

AN AMERICAN PASTOR SERIES

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

J.D. MONTIETH

AmericanPastor.com

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>I</i>
<i>Commentators</i>	<i>V</i>
<i>Session 1</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 1:1-5</i>
<i>Session 2</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 1:6-10</i>
<i>Session 3</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 2:1-9</i>
<i>Session 4</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 2:10-12</i>
<i>Session 5</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 2:13-18</i>
<i>Session 6</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 2:19-3:8</i>
<i>Session 7</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 3:9-4:6</i>
<i>Session 8</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 4:7-13</i>
<i>Session 9</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 4:14-16</i>
<i>Session 10</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 4:17-5:5</i>
<i>Session 11</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 5:6-19</i>
<i>Session 12</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 5:20-28</i>
<i>Session 13</i>	<i>II Thessalonians 1:1-12</i>
<i>Session 14</i>	<i>II Thessalonians 2:1-9</i>
<i>Session 15</i>	<i>II Thessalonians 2:10-3:5</i>
<i>Session 16</i>	<i>II Thessalonians 3:6-18</i>

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.

IT 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).¹ 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.² *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 men³ but is indeed the true Word of God, which shall also be fully upheld by Him. So that if the Gospel is rejected,⁴ 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

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.*
¹²*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.

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 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.

disciple would strengthen the testimony of the other regarding Jesus being God's only begotten Son and Israel's Messiah.⁵ 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.⁶ 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.⁷ *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 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,⁸ two other gift ministries⁹ confirming the revelation he was about to reveal.¹⁰ 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.

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 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.*²⁹ *And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening.*³⁰ *And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias.*³¹ *Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.*³² *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.*³³ *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.*³⁴ *While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.*³⁵ *And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.*³⁶ *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 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.*

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.*

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.*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:*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.*

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 spiritual confidence that what is agreed upon is the truth. Hence, when truly spiritual men speak independently (sometimes even hundreds of years apart) yet draw the same conclusions, then it is clearly evident that the same Spirit of Christ¹¹ is leading them. This is essential when entering such topics as Christ's return¹² and what it takes to be truly saved by God.¹³ Thankfully, all that genuinely has its source in God and is sent by God is sure to manifest profit to those who believe

it.¹⁴ Thus, when God sends His Word, whether by letter,¹⁵ Spirit,¹⁶ or prophet,¹⁷ because God is its true Author, it shall prosper where it is sent.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹ *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 significant number of Scripture references added to the text. This is to illustrate that not only do the author and other esteemed

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 *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: ¹⁷Then 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. ⁴Nicodemus 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? ⁵Jesus 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. ⁶That which is 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. ¹⁰For 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 *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 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.

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

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

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.

¹⁷ *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? *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.

¹⁸ *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,

¹⁹ *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.

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

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 three witnesses confirm the truth, then there is little more that can be done. At this point, though rejectors of Christ may remain religious, the truth is that they will just seek out false teachers who will enable them to continue living in their

own sinful and harmful lusts. Hence, if a man will not hear Christ's words or allow himself to be first convicted and then governed by God's Spirit, then all that is left for him to follow is an evil and corrupt world, which is purposed to satisfy 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).

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.). Over a million of *Notes on the New Testament* were sold by 1870, and they are still being printed today. Charles Spurgeon said concerning this commentary, “No minister can afford to be without it.”ⁱ

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 Biblicum*, 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.” Spurgeon found Poole’s synopsis “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.ⁱⁱ

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 as the school became 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.ⁱⁱⁱ

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 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.”^{iv}

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 Becher 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 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.^v

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.^{vi}

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.^{vii}

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*.^{viii}

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 in the set includes an introduction, history, original language studies, 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.”^{ix}

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.^x

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.^{xi}

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.^{xii}

I Repent in Dust and Ashes

Endnotes

- i Barnes, Albert. *Notes on the New Testament, Explanatory and Practical: With Questions for Bible Classes and Sunday Schools. Matthew and Mark*. 1868. Edited by Robert Frew, vol. 1, Blackie, 2006.
- “Barnes’ Notes on the Whole Bible.” *StudyLight.org*, <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/bnb.html>.
- Chisholm, Hugh. “Barnes, Albert.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 1911th ed., vol. 3, Cambridge University Press, 1911, p. 412.
- Olbricht, Thomas. *Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters*. 2007. Edited by Donald K McKim, 2nd ed., InterVarsity Press, 2007, p. 147.
- Presbyterian Historical Society*. “Guide to the Albert Barnes Papers.” Presbyterian Historical Society, 5 May 2014, www.history.pcusa.org/collections/research-tools/guides-archival-collections/rg-13.
- ii Chisholm, Hugh, editor. “Poole, Matthew.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. 22, Cambridge University Press, 1911, p. 72.
- Gordon, Alexander. “Poole, Matthew.” *Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by Sidney Lee, Smith, Elder & Co., 1896, pp. 99–100.
- Harley, Thomas. *Matthew Poole: His Life, His Times, His Contributions along with His Argument against the Infallibility of the Roman Catholic Church*. iUniverse, 2009.
- “Matthew Poole.” *SwordSearcher*, <https://www.swordsearcher.com/christian-authors/matthew-poole.html>.
- Poole, Matthew. *A Seasonable Apology for the Christian Religion*. 1673. iUniverse, 2009.
- iii “Books Available—Benson’s Commentary of the Old and New Testaments - Bible Commentaries.” *StudyLight.org*, <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/rbc.html>.
- Courtney, W. P., and John A. Newton. “Murlin, John (1722–1799), Methodist Preacher.” *Oxford University Press EBooks*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19568>.
- Grosart, Alexander Balloch. “Benson, Joseph.” *Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by Leslie Stephen, vol. 4, Smith, Elder & Co, 1885, p. 23.
- Valentine, Simon Ross. “Benson, Joseph (1749-1821).” *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Dec. 2004, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/2142>.
- iv “Books Available—Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible—Bible Commentaries.” *StudyLight.org*, <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/jfb.html>.
- Brown, David. *Life of the Late John Duncan, LL.D., Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages, New College, Edinburgh by David Brown, D.D., Professor of Theology, Aberdeen*. 2013. Edmonston and Douglas, 1872.
- Buckland, Augustus Robert. “Fausset, Andrew Robert (1821–1910).” *Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by Sidney Lee, 1912 supplement, vol. 2, Smith Elder & Co, 1912, p. 15.
- Millar, Alexander Hastie. “Jamieson, Robert (1802-1880).” *Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by Sidney Lee, 1885th–1900th ed., vol. 29, Smith, Elder & Co., 1892, pp. 239–40.
- Blaikie, William Garden. *David Brown, D.D., LL. D.: Professor and Principal of the Free Church College, Aberdeen*. Hodder and Stoughton, 1898.
- v “A New Dean of Exeter.” *The Times*, Wednesday, 3 July 1861; Issue 23975; pg. 6.
- Pryde, E. B., et al., editors. *Handbook of British Chronology*. 3rd ed., Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 232–49.
- St. Martin’s Press. *Who Was Who: A Cumulated Index 1897–1990*. Palgrave Macmillan, 1992.
- The Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle... A Journal of Papers on Subjects Connected with Maritime Affairs*. Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., Stationers’ Hall Court, 1848, p. 566.
- vi “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>.
- vii *Baptist Quarterly*. “John Gill and the Charge of Hyper-Calvinism.” *Biographia Evangelica*, edited by George M. Ella, Oct. 1995, web.archive.org/web/20191203081104/evangelica.de/articles/biographies/john-gill-and-the-charge-of-hyper-calvinism/.
- “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/>.
- Toon, Peter. *The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity, 1689-1765*. Wipf & Stock, 2011.
- Nettles, Tomas J. *By His Grace and for His Glory: A Historical, Theological, and Practical Study of the Doctrines of Grace in Baptist Life*. Baker Pub Group, 1986.
- Rippon, John. *A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late Rev. John Gill*. Bennett, 1838.
- Thornton, Chipley McQueen. “Read More Gill.” *G3 Ministries*, 6 Apr. 2022, g3min.org/read-more-gill/.
- viii Bickerton Williams, John. *Memoirs of the Life, Character, and Writings of the Rev. Matthew Henry*. B. J. Holdsworth, 1828.
- Chapman, Charles. *Matthew Henry, His Life and Times*. 1859. A. Hall, Virtue & Co, 2006.

- Hamilton, James. "Biographical Sketch of the Rev. Matthew Henry." *Christian Biography Resources*, <https://www.wholesomewords.org/biography/bhenry3.html>.
- Harman, Allan M. "The Legacy of Matthew Henry." *Reformed Theological Review*, vol. 73, no. 3, Dec. 2014, pp. 181–97.
- Hindson, Edward E., and Dan Mitchell. *The Popular Encyclopedia of Church History*. Harvest House Publishers, 2013, pp. 174–75.
- "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/>.
- ix "Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges." *Internet Archive, Cambridge [Eng.]: University Press*, 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.
- x 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.
- xi "Johann Albrecht Bengel." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 23 May 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Albrecht_Bengel.
- xii 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/. 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.
- "The Expositor's Greek Testament." *StudyLight.Org*, 2022, www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/egt.html.
- "William Robertson Nicoll." *Author Info: William Robertson Nicoll - Christian Classics Ethereal Library*, www.ccel.org/ccel/nicoll.

Session 1

An Exposition of I & II Thessalonians

I Thessalonians 1:1-5

Scriptures

I Thessalonians 1:1
II Corinthians 13:1
Galatians 4:6
I Corinthians 12:3
John 14:23
Romans 5:1
I Thessalonians 1:2
I Corinthians 3:6
I Thessalonians 1:3

Romans 10:17
Ephesians 2:10
I John 4:8
Romans 13:10
I Corinthians 13:2
I Thessalonians 4:9
John 10:28
I Thessalonians 1:4
John 10:27

John 1:48
John 15:16
I Thessalonians 1:5
Matthew 10:20
Matthew 7:29
Galatians 1:12
Matthew 28:18
John 5:22

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.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy came to the Thessalonians with one voice, declaring unto them the Word of the Lord. *A threefold cord is not quickly broken* (Eccl. 4:12), and as such, three believing servants of God were a unified choir confirming the truth that would be revealed.

To establish something as the truth, two or three witnesses are required.

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

Multiple witnesses were essential when elders were accused, when men ignored reproof from a brother, or when sinners in the Old Testament set aside the law of Moses.

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 that revelation is valid and can be trusted as having its source in God.

Understanding this, Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy's joint letter to the Thessalonians gave ample evidence that the word brought to them was from the Lord.

What Paul had preached to the Corinthians of being of one mind, speaking the same thing with no division, was exactly the same harmony that existed between Silvanus, Timothy, and 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 of Thessalonica, their true 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 distinct and different than Him.

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.

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 the Father and 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 (John 1:18).

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 members of the Godhead must be embraced.

The Great Commission demands that men are baptized or should be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit because they are divinely bound, and to truly believe in one will lead to belief in the other two (Matt. 28:19).

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 divinely linked 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. Even as it is through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit that heavenly sonship is both gained and confirmed.

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

Likewise, men will properly and rightfully call God *Abba, Father*, only when Christ sends the Spirit into their hearts.

This teaches us that for true salvation and for a man to rightfully call God his Father, the Holy Spirit must be received, and Christ's lordship rightfully accepted.

I Corinthians 12:3 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.

For any to say that Jesus is his Lord, he must possess the Spirit of God, as it will take His Spirit to ultimately compel a man to confess Jesus as Lord.

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.

Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because the Thessalonians held a sincere love for both the Father and the Son, they were reciprocally loved and adored back.

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.

Ultimately, true salvation will always include confession of the lordship of Jesus Christ, being filled with God's Holy Spirit, and being made a son of God through Christ.

For God to rightfully be any man's true Father, there must be an acceptance of His Son and a receiving of the Holy Spirit sent by Him. By these realities alone are men confirmed to be in the family of God.

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 from their heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace is divine favor bestowed upon men.

Because Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, he was saved by God (Heb. 11:7).

Romans also reveals that it is by *grace* that men are saved through faith (Rom. 3:23–24).

Hence, even the process that God employs to save the sinner, faith, is an act of divine grace.

Peace.

Peace is that which joins things together into a whole. “#1515 *eirénē* (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. His relationship with God and other men has been severed. Thus for healing to begin, there must first be reconciliation, and this reconciliation begins and ends with Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

It is only through faith in God's son that peace with God can be entered into and harmony with other men can truly begin.

Without reconciliation through the death of Christ, true peace with God and fellowship with others would be unattainable.

The Thessalonians had come into God's favor because of their faith in the Son of God. Therefore peace with God as well with each other became their spiritual fruit.

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.

I Corinthians 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.

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 any increase in His church, and this is always the case when divine attributes like faith and love are present. Hence, whenever God's people bear spiritual fruit, you can know that a divine source is mightily involved in their lives. It is God who makes all things to grow, to increase, and to prosper, and without Him, nothing can.

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 revealed their willingness to allow God's power and authority over their lives. Since no man can joyfully receive the gospel and at the same time reject its divine authority over himself.

The Thessalonians' work, labor, and love proved the sincerity of their faith. Once a man also truly believes, his life of service to God will prove it.

Work of faith.

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

Works of faith are those to which faith prompts, and which show that there is faith in the heart.

Man does many things that are prompted not by faith but by some other, selfish human motive.

The opposite of this is a *work of faith*, which has as its core trust in and reliance on God. True faith also is only possessed through first hearing the Word of God.

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

Just as faith necessitates that God must first speak, a work of faith requires the same Word of God to be revealed.

Ultimately, there is no such thing as a true work of the Lord that God, Himself, does not first inspire.

Understanding this, we can know that the Thessalonians performed works for God that were inspired by Him. They were not merely religious men who lived their lives and carried out their religion according only to their own human will.

Christians were created in Christ Jesus to do good works, and those who possess sincere faith in the Father and in His Son will seek to live their lives fulfilling them.

Ephesians 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.

One of the designs of the new birth is that God's new sons may be led by Him to do good works for His kingdom.

Because good works are both inspired and purposed by God, the good that is done will bring glory to God's name. Scripture also warns believers to continue doing good works, as this is God's will for their lives (Tit. 3:8).

The reason for this is that when benevolence ceases, true faith in God is very likely lost, none also can walk in fellowship with the Lord and not be compelled to live a life bringing glory to Him through good works done in His own holy name.

Labour of love.

Not only was faith a catalyst for the Thessalonians' service, but agape love played a dominant role in leading them to exert labor for the Lord.

When men truly love God, they are more than willing to labor for Him.

Caring for Christ's church is what Jesus instructed Peter in when He repeatedly asked him if he had true love for Christ (John 21:15–17).

When men therefore take on the care and well-being of the people of God, it proves that they have true love for Him in their hearts. Consider as well that, if a man does not truly love the children of God, whom he can see, we know he does not love God, whom he cannot (I John 4:20).

Ultimately, no man can properly be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ and have God as his Father while lacking the supernatural element of divine love in his heart.

Hence, if love is absent, no true knowledge of God can be held. This teaches us that though men may claim they know the Lord, without love they really do not.

As love reveals that God dwells in men's hearts, its absence reveals that He is not.

1 John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, 1 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.

Matthew Poole's Commentary, 1 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 love that God's law is fulfilled.

Romans 13:10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Since God is love, when men pursue His nature they reveal themselves as true followers of Him.

Yet if men do not possess love, though they might think they have an abundance of other things, God's Word reveals that they are in the end esteemed by the Lord as absolutely nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:2 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.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, 1 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.

True Christians cannot and will not lack sincere love for God and His people.

1 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.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, 1 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.

Patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

At the center of all true hope is the person of Jesus Christ.

This is also why without faith in the Lord Jesus, any true hope of heaven can be nothing but mere wishful imagination.

It is Christ Who gives eternal life, and His power alone which enables men to keep it.

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.*

When the Son of God has granted a man eternal life, then we know that he will never perish, nor can any other power remove him from Christ's possession.

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

All Christians owe their standing in the gospel to their election of God.

The word for *election*, “#1589 *eklogḗ*,” is defined as a “divine selection,” whereby through the will of God men and women are brought to share in His promises.

Thayer's Greek Lexicon defines *eklogḗ* as 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; 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 προφῆσις, 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, saved men must be first chosen, men.

