 5:13) Very highly in love.—... The bond which binds the Christian community to their directors is not to be one of "recognition" and obedience only (1 Thessalonians 5:12),<sup>26</sup> but of holy affection above all.*

*And be at peace among yourselves.* It is important that saints maintain peace not only with those who have rule and oversight over them but also amongst themselves. Thus, even as both flock and shepherd are purposed to be at peace, so also should members strive for this same spiritual peace between each other. It is the will of God that there is no schism or divisions in the church<sup>27</sup> simply because where division and schism are, there will also be marring of the Lord's temple, where also the Lord now dwells.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the peace that Jesus has established between the believers and God,<sup>29</sup> between believer and believer,<sup>30</sup> and between believers and ministers should manifest itself throughout the entire Christian assembly.<sup>31</sup> By this, Christ's ministry to establish peace in the kingdom of God<sup>32</sup> is both honored and respected. Because Jesus has brought peace to men<sup>33</sup> and established peace between sinners and God, then the Lord's peace should burgeon and flourish throughout the family of God. The pursuit of peace is also not a small thing but is in fact indicative of being a child of God. *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God* (Matt. 5:9).

24 Matt. 24:5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

Luke 21:8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

25 Matt. 7:21–23 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. <sup>22</sup>Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? <sup>23</sup>And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

26 I 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;

27 I Cor. 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

28 I Cor. 3:16–17 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? <sup>17</sup>If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

29 Rom. 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

30 Eph. 2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

31 Heb. 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

32 Col. 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

33 John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

(Benson Commentary, Matt. 5:9) *The peace-makers*—Those who are themselves of a peaceable temper, and endeavour to promote peace in others: who *study to be quiet*,<sup>34</sup> and, as *much as in them lieth*, to live peaceably with all men:<sup>35</sup> who are so far from sowing the seeds of discord between any of their fellow-creatures, that they both studiously avoid contention themselves, and labour to extinguish it wherever it prevails, laying themselves out to heal the differences of brethren and neighbours, to reconcile contending parties, and to restore peace wherever it is broken, as well as to preserve it where it is. *They shall be called the children of God*—That is, they are and shall be owned by God as his genuine children, by reason of their great likeness to him: for he is *the God of peace and love*, and *is in Christ reconciling the world to himself not imputing their trespasses to them*.

***I Thessalonians 5:14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.***

Everyone in Christ's spiritual body is spiritually responsible for caring for and being concerned with all the other members in it. This includes both warning the unruly and comforting the feebleminded, if necessary.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 5:14) *Warn them*—The same word which in 1 Thessalonians 5:12<sup>36</sup> is rendered "admonish." It is the duty of every church member, as well as of the ministers of the gospel, affectionately to admonish those whom they

know to be living contrary to the requirements of the gospel. One reason why there is so little piety in the church, and why so many professors of religion go astray, is, that the great mass of church members feel no responsibility on this subject. They suppose that it is the duty only of the officers of the church to admonish an erring brother, and hence many become careless and cold and worldly, and no one utters a kind word to them to recall them to a holy walk with God.

***I Thessalonians 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.***

All recompense, if others sin against us, must be left to the Lord,<sup>37</sup> Who alone has sufficient sight and wisdom to execute justice properly. There is but One power and ultimate authority purposed to render unto men as they have sown,<sup>38</sup> and it should never be any man's right, let alone his responsibility, to render evil for evil. Thus, there is no reason whatsoever that the people of God should ever render back either evil for evil or railing for railing. To do so is completely contrary to how the Savior said His disciples should conduct themselves. The opposite response, therefore, of rendering evil for evil is to *follow that which is good*. This pursuit of both following and pursuing good is to be exercised toward not only those in the family of God but also all outside it. Jesus went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of

34 I 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;*

35 Rom. 12:18 *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

36 I 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;*

37 Deut. 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.*

Prov. 20:22 *Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.*

II Thess. 1:6 *Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;*

38 Gal. 6:7–8 *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

<sup>8</sup>*For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

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the devil,<sup>39</sup> and His people should seek to manifest this same generosity of life. Ultimately God has purposed every Christian to do good works, and this should be his primary objective in life. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them* (Eph. 2:10). By pursuing good, through good works, Christians will discover satisfaction of life and peace within themselves. It is also for the preordained purpose of doing good that saints were created in Christ Jesus. By doing good, and manifesting good works in our lives, the Lord is glorified. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven* (Matt. 5:16).

(*Benson Commentary*, Matt. 5:16) *Let your light*—The light of that doctrine which you receive from me, and the light of your holy conversation, *so shine before men*—Be so evident and apparent unto men, *that they may see your good works, and glorify, &c.*—That is, that seeing your good works they may both praise God for sending such a religion into the world, and also, embracing your faith, may imitate your holy example, or may be moved to love and serve God as you do, and thereby to glorify him.

Because saints also have been created in Christ Jesus unto good works, they should live their lives with the express purpose of fulfilling them. By this God is glorified, and the light of God is made visible to a world in darkness.

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Eph. 2:10) *Created in Christ Jesus for good works. . .* The purpose of the new creation is to produce them. Christ “gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people of his own, zealous of good works.” It is not good works first, and grace after; but grace first, and good works after (see Titus 2:11, 14<sup>40</sup>). *Which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* A further proof of the true origin of good works. They are the subjects of a Divine decree. Before the foundation of the world it was ordained that whoever should be saved by grace should walk in good works. The term “walk;” here denotes the habitual tenor of the life; it is to be spent in an atmosphere of good works. Here we have one of the Divine safeguards against the abuse of the doctrine of salvation by grace. When men hear of salvation irrespective of works, they are apt to fancy that works are of little use, and do not need to be carefully attended to. On the contrary, they are part of the Divine decree, and if we are not living a life of good works, we have no reason to believe that we have been saved by grace.

Because saints are God’s creation, and because God has purposed that they should reveal His goodness to the world,<sup>41</sup> then doing good should be as spiritually natural to believers as doing evil is to sinners.

(*Matthew Poole’s Commentary*, Eph. 2:10) Unto good works: as the immediate end for which we are new-created. We receive our new being that we may bring forth new works, and have a carriage suitable to our new principle.

***1 Thessalonians 5:16 Rejoice evermore.***

39 Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

40 Tit. 2:11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

Tit. 2:14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

41 1 Chrn. 16:34 O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.

Ps. 86:5 For thou, LORD, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Ps. 100:5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

Ps. 145:9 The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

No one in the history of the world has been given more reason to rejoice for the life given to them than Christians. Christians are the most blessed of all people and therefore should faithfully and joyfully thank and praise the Lord for the abundant life given to them. And though many of God's blessings are intangible and reside in heaven,<sup>42</sup> still they are as real and substantial as anything material. The Lord is good beyond all measure, and none are aware of this more than those He has saved and made His own. For none can come into contact with the one true God and not be amazed at His goodness. All true Christians are therefore instructed to *rejoice evermore*, simply because there should never be any lasting reason to do otherwise. The ability to rejoice and praise God for the blessings given to us stems from the spiritual reality that believers are actually given the Lord's own joy when saved by Him. Thus, he who has been imparted with Jesus' spiritual

joy<sup>43</sup> will have both sufficient strength and reason to rejoice, simply because it is what Christ has imparted into his heart.

***I Thessalonians 5:17 Pray without ceasing.***

If a man has a genuine relationship with the Father, it will be proven in his prayer life. Prayer is that means, whether rendered for thanksgiving<sup>44</sup> or seeking direction<sup>45</sup> or pursuing forgiveness,<sup>46</sup> through which believers reveal their great dependence upon God. He who prays unceasingly is aware of his own earthly weakness and his great need for God's power to both preserve his life and bring blessings into it. A praying man is by all measures a truly dependent man, leaning upon God not only for life but also for that which makes earthly life pleasurable.

***I Thessalonians 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.***

42 Eph. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

43 John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

44 Neh. 11:17 And Mattaniah the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, was the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer: and Bakkukiah the second among his brethren, and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun.

Dan. 6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

Luke 2:37–38 And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.<sup>38</sup> And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

John 11:41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

45 Exod. 33:13 Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.

II Sam. 2:1 And it came to pass after this, that David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron.

46 Deut. 21:8 Be merciful, O LORD, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them.

Ps. 51:1–4 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup>Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. <sup>3</sup>For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. <sup>4</sup>Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

Ps. 32:5 I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

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The will of God for saints is that in all things they give thanks.<sup>47</sup> Just as joy and rejoicing will fill the standing believer's heart, so should the giving of thanks be his constant habit. There is much to thank God for, and the Holy Spirit will remind us of it daily. So many blessings have been given to believers by God that they are exhorted not to forget all of them. Hence, no Christian, regardless of his attention to detail, could ever calculate and sum up properly all that God has done for him. For this reason the spiritual exhortation is to *forget not all His benefits*. It is worthy of note that there is no true Christian who is not first a thankful Christian. *Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits* (Ps. 103:2).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Ps. 103:2) The call here on his soul is not to forget these divine dealings, as laying the foundation for praise. We shall find, when we reach the end of life, that all which God has done, however dark and mysterious it may have appeared at the time, was so connected with our good as to make it a proper subject of praise and thanksgiving.

The opposite of manifesting godly thankfulness is remaining unthankful.<sup>48</sup> He who is not thankful to the Lord and all that has been given to him must in some degree or measure murmur against Him.<sup>49</sup>

So great also is the sin of unthankfulness that it is connected to not giving the Lord the glory due His name and is a very clear indication of man's spiritual depravity. *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened* (Rom. 1:21).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Rom. 1:21) *Neither were thankful*— ... The apostle here clearly regards this unwillingness to render gratitude to God for his mercies as one of the causes of their subsequent corruption and idolatry. The reasons of this are the following.

(1) the effect of ingratitude is to render the heart hard and insensible.

(2) people seek to forget the Being to whom they are unwilling to exercise gratitude.

(3) to do this, they fix their affections on other things; and hence, the pagan expressed their gratitude not to God, but to the sun, and moon, and stars, etc., the mediums by which God bestows his favors upon people. And we may here learn that an unwillingness to thank God for his mercies is one of the most certain causes of alienation and hardness of heart.

***1 Thessalonians 5:19 Quench not the Spirit.***

<sup>47</sup> Eph. 5:20 *Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Col. 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

Col. 3:17 *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

Phil. 4:6 *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

<sup>48</sup> II Tim. 3:2 *For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,*

<sup>49</sup> Num. 14:2 *And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!*

Deut. 1:27 *And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.*

Being filled with God's Holy Spirit will create a divine fire within the believer.<sup>50</sup> It is this supernatural driving force that should never be quenched. This could be done if saints do not care for themselves spiritually and/or if they engage so much in the world, that their spiritual fire is dampened. To *quench not the Spirit* means that believers should not dampen the spiritual fire placed within their souls, nor resist the Spirit's urging to carry out the Lord's divine will in their lives. In truth, every true and faithful Christian will be on fire for the Lord. Wherever then the Spirit of God truly abides and men are led by It, spiritual fire will fill their souls. Like the two men on the road to Emmaus, the inward man will burn with spiritual excitement when Christ is revealing Himself to His people.<sup>51</sup> It is this spiritual fire within the soul that is the genesis of all true spiritual transfor-

mation and gospel advancement. For he who burns with spiritual excitement for the Lord will also quickly seek to spread His name to others.

It is common in Scripture for God's presence to be manifested in the form of fire. This is because fire is one of the elements that God likens Himself to. Examples include when the Lord revealed Himself to Moses in a burning bush<sup>52</sup> and later manifested His presence to both Moses and Israel on Mount Sinai, through smoke and a visible holy fire.<sup>53</sup> Israel was led to Canaan via a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.<sup>54</sup> When Daniel received his vision of the Ancient of Days, he observed the Lord sitting upon a throne ablaze with fire<sup>55</sup>—even as when God spoke to Israel He spoke out of the midst of a fire.<sup>56</sup> The Psalms also speak of a spiritual fire devouring all before the Lord while a

50 Luke 3:16 *John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:*

51 Luke 24:32 *And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?*

52 Exod. 3:2-6 *And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. <sup>3</sup>And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. <sup>4</sup>And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. <sup>5</sup>And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. <sup>6</sup>Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.*

53 Exod. 19:18 *And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.*

54 Exod. 13:21 *And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:*

Exod. 40:38 *For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.*

55 Dan. 7:9 *I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.*

56 Deut. 4:33 *Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?*

Deut. 5:22 *These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.*

Deut. 5:24 *And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth.*

Deut. 9:10 *And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words, which the LORD spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly.*

## The Dead Shall Rise

tempest raged round about.<sup>57</sup> The gospels reveal that the Messiah, Jesus Christ, would baptize His disciples with the Holy Spirit, and with fire.<sup>58</sup> On the day of Pentecost, when the apostles were gathered together in the upper room obeying Jesus' command to wait for the promise of the Father,<sup>59</sup> which we now know as the Holy Spirit, the Scripture reveals that the Spirit descended from heaven, accompanied by a *rushing mighty wind* and *cloven tongues like as of fire*.<sup>60</sup> The Bible also reveals that the Lord will try every man's work through the agency of fire in order to determine its true worth, whether it is precious stone—or wood, hay, and stubble.<sup>61</sup> Thus fire is often used to denote the presence of the Lord and if necessary, His

anger and judgment toward sin.<sup>62</sup> Last, in respect to the Son of God and in John's vision of the Savior, Jesus is portrayed in heaven, as possessing eyes as a flame of fire. *His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire* (Rev. 1:14).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Rev. 1:14) *His eyes were as a flame of fire*.—Comp. Revelation 19:12; Daniel 10:6.<sup>63</sup> The eyes of the Lord, which are in every place, beholding the evil and the good, are here described as like unto fire, to express not merely indignation (He had looked once on the Jewish rulers in indignation) against evil, but determination to consume it; for our God is a consuming fire, purging away sin from those who forsake sin, and consuming in their sin

57 Ps. 50:3 *Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.*

58 Luke 3:16 *John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:*

59 Acts 1:4 *And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.*

60 Acts 2:1–4 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

61 I Cor. 3:12–13 *Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*

62 Num. 11:1 *And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.*

Num. 16:35 *And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.*

II Kgs. 1:10–14 *And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight. Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight.*

63 Rev. 19:12 *His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.*

Dan. 10:6 *His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.*

those who refuse to be separated from it. (See Revelation 20:9; Daniel 7:9–10; Jude 1:7.<sup>64</sup>)

By understanding the spiritual nature of God, as a fire, we should recognize the great importance of Paul's command to the Thessalonians to *quench not the Spirit*, which is in fact minimizing and suppressing the Spirit's powerful influence in our lives. To therefore *quench the Spirit* is to minimize God's spiritual and strong presence in our lives and therefore to limit His will from being fully obeyed. To *quench the Spirit* is to quench that holy spiritual fire produced by the Holy Spirit, which has been placed in all true believers. It is to dampen the spiritual zeal that prompts men to carry out God's will and make His name known to the world. He also who has lost his fire for the Lord has equally lost all true fellowship with Him—simply because there is no stronger evidence that a man is both filled with and then is led by God's Spirit than when spiritual fire fills his soul. Hence, if spiritual fire is not what drives a man, then you can be

certain that the Holy Spirit no longer governs him, and sadly, sometimes has even completely left him.<sup>65</sup> Consequently like love, where fire is not you can be sure God is not. For no man can be filled with the Holy Spirit and not be filled with a passionate desire and fervor to both know more of God, and do His will.

(*Benson Commentary*, I Thess. 5:19) *Quench not the Spirit*— ... It is easy to observe that the qualities and effects of the Spirit's influences are here compared to those of fire. See note on Matthew 3:11.<sup>66</sup> And as fire may be quenched, not only by pouring water upon it, or heaping upon it earth and ashes, but by withholding fuel from it, or even by neglecting to stir it up; so the enlightening, quickening, renewing, purifying, and comforting operations of the Spirit may be quenched, not only by the commission of known and wilful sin, and by immersing our minds too deeply in worldly business, and burdening them with worldly cares, but by omitting to use the private or public means of grace, the fuel provided to nourish this sacred fire, and by neglecting to stir up the gifts and graces which are in us.

64 Rev. 20:9 *And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.*

Dan. 7:9–10 *I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.<sup>10</sup> A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.*

Jude 1:7 *Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*

65 I Sam. 16:14 *But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.*

66 Matt. 3:11 *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*



## I Thessalonians 5:20–28

*I Thessalonians 5:20 Despise not prophesyings.*

**T**HE Greek word for *prophesyings* is #4394 *prophēteia*. *Strong's Concordance's* definition is as follows:

prophecy, prophesying; the gift of communicating and enforcing revealed truth.

*HELPS Word-studies* defines *prophēteia* as follows:

“(from 4396 *prophētēs*, ‘prophet,’ derived from 4253 *prō*, ‘before’ and 5346 *phēmí*, ‘make clear, assert as a priority’)—properly, what is clarified beforehand; prophecy which involves divinely-empowered forth-telling (asserting the mind of God) or fore-telling (prediction).

*Tayer's Greek Lexicon* defines *prophēteia* as—

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.

Directly after the command to *quench not the spirit* we have the divine com-

mandment to *despise not prophesyings*. One of the reasons the Thessalonians were instructed by the apostle to *despise not prophesyings* is that of all the gifts of the Spirit, prophecy is that which produces edification for the entire church.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, coupled with the command to quench not the Spirit and the spiritual fire associated with it, now the apostle tells the Thessalonians not to despise prophesying. To *quench not the Spirit* and to *despise not prophesyings* are linked together so that the fire of the Holy Spirit should not be dampened because of a low view of prophetic truth. Prophecy is also the gift of the Spirit that is brought forth from the inspiration of the Spirit, whereby the Holy Spirit will inspire a message directly linked to an assembly or individual it is intended for. Prophecy, when it is genuine and from above, is highly necessary to remind those gathered in the Lord's name that the Lord knows the hearts of all men.<sup>2</sup>

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, I Thess. 5:20) *Despise not prophesyings*.—The highest outward or charismatic manifestation of this inward fire was the gift of “prophecy” (1 Corinthians 12:28; 1 Corinthians 14:1; 1 Corinthians 14:5; 1 Corinthians 14:39),<sup>3</sup> which was an inspired and inspiring

1 I Cor. 14:4–5 *He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. <sup>5</sup>I would that ye all spake with tongues but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.*

2 I Cor. 14:24–25 *But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: <sup>25</sup>And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.*

3 I Cor. 12:28 *And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*

I Cor. 14:1 *Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.*

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preaching. The despondency of the Thesalonians led them not only to quench the fervour of the Holy Ghost in their own bosoms, but to turn a cold and disparaging ear to the sanguine “prophets” who preached to them, the effect of which insensibility was to “quench the Spirit” by degrees in the prophets also. It is because of this double effect of gloominess, inward upon themselves, and outward upon others, that the command, “Quench not,” occurs between the exhortation to thanksgiving and the warning not to despise prophecy.