John 10:27 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:*

Consider as well that the Lord sees men and knows of their existence long before they are called to Himself. This was true of Nathanael and will also be true of us. When Nathanael asked Jesus, *Whence knowest thou me?* Jesus responded that He first seen him when Nathanael was under the tree.

This teaches us that when men are called by Christ, He has already seen and selected them to be His own.

Ultimately, predestination is the foundation of every call of Christ. Since, Jesus calls none to Himself that he does not already know God has purposed to be in his church.

John 1:48 *Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.*

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. In that place of retirement it is not improbable that Nathanael was engaged in private devotion.

The Dead Shall Rise: Session 1

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 God is not the basis for God choosing him but rather the result of it.

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.

What is true of Christians is equally true of apostles and all other ministries in the church. Thus for any to bare fruit in Christian ministry they need to be first chosen and ordained by Christ for it.

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. It refers here, doubtless, to his choosing or electing them to be apostles. He says that it was not because 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.

God has set the members in Christ’s body as it has pleased Him, so no man can rightfully take any ministerial honor to himself through only personal will and/or desire.

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 His gospel came with power and that it possessed the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit.

Ultimately, it is the Holy Spirit who convicts men of sin and through His power makes God known to them.

So that if a man comes in God’s name but possesses not the power of the Spirit in his life then we can know that he was never sent by God.

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

Whenever also men are truly led by the Spirit of God, it will be quite visible that the word spoken by them has God as its source.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 1:5

For our gospel came not unto you - When first preached; Acts 17:1-3. Paul speaks of it as "our gospel," because it was the gospel preached by him and Silas and Timothy; comp 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Timothy 2:8. He did not mean to say that the gospel had been originated by him, but only that he had delivered the good news of salvation to them. He is here stating the evidence which had been given that they were a church "chosen by God." He refers, first, to the manner in which the gospel was received by them 1 Thessalonians 1:5-7, and, secondly, to the spirit which they themselves manifested in sending it abroad; yet 1 Thessalonians 1:8.

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.

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

If a man does not have spiritual power in his ministry, God 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 spiritual power with it.

Matthew 7:29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Matt. 7:29

As one having authority, and not as the scribes - The scribes were the learned people and teachers of the Jewish nation, and were principally Pharisees. They taught chiefly the sentiments of their Rabbis, and the traditions which had been delivered; they consumed much of their time in useless disputes and "vain jangling." Jesus was open, plain, grave, useful, delivering truth as "became" the oracles of God; not spending his time in trifling disputes and debating questions of no importance, but confirming his doctrine by miracles and argument; teaching "as having power," as it is in the original, and not in the vain and foolish manner of the Jewish doctors. He showed that he had authority to explain, to enforce, and to "change" the ceremonial laws of the Jews. He came with authority such as no "man" could have, and it is not remarkable that his explanations astonished them.

Those who carry spiritual authority in their ministries are like Paul, to whom Christ has revealed His Word.

Galatians 1:12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Paul's source for the gospel he preached was Christ and not himself.

It was not from man, nor by man, that the apostle brought forth the gospel, but only by and through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Unlike other religious movements of the day, the early apostles spoke the Word of the Lord boldly because they knew and believed the power that God had given Christ.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Benson Commentary, Matt. 28:18

Dr. Whitby [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*.

It is the Son whom God has given full authority to judge the world.

John 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, John 5:22

The reason why judgment is committed to the Son is given in John 5:27 as resulting from His humanity. It is stated here as resulting from His divinity.

As the Son of Man, Jesus has right over man, and as the Son of God, Jesus has right to that which is God's.

By these two qualities, being both the Son of Man and the Son of God, Jesus Christ will reign over the world.

Hence, the Word of the Lord will always carry authority with it because it is the Word of Him who will one day rule all things, both in this world and in the heavenly regions beyond it.

Session 2

An Exposition of I & II Thessalonians

I Thessalonians 1:6–10

Scriptures

I Thessalonians 1:6
John 10:27
John 15:11
Acts 13:52
I John 1:3–4
Jeremiah 15:16
I Thessalonians 1:7

John 10:10
I Thessalonians 1:8
Jeremiah 20:9
I Peter 1:8
Daniel 7:13–14
Acts 2:36
John 12:48

I Thessalonians 1:9
I Thessalonians 1:10
James 5:7–8
Romans 1:4
II Thessalonians 1:7–9
Revelation 19:15

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.*

And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord.

The Greek word for *followers* is #3402 *mimētēs*. Its definition is “one who imitates, emulates.” From *mimētēs* we have the English word *mimic*.

In many places the apostles and those sent by Christ were persecuted, but the Thessalonians emulated and imitated their godly lives.

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, and quite another for men to use godly names and ministries only to cause division in the church.

No man also can be a true follower of God and not follow the example of His son.

John 10:27 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*

Ultimately, all men follow and pattern themselves after something, including their own foolish thoughts and ideas, the carnal world around them, or hopefully the benevolent God trying to save them.

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.

Jesus had instructed His disciples that they would be hated of all men for His sake.

Servants are not above their master; thus, all Christians will suffer for their Christian faith, just as Christ needed to do. Yet neither persecution nor affliction can stop belief in the gospel.

History has proven that when saints are persecuted for believing the truth, it only inspires them to cling to it even more.

Hence, for the true followers of the Lord Jesus, affliction will do no more than draw them closer to the Lord.

This was true of David, and it will be true of us as well.

The Thessalonians also possessed that *joy* of the Lord found in all to whom Jesus sends His Spirit.

John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

True joy, like peace, is a fruit of the Spirit, which has its origination in Him who gives the Spirit.

The proof that God is a living God is evidenced by the spiritual joy and peace He gives His people.

Hence, though the faith of these early believers was tested on the outside, Christ strengthened their resolve to remain faithful to God on the inside.

No man also who is not a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ can know or possess that spiritual joy that Christ imparts to those who have believed.

Acts 13:52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

Through also God imparting joy into His people, they are internally strengthened for the lives He has called them to live.

When men love and believe in the Father through the Son, they are filled with unspeakable joy.

What the Father and Son are they can give, and joy is an element of their Spirit.

This is why whenever men walk in true fellowship with the Lord, they experience supernatural and spiritual joy in their hearts.

I John 1:3–4 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.

⁴ And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

Because also God's Word has its source in God, when men through faith are exposed to it, it will produce rejoicing in the soul.

Jeremiah 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.

When men also rejoice in the Word of God as though they have found great spoil, it reveals how much they treasure the Holy One who sent it.

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 men also receive the Word gives insight into their true character.

The Jews often resisted the Word, revealing their rejection of God's sovereignty and their unwillingness to yield to God's government.

Practically speaking, a rejection of the Word of God demonstrates willful resistance to God's divine rule.

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

The word *ensamples* in Greek is #5179 *tupos*. It is defined as "the mark of a blow, then a stamp struck by a die."

The word is used for the nails in Christ's hand, the example of God's judgment upon sinners, and the pattern or copy that the temple on earth is to the real temple of God in heaven.

The force and importance of where *tupos* is used reveal the great and lasting impression that the Thessalonians' example of faith had on others who also believed the gospel.

What caused the Thessalonians to be such an example of faith?

(1) They imitated and followed the same subjection to Christ that those who brought them the Word possessed.

The apostles were single-minded and totally devoted to God in their faith, and so were the Thessalonians.

(2) The Thessalonians recognized that Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were servants of Christ. By recognizing this, they yielded their lives to the Lord. Sensing the Spirit of God, they gladly became willing to place themselves under His rule.

(3) They received the Word brought to them as the Word of God and not as the word of men. Perceiving Christ's Spirit in the apostles caused them to realize that an invisible God existed. Ultimately they received the gospel as the *Word of the Lord* simply because they could detect the Lord's divine nature in it.

(4) By perceiving the gospel's source to be the Father, the Thessalonians pursued the godly and spiritual qualities of faith, love, and hope, which are themselves characteristics of God.

(5) Ultimately, the joy of the Holy Spirit in the Thessalonians' hearts proved their relationship to Christ. Consider as well that there is a great difference between religion, which possesses no joy on its own, and true faith in God, whereby Christ imparts joy to His followers.

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. 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.

For those who sincerely believe upon Jesus Christ, an abundant spiritual joy becomes a reality, whereby through the abundance of Christ His people are filled with His own divine attributes.

John 10:10 I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 10:10

Might have it more abundantly - Literally, that they may have abundance, or that which abounds. The word denotes that which is not absolutely essential to life, but which is superadded to make life happy. They shall not merely have life - simple, bare existence - but they shall have all those superadded things which are needful to make that life eminently blessed and happy.

Those who have believed upon the Son of God will attest that Jesus will do more for the soul than what the land of Canaan did for Israel.

Hence, it will not be merely a *land flowing with milk and honey* that Jesus gives to satisfy His people, but also, spiritual blessings like joy and peace in the heart.

If men believe upon the Son of God, they will experience for themselves the abundant life purposed for them by God. The Lord is rich, and those who receive His sovereignty will partake of His rich estate.

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 "sounded out" - ἐξήχηται *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. Their influence had an effect in diffusing the gospel in other places, as if the sound of a trumpet echoed and reechoed among the hills and along the vales of the classic land of Greece.

When men truly believe the gospel, they will seek to spread the gospel. This is why the Thessalonians *sounded out the word of the Lord*.

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, so if God's nature permeates a man's soul, God's Word will be spoken.

Jeremiah is a wonderful example of how God's Spirit living in a man will compel him to speak for the Lord.

Jeremiah 20:9 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.

Matthew Pooles' 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*.

The Greek word for *Lord* is #2962 *kýrios*, defined as “a person exercising absolute ownership rights” or “an owner (master) exercising full rights.”

To the Thessalonians, Jesus was not simply their healer, deliverer, or even 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 of their lives to God.

They gave Jesus absolute ownership of themselves. Their lives were no longer their own, and they were happy to present them to God as living sacrifices.

I Peter 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.

It was not merely religious duty that prompted this spiritual surrendering to the Son of God, but faith in the reality of Christ’s Lordship over the world.

Like the Israelites, who had received the Word of God through Moses, the Thessalonians recognized a new revelation from God, given through the Son of God.

When the Scriptures speak about the *Word of the Lord*, it is in reference to the one whom Old Testament prophecies revealed would be given reign and rulership over all the earth. The *Word of the Lord*, then, specifically relates to Israel’s Messiah, the one Daniel said would be given dominion over all people.

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.

¹⁴ 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) 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, 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. In this kingdom also, God’s people will 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 describes the dominion that the *Ancient of Days* (God) has given the Son of Man.

Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Dan. 7:14

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. The word dominion 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.

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. 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.

By seeking to spread the *Word of the Lord*, this revealed that the Thessalonians were uniquely aware of the universal authority the Father had given the Son.

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.

Jesus Christ was the Thessalonians’ Lord, and His resurrection from the dead proved that one day He will return to establish justice and judgment on the earth. As the Son of Man and Son of God, Jesus has been granted by God the right to reign over man.

Ultimately, also, it will be the *Word of God* spoken by Christ which will be the final judge of all men.

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.

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.

This divine revelation that Jesus Christ is now Lord of all men, is the genesis of all true evangelism. Those also who know Christ to be the Lord desire nothing more than to spread knowledge of His sovereignty to others.

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 belief in God.

This is why tradition or handed-down religious beliefs will do nothing to inspire energetic and inspired service for the Lord. Dead things also, whether they be dead religions or dumb idols, do nothing to inspire people to offer themselves as living sacrifices.

Hence, at the core of all true Christian service lies an understanding that God is alive and will reward those who diligently seek Him.

The manner in which the Thessalonians turned to serve the Lord proved the sincerity of their faith.

The Greek for *serve* is #1398 *douleuó*, “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.”

Ultimately, it was the manner in which the Thessalonians gave themselves to God that revealed their faith in Him.

The gospel, therefore, made such an impact on their lives that they completely and wholly abandoned lives of sin to turn and serve a living God.

This is also what belief in the truth will produce today. For if men truly believe the gospel, they will turn from lives of sin to serve the One who sent it.

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 character is dependent upon waiting for the Lord. Waiting for Christ's return, therefore, will not be different.

James 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.

⁸ Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

It is thus essential that Christians learn to wait, simply because all things will be done according to God's timetable and not man's.

By also subjecting ourselves to wait upon the Lord, we reveal our total and complete subjection to Him, knowing that what God has promised, in His time, He will perform.

Equally important to the Thessalonians giving their lives to God was the fact that they expected God's Son to return from heaven.

Consider as well that there is no true faith that does not hold the Son of God as the main object in it.

It is only when men receive Christ as Lord that they are given the power to become sons of God, and it is only by possessing the Christ Spirit that one proves true spiritual adoption in God's family.

Ultimately, the Son of God is the center of all true and divine religion. If He is not, then it is only another religion formed by man and governed by Him also.

It was Christ's resurrection from the dead that proved His divinity.

Romans 1:4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

It will be Christ's return that will prove His sovereignty.

II Thessalonians 1:7-9 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

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

⁹ Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

To the saved, Christ's coming will mean the complete opposite that it does to the unsaved.

Where Jesus's return from heaven will be salvation to some, it will result in divine judgment for others. It is this coming wrath of God that faith in Christ saves men from.

Revelation 19:15 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.

Sin must be reckoned with. God's justice demands it. Ultimately, at Christ's return, He will reveal Himself as this world's Savior as well as its final judge.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Rom. 2:5

The guilt of man is accumulated little by little. The punishment will be discharged upon him all at once, in one overwhelming tide.

Though sinners remain indifferent to sin and seem to possess no sensitivity to its awful consequences, a day is coming, which will be ushered in by Christ's return, when all sin must be accounted for.

Session 3

An Exposition of I & II Thessalonians

I Thessalonians 2:1–9

Scriptures

I Thessalonians 2:1–2

I John 4:4

Revelations 19:16

John 14:23

Romans 8:37

I Thessalonians 2:3

I Thessalonians 2:4

Romans 16:18

I Thessalonians 2:5

John 8:18

I Thessalonians 2:6

John 5:44

Matthew 6:1

I Thessalonians 2:7

I John 3:14

I Thessalonians 2:8

Matthew 16:24

I John 3:16

John 15:13

I Thessalonians 2:9

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

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

The 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 Word's sake they will not, like impostors, abandon boldly holding forth the truth.

Hence, though Paul and his companions suffered and were shamefully entreated 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 is far greater than all the powers of darkness in this world

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.

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 apostacy, 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 "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."

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, but only He *them*. In the spiritual realm, there is but one King and it is not the god of this world. This is proven by how through Christ's name demons departed and by how in His name sinners are saved.

Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords, and because of His celestial authority, those called by His name 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:

Revelations 19:16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

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), [Menochius].

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

When men ponder the events recorded in the book of Revelation and are tempted to become fearful of the power of the dragon or the beast or the ungodly world governments that will align themselves with them, they need to remember that He Who has 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. And because Christ is supreme, in spiritual battle His people will prevail.

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* — 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 apostacy, and for all his confederates.

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.

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.

Because Christ is supreme and has been given divine power over all things by God, the saved are made more than conquerors through Him.

Romans 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

When this is properly understood, saints should realize that all victory lies in the fact that Christ's Spirit is the greatest spirit in the world today. And though the Holy Spirit may seem to be at times only a small part in the Christian heart, because God's presence lives within, the Lord's people will be made by God to become more than conquerors.

This is also why even an abundance of evil men could not dissuade or prohibit the apostles from fulfilling their divine commission, simply because Jesus Christ had appointed them as leaders of His own church, and nothing or no one inferior to Him could cause them to either depart from or desert their calling—teaching us that true spiritual boldness lies not in the strength of human will, not in the cleverness of human reasoning, but in the power and inward strengthening of the Holy Spirit.

It is God's power that causes His people to stand and God's power that enables weak men like ourselves to boldly proclaim the gospel, even when there are so many in the world who despise it.

Consider as well that believers are persecuted for proclaiming the truth because those who prefer the freedom to sin, have rejected the rule of God.

Thus, the greatest persecutors of faith will be seen to be those who most despise God's heavenly rule. Ultimately, any who cherish the right to sin will hate any who preach that men must be subject to God.

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

Here Paul states that his ministry was not motivated by deceit, uncleanness, or guile. The apostle's real reason for ministry lay in his sincere belief that the gospel would produce fruit in those who believed it.

This is the intent of all true ministries, as they desire nothing more than that men believe the truth solely for their own benefit.

Because the apostles' motives were undefiled, they could openly encourage the Thessalonians to inspect their motives. In short, the apostles invited men to, in business terms, look at their books. They had nothing to hide, and they wanted all they preached Christ to, to know it.

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 put in trust with the gospel. All true ministers serve at God's discretion and can be as easily removed from their divine positions as they were placed in them.

Adding to this is that when men of God have been allowed by God to be entrusted with the gospel, their sole loyalty and allegiance will always be to God since he who is called to serve the Lord cannot and will not seek to please man.

To do so would endanger his own godly designation. Thus, it is the imposter, not the true minister, whose main objective is to please the people he oversees.

No man also is more open to corruption than he who, instead of remaining faithful to the Lord, complies with the wishes and desires of sinful men. This is clearly seen in the Old Testament figure Aaron, who through external pressure from rebellious Israel, assisted them in making an idol to worship (Exod. 32:1–4). Because Aaron lacked sufficient godly character, he was compromised spiritually.

This record also teaches that no man can remain true to God if he can be compromised by anybody or anything apart from God. This must include, even those 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. This speech, though it may contain selected bits of the truth, will never really be the truth. Simply because those who say things to please the hearer, seek really only to gain something for themselves.

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.

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. 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 εὐλογία *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 making 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.

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 the simple is through flattery. *Flattery* is defined by *Strong's* as saying things "with a view to advantage or gain"

Practically speaking, fraudulent ministries will often use flattery to increase their religious influence.

When also men do not possess any real spiritual power, through the power of the Holy Spirit, they must resort to flattery in order to gain religious influence.

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 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.

Another point that Paul emphasizes to the Thessalonians is 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 will hijack spiritual positions in the church for the primary purpose of gaining material wealth for themselves, hence, counterfeits often make merchandise of God's people, to fulfill their own carnal desire for worldly riches.

In contrast to this deceptive religious behavior, are those who are sincerely sent by the Lord, who ultimately call upon the Lord as a witness to their own spiritual genuineness.

True men of God, therefore, can call upon God as a witness of their spiritual ministries when in fact counterfeits cannot.

This is seen with Elijah and the prophets of Baal, Moses, and Korah, and even our Lord Jesus, whose earthly life and spiritual resurrection from the dead proved that what He had proclaimed about Himself, as coming from God, was true.

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

By asking the Lord for confirmation, the apostle could appeal to no greater power—since who better to confirm that we are pure Christians than He Who *makes* men Christians?

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.

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. 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 herein he reflects upon those false apostles that sought to please men...

Perhaps unknown to the Thessalonians was the fact that if men seek glory one from another, this will disqualify them from believing in the one God sent to save them.

John 5:44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

When men are therefore driven by the desire for human praise, true hope for possessing real faith in Christ is lost, since 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.

The glory also that people choose to pursue, whether it is worldly or heavenly, ultimately determines if true faith in Christ can ever be possessed.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 5:44

A man cannot believe the gospel while he is wholly under the influence of ambition.

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.

Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, John 5:44

How can ye believe] The emphasis 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...

Ultimately, when religious acts are performed for the sole purpose of gaining human approval, then all heavenly reward will be lost.

Matthew 6:1 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.

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 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 any 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? Such also is the effect of sin, which so weakens men's mental powers that the wisdom to seek heavenly glory above human fame, is lost.

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.

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), 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 of Christ. Because the Thessalonians exhibited such a pure and sincere love for the Savior, the apostle sought to do nothing to discourage them in their faith.

Observe as well, that when men are true ministers of the gospel, they will care for God's people as their own. This is why, though sinners love their own, only those who are themselves born of God will love the children of God.

Consequently, if a man is born again and has God's Holy Spirit in him, God's spiritual children will be where his greatest loyalty lies. The proof also that men have passed from death unto life can be seen when love for their spiritual brethren emerges.

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.

It is when divine love for the brethren is present, that we are assured by God, that eternal life is possessed. Yet, if a man does not love those born of God, it is certain that he remains dead in sins himself.

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. 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.

True love for the Lord's people extends far beyond religious duty and will include a spiritual willingness to lay down our lives for them.

Because the Thessalonians were precious in God's sight, the apostles were more than willing to give them all they could. This went beyond simply preaching the Word but included laying down their own lives for them.

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. 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;

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 a true Christian.

Matthew 16:24 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.

This is how Jesus manifested God's love towards us, and this is how we are to manifest His love to the world.

I John 3:16 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.

It is not enough to speak words of love if sacrifice is withheld even as it is not sufficient to say we love the people of God if we remain reluctant to lay down our lives for them.

True love must progress beyond simple words and include personal sacrifice.

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

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, and not his words, is his religion proved. Hence, whereas good words and fair speeches can deceive the simple, actions and what men ultimately live for reveal who they really are.

When ministers also ask nothing from those they have been called to serve, we can know, that it is not themselves that they truly live for.

This also teaches us that those divinely sent by God will seek not what they can gain from others but only what they can give to them.

Session 4

An Exposition of I & II Thessalonians

I Thessalonians 2:10–12

Scriptures

I Thessalonians 2:10
Hebrews 12:14
I Peter 1:16
Psalms 51:4
I Thessalonians 2:11
I Corinthians 4:15

Matthew 23:11
I Thessalonians 2:12
Philippians 3:14
Matthew 4:17
Matthew 7:21
II Peter 1:11

Romans 3:23
Colossians 1:27
II Corinthians 5:17
Romans 8:17
I John 3:2

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* (3) *unblameably*. All three reveal different aspects of proper Christian character.

Holily.

The Greek word is #3743 *hosiós*, defined 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.” What is meant by the use of this word is 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. This is someone who lives his life without any respect for the sacred Scriptures, fellowship with the Lord, internal devotion, or the pursuit of holiness in his heart.

Natural men are both common and defiled by nature, having no desire to be holy. The unsaved will not sanctify God in their hearts nor have any real desire to pursue that characteristic of God that makes Him unique in creation.

Yet without both holiness and sanctification, no man will see the Lord. Practically speaking, a common man, one who lacks the holiness of God, is unfit for heaven. This is why when men do not seek holiness, they shall neither see nor experience God either on this earth or in heaven.

Hebrews 12:14 *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*

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). In the East, none but the greatest favorites are admitted to the honor of seeing the king (compare 2Sa 14:24). The Lord being pure and holy, none but the pure and holy shall see Him (Mt 5:8). Without holiness in them, they could not enjoy Him who is holiness itself (Zec 14:20). The

connection of purity with seeing the Lord, appears in 1Jo 3:2, 3; Eph 5:5. Contrast Heb 12:16 (compare 1Th 4:3). In Mt 24:30; Re 1:7, 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.

A man's religion and the God he serves is easily visible in the life he lives. So if faith is impure, it will be very apparent in the commonness its adherents live in.

This teaches us that 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, because of this, he could live in no other way than pursuing holiness among the Thessalonians.

Observe as well that any religion should not be deemed as good if the people who practice it are not holy, since in truth, this is what the Lord demands of all who follow Him.

1 Peter 1:16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, 1 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 worshipers 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.

Justly.

The Greek word for *justly* is “#1346 *dikaiōs* (an adverb) – judicially approved (approved by God); justly, uprightly.” For men to walk in union with the Lord, they must walk not just 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.

It is only when we love our neighbors as ourselves that our dealings with them are fair, equitable, and generous.

None should 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.

There is no such thing as a righteous and holy man who does not deal thoughtfully and charitably with not only the people of God but also those who are not.

Of Moses's Ten Commandments, six deal with how believers are to conduct themselves with other men (Exod. 20:1–17).

This teaches us that to walk and remain in God's will requires a righteous walk among men, simply because he who sins against his neighbor sins against God.

The life of David proved this when he realized that his sin against Uriah, taking Bathsheba to be his own and having Uriah killed, was a sin against the Lord.

Psalm 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.

Though David's sin might be viewed merely against people, it was really against the Lord.

Hence, 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 God.

Simply put, sinning against our fellow man is equal to sinning against God Himself.

Unblameably.

The Greek word for *unblameable* is #273 and #274 *amemptós*. Strong's defines it as "faultlessly – blameless, unblameably," meaning "blameless, free from fault or defect."

God's standards are higher than any human standard; thus, it shall prove very difficult to find fault in how true servants maintain themselves in their religion and interpersonal relationships.

The apostle knew that to bring others out of their sinful lives, his own life needed to be blameless.

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.

The special role that the apostle retained among the Thessalonians was that of a father, one through whom the Thessalonians had been begotten unto Christ.

This teaches us that there should always be a special affection for those who have played a key role in our coming to the new birth and being baptized with the Holy Spirit.

I Corinthians 4:15 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.

Even though there can be, and often is, a high number of spiritual instructors in faith, compared to fathers, their contribution is lesser. Mere instructors also lack the level of godly affection that fathers possess for Christ's own.

Consider as well that since the new birth is the ultimate purpose in Christian ministry, helping men receive the Holy Spirit should be valued as the most important service for God. Because of this, spiritual fathers have a unique authority in Christ's church.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I 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.

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.

Also significant about Paul's intimate care for the Thessalonians is that regardless of his special rank or extraordinary spiritual power, none of these things tempted him to be so full of pride that he would not humbly care for these early believers as his own.

For true ministers, neither spiritual power nor Christian influence will cause them to abandon the paternal nurturing necessary to raise Christ's people.

In Christ's church, the greater a man's position, the greater he should exert himself in humbling himself to and caring for those Christ has given him responsibility over. Hence, the greater a man's rank in the body of Christ, the greater he should condescend to a position of service in ministry.

Greatness should produce greater service, simply because the more spiritual gifts a man possesses, the more they should be used for the edification and assistance of others.

Matthew 23:11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

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. The words may either imply, 1st, a promise that such should be accounted greatest, and stand highest in the favour of God, who should be most humble, submissive, and serviceable: or, 2d, a precept enjoining the person who should be advanced to any place of dignity, trust, or honour in the church, to consider himself as peculiarly called thereby, not to be a lord, but a minister, and 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. 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's gifts are provided for the spiritual edification of His people. Whatever gifts He has endowed men with should be used in the service of others and not to inflate their own egos. This was Christ's purpose in coming to the earth, and it should be our mode of living before joining Him in heaven.

Hence, our religion is only pure when we are willing and ready to deny ourselves to strengthen and support the spiritual lack of others.

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, must conduct personalized ministry, wherein the congregation 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), 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, each and every member of Christ's flock is precious. Because of this, each should be exhorted, comforted, and charged so that he or she progresses toward the high calling given them through Christ.

This also teaches us that people do not need merely one element in Christian oversight to help them advance in spiritual growth. Love is not enough if saints are not exhorted to live a holier life, comforted when in need, and challenged to walk worthy of a holy God—since ultimately helping people grow closer to God is itself a great act of love.

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.

The reason is given here as to why the apostle *exhorted*, *comforted*, and *charged* the Thessalonians as *a father doth his children*. It was so that they might *walk worthy of God*.

Hence, if a person has been called of Christ, walking worthy of the Lord should be his greatest aim.

Grace does not dispel the need for proper Christian behavior but increases it.

The invitation to become a son of God is the highest of heavenly calls. Because of this, it is essential that men are exhorted to walk worthy of the holy God who has called them.

The call to heaven is both serious and grave and should be responded to only with the greatest effort.

As Matthew Henry once said, "Religion, if worth anything, is worth every thing."

Philippians 3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

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" - (ωνᾶ *anō*) - that is, which tends to the skies. The calling of the Christian is from heaven, and to heaven; compare Proverbs 15:24. 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 where God will rule His people through His Son, Jesus Christ. It was this kingdom that Jesus preached, was *at hand*.

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

This kingdom which Jesus warned men could not be entered into simply by claiming belief without doing the will of God.

Matthew 7:21 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.

The kingdom of heaven is the possession of the Son of God, and a man must be given spiritual right to enter it.

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

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Pet. 1:11

The empire of God which the Redeemer shall set up over the souls of his people shall endure to all eternity. The object of the plan of redemption was to secure their allegiance to God, and that will never terminate.

And glory.

Another vital reason believers should walk worthy of the heavenly call is that it gives hope of eternal glory.

The Greek word for *glory* is #1391 *dóksa*. (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).]

At first glance, the definition of *glory* might not arouse a person’s attention, but when we realize that a man in his fallen condition has no intrinsic value or worth, or any actual glory, then the word takes on a unique meaning. This means that 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 commit it unworthy of possessing any real heavenly value.

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

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.

If a man falls short of God’s glory, he has no intrinsic value or worth before God. Just as Jesus said that the *flesh profiteth nothing*, before a holy and righteous God, those of the flesh are practically devoid of worth themselves.

Ultimately, for sinners to have standing or value in heaven, they must be cleansed of their sin, given a holy and new nature from God, and made partakers of Christ’s celestial body.

In short, they must be changed both by Christ’s Spirit and His power in order that they may be worthy of heaven and eternal union with God.

Ultimately, this is the purpose of Christ’s ministry, whereby through His power and cleansing blood, sinners can be made fit for heaven.

Colossians 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:

Simply put, if a man is not made both righteous and holy through Jesus Christ, there is no hope of sharing eternity with God.

Heaven is for divine beings, and not those who possess as their only birth the carnal and sinful nature of Adam.

Thus, for sinners to be made fit for heaven and worthy of God, they must be transformed and made a new creature through spiritual regeneration.

II Corinthians 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.

Ultimately, being born again and made a child of God through faith in God’s Son opens the door for heavenly glorification. Thus, spiritual adoption, whereby men are given the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ, prepares them for heavenly glory.

This teaches us that no man has any real or realistic hope of heaven, or the glory of it, who has not through the new birth been made a son of God through Christ.

Romans 8:17 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.

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.

Because of the transformative work of Jesus Christ, every child of God shall share in divine glory. Because God's adopted children have been given God's nature, it is legally fitting that spiritual inheritance should also be theirs.

Inheritance is a right because of relationship, and because Christians possess the same holy nature as Christ, they are promised to share eternally with God's only begotten Son.

Consider as well that just as there is no such thing as a partial Savior, there is also no such thing as a partial spiritual inheritance.

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.

So great is the new birth, through which we are given God's divine nature, that possession of it speaks of sharing in God's immortality.

Spiritual sonship is therefore the foundation upon which immortality and glory rest.

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.

Session 5

An Exposition of I & II Thessalonians

I Thessalonians 2:13–18

Scriptures

<i>I Thessalonians 2:13</i>	<i>Romans 2:16</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 2:15</i>
<i>Romans 10:14–15</i>	<i>John 6:63</i>	<i>Mark 13:1–2</i>
<i>James 1:21</i>	<i>Psalm 19:1</i>	<i>Luke 21:20–24</i>
<i>Hebrews 4:12</i>	<i>Hebrews 12:22–24</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 2:16</i>
<i>Hebrews 10:28</i>	<i>Matthew 13:58</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 2:17</i>
<i>Hebrews 10:29</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 2:14</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 2:18</i>
<i>II Thessalonians 1:7–8</i>	<i>Matthew 10:36</i>	

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 than this one. Their faith grew into love, and their love into hope. They became examples to all other believers throughout Macedonia and Achaia, and from them sounded out the Word of the Lord, which proclaims Jesus as Lord.

The reason for all this was 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*. This divine and godly principle is at the heart of all true faith—that God’s Word has its source in God.

There is no greater example to prove what is the foundation of all true religion than Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians, who after hearing God’s word spoken to them, received it not as the word of men but knew inwardly that what was heard, had its source in God.

Yet a man cannot believe until he hears, and he cannot hear until God speaks, either through the written or preached Word.

Romans 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?

¹⁵ *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!*

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 or the prophecy brought forth from them, true faith in God cannot exist. The source of faith is the word. Consequently, without first hearing God’s word, no real faith in God can be possessed.

Ultimately, it was the preached Word brought to the Thessalonians by the apostles that produced their conversion, just as it is the preached Word, coupled with the written Word today, that saves men.

James 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.

Men should also be aware that rejecting the preached Word is equal to rejecting both the living (Christ) and written Word. Simply because, regardless of what form the gospel comes to men in they shall be held accountable for what they have heard of it.

Faith in the Word also reveals whether a man is humble enough to come under God's government or chooses to reject it.

When the Thessalonians received the word as the word of God and not as the word of men, their willingness to subject themselves to God's will for their life became visible.

By then faith and/or unbelief, we can ultimately determine who accepts God's sovereignty as well as any who have rejected it, since none can come into contact with God's true Word and not have their own heart revealed in the process.