Prophecy will be either foretelling or forthtelling. This includes foretelling the future<sup>4</sup> or forthtelling some hidden yet present truth brought forth by the inspiration of the Spirit.<sup>5</sup> Nothing that is truly prophetic and is brought forth directly from God is either premeditated or imagined by man. God is the origin of

true prophecy, and those present when it is brought forth will know it.

First Corinthians reveals that believers should greatly desire the gift of prophecy to be brought forth when saints gather in Christ’s name. *Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy* (I Cor. 14:1). Because the church needs to further understand God and His will for man, the church should earnestly desire the gift of prophecy. This is not to say that those who do not have the gift of prophecy should attempt to bring forth divine revelation that has never been given to them by God, but rather that those who have been imparted with such a spiritual gift as this should have their revelations both embraced and recognized as having their source in God. All Christians, therefore, should highly esteem the

*I Cor. 14:5 I would that ye all spake with tongues but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.*

*I Cor. 14:39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.*

*4 II Chron. 20:37 Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the LORD hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish.*

*Jer. 25:30 Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The LORD shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth.*

*Ezek. 6:2-7 Son of man, set thy face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them, <sup>3</sup>And say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys; Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places. <sup>4</sup>And your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain men before your idols. <sup>5</sup>And I will lay the dead carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars. <sup>6</sup>In all your dwellingplaces the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished. <sup>7</sup>And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.*

*Amos 7:15-17 And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel. <sup>16</sup>Now therefore hear thou the word of the LORD: Thou sayest, Prophesy not against Israel, and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac. <sup>17</sup>Therefore thus saith the LORD; Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land.*

*5 Jer. 26:12-13 Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard. <sup>15</sup>Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.*

*Luke 1:67-75 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, <sup>68</sup>Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, <sup>69</sup>And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; <sup>70</sup>As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: <sup>71</sup>That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; <sup>72</sup>To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; <sup>73</sup>The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, <sup>74</sup>That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, <sup>75</sup>In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.*

speaking forth of prophetic truth in the church, coupled with divine love, so that through both a gift of the Spirit,<sup>6</sup> prophecy, and a fruit of the Spirit,<sup>7</sup> love, spiritual edification is brought forth. And just as love should be hot, not lukewarm,<sup>8</sup> so also should prophetic truth burn within the soul. If anyone cannot discern between that which his own mind brings forth and that which the Holy Spirit brings forth, then he should never claim to be speaking for God.

It is also common that those who lack Christ's baptism of the Spirit and fire will seek to condemn and mock the spiritual fervor of the Holy Spirit in Christ's true saints.<sup>9</sup> The Greek word for *despise* is #1848 *eksouthenēō*. HELPS Word-studies says it is “(from 1537 /ek, ‘completely out from,’ which intensifies *outheneō*, ‘bring to naught, reduce to nothing’)—properly, cast out as nothing; set at naught; ‘to count as nothing, to treat with utter contempt.’ Strong’s Concordance defines the word as “to despise, treat with contempt,” with its usage as “I set at naught, ignore, despise.” Not only those outside the church but also many who claim to

be in her will despise and set at naught the divine gift of prophecy. Hence, those comfortable in religion will want nothing to shake their dull state, even if it is the Spirit of God Who is intending to do so. Thus, many who claim to believe in God will push aside and ultimately treat with contempt that which is actually inspired by God. This was the habit of rebellious Israel, who rejected the prophets’ inspired words,<sup>10</sup> and it is still clearly present and common today among many who profess to both believe in and follow the Son of God but ultimately reject the Holy Spirit’s promptings in His church.

When inspiration of the Spirit is present in an assembly and prophecy is brought forth from God, those who are unbelievers or unlearned will recognize the presence of the Lord and come to realize for themselves that God is among them. *But if all prophecy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth* (I Cor. 14:24–25). Un-

6 I Cor. 12:4–11 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. <sup>5</sup>And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup>And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. <sup>7</sup>But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. <sup>8</sup>For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; <sup>9</sup>To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; <sup>10</sup>To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: <sup>11</sup>But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

Rom. 12:5–7 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. <sup>6</sup>Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; <sup>7</sup>Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; <sup>7</sup> Gal. 5:22–23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, <sup>23</sup>Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

8 Rev. 3:15–16 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. <sup>16</sup>So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

9 Acts 2:13–15 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine. <sup>14</sup>But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: <sup>15</sup>For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

10 I Sam. 8:7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

Isa. 30:10 Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:

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doubtedly no church can worship God as it should if it does not regularly feel the Lord's presence through the gift of prophecy manifested among its members. Understandably, for actual faith in God to be produced, the true Word of God must be spoken.<sup>11</sup> Since it is the Word of God that actually prompts faith in God, this must include God's will being revealed through prophetic truth. In respect to the gift of prophecy and its penetrating effect on the unlearned and unbelieving, Barnes writes,

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 14:25) And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest—Made manifest to himself in a surprising and remarkable manner. He shall be led to see the "real" designs and motives of his heart. His conscience would be awakened; he would recall his former course of life; he would see that it was evil; and the present state of his heart would be made known to himself. It is possible that he would suppose that the speaker was aiming directly at him, and "revealing" his feelings to others; for such an effect is often produced. The convicted sinner often supposes that the preacher particularly intends "him," and wonders that he has such an acquaintance with his feelings and his life; and often supposes that he is designing to disclose his feelings to the congregation. It is possible that Paul here may mean that the prophets, by inspiration, would be able to reveal some secret facts in regard to the stranger; or to state the ill design which he might have had in coming into the assembly; or to state some things in regard to him which could be known only to himself; as was the case with Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1,<sup>12</sup> seq.); but perhaps it is better to understand this in a more general sense, as describing the proper and more common effect of truth, when it is applied*

by a man's own conscience. Such effects are often witnessed now; and such effects show the truth of religion; its adaptedness to people; the omniscience and the power of God; the design of the conscience, and its use in the conversion of sinners

*And so falling down on his face—*The usual posture of worship or reverence in eastern countries. It was performed by sinking on the knees and hands, and then placing the face on the ground. This might be done publicly; or the apostle may mean to say that it would lead him to do it in private.

*He will worship God—*He will be converted, and become a Christian.

### ***1 Thessalonians 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.***

After the encouragement of the Thessalonians to *despise not prophesyings* comes the command to *prove all things and hold fast to that which is good*. This undoubtedly includes determining where true prophetic truth is being spoken and where it is only presented as such. To *prove all things* is necessary, since many have claimed to speak for the Lord but actually do not represent Him at all.<sup>13</sup> Discerning of spirits<sup>14</sup> is therefore both critical and necessary to ensure that nothing that does not have its source in God is allowed into His church. This is why all things should be proved by both God's Word and God's Spirit before they are confirmed as having come from Him. The simple believe every word, and because they have no fixed doctrines or truths by which to be governed, they will often embrace many things not inspired or led by the Holy Spirit. *The simple believeth every word:*

11 Rom. 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

12 Acts 5:1 *But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,*

13 Matt. 7:21–23 *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*<sup>22</sup> *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*<sup>23</sup> *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

14 I Cor. 12:10 *To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:*

*but the prudent man looketh well to his going* (Prov. 14:15).

(*Benson Commentary*, Prov. 14:15) *A foolish man; believeth every word*—Is easily deceived with the smooth words and fair pretences of false and deceitful men;

Not one person, nor one man who professes to walk by and be led by the Spirit, should be considered as the Lord's without careful biblical and spiritual scrutiny. Thus, it is imperative that God's people learn the great difference between the Holy Spirit with His true workings and the false prophets and ministries that claim to come in Christ's name but in truth have no real connection to Him. *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world* (I John 4:1).

(*Benson Commentary*, I John 4:1) *Believe not every spirit*—By which any teacher is, or professes to be, actuated: or, believe not every teacher who pretends to be inspired by the Spirit of God; *but try the spirits*—Namely, *whether they are of God*—By the rule which God hath given. We are to try all spirits by the written word: *To the law and to the testimony!* If any man speak not according to these, the spirit which actuates him is not of God. *Because many false prophets*—Or false teachers; *are gone forth into the world*—With an intention to draw disciples after them.

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(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I John 4:1) The true and the false teachers of religion alike claimed to be under the influence of the Spir-

it of God, and it was of importance that all such pretensions should be examined. It was not to be admitted because anyone claimed to have been sent from God that therefore he was sent. Every such claim should be subjected to the proper proof before it was conceded. All pretensions to divine inspiration, or to being authorised teachers of religion, were to be examined by the proper tests, because there were many false and delusive teachers who set up such claims in the world.

Christians are instructed to *believe not every spirit*, but *try the spirits*, lest spiritual imposters are mistaken for those actually inspired by the Lord.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, I Thess. 5:21) *Prove all things*.—The right reading inserts a “but”:—“I bid you pay all reverence to the cheering utterances of your prophets (comp. Acts 15:32);<sup>15</sup> but take care! put everything to the test.” That the warning was needed, or would be needed soon, is shown by 2Thessalonians 2:2.<sup>16</sup> It is couched in general terms (all things), but, of course, has special reference to all things purporting to be manifestations of the Spirit. And how were these revelations to be tested? If they were not in accordance (1) with the original tradition (2Thessalonians 2:2), (2) with the supernatural inspirations of the other prophets who sat as judges (1Corinthians 14:29),<sup>17</sup> (3) with enlightened common sense (I John 4:1),<sup>18</sup> they could not be “good.” The word “good” here is not vague and general good in the moral sense—not the same Greek word as in 1Thessalonians 5:15<sup>19</sup>—but “good” in the sense of “genuine,” ...

***I Thessalonians 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.***

15 Acts 15:32 *And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.*

16 II Thess. 2:2 *That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*

17 I Cor. 14:29 *Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.*

18 I John 4:1 *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*

19 I 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.*

If a man is led by the Holy Spirit and has a strong foundation of apostolic doctrine, he will avoid not only doing evil but also doing any other thing that might have the appearance of it. Evil is the work of the devil, and any evil, even if it is so only in appearance, should never be even remotely connected to the children of God. This world also, because it is under the influence of Satan,<sup>20</sup> will promote evil as a form of good. Undoubtedly, he who engages in and practices evil hates the light. *For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd* (John 3:20). *Hate* is a strong word, yet that is exactly what exists in those who because they abide in darkness, hate the light. The Greek word for *hate* is #3404 *miseó*. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* defines it as “From a primary *misos* (hatred); to detest (especially to persecute); by extension, to love less—hate(-ful).”

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, John 3:20) Not only does the man that doeth evil love darkness rather than light, but he hates the light. (Comp. Note on John 7:7.)<sup>21</sup> Its presence makes manifest and reproveth his works, which he would hide even from himself. It illumines the dark and secret chambers of the heart, and reveals thoughts and deeds which conscience, seeing in this light, trembles at, and turns away to darkness that it may hide itself from its own gaze.

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(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, John 3:20) that men by nature “hate” the gospel. No man who is a sinner loves it; and no man by nature is disposed to come to it, any more than an adulterer or thief is disposed to come to the daylight, and do his deeds of wickedness there.

3. The reason why the gospel, is hated is that men are sinners. “Christ is hated because sin is loved.”

When a nation or generation forsakes God and chooses sin, it will first attempt to change the definition of what God considers as sin. This is done to encourage the spread of evil in the world. Hence, if the sentiment is that sin is not sin and is not an affront to God, then more people can be led into practicing it. For this reason Satan and those led by him will label *evil good, and good evil*. Isaiah speaks of this devilish practice, routinely engaged in by those who have rejected divine rule: *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!* (Isa. 5:20). It is not enough for evil men to depart from the light, since they will simultaneously attempt to pervert what true light really is. Therefore sinners and/or apostates will consistently claim that sin is righteousness and that righteousness is sin. Not content with merely breaking God's commandments themselves, those who walk in sin will routinely seek to deceive others that sin is not sin and is actually righteousness.

(*Benson Commentary*, Isa. 5:20) *Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil*—That endeavour to confound both the names and the natures of virtue and vice, of piety and impiety; commend and applaud what is evil, and disparage and discountenance what is good; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness, &c.—Ignorance and error, for knowledge and truth: in other words, who subvert, or pervert, all the great principles of truth, wisdom, and of righteousness. A most corrupt condition of a church and state is that indeed, “in which men, accustomed to vices, begin, with the things themselves, to lose also the names of them, and to draw a veil, as it were, over their impieties, by sanctifying their crimes with the names of virtues.”

20 (NIV) *I John 5:19 We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.*

21 *John 7:7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.*

To fear the Lord is *to hate evil*,<sup>22</sup> and all who possess true reverence for Him will do exactly this. It is for this reason that engaging in even the appearance of evil should be avoided. Ultimately light and darkness should never be merged or molded into one, simply because they are totally contrary one to another, and therefore any truce or connection between the two should never exist. This is the will of God, and you can be sure that any who speak contrary to this do not speak for Him.<sup>23</sup>

***I Thessalonians 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.***

The Greek word for *blameless* is #3648 *holokléros*. *Strong's Concordance* defines it as “complete, entire.” Its usage is “complete in every part, sound, perfect, entire.” Jesus saves the whole man, his whole being.

*(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, I Thess. 5:23) Sanctify you wholly.*—Rather, *sanctify you whole*. The idea is rather that of leaving no part unsanctified,

Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians was that the entirety of their whole being, body, soul, and spirit would be preserved blameless at Christ's coming. It is thus the will of God that every part of a man, including his body, soul and spirit, is sanctified and actually preserved blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus.

***I Thessalonians 5:24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.***

The faithfulness spoken of is directly related to the previous verse, that God would be faithful to sanctify the believer's body, soul, and spirit at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because it is God Who calls, it is also God Who faithfully saves. The faithfulness of God therefore extends far beyond merely calling men to Himself, since His faithfulness will continue until the saved inherit all that He has purposed for them. Thankfully, all weight and responsibility for the believer being found fit for heaven and sanctified in God's sight rests on the one Who has called him to heaven. God is faithful, and those called by Him through Jesus Christ should wholeheartedly and without reservation believe this. *God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord* (I Cor. 1:9).

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 1:9) God is faithful*—That is, God is true, and constant, and will adhere to his promises. He will not deceive. He will not promise, and then fail to perform; he will not commence anything which he will not perfect and finish. The object of Paul in introducing the idea of the faithfulness of God here, is to show the reason for believing that the Christians at Corinth would be kept unto everlasting life. The evidence that they will persevere depends on the fidelity of God; and the argument of the apostle is, that as they had been called by Him into the fellowship of his Son, his faithfulness of character would render it certain that they would be kept to eternal life.

It is worth noting that God is the source of all calls of God. The work of salvation, therefore, has always been the Lord's work, and because of this, He will complete all that is necessary to save the believer

<sup>22</sup> Prov. 8:13 *The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.*

<sup>23</sup> I Tim. 6:3–5 *If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; <sup>4</sup>He is proud, knowing nothing, but dotting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, <sup>5</sup>Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.*

## The Dead Shall Rise

through the working of His own spiritual and mighty power.<sup>24</sup>

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, I Thess. 5:24)  
It is an act of grace and mercy to call men; but when called, God's faithfulness is engaged to preserve them, and perfect the work begun:

### *I Thessalonians 5:25 Brethren, pray for us.*

Paul realized not only that God was the source of his strength but also that other believers' prayers were necessary to ensure his future safety and continued ministerial success. No believer should go it alone, and none will if saints pray for one another as God has willed them to do. Undoubtedly, if mature believers pray for those sent to preach Christ, such prayers will not go unheeded or unanswered. Ultimately, every man both needs and is dependent upon the prayers of others. The apostle knew this and thus implored the Thessalonians to pray for himself, as well as Timothy and Silas.

### *I Thessalonians 5:26 Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.*

All God's people are to be greeted in a spiritual and holy manner. The Jews and many of the Gentiles around them demonstrated this respect and affection by sharing a *holy kiss* on the cheek, hand, or head. It was also the woman who kissed Jesus' feet who revealed her great love and affection for the Savior. *Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman since the time I came in hath not*

*ceased to kiss my feet* (Luke 7:45). It is also hard to speak of a kiss without remembering the deceptive kiss of Judas when he betrayed Christ,<sup>25</sup> feigning friendship toward the Savior when actually his heart was set on betrayal. Hence, by both positive and negative examples it is observed that the biblical custom of greeting one another with a holy kiss is visible throughout God's Word.<sup>26</sup> It was evidenced in I Samuel in Saul's ordination<sup>27</sup> and in the book of Exodus as a display of deference and respect for those older than us.<sup>28</sup> At times there is no greater way to reveal love and affection for our brothers and sisters in Christ than by greeting them with a holy kiss. And though in our present Western culture spiritual wisdom should be used regarding this custom, it is surely not out of step with the revelation of God's Word.

### *I Thessalonians 5:27 I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.*

We have here Paul's charge to the Thessalonians that the epistle he penned to them should be read by all the holy brethren. The Greek for *charge* is #1775 *enorkizō*. It means "to adjure." According to *Strong's Concordance* its word origin is #3726 *horkizō*, which means "to make (one) swear, to adjure." The usage is "I adjure by, charge solemnly by."

(*Benson Commentary*, I Thess. 5:27) *I charge you*—Greek, ορκίζω υμᾶς, *I adjure you*, that is, I lay you under the obligation of an oath;

24 II Tim. 1:9 [God] hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

25 Luke 22:47–48 And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. <sup>48</sup>But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

26 Rom. 16:16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

I Cor. 16:20 All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.

II Cor. 13:12 Greet one another with an holy kiss.

27 I Sam. 10:1 Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?

28 Exod. 18:7 And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent.

*that this epistle*—The first he wrote; *be read to all the holy brethren*—Namely, of your church. ... This epistle was doubtless sent to the presidents and pastors of the Thessalonian church, and the command, that the epistle should be read, was delivered to them.