Hebrews 4:12 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.

By God's Word the hearts of men are revealed, and by God's Word are the thoughts and intents of the soul brought to the surface. Thus, none can be exposed to the true Word of God and not 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. 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.

It is important to remember that how the gospel is received directly determines whether or not God accepts or rejects those to whom it was presented.

In the Old Testament when men rejected God's law, the Lord rejected them, and a similar fate awaits those who reject the Son of God and His spiritual ministry today.

The Scriptures also reveal that a rejection of Jesus' heavenly ministry will produce an even greater punishment from God than what was inflicted upon sinners who rejected Moses' law.

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

It should never be concluded that rejecting Christ's new covenant, which provides for forgiveness for sin, the grace to be saved, and receiving a new nature from God, will not be met with punishment equal to or greater than what those who rejected God's first covenant received.

And though Jesus's new covenant speaks of grace for the sinner, this does not mean that it is devoid of judgment for those who reject it.

Hence, none can set aside God's divine government, either given through Moses or Christ, and not suffer great spiritual consequence for it.

Hebrews 10:29 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?

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Heb. 10:29

Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy - That is, he who renounces Christianity ought to be regarded as deserving a much severer punishment than the man who apostatized from the Jewish religion, and if he ought to be so regarded he will be - for God will treat every man as he ought to be treated. This must refer to future punishment, for the severest punishment was inflicted on the apostate from the Jewish religion which can be in this world - death; and yet the apostle here says that a severer punishment than that would be deserved by him who should apostatize from the Christian faith. The reasons why so much severer punishment would be deserved, are such as these - the Author of the Christian system was far more exalted than Moses, the founder of the Jewish system; he had revealed more important truths; he had increased and confirmed the motives to holiness; he had furnished more means for leading a holy life; he had given himself as a sacrifice to redeem the soul from death, and he had revealed with far greater clearness the truth that there is a heaven of glory and of holiness. He who should apostatize from the Christian faith, the apostle goes on to say, would also be guilty of the most aggravated crime of which man could be guilty - the crime of trampling under foot the Son of God, of showing contempt for his holy blood, and despising the Spirit of grace.

To despise Christ is equal to despising the holy Creator, God, simply because no one has properly revealed the Father more than the Son.

The Father and the Son are One; therefore, to reject one is to reject the other.

With greater exposure to the Lord Jesus also comes greater accountability to Him. Jesus was greater than Moses, and because He was willing to die for men's sins and was God's only begotten Son, rejection of Him will result in even severer punishment than rejecting Moses's law.

II Thessalonians 1:7-8 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

⁸ In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

At Jesus Christ's second appearance, those who *know not God* or who have chosen to *obey not the gospel* of His Son shall be punished. This is the Day of the Lord, when through the Son of God and by the Word of the Lord, God shall judge the secrets of all men's hearts.

Romans 2:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

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 base 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 is what made the Thessalonians' faith so unique, and it is also what distinguishes those called by Christ today.

Jesus's sheep recognize His voice and perceive that it comes from Him, and upon hearing, they will seek to obey His commands.

Jesus said that His words were both Spirit and life, and this is true concerning the entirety of the gospel:

John 6:63b The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

This means that the words of Christ contain the life and presences of God. Just as God breathing into Adam's nostrils brought life to his organic body, so too has God's breath brought life and holiness to the Scriptures.

For this reason the Bible is so vastly different than any other 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.

There is nothing so impactful, moving, or transformative as the Word of God, the same Word of God that at creation brought forth all things, material and living, that surround us today.

Hence, by God's word came light out of darkness, and by God's word both the heavens and earth were formed. 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 matter and life.

It is also through creation that God's spiritual glory is revealed. Hence, by observing the heavens, men can perceive the supernatural glory that is God's.

Psalms 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

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 sprung of itself, but was made by a Being of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness.

Noteworthy is the fact that 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 realm where God; His Son, Jesus Christ; and all divine beings abide.

Hebrews 12:22–24 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,

²³ *To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,*

²⁴ *And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

What is revealed here is 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 not the God of the dead but of the living, and His spiritual realm is where the spiritual lives of the holiest who have ever walked the earth now maintain residence.

Which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

When the Word of God is believed, it will prove itself to be of God through what it accomplishes in the lives of those who have believed. Ultimately, believing the truth will supernaturally bring a man into God's presence since none can believe the truth and not simultaneously experience supernatural change within themselves.

The Greek word for *effectually* is #1754 “*energēō* (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.”

God's Word will prove itself as 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 troubled soul, or anything else whereby God's power changes things.

This teaches us that there is no such thing as blind faith for those who believe. Since through belief, the spiritual power of the Word of God will be experienced, and men will be brought into an awareness that God does exist. He who believes the gospel, therefore, will be given personal proof of God's existence through the spiritual power felt in his life.

None also can sincerely believe the truth and not experience the mighty power of God in the process.

The opposite of this, though, is where because of unbelief the power of the gospel remains hidden.

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

Though Jesus had the power to do many supernatural works and demonstrate God's mighty power to all men, because some did not believe, this power remained hidden.

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. Where as, faith reveals the Lord even more to men, unbelief estranges them from God and all that He wishes for their lives.

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:

It should be expected, yet rarely is, that true believers will be persecuted. What befell the Thessalonians is the very same thing that the churches of God in Judea had experienced.

Teaching us that regardless of physical location, persecution from those who should be the closest to us will often be the result of believing upon the Son of God.

Christ's own people sought His crucifixion, and one of His chosen disciples, Judas, betrayed Him, delivering Him also into the hands of evil men.

Matthew 10:36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

Bengel's Gnomens, 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.

It is noteworthy that even when Paul penned the letter to the Thessalonians, he was himself suffering persecution.

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); naturally his letter would the more vividly dwell on Jewish bitterness against Christians.

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:

Hatred for Christ and the gospel should never be underestimated. So great, then, is man's hate of light that he shall often resort to murder in an attempt to extinguish it.

This was the condition of unbelief in the Jews in Jesus's day, whose carnal lives produced both violence and conflict with those around them. See, once God is removed from men's hearts, even if some form of religion is maintained, violence toward others will soon manifest itself.

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 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 were not a good people, though they had been chosen by God. And though some would be saved, the vast majority of Israel was purposed for destruction.

The Romans' sacking of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. began this judgment, which Jesus foretold when He spoke of the temple's and Jerusalem's destruction.

Mark 13:1–2 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!

² 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.

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.

Luke 21:20–24 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

²¹ 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.

²² For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

²³ But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

²⁴ 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.

Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, I Thess. 2:16

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). 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) 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."

1 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 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. This divine wrath also would not be suppressed until it had fully accomplished its divine and righteous purpose.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, 1 Thess. 2:16

To the uttermost - Greek - *ἕως ἁλώσεως* *eis telos* - "to the end;" that is, until wrath shall be "complete" or "exhausted;" or wrath in the extremest degree.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, 1 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.

This teaches us that God considers it a great sin when people who have themselves rejected the gospel then seek to turn others away from it as well. For this sin, among others, the Jews would be both righteously and harshly judged by God.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, 1 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, of a sudden, unexpected apparition. "The wrath" is the wrath from which Jesus is delivering us (1 Thessalonians 1:10), 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.

1 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.

18 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 strengthen the Thessalonians' faith, only that Satan was the reason.

Just as God is real, so too is Satan. This will become very apparent when the gospel of Jesus Christ is advanced since for every movement of God, men will experience a counter-movement by the devil. One can rarely preach the Word and not at the very same time come into contact with high spiritual forces that despise both God and His Word.

It is not simply sinners who despise the truth, but also angelic rebels. God's Word is as foul and distasteful to Satan as the evil he does is to God. No creature also despises the truth more than he who from the earliest days of creation has sought to prevent men from believing it.

Satan, because he wishes to possess the worship God receives, seeks to turn men away from Him. This was Satan's purpose in Genesis, and it is still his primary purpose today: to bring doubt upon God's Word and to seek to lead people away from obedience to God.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood, and this is most evident when God's truth is spoken in a world full of Satan's mischief.

Session 6

An Exposition of I & II Thessalonians

I Thessalonians 2:19–3:8

Scriptures

<i>I Thessalonians 2:19</i>	<i>Acts 20:30</i>	<i>John 16:33</i>
<i>I Corinthians 9:19–25</i>	<i>Acts 1:8</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 3:4</i>
<i>Hebrews 6:10</i>	<i>Nehemiah 4:6</i>	<i>Acts 10:38</i>
<i>Hebrews 7:25</i>	<i>I Corinthians 15:10</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 3:5</i>
<i>Mark 9:41</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 3:3</i>	<i>John 8:44</i>
<i>I Thessalonians 2:20</i>	<i>Mark 4:16</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 3:6</i>
<i>Revelation 14:13</i>	<i>Acts 9:16</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 3:7</i>
<i>John 15:16</i>	<i>Joshua 1:5</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 3:8</i>
<i>I Thessalonians 3:1–2</i>	<i>Psalms 73:26</i>	
<i>Ephesians 4:11–13</i>	<i>Romans 8:37</i>	

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?

Paul reveals here not only what his great hope was for the Thessalonians but also the hope of himself, that those whom God has given him to care over 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 coming.

This complete salvation of God's people, therefore, will be the minister's crown. Thus, a day of victory and celebration when the labor it took to bring people to Christ, as well as help them remain faithful to Him, is rewarded by God in heaven.

This hope is what prompts servants of the Lord to abandon personal freedom so others might be saved—knowing that at Christ's return, if God's people are fully welcomed into Christ's presence, all the spiritual labor done in His name will have been justified.

The degree to which the apostle was willing to sacrifice personal freedom to *gain the more* unto Christ's name and to *save some* is recorded in 1 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.

²⁰ *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;*

²¹ *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.*

²² *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.*

²³ *And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.*

²⁴ *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.*

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.*

The effort to win others to Christ is likened to a great contest in which a man holds the hope of gaining a crown of victory for his efforts. Such games were common in Paul's time and can be likened to our Olympics, in which individuals train for long hours and remain faithful to their training for years for the chance to gain victory and notoriety. Yet all this extended energy is for a mere corruptible crown, one that will quickly fade and be forgotten.

The apostle, therefore, sought a different crown, one given by Jesus Christ at His coming that would remain and continue with him.

The Scriptures also list five crowns through which God will recognize believers for their faithful service in ministry. They are: the crown of rejoicing (1 Thess. 2:19); the incorruptible crown (1 Cor. 9:25); the crown of righteousness (II Tim. 4:8); the crown of glory (I Pet. 5:4); and lastly, the crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

Consider then, that if a man runs for an earthly crown, he runs for a perishing crown—but he who labors for the gospel and its extension labors for incorruptible crowns, which because they have as their source, God, will not fade away.

Few rewards in heaven can compare to that which 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 the Lord Himself, who died for others' sins and then was granted power and authority over all things, God will fairly compensate those who have forfeited much for others' salvation.

Hebrews 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.

God's judicial fairness demands that He rewards all that has been done in service to Him. Hence, all that was done to advance the Holy Spirit's cause will not be forgotten.

There is nothing that Jesus cares more for than the saving of a man's soul. It was for this purpose that He died, and it is still the primary purpose of His heavenly ministry today.

Hebrews 7:25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Heb. 7:25

Wherefore he is able also - As he ever lives, and ever intercedes, he has power to save. He does not begin the work of salvation, and then relinquish it by reason of death, but he lives on as long as it is necessary that anything should be done for the salvation of his people.

Even if it is thought insignificant by human standards, whatever is done for Christians in Christ's name will one day be rewarded.

Mark 9:41 For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

Ministers of Christ also prove themselves to be of the Lord when His ministry becomes theirs, and their primary purpose for living becomes helping Christ save others. By taking on the care of Christ's people, they reveal the deep and sincere love they have for the Master.

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. 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?

The Scriptures state that *he that winneth souls is wise* (Prov. 11:30), teaching us that few things reveal divine wisdom more than when instead of seeking this world's pleasure and fading glory, men wisely choose to live their lives in pursuit of bringing others to Christ name.

Nothing is more precious on this earth than a human soul, and nothing more worthy to sacrifice for, than the sinner's salvation.

Revelation 14:13 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.

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.

Though men can bring none of their earthly possessions when they enter Christ's presence, God will remember all the good works done in His name.

Thus, where as, evil men and their works will be burned, good men and their divinely inspired works will remain and, according to Scripture, accompany them when they depart from this earth.

It is a unique characteristic of christian ministry that Christ promises His followers that their fruit will remain.

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.

Because Christ is eternal, He will eternally preserve the divine fruit His people bear. Even today, the fruit of the apostles and recognition for them remains in this world, but even more important than this is when a man's labor and the good works he has done for the Lord Jesus follow him into heaven.

This proves that not only will Christ's people share with Him in eternal life, but also the fruit they have borne in service to Him will be accredited to their account for eternity.

1 Thessalonians 3:1–2 Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;

²And 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 a *brother*, a *minister of God*, and a *fellowlabourer* of the gospel in his place.

Timothy, therefore, was purposed by the apostle to comfort and help establish the Thessalonians in their faith.

In Timothy also we observe the spiritual attributes necessary to assist others in Christian growth.

Timothy was a brother, one who, like the Thessalonians, had been begotten by Christ through his belief in the Savior and then confirmed to be a son of God by the possession of the Holy Spirit.

Timothy also shared the same love and affection for God’s people as his Lord. This teaches us that none can comfort or help true Christians except those who are Christians themselves.

And Timothy was exactly this, as Paul refers to him in the book of Timothy as *my own son in the faith*.

Religious bonds are the strongest bonds when faith in God’s Son and the Holy Spirit forms them.

True Christians also will bear no greater allegiance than to those who are also Christ’s. Spirit is thicker than blood, and spiritual ties greater than earthly ones. So that when men share the same heavenly Father and are bound together by the same Holy Spirit, spiritual unity is at its sweetest.

Minister of God.

Christ purposed Timothy for Christian ministry. The title *minister of God* is a weighty one, yet due to his exemplary Christian life, Timothy deserved it. All true ministers have God’s will as the reason for their appointment.

Ultimately, none can hold a position in the body of Christ without being ordained by God for it. Since God sets the members in Christ’s body as it pleases Him, all offices in the body must follow His will. Understandably, it is the Lord who chooses men for ministry, and not they Him.

Just as the body of Christ and all who should fill it are part of a greater heavenly plan, so also are those whom Christ has purposed should lead men into a greater understanding of Himself, foreordained to do so. Jesus chose the twelve apostles and He, likewise, chooses those purposed to testify for himself today.

This is why every true minister has Christ’s personal ministry as the reason for his appointment, since, it is He who places men in ministry and equips them with sufficient spiritual power and wisdom to be effective in it.

Ephesians 4:11–13 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

¹² *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

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.*

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), is, of course, suggested by Ephesians 4:8. They who are ministers of His gifts are themselves gifts from Him to the Church.

All true Christianity has as its single and most important source of unity, belief in the Son of God. Hence, what God's people need more than anything else to establish them in faith is a greater and more full knowledge of Christ Himself.

True spiritual unity and growth thus cannot be fully accomplished unless God's people are, by Christ's ministers, brought into a greater knowledge of the Son of God.

What men speak of most, they cherish the most. By this we can see the distinction between true ministers of the gospel and those who merely use God's name for their own personal self-advancement.

Acts 20:30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

It is the mark of spiritual imposters in Christ's church that their secret agenda is, though they come in Christ's name, to *draw away disciples after* themselves.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Acts 20:30

To draw away disciples after them.—Better, *to draw away the disciples*—those who had previously been disciples of Christ and His Apostles. This was at once the motive and the result of the work of the false teachers. The note of heresy was that it was essentially self-asserting and schismatical.

Ultimately, if men desire their own name to be glorified, they have no real relationship with the Savior.

It should be noted as well that the reason Christ imparts to His ministers spiritual power is solely for the purpose, of them being made credible witnesses for Himself.

Acts 1:8 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.

Fellowlaborer.

Those whom Christ has called to serve Him will, as in Nehemiah's day, be given by the Spirit a mind to work.

Nehemiah 4:6 So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.

No ministry ordained by the Lord will disregard the great need to labor for the gospel. Like Paul, who when divine grace was shown him responded by laboring more than all those around him, so shall those whom Christ has ordained today labor mightily for the gospel's advancement.

1 Corinthians 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.

Labor is the result of sincere faith in Christ. Thus, if men do not labor and are unwilling to expend sacrifice for the gospel, it is hard to conclude that they possess any real or deep faith in Christ at all.

1 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 towards them. The main objective also for spiritual persecution is to produce spiritual apostasy as Satan persecutes the beloved primarily for the purpose of hoping to turn them against God.

This was done to God's servant, Job, and it is also the reason for affliction and persecution of God's people today. The devil knows that many will, when afflicted, be offended and depart from the faith.

Mark 4:16 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.

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 the response be the same. Yet he who will not deny himself for Christ can never be glorified with Him, since all Christianity demands that men, after being saved, must endure some form of tribulation (John 16:33; Acts 14:22).

Hence, all roads that lead to heaven will entail some form of persecution because of faith in the Son of God.

Acts 9:16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

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 prove themselves against him.

Yet, in the midst of religious persecution, it should not be forgotten that though Christ's enemies are numerous and the pain they seek to inflict is real, Christ (and the strength He imparts to His people) is greater.

Joshua was a type of Christ, so if we believe the Word of God spoken to him—that no man would be able to stand before Joshua all the days of his life—then surely the Son of God’s ministry exceeds this.

Joshua 1:5 *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.*

Because Christ is both with and in His people, no worldly force can overcome them. It is also never human strength that propels and allows a man to continue in the midst of persecution—but only the power of God’s Spirit. God is the strength of His people’s hearts, and time will prove that His presence is more than sufficient to sustain their ability to persevere.

Psalms 73:26 *My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

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 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.

Practically, a man can possess a sincere love for God yet not perceive the Lord’s great power in his life. This is why the Thessalonians were urged by the apostle to continue in the faith regardless of the persecution. For He knew if they would not faint then Christ would not fail in strengthening them. Through their faithfulness, the Lord would prove Himself to be the strength of His people’s lives.

Romans 8:37 *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

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), 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. Hence, the power that strengthens those saved by Christ is His own.

Because Christ has overcome the world, His people have been given power to do the same.

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

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.) 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 on [tribulation] “*thlibō* (the root of 2347 /*thlipsis*, 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 aim is to so apply so much pressure against the saints of God that they feel restricted and then fear that there is nowhere to turn for help or escape. Practically speaking, when men are spiritually attacked, they will often feel hemmed in and think that they have no where to turn for deliverance. However, no matter what evil powers arise against those called by Christ, the power of Christ is greater.

It was also the purpose of the Son of God’s ministry, that He would through the power of the Holy Spirit, bring healing and deliverance to all those oppressed and held captive by the devil.

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.

Ultimately, it takes the Son of God and His extraordinary spiritual power to free spiritual captives of the devil.

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. 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* (I Thess. 2:18), and now it is *the tempter* (I Thess. 3:5). Both titles are connected to the subtlety of the devil. Satan tempted our first parents to sin against God, and it is always Satan who through subtlety still attacks their descendants today.

Satan’s subtlety is seen not only in his outward persecution of faith, but by the craftiness by which he turns men against the faith.

Thus, if there is no subtlety in directly tempting the Christian, there will be subtlety in how the devil moves others against him.

The devil’s primary power lies in the deceit of his tongue, and this is why it is so important that when confronting evil, the Word of God is brought into the battle.

God's truth is the only defense against Satan's lies. And make no mistake about it—the devil is a master of lying.

John 8:44 *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

He who abides not in the truth, has no truth in him. Such is the tempter's character, that he is so defiled that truth has no more any true relationship to him. Hence, the world of evil spirits is a world of liars and deceivers who fashion themselves also after the great deceiver.

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

Paul knew that the Thessalonians were continuing in the faith and had not departed from God through the spiritual characteristics they continued to evidence in their lives: (1) their *faith*, (2) their *love*, and (3) their *good remembrance* of the apostles. By these credible evidences the apostle knew that what had been purposed by the devil to discourage and turn the Thessalonians from the faith had failed.

This is also why when faith and love are evident in God's people today, we can know that they remain in fellowship with God and in harmony with His Son.

Fruits of the Spirit, which is also what faith and love actually are (Gal. 5:22–23), reveal that men are continuing to be led by the Spirit.

By also remaining thankful for spiritual leadership, we learn that God's people remain in subjection to Him, since the first thing apostates do when departing from the Lord is to separate themselves from the ministers the Lord has set over them.

Hence, if men retain good remembrance of those God has placed over them, then we can know that they remain subject to the Lord's will for their life.

I Thessalonians 3:7 *Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:*

When saints stand fast in the Lord, they inspire others to do the same. Few things also are more comforting to spiritual leadership than when those they have 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. 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.*

For ministers of the gospel, their own happiness is greatly dependent upon the faith of those they oversee. So closely tied is the minister's life to God's people that he can only really live when faith, love, and spiritual service abound in the church.

Consider as well, that in Christ's body, when one member suffers, the entire body suffers. But the opposite of this is also true, when the faithfulness of one member is a great cause for rejoicing in another.

God's people are uniquely united through possession of the same Holy Spirit. Thus, the spiritual condition of one believer in Christ's church will directly affect all other members of the church.

Session 7

An Exposition of I & II Thessalonians

I Thessalonians 3:9–4:6

Scriptures

<i>I Thessalonians 3:9</i>	<i>Jeremiah 10:23</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 4:1</i>
<i>Romans 15:13</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 3:12</i>	<i>James 1:22</i>
<i>John 15:11</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 1:3</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 4:2</i>
<i>Luke 15:7</i>	<i>I Timothy 1:5</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 4:3</i>
<i>I Thessalonians 3:10</i>	<i>I Corinthians 13:13</i>	<i>I Corinthians 6:18</i>
<i>I Corinthians 1:9</i>	<i>John 5:42</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 4:4</i>
<i>Galations 4:19</i>	<i>I Corinthians 13:2</i>	<i>Romans 6:16</i>
<i>I Thessalonians 3:11</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 3:13</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 4:5</i>
<i>Romans 10:17</i>	<i>Romans 13:10</i>	<i>Jude 1:19</i>
<i>Proverbs 28:26</i>	<i>I John 4:16–18</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 4:6</i>

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, of which there is no other kind, is directly linked to the heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

It is properly referred to as a fruit of the Spirit, which means it has its source in God and the higher spiritual realm.

With respect to the Father, the scriptures state:

Romans 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.

In respect to the Son of God, the scriptures state:

John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

What allows a believer access to the spiritual joy that Christ speaks of is union with both the Father and Son. This union from which joy springs is by the believer abiding in Christ commandments.

Hence, as men keep Christ's commandments, which is proof of their love for the savior, His own spiritual joy will fill them.

Rejoicing also, as seen here with Paul in regard to the Thessalonians, will be experienced when those called by Christ respond to His call and then become spiritually joined to the heavenly Father through the Son.

Not only on earth but also in heaven there is great rejoicing when sinners repent of sin and turn to God.

Luke 15:7 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.

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. Heavenly beings are thus represented as rejoicing over those who repent on earth. They see the guilt and danger 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' adherence to the gospel, the apostle now prays to God that he could again see them face to face. His purpose for personal contact was so that he might contribute even more fully to what may be lacking in their faith.

As with Romans, Paul felt he could impart some spiritual gift that would strengthen and confirm the Thessalonians' spiritual walk (Rom. 1:11).

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.

What Paul prayed for in regard to the Thessalonians, as with the Corinthians, was that he might add and contribute to their most holy of possessions, their response to God's call to them through Christ.

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

Through faith they had been reconciled to God and by faith they had become God's sons.

It is also only as men advance in those things lacking in their faith that they can become more spiritually whole and a blessing to others. All believers, regardless of their years in ministry, have areas of spiritual lack. For this deficiency it takes Christ's ministers, and the Spirit of God they are led by, through more specific spiritual instruction to establish saints in Christ.

A reoccurring theme also seen in Paul's letter to the Thessalonians is that though they possessed many divine qualities, still the apostle encouraged them that more spiritual growth was necessary.

This was true of love, their pleasing God, holiness of life, and their walking worthy of God, as well as an exhortation for them to possess greater watchfulness regarding Christ's return.

This teaches us that as far as putting on the new man, that spiritual man produced when God imparts His own spiritual nature in men, there is always room for growth.

No matter then the sincerity of our love and/or faith—still there is opportunity to be transformed more into the image of God's Son.

Galations 4:19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Gal. 4:19

Until Christ be formed in you.—Just as the formless embryo by degrees takes the shape of man, so the unformed Christian by degrees takes the likeness of Christ. As he grows in grace that likeness becomes more and more defined, till at last the Christian reaches the "stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

Once a man is born again of incorruptible seed and has received as a gift from God, God's own nature, then the next step is to put on and walk in this nature.

Thus, by men receiving the Spirit of God into their hearts, sinners can be transformed into the image of God's Son. This new spiritual man contains a totally new heart, one devoted to God and to His kingdom.

I Thessalonians 3:11 Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.

True ministers can do nothing more or less than the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ permit. Hence, without both God's direction and a spiritual door opened by God, those called to serve the Lord's people cannot move unless directed by the Holy Spirit to do so.

Before the feet can walk the heart must be spoken to.

Consider as well that either entertaining a double mind or a doubting mind is sin. This is also why not until there is revelation from the Lord can true faith in God begin to sprout. Simply because to truly navigate by faith, it is essential that God first speaks.

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

Apart from hearing from God and receiving direct revelation from Him, all that men can do on their own is move and make decisions according to their own human minds. Which is understandably the complete opposite of what true faith really is.

Proverbs 28:26 He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.

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 whoso 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* ...

To walk by faith therefore demands that a man can do nothing, especially in regard to ministerial service, unless it is God Who directs his steps.

Jeremiah 10:23 O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

Benson Commentary, Jer. 10:23

That the way of man is not in himself — The prophet must here be considered as acknowledging the superintendence and dominion of the divine providence; that by it, and not by their own will and wisdom, the affairs both of nations and particular persons are directed and governed. His words in this verse, taken in connection with the following, may be thus paraphrased: Thy providence, O Lord, superintends all events; all that happens comes to pass through thy permission or appointment. It is not in man to hinder that which has been once resolved on in thy decrees.

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 love in His people.

Love is also one of the two divine qualities that the apostle initially praised the Thessalonians for possessing in chapter one.

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.

This teaches us that in true Christianity, a man's faith and his love are two great evidences of religious piety. This is because it is not merely biblical knowledge that proves a man a true Christian, nor his religious tradition, but only sincere faith and love, produced also through the influence of the Holy Spirit.

By these fruits of the spirit, we can know that people possess genuine fellowship with both the Father and the Son.

It is also faith, love, and a good conscience that are the purposed end to God's commandments.

I Timothy 1:5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.

Ultimately, faith, love, and hope form the core of all true Christianity, of which love is singled out in the Scriptures as the greatest and most enduring of the three.

I Corinthians 13:13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Love is the greatest, simply because love will never vanish away (I Cor. 13:8).

Love is eternal, even as love is what God is.

Thus, since love is that which forms God's holy character, it cannot pass away as faith and hope must practically do.

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.

If men do not possess God's love, then we know that they are not yet Christian and still abide in death.

The Son of God also, because He both sees and searches the hearts of men, knows where genuine love exists and where it does not. Thus, though men may deceive other men in regard to whether they sincerely love or not, they cannot deceive Christ.

John 5:42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

Matthew Poole's Commentary, John 5:42

You pretend a great deal of religion, and to 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.

Consider as well that if a man lacks love and/or charity in his heart and life, his entire religion (and even himself, though perhaps viewed as acceptable in the world) is accounted by God to be nothing.

I Corinthians 13:2 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.

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 grasping divine mysteries, or the accumulation of all knowledge, or even faith that produces true piety. This is accomplished only by *love*, that heavenly *love* that is representative of God's own nature.

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.

It is love that covers a multitude of sins and love that will give a man boldness when Christ returns in the glory of the Father.

It is for this reason the apostle encourages the Thessalonians to increase and abound in love, simply because it would establish their hearts unblamable at Christ's return.

If they pursued love and genuinely sought to walk in it, then they would have fulfilled all of God's will for their lives and would sense no reason to be either ashamed or afraid at Christ's coming.

Romans 13:10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Rom. 13:10

Fulfilling of the law.—The form of the Greek word implies not only that love helps a man to fulfil the law, but that in the fact of the presence of love in his heart the law is actually fulfilled.

Ultimately, love is that divine fruit that fulfills God's law for man and prepares him to stand before Christ blameless.

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 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; Philippians 2:15; Philippians 3:6 notes; Hebrews 8:7 note; compare Luke 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:23. The meaning is, so that there could be no "charge" or "accusation" against them.

It is love that tends toward holiness, and holiness that shall prevent a man from trembling when exposed to God's wrath at the day of judgment.

I John 4:16–18 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.

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.***

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.***

Any then who love both God and those born of God have no reason to fear in the day of Christ's judgment.

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, 1 John 4:18. 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.

It is when believers are truly walking in God's love that all fear of God is removed.

Knowing they have kept God's commandment to love gives men great confidence that they will be joyfully received by the Lord.

Fear also—and we speak not of godly fear but only that frightening fear in which sinners are afraid of God's judgment—is that which reveals the fact that love is still lacking in the human heart.

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 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 do more than simply hear God's Word but also walk obediently in it.

James 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

It is the walk of the Christian and not simply what he has heard that produces a life pleasing to the Lord.

Hearing by itself means nothing if the truth heard is not obeyed.

Hence, it is not simply a man's faith that pleases God but also his walk, through which the sincerity of his faith is proven.

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.

It was Christ who first commissioned Paul for service to Himself and Christ who continued to give Paul direction as to how those called to Himself were to conduct their lives.

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, 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 a man desires a true place in heaven, he must pursue holiness and sanctification while on this earth. What a man does in his body also directly affects his sanctification.

The Greek word for *sanctification* is “#38 *hagiasmós* (a 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. No true Christian also should be so foolish to infer that he can commit fornication and at the same time pursue holiness of life. Simply because how men live, either carnally or spiritually, greatly affects their holiness.

When men commit fornication, as the scripture clearly reveals, they sin against themselves.

1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers, 1 Cor. 6:18

Flee fornication.—These last three verses of the chapter contain a solemn 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 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 within, and petrifies the feelings.”

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

There is a way in which a man controls his body that tends towards sanctification and honor. This is when it is not carnal lusts that govern the soul but the Holy Spirit.

Whatever nature also rules men, whether it be their flesh or their spirit, reveals the nature they are subject to.

Suffice to say that if it is the flesh that leads sinners, and especially so sexually, then it is the flesh also that controls them.

Romans 6:16 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?

Practically speaking, if the body has no constraints and is allowed to satisfy itself as it fully desires, then it is impossible for any true divinity or holiness to be walked in.

It goes without saying that those who live in sin and practice it regularly are not saved by God.

1 Thessalonians 4:5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

It is those who *know not God*, even if they profess to be of God, who allow the flesh to govern them.

Jude 1:19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Jude 1:19

Sensual men separate from Christ, and his church, and join themselves to the devil, the world, and the flesh, by ungodly and sinful practices.

When men *know not God*, they pursue things only of the flesh.

If they continue in these sins, they will assure themselves that they will never see God or gain entrance into heaven.

Without Christ cleansing the sinner, the door to heaven would remain locked to all men.

Sin is against God's nature; thus, none should willfully commit it and think that an eternal place with God will be found.

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 likened to defrauding another. To then cheat, take advantage of, and commit fornication is not only to sin against oneself but also, as the scriptures reveal here, is 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. 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 punishment is brought against those who sin in it.

That the Lord is an avenger means that He will both respond to and deal with sins like fornication when they are committed in His 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.”

Fornication is therefore such a sin, that it will entreat God to deal with it directly. Such disdain does the Lord have for sins like this in His church, that heavenly judgement is promised for any and all who commit it.