“The same course, we may suppose, the apostle followed with respect to all his other inspired epistles. They were sent by him to the elders of the churches, for whose use they were principally designed, with a direction that they should be read publicly by some of their number to the brethren in their assemblies for worship; and that not once or twice, but frequently, that all might have the benefit of the instructions contained in them.

That which is a *charge* should not be compromised. Thus, in every Christian assembly it is imperative that Paul’s epistles to the Thessalonians should be read, studied, and ultimately preached to all the holy brethren. By doing so, we can hope that the return of Jesus Christ both maintains and holds the proper place it ought to in believers’ hearts. What caused the Thessalonians to sound out the Word of the Lord with such a holy, spiritual fervor was that they knew Jesus would soon return, and so they joyfully sought to spread His message to the world.

The ultimate end of all hope is to be—at Christ’s return, through Christ’s power—transformed into the same image as the Savior. It is also this hope, if believed, that purifies the Christian’s heart and life. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure* (I John 3:2–3).

(*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, I John 3:3) This hope of seeing the Saviour, and of being made like him; that is, every true Christian. On the nature and influence of hope, see the notes at Romans 8:24–25.<sup>29</sup>

*Purifieth himself*—Makes himself holy. That is, under the influence of this hope of being like the Saviour, he puts forth those efforts in struggling against sin, and in overcoming his evil propensities, which are necessary to make him pure. The apostle would not deny that for the success of these efforts we are dependent on divine aid; but he brings into view, as is often done in the sacred writings, the agency of man himself as essentially connected with success. Compare Philippians 2:12.<sup>30</sup> The particular thought here is, that the hope of being like Christ, and of being permitted to dwell with him, will lead a man to earnest efforts to become holy, and will be actually followed by such a result.

What a man hopes for must, and will, form his character. Consequently, when saints set their affection on the return of Jesus Christ and possess genuine hope in it, they will be spiritually changed in the process. *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure* (I John 3:3). There is nothing that purifies a man’s soul more, and prepares it better for the judgment, than possessing genuine and sincere belief in the Son of God’s return. It is this future anticipation of seeing the Lord in glory and being made like Him that greatly purifies a man’s religion. What men hope for is that which will ultimately form their character. When this is Christ, then it will be His image that men are transformed into. Thus, one of the great keys to spiritual transformation is by *beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord*.<sup>31</sup> This principle is

29 Rom. 8:24–25 *For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?* <sup>25</sup>*But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

30 Phil. 2:12 *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

31 II Cor. 3:18 *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

so much greater than when men seek to change themselves through an unhealthy preoccupation with self. Hence, it is not by saints looking at their own reflections and shortcomings in the mirror that they are changed but rather only by beholding the glory of the Lord, which will produce transformation of life. The return of the Son of God in glory is also the true source of all genuine spiritual revival. We know this simply because it was belief in the Lord Jesus Christ and His return that prompted the Thessalonians to sound out the Word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia but also in all other places their faith was spoken of.<sup>32</sup> They had been spiritually illuminated that Jesus Christ was Lord of all and were equally assured that He would come again to assert His lordship over the world.<sup>33</sup>

*I Thessalonians 5:28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.*

Appropriately, the apostle closes his epistle to the Thessalonians the same way he

began it<sup>34</sup>—by reminding them that it was through the grace of God that they were saved.<sup>35</sup> Christianity at its core is a religion of grace. The specific grace spoken of is that grace given to sinners through the person of God's Son,<sup>36</sup> whereby through sincere and genuine belief in Him<sup>37</sup> they can receive forgiveness of sin and are promised to share in Christ's eternal glory.<sup>38</sup> The return of the Son of God in glory therefore is linked to and purposed for revealing not only Christ's own glory but also the purposed glory that will be imparted to all called to heaven through Him. Thankfully the *glory* of God, like the *grace* of God, is a gift from Him. It is the Lord Who gives *grace and glory*, and if man has received grace as a gift from the Lord, then you can be sure that he will also have divine glory imparted to him. *For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly* (Ps. 84:11).

32 *I 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.*

33 *Phil. 2:9–11 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: <sup>10</sup>That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; <sup>11</sup>And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

34 *I 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.*

35 *Eph. 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

36 *John 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

37 *Acts 16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

*Rom. 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

38 *Col. 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

## II Thessalonians 1:1–12

**II Thessalonians 1:1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:**

**P**AUL, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians. Paul's spiritual humility is seen in that though he was the primary author of the epistle, he did not feel the need to single himself out from these other servants of Christ. This teaches us that all ministry is a collective effort of the entire Christian church. And though members may differ as to where Christ has placed them,<sup>1</sup> this in no way infers that not all are needed for ministerial outreach.<sup>2</sup>

(Pulpit Commentary, II Thess. 1:1) *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus.* This Epistle, like the former, is written in their conjoint names, as all three were engaged in the planting of the Church in Thessalonica. *Unto the Church of*

*the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*In God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

(Meyer's NT Commentary, II Thess. 1:1) according to the Pauline custom, the fulness of Christian blessings is derived *in common* from God *and Christ*. The absolute *πατρός* (comp. Galatians 1:3; 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4)<sup>3</sup> is equivalent to *πατρός ἡμῶν*, more frequently used elsewhere in similar places; comp. Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:2; Php 1:2; Colossians 1:2; Philemon 1:3.<sup>4</sup>

The apostle recognized whom the Thessalonians were in—*God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*. He knew the Thessalonians through previous contact as abiding in both the Father and the Son.<sup>5</sup> He also knew that their profession of faith was sincere as they had demonstrated in

1 I Cor. 12:18 *But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*

2 I Cor. 12:22 *Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:*

3 Gal. 1:3 *Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,*

I Tim. 1:2 *Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.*

II Tim. 1:2 *To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Tit. 1:4 *To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.*

4 Rom. 1:7 *To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

I Cor. 1:3 *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

II Cor. 1:2 *Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Eph. 1:2 *Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Phil. 1:2 *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Col. 1:2 *To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Phlm. 1:3 *Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

5 I 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.*

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their lives the spiritual fruits of faith, love, and hope, which were all collective proof of their being born of God and abiding in His will. They were a true church of Jesus Christ, founded by Him, and the apostle recognized them as such.

### ***II Thessalonians 1:2 Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.***

This second epistle to the Thessalonians begins much like his first one, reminding these early believers of the *grace* and *peace* sent to them by *God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*. God calls sinners to Himself through the redemptive work of Christ<sup>6</sup> so that His grace and peace may be given to them, replacing also promised wrath and judgment.

*Grace* is that disposition of God that desires good for the sinner and not evil. *Strong's Concordance* defines #5485 *charis* as "grace, kindness." *HELPS Word-studies* reveals the word as "preeminently used of the Lord's favor—freely extended to give Himself away to people (because He is 'always leaning toward them')." Because of God's grace—His kind disposition toward man—when men transgress against Him, they can be forgiven if they sincerely repent of their sins and seek divine forgiveness.<sup>7</sup> This teaches us that it is God's wish that no man should die in his sin or that fallen nature passed on

through Adam. Ultimately, divine grace is meant to prevent this if there is genuine repentance for sin.

The Greek word for *peace* is #1515 *eiréné*, meaning "peace, quietness, rest."<sup>8</sup> *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word as "(from *eirō*, 'to join, tie together into a whole')—properly, wholeness, i.e. when all essential parts are joined together; peace (God's gift of wholeness)." *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* defines *eiréné* as "a state of national tranquility; exemption from the rage and havoc of war." It is also defined as "peace between individuals, i.e. harmony, concord." For those who believe that God raised Jesus from the dead and subsequently make Jesus Christ Lord of their lives, there is produced a state of harmony, tranquility, and peace with God.<sup>9</sup> It was for this purpose that Jesus died.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, when repentant sinners surrender their lives to the Son of God and His lordship over their lives, an armistice with God begins and peace with Him ensues. It is also by believing in and submitting to the lordship of God that men display their willingness to come under His divine government and rule. Because of this submission to divine authority, revealed by their reception of Christ's lordship over their lives, peace is established between them and God.

### ***II Thessalonians 1:3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as***

<sup>6</sup> Eph. 1:7 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

<sup>7</sup> II Chrn. 7:14 *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*

Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said unto them, 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 3:19 *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.*

<sup>8</sup> *Strong's Concordance*

<sup>9</sup> Rom. 5:1 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

<sup>10</sup> Col. 1:19–20 *For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; <sup>20</sup>And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*

*it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;*

In Paul's first letter he references the *work of faith* and *labor of love* evidenced by the church of Thessalonica.<sup>11</sup> In his second epistle he writes how the Thessalonians' *faith* had grown and their *charity* toward each other now abounded. This teaches us that it is both faith and love growing and developing in the Christian that prove spiritual advancement. Hence, there is no such thing as true spiritual development without the increase of these two divine fruits of the Spirit. Whereas knowledge, even if it is biblical, is not an accurate measure of either salvation or spiritual growth, manifesting sincere faith and love surely is. But if any have not received the Holy Spirit,<sup>12</sup> it will prove impossible for them either to possess or to manifest the divine and spiritual fruits of *faith* and *love*. Understandably, those whom God makes His children will manifest the same nature of their Father, and this is most visibly seen by their possessing *faith* and *love*, which are both divinely linked to Him.

**II Thessalonians 1:4** *So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:*

The Greek word for *patience* is #5281 *hupomoné*. *Strong's Concordance* defines it as "a remaining behind, a patient enduring." Its usage is "endurance, steadfastness, patient waiting for." HELPS

*Word-studies* states, "5281 *hupomoné* (from 5259 /*hypó*, 'under' and 3306 /*ménō*, 'remain, endure')—properly, remaining under, endurance; steadfastness, especially as God enables the believer to 'remain (endure) under' the challenges He allots in life." These definitions reveal that spiritual patience is needed to endure certain things in this life until the time comes for God's deliverance. Every trial has an end, and through sufficient faith and trust in the Lord, all trials for the Christian can be both endured and overcome. He who endures to the end shall be saved,<sup>13</sup> and he who trusts God fully with his life will not be disappointed. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation<sup>14</sup> even as continued faith in God is a strong catalyst for enduring worldly persecution.

*Faith* is the Greek word #4102 *pistis*. *Strong's Concordance* defines the word as "faith, belief, trust, confidence; fidelity, faithfulness." The gift of faith strengthens believers not to lose confidence in the Lord, regardless of the tribulations they are experiencing. No doubt, life is hard even without religious persecution, yet a firm and unyielding trust in the Lord makes trials bearable, trials that without faith would prove unbearable. Ultimately, at the base of any true walk with the Lord is a sincere and genuine trust in Him.<sup>15</sup> Practically, faith can do so much more for the human heart to encourage it than a room full of biblical knowledge ever could. It is also by knowing and having faith in the spiritual reality that God

11 I Thess. 1:3–4 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; <sup>4</sup>Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

12 Rom. 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

13 Matt. 24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14 II Pet. 2:9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

15 Ps. 9:10 And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

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is in control of all things<sup>16</sup> that enables the believer to be assured that the Lord has not left him and will in sufficient time deliver him.

***II Thessalonians 1:5 Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:***

The servant is not above his Master;<sup>17</sup> therefore, elements of what Jesus endured by His being despised and rejected of men must also be experienced by those who have come to believe upon Him. It is also the persecution of the righteous that provides spiritual proof of their worthiness to enter the kingdom of God's Son.<sup>18</sup>

***II Thessalonians 1:6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;***

Whenever God's people are greatly troubled, the Lord finds it just to recompense tribulation to those troubling them. Hence, God counts it as a *righteous thing* to recompense tribulation to all who trouble His children. All fathers maintain a right to defend their own, and our heavenly Father is no different. What men sow they will also reap;<sup>19</sup> therefore, any

who incite trouble and bring persecution against the people of God will have their own tribulations recompensed to them by God. This is a righteous, equitable, and fitting response by the Lord, and He will do exactly as He promises to do.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 1:6) Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you—*The sense is: "There will be a future judgment, because it is proper that God should punish those who now persecute you. It is not right that they should go unpunished, and triumph forever. It is not an arbitrary thing, a thing which is indifferent, a thing which may or may not be done; it is a just and proper thing that the wicked should be punished."

It is a false assumption of sinners that the Lord has no right to punish the wicked. But does not human law regularly engage in punishing lawbreakers? Should heaven then be restricted from punishing the wicked, as the earth does its criminals? Should not the Lord be afforded the same right to execute heavenly justice as human authorities rightly punish those who commit earthly crimes? It is thus unreasonable to assume that God should not be allowed the same right that men possess in order to maintain a civil society in which both sin and crime must be pun-

<sup>16</sup> Isa. 46:9–10 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, <sup>10</sup>Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

Acts 17:26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

Dan. 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Ps. 135:6 Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

Isa. 14:24 The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:

<sup>17</sup> Matt. 10:24 The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.

John 13:16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

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.

<sup>18</sup> Matt. 5:10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>19</sup> Gal. 6:7–8 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. <sup>8</sup>For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

ished lest evil completely overtake good. For the Lord then to punish the wicked<sup>20</sup> is not only not an unrighteous thing, but is in fact a very holy and righteous thing.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 1:6) people themselves believe that it is just that the wicked should be punished. They are constantly making laws, and affixing penalties to them, and executing them, under the belief that it is right. Can they regard it as wrong in God to do the same thing? Can that be wrong in him which is right in themselves?*

Who could consider anyone truly loving who turned a blind eye to sin and did not bring justice to the victim? Is not justice a part of love? And how could God truly be love if He remained unjust, through allowing those who do harm to go free? Ultimately God has reserved the right to punish the wicked even when they join together to commit it. *Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered* (Prov. 11:21). All sin is against the Lord<sup>21</sup> and His law and therefore shall not be tolerated by Him. This is the truth, even though many who regularly engage in sin vainly hope it should not be. *And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible* (Isa. 13:11). Regarding sin, it also makes no difference if the sinner is

a priest, prophet, or pastor—all breaking of divine law will receive the same righteous and just punishment. Whoever then commits evil sets himself up to be punished for it. Thus, just as those who do good are rewarded by the Lord<sup>22</sup> for their good deeds, so shall those who engage in evil be equally recompensed for the damage they have done.<sup>23</sup> *And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings* (Hos. 4:9).

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Hos. 4:9) The bad priest copies the sins which he should reprove, and excuses himself by the frailty of our common nature. The people, acutely enough, detect the worldliness or self-indulgence of the priest, and shelter themselves under his example. Their defense stands good before people; but what before God? Alike in sin, priest and people should be alike in punishment.*

**II Thessalonians 1:7** *And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,*

There is nothing Christians look forward to more than the Son of God's return from heaven. It is this that is the Christian's true hope, in which also he will discover deep spiritual rest. The *rest* that Paul speaks of that both he and the other apostles possessed is the *rest* produced when one re-

20 Isa. 13:11 *And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.*

Isa. 3:11 *Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.*

Ps. 145:20 *The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.*

21 Ps. 51:4 *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.* Josh. 7:20 *And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:*

Judg. 10:10 *And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim.*

22 Ps. 58:11 *So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.*

Prov. 11:18 *The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.*

Prov. 13:21 *Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repayed.*

23 Col. 3:25 *But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.*

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mains confident and has strong faith in Jesus Christ's being revealed from heaven, bringing with Him the power and glory of heaven. Accompanying Jesus in His return in glory will be angels of might, or *mighty angels*. This heavenly accompaniment of heaven's servants returning with the Son of God reveals Christ's ultimate authority over all of God's creation.<sup>24</sup> The presence of these heavenly companions is not needed to raise the dead but rather to assist the Son in rendering punishment on those who have rejected His reign. *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* (Matt. 16:27). Jesus' return in the glory of God therefore is purposed for displaying to the world the spiritual glory of the Father and His sovereignty over all of creation.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Matt. 16:27)* He will come in glory the glory of his Father the majesty with which God is accustomed to appear, and which befits God. He will be attended by angels. He will judge all people.

There is a certain glory, brilliance, and radiance that God alone possesses, and this divine and heavenly glory will be made astonishingly visible in the Son at His second coming. It will therefore be as God that the Son will judge the world. By openly displaying the Lord's brilliant glory to the earth's inhabitants, Jesus will commu-

nicate to all mankind His divine appointment to represent the Father, proven also by His coming in the Father's own glory. In truth it is Jesus Christ Who has been given by God the universal authority to judge both the dead and living,<sup>25</sup> to then stand as God judging the entire world.<sup>26</sup> No doubt, this celestial display of heavenly might will cause all those who have rejected Jesus Christ's rule to tremble as they visibly observe the very one they despised as Him Whom God has glorified. *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him* (Ps. 2:12).

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ps. 2:12)* The practice of kissing the hand of a monarch is not uncommon in European courts as a token of allegiance. The meaning here is that they should express their allegiance to the Son of God, or recognize him as the authorized King, with suitable expressions of submission and allegiance; that they should receive him as King, and submit to his reign. Applied to others, it means that they should embrace him as their Saviour.

*Lest he be angry*—If you do not acknowledge his claims, and receive him as the Messiah.

*And ye perish from the way*—The word *from* in this place is supplied by the translators. It is literally, "And ye perish the way." See the notes at Psalm 1:6.<sup>27</sup> The meaning here seems to be either "lest ye are lost in respect

<sup>24</sup> Matt. 28:18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* Eph. 1:20–22 *Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup>Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: <sup>22</sup>And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*

Col. 1:16–17 *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: <sup>17</sup>And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*

<sup>25</sup> Acts 10:42 *And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.*

<sup>26</sup> John 5:22 *For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:*

Acts 17:31 *Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

<sup>27</sup> Ps. 1:6 *For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.*

to the way,” that is, the way to happiness and salvation; or “lest ye fail to find the way” to life; or “lest ye perish by the way,” to wit, before you reach your destination, and accomplish the object you have in view. The design seems to be to represent them as pursuing a certain journey or path—as life is often represented (compare Psalm 1:1<sup>28</sup>)—and as being cut down before they reached the end of their journey.

*When his wrath is kindled*—When his wrath burns. Applying to anger or wrath a term which is common now, as when we speak of one whose anger is heated, or who is hot with wrath.