Session 8

An Exposition of I & II Thessalonians

I Thessalonians 4:7–13

Scriptures

<i>I Thessalonians 4:7</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 4:12</i>	<i>John 3:3</i>
<i>Galatians 5:13</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 4:13</i>	<i>I Corinthians 15:48</i>
<i>I Thessalonians 4:8</i>	<i>Romans 8:10</i>	<i>Colossians 1:27</i>
<i>I Thessalonians 4:9</i>	<i>Ezekiel 36:27</i>	<i>I Corinthians 15:49</i>
<i>I John 4:7</i>	<i>I Corinthians 15:45</i>	<i>I John 3:2</i>
<i>I John 2:15</i>	<i>I Corinthians 15:46</i>	<i>Romans 5:2</i>
<i>I Thessalonians 4:10</i>	<i>I Corinthians 15:47</i>	<i>John 5:21</i>
<i>I Thessalonians 4:11</i>	<i>John 8:21–23</i>	

I Thessalonians 4:7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

While it is true Christians are called unto liberty, they are also called unto holiness. Thus, it is a great distortion to infer that the freedom Christ gives, will allow any the right to sin. Yet this is often evidenced in sinners where one truth of God is used against another truth in order that men may justify themselves for the sin they commit.

Galatians 5:13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

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.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Gal. 5:13

Only use not liberty ... - The word *use* here introduced by our translators, obscures the sense. 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.

1 Thessalonians 4:8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

If a man treats as insignificant the pursuit of sanctification, then this reveals contempt for the Lord Himself.

For none can spurn God's spiritual command that His people should be holy and not at the very same time show contempt for divine law.

The Greek word for *despise* is #114 *atheteó*, "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."

For then to set aside that which has its origin in God is to both ignore and set 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 gave them to men to live by.

1 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.

Transitioning from one of the strongest desires of the flesh, fornication, to now the strongest evidence of the Spirit, love, the apostle 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 led these early Christians to love, it became unnecessary that Paul needed to teach it again but only that he should encourage them to increase manifesting it in their lives.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, 1 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 imperfect attempts: a specimen of that "courtesy" which is a part of "brotherly love."

In truth, there is no greater evidence that men and women have been taught of God than when love manifests itself in their lives. By *love* Jesus said men would know who were His disciples (John 13:35).

And by *love* we can know if a man has passed from death unto life (John 3:14).

Love is the mark of true Christianity, and if a man does not possess divine love, he should not assume himself Christian at all.

The genuineness, therefore, of any man's religion is directly visible by love filling his soul.

By abiding in God's love, believers can know that they are no longer born simply of the flesh but have been now born of God.

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

Love is that divine quality that proves that a man genuinely knows God and has had personal contact and relationship with Him.

Yet when men love the world, any sincere love for God and His people will be absent. Practically speaking, if a man loves the world, then he cannot truly love either God or God's people.

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.

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* ...

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 ability to love, and the sincerity of love, should increase the more believers are led by God's Spirit.

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.

Regardless, then, of how much a man or woman loves, both the purity and the amount of it can be increased in their lives.

By also spreading God's love to others, the very fragrance of what God is gives witness that His presence remains in the world.

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;

It is God's will, and in agreement with walking in love, that believers study to be quiet and to do their own business.

Teaching us that it is always the opposite of love for any man to meddle in affairs that are not his own.

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” ...

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 men tend to their own affairs, and work with their own hands, while also not meddling in the lives of others, the promise is that they will live without lack.

By keeping God's commandments and walking in His love, the Lord shall supply all that man needs to both serve God and bless his fellows.

Industry never makes a man poor, even as it tends towards godliness itself.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I Thess. 4:12
have lack of nothing—not have to beg from others for the supply of your wants (compare Eph 4:28). So far from needing to beg from others, we ought to work and get the means of supplying the need of others. Freedom from pecuniary embarrassment is to be desired by the Christian on account of the liberty which it bestows.

When men then work, they should not have to beg, and should also have sufficient left over to help with the needs of others.

This is also why if men refuse to labor when fit and able to do so, then God says they should not eat (II Thess. 3:10).

It is a man's responsibility to take care of himself, and if he refuses to do so, it should not be required of others who do work, to supply his needs.

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 men can be ignorant of: God's righteousness (Rom. 10:13), the mystery of Israel's rejection until God's appointed time for their restoration (Rom. 11:25), ignorance of the fact that though many are called, few will actually be saved (I Cor. 10:1–5), the gifts of the Spirit, Satan's devices (I Cor. 12:1), and last, as seen in Thessalonians, ignorance of the hope that awaits the saved.

Surprisingly, these areas of revelation that the Lord does not want people to be ignorant of are the very areas where human ignorance is at its greatest. This is seen by how many foolishly pursue their own righteousness, how they know little to nothing of the Holy Spirit or His gifts, and how saints are wrongly tempted to believe that they have the same absence of hope as the unsaved around them.

The language Paul uses in his instruction to the Thessalonians that they should *sorrow not, even as others which have no hope*, is strong so that his point may be clear: the fate of an unsaved man is vastly different than that of a saved man.

This teaches us that for Christians there is hope, but for those who have no relationship with the Son of God there can be only sorrow.

And like the thieves crucified with Christ on the cross (Luke 23:39–43), two men can die at the very same time and in the exact same manner yet have two totally different futures.

For this reason, Christians should not grieve as do those to whom physical death brings much sorrow. If a man has Christ in him, though his physical body is destined for death, his soul/spirit will live because of his connection to Christ.

Romans 8:10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Benson Commentary, Rom. 8:10

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* — τὸ 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;

The key to a man continuing to live once his fleshly body dies is through the Christ Spirit living within him. The manner in which Christ lives with the Christian is through the Spirit of God, Christ imparts to them (Gal. 4:6).

But how, though, does a man know that Christ lives within him?

It cannot be just because he assumes it to be so but must rest on a much more concrete foundation than human assumption.

Ultimately then, it is only by men keeping Christ commandments that it can be seen that Christ lives in His people. The proof therefore that the Holy Spirit lives within a man is that he will both keep and walk in God's laws.

It was for this purpose that the Spirit was sent, and all who have Him will manifest this fruit.

Ezekiel 36:27 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.

Matthew Poole's Commentary, Ezek. 36:27

My spirit; the Holy Spirit of God, which is the immediate principal cause of that change of an old heart into new, and of hard into soft. By the efficient cause we may know the effect; and understand what a new heart is, and what the new spirit is, when we know they are wrought in us by the Spirit of God, which is given to and dwelleth in the saints, which makes them saints, and then abideth with them.

Cause you; sweetly, powerfully, successfully, yet without compulsion; for our spirit, framed by God's Spirit to a disposition suitable to his holiness, readily concurrereth and co-worketh.

Keep my judgments; be willing and ready, able, and in your degree sufficient, to keep the judgments and to walk in the statutes of God, which is to live holiness.

Because of the presence of this divine spiritual nature, sent by the Son of God to the saved, spiritual death need not follow bodily death.

Though the natural body must return to dust from whence it was made, the spirit, because its source is God, returns to God.

Practically speaking, the natural material realm, which is what the earthly body consists of, cannot pass over to the higher spiritual realm where God maintains His being. Each world, natural and spiritual, consists of two completely different substances, and because of this the natural body, whether alive or dead, cannot without transformation enter the higher spiritual realm of God.

For this reason, to save any from spiritual death, Christ must impart to them a new and different nature, which is holy and suited for heaven.

I Corinthians 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [Jesus Christ] was made a quickening spirit.

It was from the first Adam that we derive our natural, physical, and carnal nature, but it is from the last Adam, Jesus Christ, that a new spiritual life is given to us. This life is not natural; rather, it is spiritual and descends from the higher spiritual realm. Its source is God; its sender is the Son of God.

Those of the *last Adam*, who have been born again or born from above, are made living spirits both like and by Christ. Hence, whereas the first Adam genetically passed natural life to his progeny, the second Adam, Jesus Christ, because He is a living Spirit, imparts eternal life to His children.

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,) just as mankind have derived their corrupted nature and mortal bodies from the first Adam. He is also called *the last Adam*, because he is posterior in time to the first Adam, or because there shall be no restorer and head of the human race after him. *Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, &c.* — That is, as the first Adam existed before Christ was sent to assume our nature, and become our Saviour, so must we first wear that animal body, which we derive from the one, before we put on that spiritual body which we receive from the other. Here we are taught that the plan of the divine government is to lead his creatures from a lower to a higher state of perfection.

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 it came from the natural realm. Adam was the first of an earthly race of men who would populate and spread over a natural and organic world. A splendid and bountiful earthly garden was prepared for Adam's residence, purposed by God not only to bless Adam's life but also to provide the necessary sustenance for his survival. The first man, Adam, was earthly in every way.

The next Adam, though, Jesus Christ, is not natural but spiritual, and for those called to heaven through Him, God has purposed heavenly habitation.

I Corinthians 15:47 The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.

Adam's body was from the earth, from the dust and matter that comprises it; whereas Christ's origination is from above, and from the higher realm of heaven.

Jesus's words to the Pharisees who did not believe He was the Son of God reveal the great gulf between the natural and spiritual world.

John 8:21–23 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.

²² ***Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.***

²³ ***And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.***

In plain and simple language, Jesus revealed why those who did not believe in Him could not follow Him where he was to go. It was because they were from *beneath*, and He was from *above*.

For a man to enter the higher spiritual realm, biblically defined as heaven, he must be born again. This teaches us that for any to live beyond the grave, a new spiritual birth must be given to them by God, whereby through the Spirit they are given the same nature as God.

Jesus taught this important truth to Nicodemus in John chapter 3.

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.

Ultimately, it is spiritual birth produced by being given the Holy Spirit that produces heavenly sonship.

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, they will also share just as equally in the glory of the second Adam, Jesus Christ.

Colossians 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.

Being born of God through possessing the Spirit of God gives hope of glory in the world to come.

Again, it needs to be emphasized that the connection to the second Adam, Jesus Christ, is not less than the one to the first man, Adam, once a man is born again.

Thus, just as men must physically die because of their relationship to the first man, Adam, so too will they eternally live because of their relationship with God's second Adam, Jesus Christ.

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 destiny. Equally true is that those born of the second Adam, Jesus Christ, will also share in Christ's heavenly image.

The Greek word for *image* is #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).

“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 not only the same as their forefather, earthly Adam, on the outside but also in their inner beings as well, where sin lives. What Adam was, those born of

him are the same in completeness and totality. This same principle holds true when a man is born of Christ.

1 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.

Ultimately, *we shall be like him* is the future hope of the Christian.

For most men it would be enough to be saved by the Savior, but this is not what God's Word reveals is the believer's true hope. This hope is to be made through Christ's power to share in Christ's own glory and likeness.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 15:49

We shall also bear the image of the heavenly - The Lord Jesus Christ, who was from heaven, and who is in heaven. As we are so closely connected with Adam as to resemble him, so by the divine arrangement, and by faith in the Lord Jesus, we are so closely connected with him that we shall resemble him in heaven. And as he is now free from frailty, sickness, pain, sorrow, and death, and as he has a pure and spiritual body, adapted to a residence in heaven, so shall we be in that future world. The argument here is, that the connection which is formed between the believer and the Saviour is as close as that which subsisted between him and Adam; and as that connection with Adam involved the certainty that he would be subjected to pain, sin, sickness, and death, so the connection with Christ involves the certainty that he will like him be free from sin, sickness, pain, and death, and like him will have a body that is pure, incorruptible, and immortal.

Being made to share in Jesus Christ's heavenly image is the Christian's hope and cause for rejoicing.

Romans 5:2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The Greek word for *glory* is #1391 *doxa*. *Strong's* defines *doxa* as "honor, renown; glory, an especially divine quality, the unspoken manifestation of God, splendor."

Because of the Christian's connection to the glorified Son of God, he is said to have the hope of sharing in, and having conferred upon him, the same glory as the Son.

This hope of *glory* is the primary expectation of the Christian, whereby through God's power he will be made to share in the same glory, honor, and heavenly inheritance that is the Son of God's now.

Because Christ became a living Spirit and has life within Himself, He can both quicken and make alive spiritually those whom He wills.

John 5:21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 5:21

As the Father raiseth up the dead - God has power to raise the dead. By his power it had been done in at least two instances - by the prophet Elijah, in the case of the son of the widow of Sarepta 1 Kings 17:22, and by the prophet Elisha, in the case of the Shunamite's son, 2 Kings 4:32-35. The Jews did not doubt that God had power to raise the dead. Jesus here expressly affirms it, and says he has the same power.

Quickeneth them - Gives them “life.” This is the sense of the word “quickeneth” throughout the Bible.

Even so - In the same manner. By the same authority and power. The power of raising the dead must be one of the highest attributes of the divinity. As Jesus affirms that he has the power to do this “in the same manner” as the Father, so it follows that he must be equal with God.

The Son quickeneth - Gives life to. This may either refer to his raising the dead from their graves, or to his giving spiritual life to those who are dead in trespasses and sins. The former he did in the case of Lazarus and the widow’s son at Nain, John 11:43–44; Luke 7:14–15. The latter he did in the case of all those who were converted by his power, and still does it in any instance of conversion.

Whom he will - It was in the power of Jesus to raise up any of the dead as well as Lazarus. It depended on his will whether Lazarus and the widow’s son should come to life. So it depends on his will whether sinners shall live. He has power to renew them, and the renewing of the heart is as much the result of his “will” as the raising of the dead.

The Son quickens and has the power to make alive whom He wills. This was proven by Jesus raising Lazarus (John 11:39–44), Jairus’s daughter (Mark 5:22–23, 38–42), and the widow’s son from the dead (Luke 7:11–17).

Hence, as surely as he who is without Christ will die eternally, just as certainly will believers who are given life through Christ live eternally.

All that was lost in Adam through the fall has been regained, and then some, by the second Adam, Jesus Christ, in resurrection.

Because of this, we who have believed upon the Son of God should *sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*

Session 9

An Exposition of I & II Thessalonians

I Thessalonians 4:14–16

Scriptures

I Thessalonians 4:14
Romans 10:9–10
Matthew 9:27–30

Romans 4:19–24
I Thessalonians 5:23
I Thessalonians 4:15

I Thessalonians 4:16
Daniel 7:13
Galatians 1:11–12

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; it is for a man to be saved by God, then he must believe that God raised Jesus from the dead.

Romans 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.

¹⁰ For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

As Romans reveals, salvation requires two essential elements. (1) A confession of Christ's lordship over a man's life. (2) Belief, that God raised Jesus from the dead. On these two great spiritual truths, salvation rests, without which no man can be saved.

Understanding this, for God's salvation to be given, it is essential that there is in the penitent, a solid and sure belief, that God raised Jesus from the dead.

It was common in Christ's earthly ministry, even as it is essential in Christ's heavenly ministry, that in order for Him to either save or deliver any man, there was both needed, and needs to be belief in His power. Simply put, if a man did not believe in Christ's power to deliver him, then Christ could not.

The record of Jesus healing the two blind men in Matthew's gospel shows us this principle in action.

Matthew 9:27–30 And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us.

²⁸ And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

²⁹ Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

³⁰ And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it.

The first thing notable is that the two blind men following Jesus, both knew and believed Him to be the Messiah.

This is seen by their addressing Him as, *Thou son of David*.

Yet, as the record goes on to reveal, being aware of Christ's identity and even believing in it, is not the same as believing in Him to do what is by human means impossible.

For this miracle, the men needed to believe in Christ's divine ability to heal them of their blindness.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Matt. 9:28

Believe ye that I am able to do this?—The cry, "Have mercy on us," had implied the request that He would restore their sight. In this case, as in others, faith was the antecedent condition of the miracle.

Christ's question, *Believe ye that I am able to do this?*, refers specifically to Himself. Hence, He did not ask them if others lower than Himself could heal them, but only if He, the Son of God, could.

This teaches us, that it is not simply if men believe something can come to pass, but rather if they believe in the One, Who alone has the spiritual power to make it come to pass.

It is worthy of emphasis, that though the blind men had sufficient faith to pursue Jesus because they knew Him to be the Messiah, still Christ required that they believe in His power to heal them of their blindness. His mercy was available if faith in His power was exercised.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Matt. 9:28

Believe ye that I am able to do this? - To work such a miracle. Though they had followed him and cried after him, yet he required of them an open profession of their faith in regard to his power.

Upon hearing the Lord's words that they needed to believe in order to be healed, the men cried, *Yea, Lord*.

What a wonderful truth this teaches us, that to be either saved or delivered by the Son of God, and receive mercy from Him, faith in His power is necessary.

Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

Ultimately, the two men had exhibited the necessary faith to be delivered by the Lord. (1) They had believed Him to be the Messiah. (2) They had the faith to follow and pursue Him where He went. (3) They had sufficient faith that Jesus could do the impossible, and heal them of their blindness.

Thus, it was their total and complete faith in the Son, that yielded to them a miracle from God. So that when Jesus said, *According to your faith be it unto you*, He desired them to know the primary reason for their deliverance. It was because they had fully believed in His person as well as in His power.

Another example of a man needing to believe in the power of the Lord for deliverance is found in Romans and the biblical figure, Abraham.

Romans 4:19–24 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb:

²⁰ ***He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;***

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

²² ***And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.***

²³ ***Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;***

24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

It was Abraham's faith that God could give him a son, though Sarah's body was advanced in years and undeniably barren, that provided the means for God to impute to Abraham righteousness.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Rom. 4:21

And being fully persuaded, &c.—that is, the glory which Abraham's faith gave to God consisted in this, that, firm in the persuasion of God's ability to fulfil his promise, no difficulties shook him.

It was Abraham's belief, that God could give him a son, though Sarah's body was barren, that led God to impute to him righteousness. Thus, it was Abraham's faith in God's power to do the impossible that allowed God to fulfill His promise to Abraham.

Understanding this, it is only when men have sufficient confidence, faith, and trust to believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, that divine righteousness is made available to them.

So necessary is this principle of justification by faith, that if a man does not believe this, then he cannot be saved nor receive from God the divine righteousness made available through His Son.

By faith men inherit God's promises, even as if they remain in unbelief, they shall be broken off from them.

Returning to Thessalonians we read, *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 died while trusting in Christ while on this earth. It is that at Jesus's return, God will bring the souls of the saved from heaven with Him.

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, 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.

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 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 His resurrection from the dead, their justified souls shall return with the Savior, to be clothed with new bodies provided also by Christ's power.

From the grave then Jesus shall transform what were before His people's earthly bodies, to then heavenly bodies, equipped for permanent residence in heaven.

This raising of the saints' bodies from the grave is not solely for their full salvation, but is also intended to be a great part of Christ's own future glorification.

When believers are glorified and given new bodies by the Son, then shall Christ Himself be even more glorified because of the power of God given to Him.

To understand the process of this future salvation, we must understand what three elements make up a man's being.

1 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 the scripture speaks of what man is comprised of, it simplifies his being as either flesh or spirit, the flesh put for both the body and soul of man. Yet, here in Thessalonians, the scripture makes the vital distinction between the soul and the spirit.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, 1 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). 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). 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).

Pulpit Commentary, 1 Thess. 5:23

The "spirit" is the highest part of man, that which assimilates him to God; renders him capable of religion, and susceptible of being acted upon by the Spirit of God. The "soul" is the inferior part of his mental nature, the seat of the passions and desires, of the natural propensities. The "body" is the corporeal frame. Such a threefold distinction of human nature was not unknown among the Stoics and Platonists. There are also traces of it in the Old Testament, the spirit, or breath of God, being distinguished from the soul. Be preserved blameless. "The spirit is preserved blameless at the advent when the voice of truth rules it, the soul when it strives against all the charms of the senses, and the body when it is not abused as the instrument of shameful actions" (Lunemann).

Practically speaking, every man possesses all three elements—body, soul, and spirit—which comprise his being. He has a body of the earth, he has a soul like the beasts of the field, and he has a spirit.

What is unique though in a Christian, someone who has believed upon the Son of God, is that they are given a *Holy Spirit*, a divine Spirit directly related to and connected with Christ's own resurrected nature. This nature is both holy and everlasting. There is thus a distinction between the spirit of man and the Holy Spirit given to men, by the Son of God.

The Holy Spirit, as revealed in scripture, is separate from both the body and soul, and need not and does not die at the body's death.

1 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.

The apostle, by using the words, *we say unto you by the word of the Lord*, assures the Thessalonians that what he was about to reveal to them, concerning both the living and dead at Christ's return, had its source in the Lord Jesus Himself.

The resurrected Son of God had given this revelation to Paul, and now Paul would reveal it to the Thessalonians. The gist of the revelation is this, that there is no real advantage to being alive at Christ's second coming, simply because the dead will be changed before the living. Thus, before the living are given new bodies by the Lord Jesus, the dead shall have already received them.

In simple terms, the bodily transformation of the dead, shall be prior to those living at Christ's return, given their new bodies. Thus, at this time, this glorious time when Jesus returns to the earth, to rightfully claim what God has given Him, it shall be more advantageous for the bodies of those who have fallen asleep in Christ, than even those saints still alive at His return.

Hence, where it might have been easily thought that those alive at the Son of God's return might have advantage over the dead, in reality it is the bodies of the souls of those who have ascended to heaven, which shall first be changed.

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:

That which shall precede the dead and the living being given new bodies by the Lord Jesus, shall be His return from heaven to the earth.

Jesus spoke about this time when all the people of the earth would see Him coming in the power and glory of God. It is this coming of the Lord in the clouds that Daniel had spoken prophetically about, as referring to the Son of Man.

Daniel 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.

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,) indeed no less than the Messiah, as the following description of him declares.

The scripture here lists three things that shall mark and call attention to Christ's heavenly entrance into this world. (1) Shout. (2) This shout will be the voice of the archangel. (3) The trump of God, which was sounded to mark all solemn events and gatherings shall be blown.

First, there shall be these great sounds that reverberate throughout the earth, reaching and touching each and every one of its inhabitants. This is meant to draw people's attention upward. For then, after the shout and the voice of the archangel and this last trumpet of God, Jesus shall appear.

These sounds of heaven, therefore, will give anticipation for Christ's glorious manifestation to the world as both the Son of Man and the Son of God. He shall come in the Father's glory, and the heavenly sounds introducing Him, foretell of His glory and might.

Practically speaking, Christ's entrance will startle all the inhabitants of the earth. He shall interrupt all the noises of human activity and communication.

Never before has the earth, the entire earth, heard the trump of God, which also caused the Israelites to shrink in fear at Mt. Sinai, and summoned them to hear God's voice.

Never before has this voice of the archangel, been so loud and dramatic, that not even one will not recognize it as coming from God.

So great also will be this shout that accompanies Jesus' return, that it shall awaken and call from the grave, the bodies of those, who prior to death, maintained faith in the Son of God.

If one should ask why such a public and universal display of Christ's glory, then it should be considered that Christ was first humiliated publicly: He was mocked and put to shame for all men to see by the Romans, the Jews, and the devil. Thus, as open and as public as men sin in this world, and did sin against the Son of God, so shall Christ's victory over hell and death be a grand and visual event in view of the entire world.

Not only though will Christ's glory, be made visible and open, but so also shall His people be glorified, who their entire lives have been mocked by the world, and persecuted because of their loyalty to God.

All faith therefore both of the Son of God, and those who have believed in Him, shall be proven true, and worthy to be openly declared righteous.

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. 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 looks forward to more than this one, when their faith in God and His Son, is both justified and vindicated. So that what all believers have suffered for, because of their believing on the Son of God will redound to their being glorified with Him.

And though this glory is yet future, still it is certain. We know this because all that Paul had revealed, and will reveal, he assures us came from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Galatians 1:11–12 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

¹² *For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Session 10

An Exposition of I & II Thessalonians

I Thessalonians 4:17–5:5

Scriptures

I Thessalonians 4:17

Genesis 5:24

Hebrews 11:5

Philippians 3:14

John 17:2

I Corinthians 15:51–52

II Peter 3:7

Romans 1:18

I Thessalonians 4:18

Acts 4:12

Colossians 1:27

I Thessalonians 5:1

Acts 1:6–8

I Thessalonians 5:2

Revelations 1:7

I Thessalonians 5:3

Isaiah 5:21

I Thessalonians 5:4

II Corinthians 4:6

I Thessalonians 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.

After the dead have been raised, those who remain alive at Christ's return, shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Because they have maintained faith in the Son of God, their reward will be that they meet Him upon His arrival to the earth.

The manner in which saints will be caught up to meet Christ in the air is first seen in Enoch, whom the scriptures state, *walked with God before God took him*

Genesis 5:24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

What started with Seth, when men began to call upon the Lord, now found its fulfillment in Enoch and his exemplary walk with God.

Enoch's fellowship with the Lord implies that where the Lord led him, he, by faith, followed. This will always be the primary manifestation of true faith.

The reward for Enoch's obedience to the Lord was that he was lifted from the earth while still alive.

Hebrews 11:5 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.

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 into heaven.

There is no greater reward for faith than this, and even the great Apostle Paul pursued such an end.

Philippians 3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

In recorded history, rapture is rare, only purposed for the godliest of men. The rapture of present-day saints shows us the monumental work the Son of God has accomplished

for His people, whereby, through His life and death, He makes men worthy of heavenly transformation.

The basis for the Christian being lifted into heaven is found in Christ's perfect work to redeem him.

Christ pleased God, and because of this, God has given Christ the power to receive into heaven all that God wills should join Him there.

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.

We, the church, have been given to Christ by God. Ultimately, no man can enter heaven without their election by God to share with His Son in heaven.

Saints will be lifted from the earth by being *caught up*. This means that it will be through no ability of their own that they will be raised to meet the Lord in the air, but rather solely by heavenly might and power being exerted upon them.

As the word implies, this force will be quite sudden, will originate from above, and will surprise all who observe it.

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 bodies 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 body of Christ is mystical, and because it is wholly spiritual in nature, once a man has Christ's spiritual life imparted into him, the state of his body, whether dead or alive, makes no difference. Ultimately, the unity established on earth between Christ and His people will reach its purposed end when both the living and the dead are eternally joined to the Savior.

Some have speculated that one of the reasons the saved will join Christ in the air is that the earth cannot contain such a great number of redeemed saints for such occasions as the church's final salvation and this world's 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 world was never meant to be the believer's home, and Christ will prove this when He ushers him into His own promised heavenly inheritance. Like their Master, Who died and after resurrection ascended into heaven, Christ's chosen have been born from above and will be equipped with new bodies to maintain spiritual existence beyond the earth.

Just as the caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly, the Lord's people will be caught up and changed, preparing them for heavenly habitation and enjoyment. All this, as Corinthians reveals, will be in the twinkling of an eye.

I Corinthians 15:51-52 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

⁵² *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.*

The trumpet, as seen in Corinthians and Thessalonians, as well as many other records in scripture, is attached to the Lord's return, and it will call all God's people for their final gathering.

As mentioned, the trumpet signaled the Lord's chosen to assemble themselves before God. Here its heavenly sound will call those chosen by God to now inherit their spiritual destiny.

However, it will not be upon a mount that God will come down to man, as He appeared to Israel. Instead, the Son of God will appear in heaven and, by supernatural power, raise His people to meet Him there.

This transition from God descending to the earth to meet Israel, to now the church being powerfully raised to meet Christ in the air marks a change of administrations, signifying that the earthly, all that is fleshly, is to be replaced by the spiritual, and all that is heavenly.

It is important to note that *change* is the optimal word to define what will transpire with the Son of God's return. Here it is the changing of His people's bodies, but many other things will also be transformed by Christ. The entire world order will change, from human governmental authority to divine spiritual authority contained in the person of God's Son. No longer will the descendants of the first Adam function according to their own human will, which has always resisted God's sovereignty over it, but now all will be done according to God's will.

Man, as we know him today in his fallen state, has lost the right to rule or be given stewardship over anything; therefore, a new race of men, created in the image and likeness of the Son of God, will replace him. These people, because of their new hearts, created in them by God, shall forever remain loyal to God, faithfully keeping God's laws and commandments. Many other Old Testament prophecies will also be fulfilled, but the Christian's transformation provides great insight into what new glories are to come.

Another vitally important reason that the rapture will take place in heaven, is so that the saved will be removed from the earthly judgements to come.

The last trumpet marks the beginning of the day of the Lord, and once it is blown, God's wrath will be poured out from heaven.

Hence, once the saved are raised, the day of this world's judgment has arrived.

II Peter 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.

Because of its wickedness, the first world, as seen in the time of Noah, was destroyed by water (Gen. 6:7); the one which we live in now, because of men's unbelief and rejection of God's Son, will be destroyed by fire.

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 “*asebés* (an adjective which is the negation of 4576 *lébomai*, ‘to respect’) – properly, lack of reverence (‘without due respect’), i.e. failing to honor what is sacred – especially in the outward (ceremonial) sense.”

This definition teaches us that 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 judgment.

The two greatest sins in man, aside from blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, are unbelief and ungodliness. These sins are committed directly against a holy God and, as such, are worthy of divine judgment. The day of the Lord will prove how distasteful God finds the pride and the insolence of man to be.

The scriptures also teach us that now, that is today, even before this great day of judgment, a portion of God’s anger towards sin is being revealed in the earth. Thus, if men do not believe that divine judgment for sin will come in the future, they need only to observe a small amount of God’s judgment being revealed towards sinners in the present.

Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

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 is measured, at Christ’s return, marking the day of the Lord, neither will be. It is this judgment and divine wrath of God upon the world that Jesus came to save sinners from.

Just as Lot was rescued from Sodom and Gomorrah and led out by angels from whence judgment was promised (Gen. 19:21–26), the Lord will rescue the righteous and catch them up into heaven before His vengeance is fully let loose upon an ungodly world.

And so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Once raptured by the Son of God, the saved shall never again be separate from Him.

It is common today for those who possess the 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 our heavenly Father and Savior is damaged. This is why, once the believer is joined to the Lord Jesus, all such fear will be eternally removed.

Our spiritual hearts will be at peace, simply because of our proximity to the Lord of peace.

In God’s presence is fullness of joy, and this joy will be exceedingly felt in the saved once they join Jesus in heaven.

I Thessalonians 4:18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

This verse teaches that there can be no real comfort, nor any sustainable hope regarding good expectation for the dead, without their having had good relationship with the Son of God.

There is but one name given under heaven through which men can be saved, and only One that can bring comfort when a man is either facing death or his body has entered the grave.

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.

All salvation, both of the soul and body, is tied to the Son of God. This is why, if a man does not have true relationship with Christ, he possesses no real hope beyond the grave.

For comfort therefore to manifest itself in the heart, a man must be found in Christ, and Christ must be found in him.

Colossians 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:

Before Jesus Christ's entrance into the world and His resurrection from the dead, men knew little to nothing of the concept of spiritual immortality. Today, because of the revelation given to Paul, by the Lord Jesus, we know much more.

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 of Christ and the rapture of His saints, the apostle now states that it makes no difference as to when these things will take place, but only that they will. This teaches us that men can get easily distracted about when something will be, when in fact, they should only be concerned that it shall be.

Curiosity, though common in man is not a heavenly virtue. The secret things belong unto the Lord (Deut. 29:29), and that which He says should remain hidden cannot be discovered by human effort.

Jesus' words to the disciples before His ascension reveal the proper behavior saints should exhibit 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?

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.***

⁸***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 unknown future; instead, Jesus directed them to a very near event, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

Teaching us that if men wonder if Jesus will return to the earth and transform the bodies of both the living and the dead, they really only need to look at the power of God already present on the earth in the form of the Holy Spirit.

Hence, instead of speculating as to the timing of future events, like Israel's restoration, true believers should pursue walking in the power of the Holy Spirit, which itself testifies to the reality of the Son of God.

This witness, the witness of the Holy Spirit, assures men of the truth of God's word and the sureness of His Son's return to the earth.

1 Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

The reason believers are instructed not to speculate on the day of the Lord is because it will come upon the world unexpectedly, and as a thief in the night.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, 1 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, et seq., it means the time appointed for the plague of locusts; in Ezekiel 13:5, generally, any day when God visits His people; in Joel 3:14, the fixed time for vengeance to be taken upon the heathen for persecuting the Church; which, in Isaiah 2:12 (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 is that future time referred to in the book of Revelation as the *Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Rev. 1:1).

Like in Thessalonians, the book of Revelation reveals that God's Son will come with clouds.

Revelation 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.

It is stated that Jesus' return and His appearance to the world will cause many to wail. This wailing will be by all who have rejected God's sovereignty and have now become 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 absence. The complete opposite scene is described here, for now it is sinners who cry because heavenly order has arrived. How different also are sinners from saints; whereas sinners rejoice when sin spreads, yet saints rejoice when divine power comes to remove it.

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.

It is worth noting that sinners shall mourn *because of him* (Christ). The sight of the Son of God coming in glory will awaken in even the dullest of men the authority of God.

The world's inhabitants, knowing they are unworthy of Christ's company, will wail at His coming.