Since all judgment has been committed to the Son, those without a relationship with Him will quickly become aware of their eternal fate at His coming. Today all men are commanded to repent for their sin, lest on the Lord’s appointed day they will have to endure His wrath. As the Son of man,<sup>29</sup> Jesus has inherited the right to judge all mankind, and as the Son of God He has been given the divine and inherited right to rule all of creation in God’s stead.<sup>30</sup> All men, therefore, regardless of their natural state, whether living or dead, will one day be required to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. *Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead* (I Pet. 4:5). It is in accordance with divine will that the entirety of mankind must stand before the

judgment seat of both the Son of man and the Son of God. *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* (II Cor. 5:10).

(*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, II Cor. 5:10) Before we receive our eternal allotment it is proper that we should render our account of the manner in which we have lived, and of the manner in which we have improved our talents and privileges. In the nature of things, it is proper that we should undergo a trial before we receive our reward, or before we are punished; and God has made it necessary and certain, by his direct and positive appointment, that we should stand at the bar of the final judge; see Romans 14:10.<sup>31</sup>

The solemnity of this occasion should prompt all to deeply ponder what and who they are living for, since all religious sincerity will be tested and all religious hypocrisy will be revealed. The Scripture states that nothing will remain covered that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be made known.<sup>32</sup> It is this divine justice that the righteous crave. It is this divine justice that the ungodly despise. More than anything else, the Lord’s people greatly desire divine justice to be brought forth in the earth.<sup>33</sup> Jesus’ coming in the clouds and in the Father’s glory<sup>34</sup> will reveal that this time has arrived.

28 Ps. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*

29 John 5:27 *And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.*

Matt. 16:27–28 *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.* <sup>28</sup>*Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*

30 Phil. 2:9–11 *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: <sup>10</sup>That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; <sup>11</sup>And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

31 Rom. 14:10 *But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*

32 Luke 12:2 *For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.*

33 Rev. 6:10 *And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*

34 Mark 13:26 *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.*

**II Thessalonians 1:8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:**

The object of Christ's vengeance and punishment will be upon those who have rejected His rule. It is not a small thing to set at naught the good news of the gospel, nor is it an insignificant action to choose to disobey Him Whom God has appointed to rule the world. Undoubtedly most men do not consider it a great offense to reject either Jesus' rule or His gospel. Yet the Scripture is clear that divine punishment awaits all who though they knew the will of God, manifested in the person of God's Son, still rejected it. Understandably, there will be greater consequences for rejecting Jesus Christ and His gospel than even when Israel rejected Moses and the Mosaic law given to him.<sup>35</sup> The reason for this is that Jesus, the Son of God, is greater in might, glory, and heavenly rank than Moses, who was only the Lord's servant. *Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he*

*was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?* (Heb. 10:29). Therefore despising and rejecting the greatest representative of God, God's only begotten Son, will result in being worthy of greater judgment by Him.

*(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Heb. 10:29) Shall he be thought worthy.*—Better, shall he be accounted (or, judged) worthy, by God the Judge of all, when "the Day" shall come. In the act of apostasy the sinner trampled under foot the Son of God, treated with contempt and scorn Him to whom belongs this highest Name (Hebrews 1:1–4);<sup>36</sup> and the principle of this act becomes the principle of the whole succeeding life. That "blood" by which the new covenant was established (Hebrews 9:15–17)<sup>37</sup>—the blood in which he himself had received the sanctification which the law could not give—he has esteemed an unholy thing. There is no medium between highest reverence and utter contumely in such a case: to those who did not receive Jesus as Lord He was a deceiver (Matthew 27:63),<sup>38</sup> and one who deserved to die.

That Christ is said to return to the earth *in flaming fire* reveals that through *fire* the purification of the earth and its sin will be accomplished. Just as fire purifies,<sup>39</sup> so

35 Ezek. 20:13 *But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them.*

Dan. 9:11 *Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.*

36 Heb. 1:1–4 *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*

37 Heb. 9:15–17 *And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.*

38 Matt. 27:63 *Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.*

39 Zech. 13:9 *And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.*

shall the Son of God return purify and cleanse the world of all unholiness and unrighteousness. And just as Jesus' baptism of the Holy Spirit is associated with fire,<sup>40</sup> so shall He also, through His own fiery and just indignation, judge the wicked.

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, II Thess. 1:8) In flaming fire*—Greek, “In flame of fire”; or, as other oldest manuscripts read, “in fire of flame.” This flame of fire accompanied His manifestation in the bush (Ex 3:2);<sup>41</sup> also His giving of the law at Sinai (Ex 19:18).<sup>42</sup> Also it shall accompany His revelation at His advent (Da 7:9, 10),<sup>43</sup> symbolizing His own bright glory and His consuming vengeance against His foes (Heb 10:27; 12:29; 2Pe 3:7, 10).<sup>44</sup>

*taking*—literally, “giving” them, as their portion, “vengeance.”

*know not God*—the Gentiles primarily (Ps 79:6; Ga 4:8; 1Th 4:5);<sup>45</sup> not of course those involuntarily not knowing God, but those wilfully not knowing Him, as Pharaoh, who might have known God if he would, but who boasted “I know not the Lord” (Ex 5:2);<sup>46</sup> and as the heathen persecutors who might have known God by the preaching of those whom they persecuted. Secondarily, all who “profess to know God but in works deny Him” (Tit 1:16).<sup>47</sup>

*obey not the gospel*—primarily the unbelieving Jews (Ro 10:3, 16);<sup>48</sup> secondarily, all who obey not the truth (Ro 2:8).<sup>49</sup>

*I Pet. 1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:*

*Rev. 3:18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.*

*40 Matt 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*

*Luke 3:16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:*

*41 Exod. 3:2 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.*

*42 Exod. 19:18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.*

*43 Dan. 7:9–10 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.<sup>10</sup> A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.*

*44 Heb. 10:27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*

*Heb. 12:29 For our God is a consuming fire.*

*II Pet. 3:7 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.*

*II Pet. 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

*45 Ps. 79:6 Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.*

*Gal. 4:8 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.*

*I Thess. 4:5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:*

*46 Exod. 5:2 And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.*

*47 Tit. 1:16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.*

*48 Rom. 10:3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

*Rom. 10:16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?*

*49 Rom. 2:8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,*

## The Dead Shall Rise

Because Jesus has been declared the Son of God,<sup>50</sup> and has been given all judgment over man, it is paramount that men respond to His authority as God. For there will be none who will be able to escape the Son of God's wrath if they have rejected His rule. Simply put, all those who refuse to come under the government of the Son of God, Who is God's most vital representative of Himself, will have to endure His wrath.

***II Thessalonians 1:9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;***

The punishment that will be executed on all who chose not to obey the gospel of Jesus Christ will be their eternal removal from His presence. By this is meant that sinners will be given no part nor any share in the eternal light<sup>51</sup> and life<sup>52</sup> that are Christ's.

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, II Thess. 1:5–10) The Lord Jesus will in that day appear from heaven. He will come in the glory and power of the upper world. His light will be piercing, and his power consuming, to all who in that day shall be found as chaff. This appearance will be terrible to those that know not God, especially to those who rebel against revelation, and obey not the gospel of

our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the great crime of multitudes, the gospel is revealed, and they will not believe it; or if they pretend to believe, they will not obey it. Believing the truths of the gospel, is in order to our obeying the precepts of the gospel. Though sinners may be long spared, they will be punished at last. They did sin's work, and must receive sin's wages.

***II Thessalonians 1:10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.***

It will be the redemption of the saved that ultimately redounds to the glory of the Son. Hence, just as Jesus' return will bring glory to all saved by Him,<sup>53</sup> so will all those saved by Christ even further reflect Christ's own glory. It will be therefore Jesus Christ Who at His coming glorifies believers, and then they—after Jesus' being revealed in glory and being given their own spiritual transformation—bring further praise, glory, and honor to Christ. Appropriately, the salvation of Christ's people will be counted as His most prized victory. Through their heavenly transformation<sup>54</sup> the world will come to know and spiritually realize the heavenly power and everlasting glory that God has conferred upon the Son, when men who were sinners before faith in Jesus Christ are trans-

50 Rom. 1:4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

51 John 12:46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. John 1:4–5 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

52 John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

I John 5:11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

53 Col. 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

54 I Cor. 15:51–52 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup>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.

formed into becoming a new race of man, created after Christ's own image.<sup>55</sup>

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 1:10) When he shall come to be glorified in his saints — That is, the redeemed in that day will be the means of promoting his glory, or the universe will see his glory manifested in their redemption. His chief glory as seen in that day will be connected with the fact that he has redeemed his people;*

***II Thessalonians 1:11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:***

Paul's prayer is that the Thessalonians' faith and spiritual walk would continue growing so that they might be found worthy of their heavenly calling. It is *the work of faith*, which work is also the work of God, through which sinners discover eternal acceptance with God.<sup>56</sup> Paul's prayer is accordingly that through the Thessalonians' continued *faith*, they would eventually enter all the good that the Lord had prepared for them. Hence, if the Thessalonians continued to believe, this would in the end find them worthy of the Lord and enable them to fully enter into all the heavenly goodness purposed for them by the Lord. By faith men enter into God's promises,<sup>57</sup> and through faith they are found worthy of them.

***II Thessalonians 1:12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in***

*55 Phil. 3:20–21 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: <sup>21</sup>Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

*56 Rom. 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

*57 Heb. 6:12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

*58 Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

*John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

*Col. 1:19–20 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; <sup>20</sup>And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*

*you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

The center of all true Christian religion is Jesus Christ. It is He Who is the center and author of God's salvation,<sup>58</sup> without which no man can enter heaven. Whereas the whole world seeks to promote its own name and glorify themselves, those saved by the Son of God are purposed to bring others' attention, gaze, and interest to Him Who has through His own spiritual sacrifice saved them.

*(Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, II Thess. 1:12) and ye in him] This glorification will be mutual. It will be the honour of the Head to have such members, and of the members to have such a Head;*

For those truly saved by the Son of God, it is Christ's name, not their own, that will be sought to be exalted. Nothing proves true Christian piety more than Jesus' name being glorified in His people. It is this exaltation of the Son that ultimately reveals those who have truly been begotten by God. For none will both willingly and joyfully praise the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, unless first saved by Him. Ultimately for Christians, this act of glorying in Jesus Christ is natural, but for non-Christians it is actually impossible. *Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost (I Cor. 12:3).*

## The Dead Shall Rise

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Cor. 12:3) *And that no man can say . . .* — That is, that it cannot occur, or even happen, that anyone will acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah who is not influenced by the Holy Spirit. The meaning is, not that no one has physical ability to say that Jesus is Lord unless aided by the Holy Spirit, since all people can say this; but that no one will be disposed heartily to say it; no one will acknowledge him as their Lord; it can never happen that anyone will confess him as the true Messiah who has not been brought to this state by the agency of the Holy Spirit.

*Is the Lord*—Is the Messiah; or shall acknowledge him as their Lord.

*But by the Holy Ghost* — Unless he is influenced by the Holy Spirit. This is a very important verse, not only in regard to the particular subject under consideration in the time of Paul, but also in its practical bearing at present. We may learn from it:

(1) That it is a proof that any man is under the influence of the Holy Spirit who is heartily disposed to honor the name and work of Jesus Christ.

(2) those forms and modes of religion; those religious opinions and practices, will be most in accordance with the designs of the Spirit of God, which do most to honor the name and work of Jesus Christ.

(3) it is true that no man will ever cherish a proper regard for Jesus Christ, nor love his name and work, unless he is influenced by the Holy Spirit. No man loves the name and work of the Redeemer by following simply the inclinations of his own corrupt heart. In all instances of those who have been brought to a willingness to honor him, it has been by the agency of the Holy Spirit.

If men cannot even proclaim Jesus Christ as their Lord, absent the agency of the Holy Spirit, then it is nonsense to believe that any would praise Christ until saved by Him. Hence, all true Christians will be made visible, first by their confession of Jesus Christ as being their Lord, and second by their joyfulness in glorying in the Son of God.

## II Thessalonians 2:1–9

*II Thessalonians 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,*

**I**F there is anything the Christian should know, it is that he will one day be gathered together unto the Son of God—that one of the grand purposes for his salvation is to eternally abide with the Savior.<sup>1</sup> This reality will fully be realized when Jesus returns to escort to heaven all who have believed upon Him.

It is worth noting that one of the great reasons that many people do not truly believe in heaven is that the “heaven” they hope themselves to one day enter does not have Jesus Christ as the center of their hope. Hence, it is impossible to truly believe in something that is not itself real. This is why not until a man possesses true faith in God’s Son will he then be able to hold the realistic hope of heaven in his heart. In truth there exists no heavenly existence or afterlife that is not directly related to the Son of God. Hence, if a man has never come to possess true faith in Jesus Christ, then it will prove impossible for him to truly believe in heaven—simply because without connection to the Son of God, it does not exist. *He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life* (I John 5:12).

*II Thessalonians 2:2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*

The apostle is comforting the Thessalonians in his second epistle, assuring them that the day of the Lord, or Christ’s return to the earth, had not come nor could come until other biblical events manifested themselves. No doubt, these events were both the apostasy of the church and the appearance of the *man of sin*. Therefore Jesus Christ would not return to the earth to gather His people unto Himself until these two great tragic events had become realities in the world.

*(Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers, II Thess. 2:2) As that the day of Christ is at hand— ... Probably the form which the false doctrine at Thessalonica was beginning to take was that the day of the Lord had already set in, thus confusing the whole idea of a personal, visible Advent, just as, at a later period, Hymenæus and Philetus confused the true doctrine of resurrection by affirming that it was already past (2Timothy 2:18<sup>2</sup>). St. Paul not only denies vigorously that the day is come, but proceeds in the next verse to show that the signs of its approach are not yet exhibited.*

*II Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away*

<sup>1</sup> *I Thess. 4:17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

*John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

<sup>2</sup> *II Tim. 2:18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.*

*first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;*

Concerning the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the churches gathering together unto Him, we learn a very significant truth—that this great biblical event cannot occur and cannot transpire until there first commences a great *falling away* from the faith, directly influenced by the revealing of the *man of sin*, the great proponent of sin.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, II Thess. 2:3) *That man of sin.*—It is not absolutely certain from the Greek, but the context makes it tolerably clear that the “Man of Sin” is the head and centre of the Apostasy itself, and does not form a separate movement from it. The “Man of Sin,” then, will have at one time formed (or will still profess to form) part of the Christian Church, and the Apostasy will culminate in him. . . . The phrase, “the Man of Sin,” might, perhaps, be only a poetical personification of a movement, or of a class of men, or of a succession of men (as, e.g., Psalm 89:22; Revelation 2:20; Revelation 17:3);<sup>3</sup> but the analogy of the parallel passages in Daniel 8, 11 leads rather to the supposition that St. Paul looked for the coming of some actual individual man who should be the impersonation of the movement of Apostasy. The genitive (see Note on 1 Thessalonians 1:3<sup>4</sup>) is like a forcible epithet: “A man so wicked that, bad as other men are, wickedness should be his mark by which he is distinguished from all others; a man who belongs to sin, in whom the ideal of sin has become realised and incarnate.” What kind

of sin will be most prominent in him is not expressed in the word itself; but the context points clearly to that which is, in fact, the crowning sin—spiritual pride and rebellious arrogancy (Ephesians 6:12<sup>5</sup>).

When sin (led by the *man of sin* deceptively leading mankind to sin) reaches its peak then, and not before, the promised Messiah will return. Hence, only after the *man of sin* is revealed in the world and sin is willingly embraced as righteousness will the Son of God appear in heavenly glory to destroy both the son of perdition and all who have followed him. The apostle therefore strongly proclaims that the day of the Lord cannot come until there is first a great *falling away* from the faith, coinciding with the *man of sin* being revealed in the world.

No doubt there were at the time many foolish thoughts and suppositions concerning Jesus' return and the beginning of the day of the Lord. Yet when Jesus' disciples asked the Lord when He would restore the kingdom to Israel,<sup>6</sup> His reply was *It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power* (Acts 1:7). Certain things like the times and seasons when biblical prophecy will be fulfilled are not intended to be specifically known by anyone, including God's chosen. These secret things are hidden in the mind of God<sup>7</sup> until their appointed time for fulfillment. *But of that day and hour knoweth no man,*

3 Ps. 89:22 *The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him.*

Rev. 2:20 *Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.*

Rev. 17:3 *So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.*

4 I 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;*

5 Eph. 6:12 *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

6 Acts 1:6 *When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*

7 Deut. 29:29 *The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only (Matt. 24:36). In respect to the day and the exact time of Jesus' return to the world in the Father's glory and the time of the man of sin's entrance into the world, Scripture reveals that no man knows but the Father. This is why it is a waste of good Christian energy to search for something that God has said cannot be known until the time of its fulfillment. It is enough for the people of God to concern themselves with things that have been revealed instead of foolishly inquiring about divine mysteries not purposed for any man to presently know. So although Christians should anticipate the day of the Lord and its approach, nothing beyond this will prove profitable—simply because the things the Lord wishes to be kept secret are past finding out. They are beyond all human reach, and no man can come to know them through any human ability or investigation by himself. *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* (Rom. 11:33).

(McKnight qtd. in *Benson Commentary*, Rom. 11:33) Men are not capable of penetrating into the depths of the divine wisdom, because revelation hath made known only what God hath willed, and said, and done, without disclosing the reasons either of his general or his particular conduct. The knowledge of whatever is above our present childish conceptions is to be sought for, not here, but in the future state.

Human curiosity has done more to damage faith than to strengthen it. This is why the Thessalonians were instructed to let no man deceive them by claiming to know things that God has said cannot be known,

lest human thought replace divine revelation—revelation also that is only partially revealed at the present time.

With all great movements of evil, which is what this final apostasy from the faith will be, there needs to be a figurehead, someone for sinners to congregate around who will validate their sinful desires. This someone is revealed in prophecy as the *man of sin ... the son of perdition*. This spiritual imposter will have a direct relationship with Satan and will assume the top position of what was previously thought to be Christ's church. He will possess no shame in rejecting the Godhead and will assert himself as the new ruler of man. He is termed *antichrist* because he is the embodiment of sin, positioning himself against Him who died to remove sin and introduce true righteousness to the world.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, II Thess. 2:3) *A falling away . . .* "That falling away" must undoubtedly imply that the persons so apostatising had formerly held (or, perhaps, still professed to hold) the Christian faith: men cannot fall from ground which they never occupied. This vast and dreadful Apostasy (see Luke 18:8),<sup>8</sup> so clearly and prominently taught of to the ancient Church, and so mysterious to us, is further defined by the following words, as the Apocalypse or Manifestation of the Man of Sin. Of this revelation of Antichrist the same word (apocalypsis) is used which is often used of Christ, as, e.g., 2Thessalonians 1:7; Luke 17:30;<sup>9</sup> and thrice in St. Peter; so that we may expect to recognise him when he comes as clearly as we shall recognise Christ. The conception of the Antichrist is not merely that of an opponent of the Christ, but of a rival Christ: there is a hideous parallelism between the two.

<sup>8</sup> Luke 18:8 *I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*

<sup>9</sup> II Thess. 1:7 *And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,*

*Luke 17:30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.*

## The Dead Shall Rise

In the history of the world we have seen figures who have manifested themselves as shadows of the Antichrist, Hitler and the Third Reich being the most recent. But no matter how many in history have attempted to take on the role of human ruler of the world, not until the man of sin's appearance will any be successful.

The war that will be the result of the Antichrist's rise in worldly influence will be directed against heaven itself.<sup>10</sup> The casualties of this coming prophetic spiritual conflict will dwarf previous human world wars, like World War II, in which an estimated forty to fifty million people died.<sup>11</sup> In regard to the day of the Lord and its dreadful death toll, unless this day is shortened through God's intervention, no human life could be saved. *And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened* (Matt. 24:22). So regardless of the violence that has been

observed on the earth, created by human war, the day of the Lord and the Antichrist's rise to power will bring pain and punishment beyond anything this world has ever experienced. Hence, so dramatic in violence will the day of the Lord be that unless it is shortened, not one person would be able to survive. This day, though estimates are varied, perhaps as many as half of the world's entire population will perish during the Antichrist's ascension to assume the role of playing God in the world.<sup>12</sup> But in contrast to the rise of evil and the ascent of the *man of sin*, Jesus will return to the earth and assume His rightful position as God's heir of all things.<sup>13</sup> Ultimately evil will not be allowed to reign, because the God of the heavens,<sup>14</sup> Who is Himself only good, will not let it. Therefore, at God's appointed time, which no man now knows, Jesus Christ will return to assert heavenly power, to eternally remove sin from the world, and to destroy its new satanic representative.<sup>15</sup>

10 Rev. 13:6-7 *And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.*

Rev. 17:12-14 *And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. 13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. 14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*

11 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: "An estimated 40,000,000 to 50,000,000 people died during World War II. Among the Allied powers, the U.S.S.R. suffered the greatest total number of dead: perhaps 18,000,000. An estimated 5,800,000 Poles died, which was 20 percent of Poland's prewar population. About 298,000 Americans died. Among the Axis powers, there were about 4,200,000 German deaths and about 1,972,000 Japanese deaths."

12 Rev. 6:7-8 *And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. 8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.*

Rev. 9:15 *And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.*

Rev. 9:18 *By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.*

13 Heb. 1:2 *Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;*

14 Deut. 10:14 *Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.*

15 Rev. 11:15-17 *And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

<sup>16</sup>*And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O LORD God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.*

**II Thessalonians 2:4** *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*

Here we observe the spiritual hubris, arrogance, and pride of the *man of sin* as he will ostentatiously assume the position of God. Because of his jealousy toward the one true God, he will allow no one but himself to be worshiped and adored.<sup>16</sup> In the Antichrist's eye no one is worthy of worship above himself; therefore, he will not tolerate any who reject his newly instituted religious system. There will then exist, at least from a human standpoint, but one religion, and the *man of sin* will oversee and enforce it as the new religion of the world. Very likely this evil one will remove not only all Christian worship, including every institution or church that promotes faith in Jesus Christ, but also all other forms of worship. And just as the types of the Antichrist in the past have sought to assert themselves above all in the world, so will the *man of sin* follow their pattern of evil.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, II Thess. 2:4) The previous world kingdoms had each one extraordinary person as its representative head and embodiment (thus Babylon had Nebuchadnezzar, Da 2:38,<sup>17</sup> and; Medo-Persia had Cyrus; Greece had Alex-

ander, and Antiochus Epiphanes, the forerunner of Antichrist); so the fourth and last world kingdom, under which we now live, shall have one final head, the concentrated embodiment of all the sin and lawless iniquity which have been in pagan and papal Rome.

To set the context of the *man of sin's* place in biblical prophecy and how he will precede the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is important to at least briefly consider the four Gentile kingdoms that Daniel prophesied would lead to the Son of God's appearance in the world. Daniel 2 reveals the images that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, symbolizing the great Gentile kingdoms that would arise, beginning with his own, but would ultimately end with the *Ancient of days*,<sup>18</sup> representing the final kingdom, which shall be ruled and overseen by the *Son of man*.<sup>19</sup>

**Daniel 2:31–44** *Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.*

<sup>32</sup> *This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,*

<sup>33</sup> *His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.*

<sup>34</sup> *Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.*

Rev. 19:15–16 *And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.* <sup>16</sup> *And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*  
16 Rev. 13:15 *And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.*

Rev. 20:4 *And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

17 Dan. 2:38 *And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.*

18 Dan. 7:9 *I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.*

19 Dan. 7:13 *I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.*

<sup>35</sup> Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

<sup>36</sup> This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

<sup>37</sup> Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.

<sup>38</sup> And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

<sup>39</sup> And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

<sup>40</sup> And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

<sup>41</sup> And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

<sup>42</sup> And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

<sup>43</sup> And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

<sup>44</sup> And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but

*it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Dan. 2:44) This image represented the kingdoms of the earth, that should successively rule the nations, and influence the affairs of the Jewish church. 1. The head of gold signified the Chaldean empire, then in being. 2. The breast and arms of silver signified the empire of the Medes and Persians. 3. The belly and thighs of brass signified the Grecian empire, founded by Alexander. 4. The legs and feet of iron signified the Roman empire. The Roman empire branched into ten kingdoms, as the toes of these feet. Some were weak as clay, others strong as iron. Endeavours have often been used to unite them, for strengthening the empire, but in vain.

In Daniel 7 the four kingdoms are represented by great beasts coming from the sea.

*Daniel 7:1–4 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.*

<sup>2</sup> Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.

<sup>3</sup> And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

<sup>4</sup> The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

For the sake of simplicity, we have included from Benson's Commentary the primary characteristics of these beasts, or kingdoms, that arise from the sea. The first is that which is represented as a *lion*.

(*Benson Commentary*, Dan. 7:4) *The first was like a lion*—The Chaldean or Babylonian

empire: compared to the head of gold, the chief of metals, in the image represented to Nebuchadnezzar in his dream, Daniel 2:32; Daniel 2:37–38,<sup>20</sup> is here represented as a lion, the king of beasts. . . . It is represented as having eagles' wings, to denote the extent and rapidity of its conquests, that empire being advanced to its height within a few years, by the conduct and arms of one single person, namely, Nebuchadnezzar. *I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked*—Or, torn out, as מרייתו may be rendered: that is, it was checked in its progress by frequent defeats, and rendered unable to make further conquests. Its wings were beginning to be plucked at the time of the delivery of this prophecy; for at this time the Medes and Persians were encroaching upon it. Belshazzar, the king now reigning, was the last of his race; and in the seventeenth year of his reign Babylon was taken, and the kingdom transferred to the Medes and Persians.

**Daniel 7:5** *And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.*

The second kingdom represented in Daniel's prophecy is like that of a *bear*—a kingdom that would arise and devour much flesh and like a bear would ravage the world.

(Benson Commentary, Dan. 7:5) *And behold another beast like a bear*—This is the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, who, for their cruelty and greediness after blood, are compared to a bear, which is a most voracious and cruel animal. Bochart recounts several

particulars wherein the Persians resembled bears; but the chieflikeness consisted in what has been just mentioned, and this likeness was principally intended by the prophet, as may be inferred from the words of the text, *Arise, devour much flesh*. A bear, saith Aristotle, is an all-devouring animal; and so the Medo-Persians were great robbers and spoilers, according to Jeremiah 51:48; Jeremiah 51:56:<sup>21</sup> see Bishop Newton and the note on Isaiah 13:18.<sup>22</sup> *And it raised up itself on one side*—Some think the allusion is to the eastern quarter of the world, from whence the Persians came; others, to the elevation of the Persians above the Medes and Babylonians, which three powers are conceived to be meant by the *three ribs* in the mouth of the bear: but Sir Isaac Newton and Bishop Chandler, with great propriety, explain them as signifying the kingdoms of Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt, which were conquered by it, but were not properly parts and members of its body. They might be called *ribs*, as the conquest of them much strengthened the Persian empire; and they might be said to be *between the teeth of the bear*, as they were much grinded and oppressed by the Persians.

**Daniel 7:6** *After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.*

The third kingdom represented in Daniel's dream is that likened to a *leopard*. This kingdom would be marked by its speed and swiftness to conquer the earth.

(Benson Commentary, Dan. 7:6) *After this I beheld, and lo, another like a leopard*—“This third kingdom is that of the Macedonians, or

20 Dan. 2:32 *This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, Dan. 2:37–38 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.* <sup>38</sup>*And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.*

21 Jer. 51:48 *Then the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers shall come unto her from the north, saith the LORD.*

Jer. 51:56 *Because the spoiler is come upon her, even upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for the LORD God of recompences shall surely requite.*

22 Isa. 13:18 *Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eyes shall not spare children.*

Grecians, who, under the command of Alexander the Great, overcame the Persians, and reigned next after them; and it is fitly compared to a *leopard* upon several accounts. The leopard is remarkable for swiftness, and Alexander and the Macedonians were amazingly swift and rapid in their conquests. The leopard is a spotted animal, and so was a proper emblem, according to Bochart, of the different manners of the nations which Alexander commanded; or, according to Grotius, of the various manners of Alexander himself, who was sometimes merciful, and sometimes cruel; sometimes temperate, and sometimes drunken; sometimes abstemious, and sometimes incontinent. The leopard, as Bochart observes, is of small stature, but of great courage, so as not to be afraid to engage with the lion and the larger beasts; and so Alexander, a little king, in comparison, of small stature too, and with a small army, dared to attack the king of kings, that is, Darius, whose kingdom was extended from the Ægean sea to the Indies. *Which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl*—The Babylonian empire was represented with *two* wings, but this is described with *four*. For, as Jerome says, nothing was swifter than the victories of Alexander, who ran through all the countries from Illyricum and the Adriatic sea to the Indian ocean and the river Ganges, not so much fighting as conquering; and in *six* years (he should have said in *twelve*) subjugated part of Europe and all Asia to himself. *The beast had also four heads*—To denote the four kingdoms into which this same third kingdom should be divided, as it was after the death of Alexander, among his four captains; Casander reigning over Macedon and Greece, Lysimachus over Thrace and Bithynia, Ptolemy over Egypt, and Seleucus over Syria. *And dominion was given to it*—Which shows, as Jerome observes, that it was not owing to the fortitude of Alexander, but proceeded from the will of the Lord. And, indeed, unless he had been directed, preserved, and assisted by the mighty power of God, how could Alexander, with thirty thousand men, have overcome Darius with six hundred thou-

sand, and in so short a time have brought all the countries, from Greece as far as to India, into subjection.”—Bishop Newton.

***Daniel 7:7–8 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.***

<sup>8</sup> *I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.*

The fourth beast in Daniel’s prophecy has no name nor does it share in any likeness to an animal. It is said simply to be a *beast*, separate and distinct as well as greater in might than all the previous kingdoms and kings who reigned before it.

(*Benson Commentary*, Dan. 7:7) *Behold a fourth beast*—This *fourth kingdom* can be no other than the Roman empire, which answers this emphatical description better than any of the former kingdoms. *Dreadful, and terrible, and strong exceedingly*—And therefore compared to iron, Daniel 2:40.<sup>23</sup> *It devoured and brake in pieces*—It spread its arms and its terrors to a much greater extent than any of the preceding powers, and entirely subdued all the remains of the former kingdoms, and all the nations that had been subject to them. It reduced Macedon into a Roman province about one hundred and sixty-eight years, the kingdom of Pergamus about one hundred and thirty-three years, Syria about sixty-five years, and Egypt about thirty years, before Christ. And besides the remains of the Macedonian empire, it subdued many other provinces and kingdoms; so that it might, by a very usual

<sup>23</sup> Dan. 2:40 *And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.*

figure, be said to *devour the whole earth, to tread it down and break it in pieces*; and become, in a manner, what the Roman writers delighted to call it, “The empire of the whole world.” The words of Dionysius Halicarnasus are very apposite to this subject. “The city of Rome,” says he, “ruleth over all the earth as far as it is inhabited, and commands all the sea, not only that within the Pillars of Hercules, but also the ocean, as far as it is navigable; having first and alone, of all the celebrated kingdoms, made the east and west the bounds of its empire, and its dominion hath continued longer than that of any other city or kingdom.” *And it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it*—This is intimated by its having no name, being more cruel and horrid than any sort of beast whatever; and the Roman power was so multiform, that it could not be pointed out by any one species of resemblance. And it was different from all kingdoms in its republican form of government, its greatness, length of duration, and extent of dominion. But its chief distinction consisted in its having ten horns, which we find at Daniel 7:24<sup>24</sup> are ten kings or kingdoms: see also Revelation 17:12.<sup>25</sup> And these answer to the ten toes of the image, Daniel 2:42.<sup>26</sup> The empire continued in its greatness till the reign of Theodosius the Great, and soon afterward the partition happened, and the broken form remained, for the ten kingdoms were to be no more united, till the Ancient of days should come.

We live in the time described in Daniel’s prophecy in which the *ten horns*, or ten kings and kingdoms, will soon arise from the remnants of the Roman Empire. But this time cannot come until the little horn, which has a *mouth speaking great things*, rises to preeminence in Christ’s church, and then the world unites and unifies itself through his leadership against the true ruler of man, the Lord and His Christ.

**Daniel 7:9–10** *I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.*

<sup>10</sup> *A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.*

In the next part of Daniel’s prophecy we see what can be considered a length of time before the appearance of the *Ancient of days*, who is none other than the Son of God, who will overthrow, conquer, and ultimately judge the entire world. His heavenly spiritual reign will far exceed, both in extent and power, that of any other of the great world governments before Him. His kingdom is of God, and as such it cannot be moved, nor will it ever be overthrown.

(Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Dan 7:9) *I beheld*—“I continued looking on these strange sights, and contemplating these transformations.” This implies that some time elapsed before all these things had occurred. He looked on until he saw a solemn judgment passed on this fourth beast particularly, as if God had come forth in his majesty and glory to pronounce that judgment, and to bring the power and arrogance of the beast to an end. ... *And the Ancient of days did sit*—Was seated for the purposes of judgment.

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(Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Dan 7:10) *A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him*—Streams of fire seemed to burst forth from his throne. Representations of this kind

<sup>24</sup> Dan. 7:24 *And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.*

<sup>25</sup> Rev. 17:12 *And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.*

<sup>26</sup> Dan. 2:42 *And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.*

## The Dead Shall Rise

abound in the Scriptures to illustrate the majesty and glory of God. Compare Revelation 4:5, “And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunders, and voices.” Exodus 19:16; Habakkuk 3:4; Psalm 18:8.<sup>27</sup>

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(*Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers*, Dan 7:10) *The books*—i.e., the unerring record of man’s thoughts, words, and deeds, which is written in the unfailing memory of God. (Comp. Exodus 32:32; Psalm 56:8; Psalm 69:28; Isaiah 4:3; Malachi 3:16.)<sup>28</sup>

**Daniel 7:11–14** *I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.*

<sup>12</sup> *As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.*

<sup>13</sup> *I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.*

<sup>14</sup> *And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*

The majority of Daniel’s prophecy has been fulfilled. What Daniel prophesied

about Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece, and part of his prophecy regarding Rome’s rule, is now recorded as world history. All that is left now is for the *little horn* with a *mouth speaking great things*, issuing forth from the *fourth beast* (the remnants of Rome’s influence), to exercise authority in the world. This is the *antichrist*, the *man of sin*, the *son of perdition*. It is he who makes *war with the saints, and prevailed against them* before the great day of the Lord’s return and Christ’s final victory over all things evil, both human and satanic.

**Daniel 7:19–21** *Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; <sup>20</sup> And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.*

<sup>21</sup> *I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;*

So much of an impact did Daniel’s sight of the fourth beast, and its unholy terror make upon Daniel that he desired and sought the Lord for greater understanding of the vision.

<sup>27</sup> *Exod. 19:16* And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.

*Hab. 3:4* And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power.

*Ps. 18:8* There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

<sup>28</sup> *Exod. 32:32* Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

*Ps. 56:8* Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?

*Ps. 69:28* Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.

*Isa. 4:3* And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem:

*Mal. 3:16* Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Dan. 7:19) *Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast—I desired to know particularly what was symbolized by that. He appears to have been satisfied with the most general intimations in regard to the first three beasts, for the kingdoms represented by them seemed to have nothing very remarkable. But it was different in regard to the fourth. The beast itself was so remarkable—so fierce and terrific; the number of the horns was so great; the springing up of the little horn was so surprising; the character of that horn was so unusual; the judgment passed on it was so solemn; and the vision of one like the Son of man coming to take possession of the kingdom—all these things were of so fearful and so uncommon a character, that the mind of Daniel was peculiarly affected in view of them, and he sought earnestly for a further explanation. In the description that Daniel here gives of the beast and the horns, he refers in the main to the same circumstances which he had before described; but he adds a few which he had before omitted, all tending to impress the mind more deeply with the fearful character and the momentous import of the vision; as, for instance, the fact that it had nails of brass, and made war with the saints.*

Ultimately it is that time, when the fourth beast and/or the remnants of it make war against the saints, that sets the stage for the *Ancient of days* sending the *Son of man* to usher in God's heavenly kingdom.

**Daniel 7:22–27** *Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.*

<sup>23</sup> *Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.*

<sup>24</sup> *And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be*

*diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.*

<sup>25</sup> *And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.*

<sup>26</sup> *But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.*

<sup>27</sup> *And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.*

This last dominion, or last power, that will exert itself over the world's inhabitants *shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces* (v. 23). The *ten horns* that come out of *this kingdom* are *ten kings that shall arise*, and one will be more predominant than the others. This *little horn*, the *man of sin*, will make war with the saints and prevail against them, ushering in the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory. Ultimately it is the *Son of man* who will be given *dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed* (v. 14).

The rebellion orchestrated by the *little horn* will be a universal condemnation of God's laws.<sup>29</sup> Led by him and the apostasy that began in Genesis when Adam and Eve departed from God's Word, both sin and rebellion against God will grow until it has engulfed the entire world. This is why a great majority of this world's in-

<sup>29</sup> Dan. 7:25 *And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times*

habitants will freely and willingly join themselves to the *man of sin* and his rebellion against God. But in the end the Lord will overcome the devil, who has sought since the beginning to lead man into sin. This will be accomplished by Jesus Christ, God's only true begotten Son, who by the power, might, and spiritual authority given to Him by God will usher in with force the kingdom of God.<sup>30</sup>

***II Thessalonians 2:5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?***

Here the apostle reminds the Thessalonians that all he has revealed concerning both the return of the *Son of man* and the *man of sin*, whom He will destroy, he had previously instructed them in. Paul's revelations therefore were not new to the Thessalonians but were purposed only to remind them not to be deceived by false prophets and prophecies, which implied, or flat-out said, that the day of the Lord was already upon them.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 2:5) Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?—The whole subject of the second coming of the Saviour seems to have constituted an important part of the instructions of Paul when at Thessalonica. He now refers them to what he had told them respecting the great apostasy, to show that his views had not changed, and that he did not mean to have them understand that the world would soon come to an end. He had stated these things to them implying that a considerable interval must elapse before the Saviour would appear.*

*and the dividing of time.*

<sup>30</sup> Rev. 11:15 *And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. I Cor. 15:24–25 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. <sup>25</sup>For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.*

<sup>31</sup> Dan. 2:36–45 *This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. <sup>37</sup>Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. <sup>38</sup>And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. <sup>39</sup>And after thee shall arise*

***II Thessalonians 2:6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.***

Much has been written about this verse, and many have speculated about the power that is said to withhold the Antichrist's arrival on the earth. As with many other things, the simplest explanation is often the most logical one. That which then withholds the Antichrist's emergence in the world and his rise to power is none other than God Himself. Thus, if the Thessalonians were troubled about the false and misleading prophecies of the day, they needed only to be reminded that the God of the heavens remains in total and complete control of all coming world events. It is the Lord Who sets up both kings and kingdoms, and it is He also who tears them down once His purposes have been fulfilled. *And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding* (Dan. 2:21).

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Dan. 2:21) And he changeth the times and the seasons—The object of this is to assert the general control of God in reference to all changes which occur. The assertion is made, undoubtedly, in view of the revolutions in empire which Daniel now saw, from the signification of the dream, were to take place under the Divine hand. Foreseeing now these vast changes denoted by different parts of the image Daniel 2:36–45,<sup>31</sup> stretching into far-distant times, Daniel was led to ascribe to God the control over "all" the revolutions which occur on earth.*

Ultimately, then, it is God and His divine purposes that withhold the Antichrist's appearance in the world—teaching us that even evil is subject to divine will and cannot freely operate until God has purposed it should.

**II Thessalonians 2:7** *For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.*

The *mystery of iniquity* is that concealed spiritual force that seeks to advance sin and rebellion in the earth. This satanic power can be observed in all worldly governments, in misleading media, and in many other places where sinners hold an extensive amount of worldly influence. And though these devilish forces are not as widespread as they will one day be, make no mistake about it—the *mystery of iniquity* is absolutely and without a doubt presently at work in the world today. Because Satan's work is to advance sin, it remains a secret and mysterious work as the devil has forever sought to deceive man through stealth and subtlety. *Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* (Gen. 3:1). Practically, there is the *mystery of godliness*,<sup>32</sup> which has di-

rect relationship to Jesus Christ, and the *mystery of iniquity*, which is the hidden influence of sin as it spreads and secretly influences the world, culminating in the Antichrist's appearance to then lead a human revolution against God.

(Benson Commentary, II Thess. 2:7) *For the mystery of iniquity*—There is a mystery of iniquity as well as of godliness, the one in direct opposition to the other. The expression, *a mystery*, in the Scripture sense of it, is something secret or undiscovered. See note on Ephesians 1:9.<sup>33</sup> *The mystery of iniquity*, therefore, is a scheme of error, not openly discovered, whose influence is to encourage iniquity. *Doth already work*—*Ἐργεῖται, worketh inwardly*, in men's minds, or in the church, and perhaps also secretly. The seeds of corruption were sown, but they were not yet grown up to any maturity: the leaven was fermenting in some parts, but it was far from having yet infected the whole mass. To speak without a figure, the apostle means that the false doctrines and bad practices, which he foresaw in after times would be carried to a great height by the power which he denominates the *man of sin*, were already operating in the false teachers, who then infested the church.

**II Thessalonians 2:8** *And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:*

another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.<sup>40</sup> And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.<sup>41</sup> And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.<sup>42</sup> And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.<sup>43</sup> And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.<sup>44</sup> And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.<sup>45</sup> Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

<sup>32</sup> I Tim. 3:16 *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

<sup>33</sup> Eph. 1:9 *Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:*

## The Dead Shall Rise

Regardless of whatever false glory, power, and deceptive influence the *man of sin* may accumulate during his brief reign, it will quickly be dissolved when *the Lord Jesus* comes in the power and glory of God.<sup>34</sup> Whatever delusions the Antichrist has tricked both himself and the world into believing will be absolutely absolved at Christ's return—simply because at this time both the counterfeit and the genuine will be examined side by side, and all the world will see, albeit too late for most, how foolish any were who trusted in one who possessed only an illusion of heavenly might, and that He Whom heaven will reveal actually possesses it. This will be seen to be true when He Who does possess divine power and might then consumes with *the spirit of his mouth* and the *brightness of his coming* him who could only falsely project it. Ultimately Satan's counterfeit Christ, the Antichrist, will never be able to match the power and glory of God's true Christ.

*The Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.* In the end, the Word of God on the lips of the Son of God, accompanied by the brightness of His coming, will consume and destroy the *man of sin*. Good will overcome evil,<sup>35</sup> and light will be proven to be so much greater than darkness. Jesus Christ, therefore,

will destroy with the brightness of His coming in glory the *man of sin*, who at this time will have deceived the greater part of the world.<sup>36</sup>

(*Benson Commentary*, II Thess. 2:8) *and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming ...* literally, the bright shining of his coming, and means that, as darkness is dispelled by the rising of the sun, so the mystery of iniquity shall be destroyed by the lustre with which Christ will cause the true doctrine of the gospel to shine.

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(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, II Thess. 2:8) *with the brightness of his coming*—Greek, “the manifestation, (or appearance) of His presence”: the first outburst of His advent—the first gleam of His presence—is enough to abolish utterly all traces of Antichrist, as darkness disappears before the dawning day.

The Scripture speaks of Jesus' appearance as possessing a brilliant countenance likened to the sun. The book of Revelation gives us valuable insight into the glorious celestial light, now possessed by the ascended Son of God: *And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet*

34 Matt 16:27 *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.*

Mark 8:38 *Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*

35 Rev. 20:10–15 *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.* <sup>11</sup> *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.* <sup>12</sup> *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.* <sup>13</sup> *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.* <sup>14</sup> *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.* <sup>15</sup> *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

36 Rev. 13:14 *And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.*

*like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength* (Rev. 1:13–16).

So bright, illuminating, and beautiful is the Son of man's countenance that it is likened to the sun shining in full strength. It is this light of God's Son, the Lord's true Christ, coupled with the Word of His mouth, that will eventually eradicate, either by spiritual sacrifice<sup>37</sup> or spiritual might, all sin in the world.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rev. 1:16) *Was as the sun shineth in his strength*—In his full splendor when unobscured by clouds; where his rays are in no way intercepted. Compare Judges 5:31; "But let them that love him (the Lord) be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might"; 2 Samuel 23:4, "And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun ariseth, even a morning without clouds"; Psalm 19:5, "Which (the sun) is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race." There could be no more striking description of the majesty and glory of the countenance than to compare it with the overpowering splendor of the sun.

*II Thessalonians 2:9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,*

Here the apostle confirms to the Thessalonians that the coming of the *man of sin* is directly linked to the *working of Satan*. Actually, the devil has no true inherent spiritual power and authority; thus, he must resort to deception and lies to maintain his influence over man. The *man of sin's*—Satan's—progeny will do the same. Like Satan, the *son of perdition* will possess only the illusion of power, signs, and/or miracles. Ultimately Satan's real power resides in his deceiving people to execute his will. Since he has no *true* power, then men are deceived to do his dirty work for him. Therefore, no Christian should ever be afraid or fearful of Satan, simply because the only true spiritual power that Satan possesses is the power and ability to deceive,<sup>38</sup> which will ultimately be proven ineffective when God's new sons are filled with the Lord's own Holy Spirit, thereby enabling them to discern between truth and error as well as light and darkness. For this reason the Antichrist will not deceive the true followers of Jesus Christ, simply because the Holy Spirit, which is Christ within them,<sup>39</sup> will prohibit it.

37 Heb. 9:26 *For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

38 II Cor. 11:14 *And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*

Rev. 20:3 *And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.*

39 Gal. 4:6 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*



## II Thessalonians 2:10–3:5

*II Thessalonians 2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*

WHEN men do not love truth or count it as their greatest joy,<sup>1</sup> they make themselves fertile for deception. Ultimately it is the engrafted Word that saves a man's soul<sup>2</sup> and the kept Word that keeps him from sinning against God.<sup>3</sup> Thus, at the core of all apostasy is the reality that those who apostatized from the truth held no real affection for the truth. They did not love the inspired Word of God<sup>4</sup> and therefore could not be saved. It is this absence of love for God and His Word that sets the table for human deception by evil forces.<sup>5</sup>

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 2:10) And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness—*There are two ideas here. The first is, that there would be deceit; and the other is, that it would be for the purpose of promoting unrighteousness or iniquity. The iniquitous system would be maintained by fraudulent methods.

Scripture reveals that the Antichrist will lead people toward unrighteousness through deceit. Iniquity is an odious thing, so much so that even those born in sin will not fully embrace it without a level of deception. For sin to fully grow, deception is needed in order to present good as evil and evil as good.<sup>6</sup> The people most susceptible to the Antichrist's deceptive methods will be those who took pleasure in unrighteousness because of their affection for sin. Hence, when men lack a deep and affectionate love for the truth, all that is left for them is a love for the world and sin. What people love directly affects what they believe. Therefore, a man's appetites will eventually determine both his beliefs and his destiny. What the heart cherishes most, whether it is God or the world, greatly determines what the soul believes. This is why if a man embraces sin and not God, he cannot escape deception. Observe as well that love for the truth is directly linked to love for God. Therefore, men's abandonment of the Word of God sends a very clear and unambiguous message that they prefer

1 Jer. 15:16 *Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.*

2 Jas. 1:21 *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*

3 Ps. 119:11 *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

4 II Tim. 3:16 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

II Pet. 1:21 *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.*

Gal. 1:11–12 *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. <sup>12</sup>For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

5 Eph. 6:12 *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

6 Isa. 5:20 *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*

## The Dead Shall Rise

love of self,<sup>7</sup> sin,<sup>8</sup> and the world<sup>9</sup> above love for the Creator.

**II Thessalonians 2:11** *And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:*

To those who do not possess affection for the truth, God will send them *strong delusion, that they should believe a lie*. One of the great purposes of the truth is that God has designed it to keep men from sin.<sup>10</sup> Thus, when men by deliberate choice reject both God and His will for their lives, then sin can do nothing but spread and ultimately completely delude them. There is always a point after sinners have been given sufficient warning by God concerning their sin when the Lord gives them up and over<sup>11</sup> to both Satan and the sin they so willingly cherished. It is at this point that God sends *them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie*.

(*Benson Commentary*, II Thess. 2:11) *For this cause God shall send them*—That is, shall judicially permit to come upon them; *strong delusion*—The strong working of error in their hearts. From this we learn that, as a punishment of their sins, God suffers wicked men to fall into greater sins; and as the sin of the persons described in this passage consisted

in their not loving the truth, what could be more just or proper than to punish them, by suffering them to fall into the belief of the greatest errors and lies? Thus the heathen, mentioned Romans 1:24,<sup>12</sup> were punished by God's giving them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts; that they should believe a lie—Or, as the words εἰς τὸ πιστεῦσαι αὐτοὺς τὴν ψευδεὶν may be translated, *so that they will believe a lie*.

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(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, II Thess. 2:11) *And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion*: we had account in the former verse of such as are deceived by the man of sin, of their sin, and here of their punishment. They were first deluded, which was their sin; and God sends them strong delusion, and that is their punishment. They did not receive the truth in the love of it, which was their sin; and therefore are given up to believe a lie, which is their punishment. Had they received the truth aright, they might have been saved; but not receiving it, they are damned.

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(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, II Thess. 2:11) God often places people in circumstances to develop their own nature, and it cannot be shown to be wrong that He should do so. If people have no love of the truth, and no desire to be saved, it is not improper that they should be allowed to manifest this.

7 II Tim. 3:1–4 *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;*

8 John 3:19 *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

II Thess. 2:12 *That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

9 I John 2:15 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

10 Ps. 19:11 *Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.*

11 Rom. 1:24 *Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:*

Rom. 1:26 *For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:*

Rom. 1:28 *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;*

12 Rom. 1:24 *Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:*

What men sow they will reap.<sup>13</sup> The English idiom “The chickens have come home to roost” informs us that even in an ungodly world, men are aware that their past actions will result in future consequences. However, Geoffrey Chaucer’s idea in “The Parson’s Tale”<sup>14</sup> cannot even remotely compare to what God’s Word reveals on this important subject—that if men reject the truth, God will ensure that they believe a lie, teaching us that even in unbelief and rebellion, the Lord maintains control over all things and will yield to every man exactly as he has sown.

Though Satan and the man of sin may begin the process of deception in those who willingly reject the truth, it is the Lord Who finishes it.

*(Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers, II Thess. 2:11) A terrible combination when God and Satan are agreed to deceive a man! Yet what an encouragement to see God using Satan for His own purposes.*

***II Thessalonians 2:12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.***

The emphasis here is that *all* who loved sin and followed the *man of sin* will be *damned*. *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon* defines *damned*, the Greek *krinó* #2919, “to separate, put asunder; to pick out, select, choose.” What this reveals is that those who will be damned and judged by God will be selected and separated out for their sin. That *all might be damned who believed not the truth* reveals that *all*, without exception, who chose sin over God will be damned and ultimately punished by God.<sup>15</sup>

***II Thessalonians 2:13 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:***

In comforting contrast to those who will be damned because of their affection for sin, the apostle now turns to what God has purposed for the Thessalonian believers who had exhibited a belief in and love for the gospel. They are referred to as *beloved of the Lord*. The apostle identifies two powerful forces that led to the Thessalonians’ sanctification: first, sanctification by God’s Spirit,<sup>16</sup> and second, sanc-

13 Gal. 6:7 *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

14 “And ofte tyme swich cursynge wrongfully retorneth agayn to hym that curseth, as a bryd that retorneth agayn to his owene nest.” [And often times such cursing wrongfully returns again to him that curses, as a bird that returns again to his own nest.]

15 Gen. 6:13; 7:18, 21 *And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. . . .*<sup>18</sup> *And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. . . .*<sup>21</sup> *And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man:*

Gen. 19:24–25 *Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;*<sup>25</sup> *And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.*

Num. 25:1–3, 9 *And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. <sup>2</sup>And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. <sup>3</sup>And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel. . . .*<sup>9</sup> *And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.*

I Sam. 6:19 *And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter.*

16 I Pet. 1:2 *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.*

tification that comes from a belief of the truth.<sup>17</sup> Because also God is God, He can just as easily sanctify a soul for heaven and cleanse it of sin as He can send sinners to hell because of their love for sin. The Lord's power to cleanse, therefore, should never be thought less than His power to damn. Thus, those who love God's Word will be as thoroughly cleansed from their sin as sinners will be damned for theirs. Both salvation and damnation reside in God's power, and how men live while upon the earth will determine whether they are either forgiven or damned.

Believers can know and be personally comforted that God has chosen them for salvation because of their possession of the Holy Spirit. For none can truly possess the Lord's Holy Spirit without being baptized by God's Son and becoming a child of God through Him.<sup>18</sup> This is why being given the Holy Spirit<sup>19</sup> certifies heavenly sonship<sup>20</sup> and confirms that a person has been made by divine power a son of God.<sup>21</sup>

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 2:13) No one can have evidence that he is chosen to salvation except as he has evidence that he is sanctified by the Spirit; ... No one who is not a believer in the truth can have evidence that God has chosen him.*

*I Cor. 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

*Rom. 15:16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.*

*17 John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

*18 John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

*19 Acts 5:32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.*

*Rom. 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

*I John 3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

*1 John 4:13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*

*20 Gal 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

*21 I John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

*II Thessalonians 2:14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

As dark and dreary as will be the apostasy through the man of sin's rise to power, equally as brilliant will be the heavenly glory Jesus confers upon those who have believed upon Him. In truth, there is no gray area between light and darkness, no middle ground upon which any man will be allowed to stand. Either saints will be glorified because of their connection to the Son of God, or sinners will be condemned because of their rejection of His authority.

*Obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Whenever we think of heaven and life beyond this earthly abode, we should think of it as God describes it and not as we might be misled to believe it will be. It is not simply that a man will enter a land of heavenly bliss, smoke expensive cigars, and live a life of ease but rather that those called by Jesus Christ will obtain and share in the *glory* of Jesus Christ.

One of the great reasons that most do not truly believe in heaven is that the heaven they attempt to believe in is one formed thoroughly through human imagination. And like all things fictional and made up,

it will prove impossible to deeply believe in that which does not exist. This is why there will never be any lasting comfort if men try to believe in heaven without sincere and genuine faith in the Son of God. All heavenly glory for the saint resides in Jesus Christ, and there exists no true glory or hope of heaven apart from Him. The contrast to a make-believe heaven is the possession of genuine faith in God's Son and being given the hope of being glorified with Him. This is the true hope of the gospel, and it will provide great spiritual encouragement when believed. *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory* (Col. 1:27).

Earthly children share the characteristics of their fathers, and the children of God will be no different. Because of their faith,<sup>22</sup> God's new sons will share in the glory of the only-begotten Son. And though this coming glorification will not be equal to Christ's, it will be of the same constitution and worth as Christ's. This will include sharing in the same heavenly body as the Savior.<sup>23</sup> One record in Scripture that reveals a glimpse of Christ's glory is found in Matthew's gospel regarding Christ's transfiguration before Peter, James, and John. *And after six days Jesus*

*taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light* (Matt. 17:1–2). It was not by accident that Jesus led His trusted followers to the top of a mountain to reveal to them His future glory—simply because it would prove necessary and essential for Christ to ascend and enter into heaven, which is high above the earth, to receive His full glory from God.<sup>24</sup>

The word for *transfigured* is the Greek #3339 *metamorphoō*. HELPS Word-studies defines it as “(from 3326 /*metá*, ‘change after being with’ and 3445 /*morphoō*, ‘changing form in keeping with inner reality’)—properly, transformed after being with; transfigured.” From this word we get the English terms *metamorphosis* and *metamorphize*. No doubt, the sight of the Lord Jesus in heavenly glory did much to encourage the disciples that their faith in Christ was warranted as they became *eyewitnesses of his majesty*.<sup>25</sup> What Peter, James, and John saw when Jesus' face shone as the sun was similar to, yet greater than, what was observed of Moses when he came down from the mount.<sup>26</sup> It was also the brilliant and spectacular celestial light that radiated from Jesus' being that

22 John 3:36 *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

John 6:40 *And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

John 11:25 *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:*

John 20:31 *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

23 I Cor. 15:49 *And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.* Phil. 3:21 *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

24 Luke 24:26 *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?*

25 II Peter 1:16 *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

26 Exod. 34:29–30 *And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.* <sup>30</sup>*And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.*

bore witness to His being the Son of God. Jesus' transformation also was a visible witness of His heavenly deity. Whereas Moses' face shone because of his having been in the presence of God, the entirety of Christ's body emitted the light and glory of the holy Father. It is a form of this celestial glory observed on the Mount of Transfiguration that the apostle John reveals believers will be partakers of. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is* (I John 3:2). The time of the believer's glorification is directly linked to his sight of the Savior, inferring that there will be such an effect on the saved when they come in direct and personal contact with the Lord Jesus that their own beings, their mortal bodies, will be changed in the process. It is also this heavenly transformation that will allow the children of God to fully view the celestial glory and deity that is Christ's.

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 3:2) see him— ... Our spiritual bodies will appreciate and recognize spiritual beings hereafter, as our natural bodies now do natural objects.*

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

It is one thing to be taught the truth, and it is quite another to fully obey it. This is why the apostle exhorts the Thessalonians to hold fast to all that had been communicated to them, whether by word or epistle.

*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves* (Jas. 1:22).

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Jas. 1:22) Deceiving your own selves—*It is implied here, that by merely hearing the word but not doing it, they would deceive their own souls. The nature of this deception was this, that they would imagine that that was all which was required, whereas the main thing was that they should be obedient. If a man supposes that by a mere punctual attendance on preaching, or a respectful attention to it, he has done all that is required of him, he is laboring under a most gross self-deception. And yet there are multitudes who seem to imagine that they have done all that is demanded of them when they have heard attentively the word preached. Of its influence on their lives, and its claims to obedience, they are utterly regardless.

It makes no difference how we are exposed to the Word of truth, either by *word* or *epistle*. Regardless of whether God speaks to us through His Spirit<sup>27</sup> or through His Word, both should be obeyed accordingly. For if the Word of God is not held to, you can be sure it will never be believed. It is certain, then, that he who is soon to forget the truth will never live his life according to it.

***II Thessalonians 2:16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,***

Through love of the Father and the Son, saints are given *everlasting consolation and good hope through grace*. This everlasting comfort has been imparted to

<sup>27</sup> John 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

John 16:13 *Howbeit 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: and he will shew you things to come.*

Acts 8:29 *Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.*

Acts 21:4 *And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.*

them by divine means, and it will not be taken away as it is said to be *everlasting*. To therefore sincerely and genuinely believe upon God will ensure receiving divine comfort from Him—a spiritual comfort also, which is permanent and gives good hope of a blessed future. Because God Himself is eternal, the comfort He provides to the saved cannot be anything less than eternal.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 2:16) And hath given us everlasting consolation.*—Not temporary comfort, but that which will endure forever. The joys of religion are not like other joys. They soon fade away—they always terminate at death—they cease when trouble comes, when sickness invades the frame, when wealth or friends depart, when disappointment lowers, when the senses by age refuse to minister as they once did to our pleasures. The comforts of religion depend upon no such contingencies. They live through all these changes—attend us in sickness, poverty, bereavement, losses, and age; they are with us in death, and they are perpetual and unchanging beyond the grave.

**II Thessalonians 2:17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.**

The Lord not only loves His children, gives them hope, and comforts their hearts,<sup>28</sup> but He also establishes them in every good word and work. Whenever then saints are grounded in the faith and established in every good word and work, it is because of God's mighty power and influence in their lives. It is not enough to say we believe the gospel if it does not affect our lives and the pursuit of doing good. Faith without works is dead,<sup>29</sup> and

28 II Cor. 1:3–4 *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; <sup>3</sup>Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*

29 Jas. 2:17 *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*

30 Eph. 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

as such, sincerely believing upon Jesus Christ must result in pursuing doing good in His name. And though it is not good works that save a man, every true Christian will set about doing good after he has been saved. It is for this purpose that Christians have been created in Christ Jesus,<sup>30</sup> and they will begin fulfilling this purpose once they begin responding to God's call in Christ.

**II Thessalonians 3:1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:**

This verse reveals that it is never enough for the gospel to spread and accomplish its purposes in only one geographical area of the world but that God desires that His Word may be both received and glorified by all men.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 3:1) Finally, brethren, pray for us... That the word of the Lord may have free course*—That is, the gospel. The margin is “run.” So also the Greek. The idea is, that it might meet with no obstruction, but that it might be carried abroad with the rapidity of a racer out of whose way every hindrance was removed. The gospel would spread rapidly in the earth if all the obstructions which men have put in its way were removed; and that they may be removed should be one of the constant subjects of prayer.

Whatever a man believes is his greatest strength is what he will lean on when setting out to do a work. Thus, if men believe that it is through their own power and ability that the gospel is advanced, then they will turn to themselves for the strength and wisdom to do it. Saving souls

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is the Lord's work,<sup>31</sup> and this is why men can never be successful in reaching the lost without God's supernatural power assisting them. It is the Lord Who first prepares the sinner's heart before any can believe His Word.<sup>32</sup>

Every true Christian's desire is that when others hear the truth, the Lord will be glorified by it. It is this glorification of God, His Son, and the Word of God that proves true belief in the gospel. For no one can truly glory in the Lord without first being saved by Him. It is sinners who mock God's messengers, reject His Word, and scoff at His prophets.<sup>33</sup> It is the righteous who believe God's ministers, rejoice and glory in His Word, and praise the Lord's holy name. By these simple realities it is easy to discern who are of the Lord and who are not.

***II Thessalonians 3:2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.***

It is common that Christians who are early in the faith will consider all men exact-

ly like themselves, hence naïvely believing that if others had the same chance to believe, then they would. But sadly, this is not the case, simply because *all men have not faith*.

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, II Thess. 3:2) *have not faith*—or as Greek, “the faith” of the Christian: the only antidote to what is “unreasonable and wicked.” The Thessalonians, from their ready acceptance of the Gospel (1 Th 1:5, 6),<sup>34</sup> might think “all” would similarly receive it; but the Jews were far from having such a readiness to believe the truth.

***II Thessalonians 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.***

As much as God is love<sup>35</sup> and light,<sup>36</sup> so also is He faithful.<sup>37</sup> We see this in the Lord's faithfulness to uphold His promises,<sup>38</sup> provide forgiveness for sin,<sup>39</sup> and receive those called to heaven through His Son.<sup>40</sup> The Lord is faithful, and this will be repeatedly proven when He establishes His saints and keeps them from evil.

31 Ps. 3:8 *Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.*

Ps. 62:1 *Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.*

Jnh. 2:9 *But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.*

32 Acts 16:14 *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.*

33 II Chrn. 36:16 *But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.*

34 I Thess. 1:5–6 *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. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.*

35 I John 4:8 *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

I John 4:16 *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

36 I John 1:5 *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.*

37 I Cor. 10:13 *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.*

38 Heb. 11:11 *Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.*

39 I John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

40 I Cor. 1:9 *God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

There is great truth concerning God's faithfulness; it is that if men deny God, His faithfulness demands that He will deny them. Thus, just as equally and certainly that God will preserve saints from evil, so will He with the same faithfulness and certainty send the ungodly and unbelieving to hell. Hence, just as the Lord will faithfully save the believer, so too will He faithfully judge and punish the unbeliever. *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself* (II Tim. 2:12–13).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, II Tim. 2:13) *Yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.*—Those who have understood these words as containing soothing, comforting voices for the sinner, for the faithless Christian who has left his first love, are gravely mistaken. The passage is one of distinct severity—may even be termed one of the sternest in the Book of Life; for it tells how it is impossible even for the pitiful Redeemer to forgive in the future life. “He cannot deny Himself”—cannot treat the faithless as though he were faithful—cannot act as though faithfulness and faithlessness were one and the same thing. The Christian teacher, such as Timothy, and the members of his flock likewise, must remember that, sure and certain as are the promises of glory and happiness to those who love the Lord and try to live His life, so surely will fall the chastisement on all who are faithless and untrue.

**II Thessalonians 3:4 *And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye***

41 Phil. 1:6 *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*  
 Phil. 4:7 *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*  
 II Tim. 1:12 *For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: 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.*  
 Jude 1:24 *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,*  
 Rev. 3:10 *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*  
 Prov. 28:26 *He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.*  
 42 Phil. 2:13 *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

***both do and will do the things which we command you.***

At the base of all Christian ministry should be held great confidence that the Lord will do exactly as He has promised. It was his confidence in the Lord, and not necessarily the Thessalonians, that assured the apostle that the Thessalonians would obey what was commanded to them.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, II Thess. 3:4) *And we have confidence in the Lord*—Not primarily in you, for you have hearts like others, but in the Lord. It is remarkable that when Paul expresses the utmost confidence in Christians that they will live and act as becomes their profession, his reliance is not on anything in themselves, but wholly on the faithfulness of God. He must be a stranger to the human heart who puts much confidence in it even in its best state; see Philippians 1:6; Philippians 4:7; 2 Timothy 1:12; compare Jude 1:24; Revelation 3:10; Proverbs 28:26.<sup>41</sup>

Paul's confidence that the Thessalonians would do all that the Lord had commanded originated in the fact that he knew that God's Spirit now lived in them and that He would work in them both to will and to do His own good pleasure.<sup>42</sup> Whereas sin had been the dominant power in the Thessalonians before conversion, now the Lord and His holiness held this position. And though sin could still tempt these new children of God, it could no longer control them. By imparting to them the Holy Spirit, God had provided for His

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people both the desire and that ability to keep His Word. *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them* (Ezek. 36:26–27).

(*Benson Commentary*, Ezek. 36:26) *A new heart also will I give you*—A new disposition of mind, excellent in itself, and vastly different from what it was before; a frame of soul changed from sinful to holy, from carnal to spiritual; a heart in which the law of God is written, Jeremiah 31:33;<sup>43</sup> a sanctified spirit, in which the almighty grace of God is victorious, and turns it from the world to God, and from all sin to all holiness; a state of mind which is the supernatural gift of God, and not wrought in any man by his own power. *And I will take away the stony heart*—The hard, senseless, unfeeling, inflexible heart; the heart unapt and averse to receive any divine impressions, and to return any devout affections. *Out of your flesh*—That is, out of you. *And I will give you a heart of flesh*—A soft and tender heart, that has spiritual senses exercised, and is conscious to itself of spiritual pains and pleasures; a heart of quite another temper, hearkening to God's law, trembling at his threats, moulded into a compliance with his whole will; disposed to do, to be, or to suffer what God wills; receiving the divine impress as soft wax receives the impress of the seal. *I will put my Spirit within you*—My enlightening, regenerating, and sanctifying Spirit; that Holy Spirit which is given to and dwells in all true believers; *and cause you*—Sweetly and powerfully, yet without compulsion; *to walk in my statutes*—In all my

ordinances and commandments, and that from judgment, choice, and affection. For our spirits, when renewed by God's Spirit to a disposition conformed to his holiness, readily comply with his will in all things, concur with his designs, and become *workers together with him. And ye shall keep my judgments, and do them*—Ye shall be willing and able to perform all acceptable obedience, and to live a life of universal holiness and righteousness.

### ***II Thessalonians 3:5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.***

These spiritual qualities, the *love of God* and the *patient waiting for Christ*, are two of the most transformative works of God in the believer's heart, both of which are also indications of true salvation.

It was the Lord's Spirit that inspired the Thessalonians to obey the gospel, and that same Holy Spirit Who now directed and encouraged them to continue growing in the *love of God* and *patient waiting for Christ*.

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, II Thess. 3:5) Till man's love is set upon God, the motions of the heart are crooked and irregular; as the ways of sin are called *crooked ways*, Psalm 125:5;<sup>44</sup> and John [the] Baptist's ministry was to make crooked things straight, Isaiah 40:4.<sup>45</sup> The turning [of] man's heart and ways towards God makes them straight. David prays, Psalm 119:36:<sup>46</sup> *Incline my heart unto thy testimonies; ybm-jh* or, bend my heart; as we bend a crooked stick to make it straight. Or as he prays God to unite his heart to his fear, Psalm 86:11;<sup>47</sup> so here Paul,

43 Jer. 31:33 *But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

44 Ps. 125:5 *As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.*

45 Isa. 40:4 *Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:*

46 Ps. 119:36 *Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.*

47 Ps. 86:11 *Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.*

to direct theirs to his love, by which some understand all religion. We learn hence, that to direct man's heart to the love of God is the work of God, and beyond our power. And the hearts of the best saints stand in need of a more perfect and constant direction unto the love of God.

When manifested in Christians, it is love for God and their fellow man that reveals true knowledge of the Lord and a connection to the higher spiritual realm. Those

who dwell in love dwell in God,<sup>48</sup> and by this we know that the Spirit of God dwells in them.<sup>49</sup> It is only those who patiently wait for Jesus Christ who have been saved by Him, simply because an unsaved man, an unregenerate man, has no desire for the Lord Jesus, and surely would never with great anticipation await His return. Thus, it is the possession of God's love and the patient waiting for God's Son that prove true religious piety.

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<sup>48</sup> *I John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

<sup>49</sup> *Rom. 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

*I John 3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*



## II Thessalonians 3:6–18

*II Thessalonians 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.*

**T**HOUGH the Thessalonians were *brethren*, Paul and the other apostles with him maintained the spiritual right to *command* them concerning certain behaviors in the church. Gift ministries, like those of the apostles and prophets,<sup>1</sup> are appointed by Christ. Because of this, any who are appointed to this office have been given divine authority by the Son of God to carry out God's will when led by the Spirit of God. It is thus both the right and responsibility<sup>2</sup> for true ministers to come in God's name, hold forth His Word, and reveal His will to man.<sup>3</sup> It is this spiritual responsibility that men of God have been charged with, and neither praise nor fear of man should be allowed to interfere

with that which has been declared to be God's will for their lives. *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine* (II Tim. 4:2).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, II Tim. 4:2) *Preach the word*—The Word of God; the gospel. This was to be the main business of the life of Timothy, and Paul solemnly charges him in view of the certain coming of the Redeemer to judgment, to be faithful in the performance of it.

*Be instant*—see the notes at Romans 12:12.<sup>4</sup> The meaning here is, that he should be constant in this duty. Literally, “to stand by, or to stand fast by;” that is, he was to be pressing or urgent in the performance of this work. He was always to be at his post, and was to embrace every opportunity of making known the gospel. What Paul seems to have contemplated was not merely, that he should perform the duty at stated and regular times; but that he should press the matter as one who

1 I Cor. 12:28 *And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*

Eph. 4:10–12 *He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.*<sup>11</sup> *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*<sup>12</sup> *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:* 2 Matt. 28:18–20 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*<sup>19</sup> *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*<sup>20</sup> *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

Acts 20:28 *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.*

I Pet. 5:1–2 *The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:*<sup>2</sup> *Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;*

3 Rom. 10:14–15 *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?*<sup>15</sup> *And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

4 Rom. 12:12 *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;*

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had the subject much at heart, and never lose an opportunity of making the gospel known.

*In season*—ἐνκαιρῶς *eukairōs*. In good time; opportunely; compare Matthew 26:16; Luke 22:6; Mark 14:11.<sup>5</sup> The sense is, when it could be conveniently done; when all things were favorable, and when there were no obstructions or hindrances. It may include the “stated and regular” seasons for public worship, but is not confined to them.

*Out of season*—ἀκαιρῶς *akairōs*. This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It is the opposite of the former, and means that a minister is to seek opportunities to preach the gospel even at such periods as might be inconvenient to himself, or when there might be hindrances and embarrassments, or when there was no stated appointment for preaching. He is not to confine himself to the appointed times of worship, or to preach only when it will be perfectly convenient for himself, but he is to have such an interest and earnestness in the work, that it will lead him to do it in the face of embarrassments and discouragements, and whenever he can find an opportunity. A man who is greatly intent on an object will seek every opportunity to promote it. He will not confine himself to stated times and places, but will present it everywhere, and at all times. A man, therefore, who merely confines himself to the stated seasons of preaching the gospel, or who merely preaches when it is convenient to himself, should not consider that he has come up to the requirement of

the rule laid down by the apostle. He should preach in his private conversation, and in the intervals of his public labors, at the side of the sick bed, and wherever there is a prospect of doing good to any one. If his heart is full of love to the Saviour and to souls, he cannot help doing this.

Because Christ has called certain men for ecclesiastical ministry and filled them with the necessary wisdom and spiritual power to be effective in it, they are given both the permission and godly responsibility to speak for God, but only as the Holy Spirit prompts them.<sup>6</sup> It is worth noting that the punishment in the Old Testament for prophets who presumed to speak in God’s name anything that God had not inspired was death.<sup>7</sup> By this it is seen how important it was for the Lord to protect His Word, that same engrafted and living Word that alone leads people to His salvation.<sup>8</sup>

The Greek word for *command* is #3853 *paraggellō*. *HELPS Word-studies* defines it as “properly, to charge, give a command that is fully authorized because it has gone through all the proper (necessary) channels. / God commands (3853 /*paraggellō*) believers to act as He authorizes them through the revelation of faith (His inworked persuasions). Accordingly, 3853 (*paraggellō*) and faith (4102 /*pistis*) are closely connected in the NT—see 1 Tim

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 26:16 *And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.*

Luke 22:6 *And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.*  
Mark 14:11 *And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.*

<sup>6</sup> Exod. 6:29 *That the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, I am the LORD: speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say unto thee.*

Deut. 18:18 *I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.*

I Kgs. 22:14 *And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak.*

Jer. 1:7 *But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.*

Luke 12:12 *For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.*

<sup>7</sup> Deut. 18:20 *But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.*

<sup>8</sup> Jas. 1:21 *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*

1:2–4, 4:11,12, 5:7,8.<sup>9</sup> / 3853 (*paragállō*) ‘originally meant to pass on or transmit; hence, used as a military term, of passing a watchword or command; and so generally to command.’” No true servant of Jesus Christ would give a command in Christ’s name without first being commanded by the Holy Spirit to do so. To think otherwise is to know nothing of the strict subjection that the Lord Jesus demands from spiritual ministries He has Himself placed in His church.<sup>10</sup> True servants of Christ therefore consider Christ’s will to be superior to their own and the influence of the Spirit of the Lord greater than their own personal wishes and desires. Moreover, God gives no man true spiritual authority over another unless the man is first willing to subject himself to Christ’s lordship.<sup>11</sup> In Christ’s church Christ is the head,<sup>12</sup> and as such, His Word and His Spirit are the supreme authority over His people. This ecclesiastical order encourages unity and harmony in the body of Christ and provides the means for the church’s spiritual growth.<sup>13</sup>

The Greek root word for *withdraw* is #4724 *stello*. *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon* defines it as “to remove oneself *withdraw oneself to depart*, followed by ἀπό with the genitive of the person, to *abstain from familiar contact with one*.” Paul command-

ed the Thessalonians to avoid fellowship with those who were disorderly, broke rank, and did not subject themselves to the gospel’s directives.

The Greek word for *disorderly* is #814 *ataktós*. *HELPS Word-studies* defines it as “properly, disorderly (‘breaking rank’); insubordinate to God’s Word and hence fruitless (unproductive)—because lacking proper order (discipline).” In some cases, men—even those who claim to be brethren—are insubordinate to apostolic instruction and refuse to yield to its authority over their lives. When this is the case, believers, who have themselves chosen to remain subject to the Lord, should avoid having any religious contact and/or fellowship with the disorderly. By this it is hoped that the offenders will recognize their sin and turn to God in repentance. Until they repent, all fellowship with the sinner should be broken. It is also hoped that with this strong collective response of the church and its leadership, those who have sinned against God will become ashamed of their sin and return to spiritual subjection. To *walk disorderly* does not mean to take a false step here and there. Rather, it means a consistent habit of breaking rank by not submitting to gospel instruction and the heavenly ministers whom Christ has set in His

9 I Tim. 1:2–4 *Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.* <sup>3</sup>As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, <sup>4</sup>Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.

I Tim. 4:11–12 *These things command and teach.* <sup>12</sup>Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

I Tim. 5:7–8 *And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.* <sup>8</sup>But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

10 Rom. 13:1 *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.*

11 Jer. 3:15 *And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.*

12 Eph. 1:22 *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,* Eph. 5:23 *For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.*

Col. 1:18 *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

13 Eph. 1:23 *Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

church. Practically, even a small amount of unaddressed sin can do great damage to the entire body of Christ. *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump* (Gal. 5:9).

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Gal. 5:9) Leaven is that small portion of fermented dough which is introduced into the fresh lump of dough, and communicates lightness to the whole mass. It is employed figuratively in Scripture to denote the working of both good and bad influences, and is used both of persons and of principles or teaching—comp. Matthew 16:12; Luke 13:21.<sup>14</sup> ... But error, once admitted, is a virus which will gradually spread and poison the whole system of doctrine, or the whole spiritual life of the individual or of the Church.

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(Bengel's *Gnomon*, Gal. 5:9) [One wicked man destroys much good, Ecclesiastes 9:18.<sup>15</sup> The malice, cunning, or violence of a single person, often produces immense injury.—V. g.]

**II Thessalonians 3:7–9 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;**

14 Matt. 16:12 Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Luke 13:21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

15 Eccl. 9:18 Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.

16 Acts 20:33–34 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. <sup>34</sup>Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

I Cor. 9:12–18 If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. <sup>13</sup>Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? <sup>14</sup>Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

<sup>15</sup>But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. <sup>16</sup>For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! <sup>17</sup>For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. <sup>18</sup>What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

II Cor. 11:7–9 Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? <sup>8</sup>I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.

<sup>9</sup>And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.

17 I Cor. 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

18 Prov. 21:25 The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.

Prov. 20:13 Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.

<sup>8</sup>Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

<sup>9</sup>Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

Though Paul had the power and authority to demand that the Thessalonians provide for his physical needs, he did not exercise this right.<sup>16</sup> Instead, he set an example for how all Christians should labor. Using his own life as a pattern, the apostle sought to impart the idea that sincere followers of Jesus Christ should work to provide for others' needs and thus not be carried and/or supported by them. *I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive* (Acts 20:35). It is paramount, if not critical, that those who call themselves Christians realize the importance of not only physical labor but also the work of the Lord.<sup>17</sup> Hence, no Christian assembly should endorse either physical or spiritual laziness,<sup>18</sup> which

undoubtedly includes the sin of idleness.<sup>19</sup> The command to work<sup>20</sup> extends even unto evangelism. Unfortunately, many have taken the title of “Christian” yet have chosen to carry no weight whatsoever in advancing the gospel. Ultimately, if a man refuses to labor for his own food, then you can be sure that no real effort will be exerted to reach others with the Bread of Life. Hence, in all areas of both religion and life, believers should be industrious, willing to work, not only for their own welfare and enjoyment but also to help others in true physical and spiritual need.<sup>21</sup>

Jesus specifically instructed His disciples that because they had been given to freely, they should likewise freely give. It was

this generosity of heart that practically revealed their connection to the Savior. *Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give* (Matt. 10:8).

(Barnes’ *Notes on the Bible*, Matt. 10:8) *Freely ye have received, freely give*—That is, they were not to sell their favors of healing, preaching, etc. They were not to make a money-making business of it, to bargain specifically to heal for so much, and to cast out devils for so much. This, however, neither then nor afterward precluded them from receiving a competent support. See Luke 10:7; 1 Corinthians 9:8–14; 1 Timothy 5:18.<sup>22</sup>

**II Thessalonians 3:10** *For even when we were with you, this we commanded*

*Prov. 12:11 He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.*

*Heb. 6:12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. 19 Prov. 19:15 Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.*

*Prov. 20:4 The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing. Eccl. 10:18 By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.*

*Ezek. 16:49 Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.*

*20 Eph. 4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

*Deut. 5:13–14 Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: <sup>14</sup>But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou.*

*1 Cor. 4:12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it 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;*

*Eccl. 5:18 Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion.*

*21 II Cor. 8:13–14 For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: <sup>14</sup>But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:*

*Gal. 6:2 Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

*22 Luke 10:7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.*

*1 Cor. 9:8–14 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? <sup>9</sup>For it is written in the law of Moses, thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?*

*<sup>10</sup>Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. <sup>11</sup>If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? <sup>12</sup>If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. <sup>13</sup>Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? <sup>14</sup>Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.*

*1 Tim. 5:18 For the scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.*

## The Dead Shall Rise

***you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.***

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, II Thess. 3:10) The Thessalonians are not to be misled into a false charity: giving food in Christ's name to persons who are capable of working and able to get work, and are too indolent to do so. The support which is here forbidden to be given to these disorderly persons might come either direct from the private liberality of individuals, or from some collected church fund administered by the deacons.

The apostle's words are unambiguous, that *if any would not work* or would choose not to labor for his own needs though physically able, they should not eat. If this biblical standard were applied today, much that is being done in Christian charity would have to be abandoned. It is thus common that good Christian energy is expended upon so many who take advantage of it, who have the ability to work but willfully choose to live at the expense of others. Though this is common, it should never be thought to be biblical, simply because it is neither the responsibility of the church nor the responsibility of its members to share their abundance with those who have chosen not to work though able. Hence, if any man will not work and refuses to do what God commands him to do, then neither should he eat. This is especially true when what is eaten originates from another man's labor and not his own.

***II Thessalonians 3:11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.***

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, II Thess. 3:11) *But are busy-bodies*—Compare the 1 Timothy 5:13 note; 1 Peter 4:15 note.<sup>23</sup> That is, they meddled with the affairs of others—a thing which they who have nothing of their own to busy themselves about will be very likely to do. The apostle had seen that there was a tendency to this when he was in Thessalonica, and hence he had commanded them to “do their own business;” 1 Thessalonians 4:11.<sup>24</sup> ... In times of affliction and want, we should be ready to lend our aid. At other times, we should feel that he can manage his own affairs as well as we can do it for him; or if he cannot, it is his business, not ours.

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(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, II Thess. 3:11) *busy bodies*—In the Greek the similarity of sound marks the antithesis, “Doing none of their own business, yet overdoing in the business of others.” Busy about everyone's business but their own. “Nature abhors a vacuum”; so if not doing one's own business, one is apt to meddle with his neighbor's business. Idleness is the parent of busybodies (1 Ti 5:13). Contrast 1 Th 4:11.

The Scripture is very clear about how saints are to conduct themselves in Christ's church: by working with their own hands, going about their own business, and not becoming busybodies by meddling in areas that in fact are none of their business. *And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you* (I Thess. 4:11).

***II Thessalonians 3:12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.***

<sup>23</sup> 1 Tim. 5:13 *And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.*  
1 Pet. 4:15 *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.*

<sup>24</sup> 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;*

It is sufficient, and should be considered as such, for Christians to be about their own business and prove their own work. It is this that leads to true godly contentment and genuine spiritual happiness. *But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another* (Gal. 6:4).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Gal. 6:4) *In himself alone*—Compare Proverbs 14:14; “A good man shall be satisfied from himself.” The sentiment is, that he will find in himself a source of pure joy. He will not be dependent on the applause of others for happiness. In an approving conscience; in the evidence of the favor of God; in an honest effort to lead a pure and holy life, he will have happiness. The source of his joys will be within; and he will not be dependent, as the man of ambition, and the man who thinks of himself more highly than he ought, will, on the favors of a capricious multitude, and on the breath of popular applause.

*And not in another*—He will not be dependent on others for happiness. Here is the true secret of happiness.

**II Thessalonians 3:13** *But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.*

Hardly a more accurate representation of manifesting Jesus’ heart can be found than when His people do good in His name. This pattern of walking about and doing good encapsulated the Savior’s entire earthly life—a pattern of generosity and true goodness that should be continued to be evidenced in all who now carry Christ’s name. *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him* (Acts 10:38).

25 Ps. 34:14 *Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.*

Ps. 37:3 *Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*

Gal. 6:10 *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

I Tim. 6:18 *That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;*

Heb. 13:16 *But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Acts 10:38) *Who went about doing good*—Whose main business it was to travel from place to place to do good. He did not go for applause, or wealth, or comfort, or ease, but to diffuse happiness as far as possible. This is the simple but sublime record of his life. It gives us a distinct portrait of his character, as he is distinguished from conquerors and kings, from false prophets and from the mass of people.

To do good and continue to do it should be the believer’s ultimate purpose in this life. It is a heavenly charge that is revealed throughout Scripture,<sup>25</sup> that when there is an opportunity to do good and the means to do it, then good should be done. For if it is not, then God considers it as sin. Hence, it is not simply those who do evil whom God considers sinners but also those who refuse to do good though humanly able to do so. *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin* (Jas. 4:17). It is therefore not enough for men to abstain from doing evil if they do not pursue doing good.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Jas. 4:17) *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin*—That is, he is guilty of sin if he does not do it. Cotton Mather adopted it as a principle of action, “that the ability to do good in any case imposes an obligation to do it.” ...

If he understands what his duty is; if he has the means of doing good to others; if by his name, his influence, his wealth, he can promote a good cause; if he can, consistently with other duties, relieve the distressed, the poor, the prisoner, the oppressed; if he can send the gospel to other lands, or can wipe away the tear of the mourner; if he has talents by which he can lift a voice that shall be heard in favor of temperance, chastity, liberty, and

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religion, he is under obligations to do it: and if, by indolence, or avarice, or selfishness, or the dread of the loss of popularity, he does not do it, he is guilty of sin before God. No man can be released from the obligation to do good in this world to the extent of his ability; no one should desire to be.

**II Thessalonians 3:14** *And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.*

It is not wrong to *note* and mark<sup>26</sup> as offenders those who break spiritual rank and think themselves above gospel authority. Likewise, it is neither transgressive nor unrighteous to refuse either fellowship or companionship with the proud of heart who openly refuse to obey the gospel. If any, then, have willfully chosen to disobey God's will for their lives, then the Lord's command is that no fellowship should be entered into with them. This is the truth of God's Word, the Son of God's will, and any who profess to follow the Savior should obey it.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, II Thess. 3:14) *Note that man.*—The reflexive voice of the verb implies mutual warning against him: "Agree to set a mark upon him, to make a marked man of him." The notion is that of making him easily recognisable, so that no Christian should "have company" with him unawares. (Comp. Genesis 4:15.<sup>27</sup>)

**II Thessalonians 3:15** *Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.*

<sup>26</sup> Rom. 16:17–18 *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.* <sup>18</sup>*For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*

<sup>27</sup> Gen. 4:15 *And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.*

<sup>28</sup> Rom. 14:1–3 *Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.* <sup>2</sup>*For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.* <sup>3</sup>*Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.*

<sup>29</sup> Gal. 5:22–23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,* <sup>23</sup>*Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

If some who do not obey Christ's words are brethren, the Scripture reveals here that they should not be considered as enemies, teaching us that God considers there to be a great difference between those weak in the faith<sup>28</sup> and those who publicly break rank and willingly reject apostolic authority.

**II Thessalonians 3:16** *Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.*

In this verse we have the apostle's wish and prayer for the Thessalonians, that the *Lord of peace*, Jesus Christ, would impart to them His own spiritual peace. Every true Christian knows the inward stabilizing force of the Christ Spirit within and the peace of God produced by it. This spiritual peace, whose source is God, surpasses all human understanding and is beyond what the mind of man can comprehend. So great, then, is its effect on the soul that even believers cannot fully understand the supernatural means by which the Lord imparts quietness in the deepest parts of the soul. *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus* (Phil. 4:7). Because the source of God's peace is in the spiritual realm, then if a man does not have the Spirit, it will prove impossible for him to truly experience this wonderful fruit of the Spirit.<sup>29</sup> It is also peace that Jesus promised to impart to all who believed upon Him. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give*

*I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid* (John 14:27). The peace that Jesus imparts to His followers is unique and can be felt only through becoming a child of God. Jesus also stated and revealed that it is *my peace* that He would give His followers. By this it is meant that true spiritual peace cannot be discovered or experienced anywhere else in the world apart from sincere and genuine relationship with the Son of God. Because it is Christ's own possession, His peace imparts a serenity that is completely unknown to a sinful world totally separated from Him.

It was also Jesus' promise to those saved by Him that He would remain with them unto the end of the world.<sup>30</sup> What greater way also to comfort a new convert's heart than to learn that He Whom the convert has believed upon will never leave or forsake him,<sup>31</sup> that Jesus will remain with those saved even to the end of the world.

***II Thessalonians 3:17 The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.***

Paul's epistles were personal letters to communities of believers.<sup>32</sup> These epistles, thirteen or perhaps fourteen in number (if we include Hebrews), were later made an integral part of Christ's doctrine for the Christian church. What is true concerning Galatians is also true concerning all of Paul's epistles. *But 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* (Gal. 1:11–12). It was not the apostle's personal gospel that he preached to the Thessalonians but only that divine Word of God revealed to him by the Son of God. Jesus Christ was the source of Paul's revelation, and there was nothing either of man or of himself contained in it. It was the *Word of the Lord*,<sup>33</sup> and as such, it was to be treated with the greatest respect and admiration. This is also how the Thessalonians received the gospel, fully regarding its source as in God, not man.<sup>34</sup>

*(Benson Commentary, Gal. 1:11–12) But I certify you, brethren—He does not, till now, give them even this appellation; that the gospel which was preached by me—Among you; is not after man—Of mere human authority and invention; is not from man, not by man, nor suited to the taste of man; for I neither received it of man—From the authority or interposition of any man; neither was I taught it—By any writing or any human method of instruction; but by revelation of Jesus Christ—Who communicated to me by inspiration his gospel in all its parts, and sent me forth to publish it to the world. If Paul did not receive the gospel from man, as he here asserts, and as we are therefore sure he did not, the perfect conformity of his doctrine with the doctrine of the other apostles, is a proof that he was taught it by revelation from Jesus Christ, who revealed to him at first his resurrection, ascension, and the calling of the Gentiles, and his own apostleship; and told him then there were other things for which he would appear to him.*

30 Matt. 28:20 *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

31 Heb. 13:5 *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

32 Romans, I–II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I–II Thessalonians, I–II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and perhaps Hebrews

33 I 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.*

34 I 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.*

***II Thessalonians 3:18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.***

The *grace* spoken of is the grace that originates from God and whose source is God's Son. *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ* (John 1:17). True Christianity is a religion of divine favor,<sup>35</sup> generous forgiveness,<sup>36</sup> and heavenly blessings.<sup>37</sup> These

realities become available when men are exposed to and believe both in and upon the Son of God.<sup>38</sup> It is quite reasonable that since Jesus died for us, we should live for Him.<sup>39</sup> It is likewise fitting that since Christ has brought us to God,<sup>40</sup> then we should live the remainder of our earthly lives serving Him and anticipating His Son's return,<sup>41</sup> exactly as this early church of Thessalonica lived their lives.

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35 Rom. 3:24 *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

Eph. 2:8–9 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: <sup>9</sup>Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

36 Ps. 86:5 *For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*

Ps. 103:2–3 *Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: <sup>3</sup>Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;*

I John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

37 Eph. 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

Gal. 3:14 *That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*

38 John 20:31 *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

I John 5:13 *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

39 II Cor. 5:15 *And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.*

40 I Pet. 3:18 *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:*

41 I 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.*

Phil. 3:20 *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: I Cor. 1:7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:*