The great majority of this world both have, and even do now seek to evade God's rule, but with the Son of God's appearance, because of the power given to the Son, divine sovereignty cannot be avoided.

The time of sin will have passed, and the time of righteousness being executed on the earth has begun.

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 judgment comes, the world will think itself in *peace and safety*. But, consistent with Christ's unexpected return to the earth and believers quickly being caught up to meet Him in the air, we now observe the sudden destruction of the ungodly. Divine deliverance, as well as divine justice, therefore, will be swift. As the Lord will not hesitate in transforming the saved, nor will He delay in executing His wrath upon those 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, and it need not wait any longer. This is why the believer's full salvation and the unbeliever's final judgment will be both quick and prompt.

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."

Sinners have foolishly surmised for millenniums that they can reject living under divine rule and evade any future judgment for doing so. This false human reasoning will be proven wrong.

It is often a predominant characteristic of the ungodly that they wrongly estimate the danger of sin, as well as God's final judgment for it.

Because they are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight, sinners cannot perceive their final end.

Isaiah 5:21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

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: 'Be not wise in thine own eyes;' compare Proverbs 26:12.

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.”
- (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.

Ultimately, the world will see itself as vastly mistaken for not recognizing and revering the Son of God. It will realize that He Who was rejected by man has been made ruler of all men and the final judge of all those born of the flesh.

The wiser a man believes himself to be the less he will rely on heavenly prophesy. This is why: those who trust in their own thoughts and reasonings have little to no use for God’s word.

Foolishly believing that truth comes from themselves and the small intellect they possess. Unbelievers will be wildly surprised at Christ’s coming. Ultimately, proving that the carnal mind has absolutely no perception of God nor can it perceive God’s final judgement towards sin.

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 to avoid giving account for their sin, yet God found them, so will those who have resisted God’s rule attempt to flee yet find no escape from God’s wrath. The earth, though vast in human estimation, is small to God, so that when divine judgment is brought upon her, there will be found no place for sinners to escape.

Whereas they once freely sinned upon the earth without any thought of divine intervention, now the earth has become their prison. *They shall not escape*, simply because there will be no place to hide. And though sinners will wish that the hills could cover them (Luke 23:30), this hope, like the lives they lived, will be in vain. God’s righteousness and His judgment will sweep the entire ungodly world, allowing no one who has rejected His Son’s rule to escape divine punishment.

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 God given to them, they will find themselves prepared for Jesus’ return.

II Corinthians 4:6 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.

Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, II Cor. 4:6

Hath shined in our hearts - Margin, “It is he who hath.” This is more in accordance with the Greek, and the sense is, “The God who at the creation bade the light to shine out of darkness, is he who has shined into our hearts; or it is the same God who has illuminated us, who commanded the light to shine at the creation.” “Light” is every where in the Bible

the emblem of knowledge, purity, and truth; as darkness is the emblem of ignorance, error, sin, and wretchedness. See note, John 1:4-5. And the sense here is, that God had removed this ignorance, and poured a flood of light and truth on their minds. This passage teaches, therefore, the following important truths in regard to Christians - since it is as applicable to all Christians, as it was to the apostles:

(1) That the mind is by nature ignorant and benighted - to an extent which may be properly compared with the darkness which prevailed before God commanded the light to shine. Indeed, the darkness which prevailed before the light was formed, was a most striking emblem of the darkness which exists in the mind of man before it is enlightened by revelation, and by the Holy Spirit. For:

(a) In all minds by nature there is deep ignorance of God, of His Law, and His requirements; and,

(b) This is often greatly deepened by the course of life which people lead; by their education; or by their indulgence in sin, and by their plans of life; and especially by the indulgence of evil passions.

The tendency of man if left to himself is to plunge into deeper darkness, and to involve his mind more entirely in the obscurity of moral midnight. "Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," John 3:19.

(2) 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. 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. This does not mean:

(a) That they are superior in their powers of understanding to other people - for the reverse is often the fact; nor,

(b) That the effect of religion is at once to enlarge their own intellectual powers, and make them different from what they were before in this respect.

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.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 5:5

Ye are all the children of light - All who are Christians. The phrase "children of light" is a Hebraism, meaning that they were the enlightened children of God.

By instructing and reminding the Thessalonians who they were, the apostle sought to remove any fear they might have of the day of the Lord. Since, it is those who prefer darkness who should fear, not those who have made Jesus their Lord. It is important then for saints to think of themselves as they properly are; least they forget the great distinction and separation that God has put between them and those still dead in sins.

Because of being born of God, the saved are now aptly designated as the *children of light*, children of the *Father of lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning* (Jas. 1:17).

Session 11

An Exposition of I & II Thessalonians

I Thessalonians 5:6–19

Scriptures

<i>I Thessalonians 5:6</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 5:10</i>	<i>II Thessalonians 1:6</i>
<i>Ezekiel 3:17</i>	<i>John 17:24</i>	<i>Matthew 10:16</i>
<i>I Thessalonians 5:7</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 5:11</i>	<i>Ephesians 2:10</i>
<i>Romans 11:8</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 5:12</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 5:16</i>
<i>I Thessalonians 5:8</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 5:13</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 5:17</i>
<i>Romans 8:6</i>	<i>Ephesians 4:8</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 5:18</i>
<i>Romans 5:1</i>	<i>Ephesians 4:11</i>	<i>II Timothy 3:2</i>
<i>I John 4:16</i>	<i>Ephesians 4:14</i>	<i>Romans 1:21</i>
<i>I Thessalonians 4:9</i>	<i>II Corinthians 11:3</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 5:19</i>
<i>I Thessalonians 5:9</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 5:14</i>	<i>Hebrews 12:29</i>
<i>I Corinthians 1:9</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 5:15</i>	<i>Revelations 1:14</i>

I Thessalonians 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

The Greek word for *sleep* is #2518 *katheudó*. When used figuratively, *Thayer's* defines it as "to yield to sloth and sin, and be indifferent to one's salvation: Ephesians 5:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:6."

When men are asleep to the spiritual realm, they cannot perceive and are not aware of either the opportunity for salvation or future judgment for sin.

The opposite of spiritual sleep is being vigilant to hear God's voice and avoid the danger of disobedience by rejecting God's commandments.

A spiritually watchful man, is a man aware of the dangers of sin, and who warns others of divine judgment.

Ezekiel 3:17 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.

Conscious of the possibility of being found unapproved and suffering the Lord's wrath, a watchman will apply himself first through preparing for the Lord's arrival, and secondly, warning others of it as well.

I Thessalonians 5:7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

The figure of speech used here is graphic when it compares those not watching for Christ's return and the Lord's Day to those sleeping in the night because of drunkenness.

If lived in and maintained, sin will completely separate a man from any true awareness of God and His coming judgment.

And like a drunken man who knows not where he has been the previous night, or what he has done, so are those who are not preparing for Christ's return, equally as ignorant of their state, and final judgment for sin.

The soul that sinneth, God's Word clearly reveals, will die, yet, those who sleep in the night, know nothing of the great consequence they will reap, by choosing sin as a manner of living.

A spiritually sleeping and drunken man has no real awareness of Jesus Christ, because also he has not the spiritual ears and eyes to perceive Him.

Romans 11:8 According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;

Ultimately, sinners can be so occupied with sin's pleasures that no real thought is given to spiritual things nor the judgment that is sure to come on any who willingly reject divine law.

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.

The contrast to being drunk and sleeping in the night is to exercise faith, love, and the hope of salvation. When possessed by Christians, these qualities prove their adoption into the higher spiritual realm of God. Yet if men, even if they are religious, are devoid of these divine qualities, it is certain that they remain dead in sins and oblivious to the saving power of God.

Romans 8:6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

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.

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. It tends to life, and is in fact real life. For 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.

Believers are encouraged to pursue faith, love, and the hope of salvation because these spiritual qualities stem from above and originate in the higher spiritual realm.

Faith.

The first quality listed by the apostle for the Thessalonians to pursue is that which produces peace with God.

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Man, in his fallen state, is at war with the Lord, and the Lord with him.

Thus, it is only when faith in God is first desired and then exercised that men prove themselves willing to come under divine government. See, no man will seek to believe if he has not already determined within himself that he will yield to the One he is seeking to manifest faith in.

Thus, it is by pursuing faith that men prove themselves willing to hear God's voice and obey it in their lives. This teaches us that faith, at its core, is an act of submission to divine rule and government. By also pursuing relationship with the Lord, this reveals that men are not satisfied with the natural and carnal world they were birthed into, and are seeking a heavenly world beyond it.

Love.

If a man knows not love, then he knows not God.

Consequently, until men are acquainted with and manifest divine love; they will lack any true knowledge of God.

Since the man who lacks love, the scriptures clearly state, knows not God, nor has any real fellowship with Him (I John 4:8). Like spirit, love is what God is.

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.

There is no greater evidence of the purity of religion than when Christ's love is manifested in His people. This proves their relationship with God as sincere and their affection for the Father as genuine.

Jesus said that men would know who were His true disciples by the love they held one for another (John 13:35).

Love, therefore, is that test which reveals if a man has given himself to be Christ's disciple, or if he merely panhandles Christ's name.

By love, we also know whom the Lord has revealed Himself to, as well as those whom He has not.

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.

If men truly love God, they will greatly desire to be like Him. Thus, by imitating God's love, they reveal themselves as His true followers.

Hope of salvation.

When a man possesses the hope of salvation and is waiting for Christ's return, this reveals that he has believed upon the Son of God and is aware of the exalted position or authority given to Christ.

It is also, when men walk in the spiritual qualities of faith, love, and hope that they can properly prepare themselves for Christ's coming and future judgment of not only sinners, but also the works done in the body of the righteous.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I Thess. 5:8

Faith, hope, and love, are the three pre-eminent graces (1 Th 1:3; 1 Co 13:13). 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, 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 wants any real hope of heaven, he must realize that it is only through the Son of God that he can gain it.

It is therefore solely through Christ that both spiritual and eternal life is received. Without also spiritual connection to the Son of God, the soul's salvation remains beyond the sinner's reach.

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

There is no other attainable way to enter heaven apart from responding to God's call in Christ.

It is only in Christ that God has called men to Himself, and it is only through belief in the Son that men can receive forgiveness for sin, ultimately resulting in receiving the divine righteousness needed to enter heaven.

I Thessalonians 5:10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

Charles Spurgeon once said, “If Christ died for you, then he will not forget you.” Ultimately, Jesus died on the cross so that those chosen by God might through Christ, live through Him.

To *live together* with the Son of God is the Christian's true hope.

It was for this reason that Jesus died, so that through death, He would be able to purify and cleanse all those called to heaven through Himself. To be with the Son of God where He is, which is in heaven, is the promise of the gospel.

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.

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

The comforting and encouraging message that the Thessalonians were to share and spread to others was that, whether living or dead, it made no difference, because God had purposed that all saved by God, should live together with His Son.

When love is sufficiently strong, it cannot be broken, and this is especially true regarding God's love for those He has called to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is why neither death nor life, can suspend relationship with the Lord, once the Son of God enters a man's heart, in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

*I Thessalonians 5:12-13 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;
¹³ And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.*

True ministers are spiritual gifts to the body of Christ by Christ.

Ephesians 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Because Christ has placed these spiritual ministries in the church, it is a great affront to His spiritual authority if their divine positions are not properly respected.

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

To be under Christ's rule requires that men freely become subject not only to Jesus's words and His Spirit but also, as evidenced here, to those ministers whom He has placed in the church, spiritual ministers also purposed for the church's growth and spiritual development.

Without the heavenly ministries of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers functioning in Christ's body, believers will be tossed to and fro, and carried about with many false and misleading doctrines meant to deceive.

Ephesians 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;

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 ...

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. The "doctrine" taught here is, that we should have settled religious opinions. We should carefully examine what is truth, and having found it, should adhere to it, and not yield on the coming of every new teacher. We should not, indeed, close our minds against conviction. We should be open to argument, and be willing to follow "the truth" wherever it will lead us. But this state of mind is not inconsistent with having settled opinions, and with being firm in holding them until we are convinced that we are wrong. 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 young because of their spiritual youth and lack of divine wisdom. And just as a toddler will place virtually

anything in his mouth even if it is dangerous and might cause harm, new believers, because of their lack of proper spiritual perception, can be easily deceived to receive false doctrines purposed to deceive them from the simplicity found in Christ.

II Corinthians 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.

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.

Lest by any means - Lest somehow (μήπως *mēpōs*). It is implied that many means would be used; that all arts would be tried; and that in some way, which perhaps they little suspected, these arts would be successful, unless they were constantly put upon their guard.

Ultimately, just as there are true ministers in Christ's church, so also is there an equal amount, if not more, of imposters sent by Satan to deceive the elect. Their devilish aim is to not only bring disgrace to the gospel, but also, by teaching falsities, to bring distrust to God's Word, and to practically remove people from a true knowledge of God's Son.

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.

It is the responsibility of all who are in Christ's body, not only His ministers, but also the church, to be concerned about and comfort, if necessary, the weak in faith as well as be ready to address those who break spiritual rank.

However, seldom in the history of the church has such spiritual diligence been evidenced by Christians.

Ultimately, sin can only spread and affect others in the church, if those who are God's people, neglect their religious duty. It is therefore a responsibility that everyone in Christ's spiritual body, care for and are concerned with, all the other members in it. This will include, if necessary, both warning the unruly and comforting the feebleminded and weak.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 5:14

Warn them - The same word which in 1 Thessalonians 5:12 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.

That are unruly -... The word here used (ἀτακτος *ataktos*), is one which properly means “not keeping the ranks,” as of soldiers; and then irregular, confused, neglectful of duty, disorderly. The reference here is to the members of the church who were irregular in their Christian walk. It is not difficult, in an army, when soldiers get out of the line, or leave their places in the ranks, or are thrown into confusion, to see that little can be accomplished in such a state of irregularity and confusion. As little difficult is it, when the members of a church are out of their places, to see that little can be accomplished in such a state. Many a church is like an army where half the soldiers are out of the line; where there is entire insubordination in the ranks, and where not half of them could be depended on for efficient service in a campaign. Indeed, an army would accomplish little if as large a proportion of it were irregular, idle, remiss, or pursuing their own aims to the neglect of the public interest, as there are members of the church who can never be depended on in accomplishing the great purpose for which it was organized.

Comfort the feeble-minded - The dispirited; the disheartened; the downcast. To do this is also the duty of each church member. There are almost always those who are in this condition, and it is not easy to appreciate the value of a kind word to one in that state.

One of the great reasons also that believers will often be afraid to stand up for the truth, is simply because they desire to keep their own name pure, more than they sincerely care for, Christ’s will being done on the earth.

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 for sin must be left to the Lord, Who alone has sufficient wisdom and justice to exercise it. Ultimately, it is God Who will manifest Himself as His people’s avenger, and they should never take this spiritual responsibility upon themselves.

II Thessalonians 1:6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

There is but One power and authority in the world, and no man has any right to believe himself equipped to do what is solely the right of God. Thus, there is no reason whatsoever that the people of God should ever render back again, either evil for evil or railing for railing. To do so betrays how Jesus said His called should conduct themselves in the world.

Matthew 10:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

Matthew Poole’s Commentary, Matt. 10:16
harmless as doves. Amongst the beasts of the field there is none more innocent than a sheep; amongst the birds of the air none more innocent than a dove; to both these our Lord compares his disciples.

The opposite of rendering evil for evil is pursuing good. The pursuit of doing good is to be exercised not only to those in the church but also, when available, to many outside her.

Jesus went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil (Acts 10:38), and we should seek to do the same.

Ultimately, God has purposed Christians for good works, and it should be their primary aim, while living in this world, to pursue doing them.

Ephesians 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.

1 I Thessalonians 5:16–22 Rejoice evermore.

17 Pray without ceasing.

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

19 Quench not the Spirit.

20 Despise not prophesyings.

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

22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Though these imperatives are grouped together, they are meant to be carefully and thoughtfully considered individually.

1 I Thessalonians 5:16 Rejoice evermore.

No one in the history of the world has been given more reason to rejoice for the lives given to them by God than Christians. We are the most blessed of peoples, and therefore should constantly thank God, Who is both the source and origin of all our blessings.

Through belief in the Son, we have gained access to the joy, peace, and love of God's own Holy character. And though many of God's blessings given to us are intangible and reside in our hearts, still they are real and confirm His presence in our lives. The Lord is good beyond all measure, and none know this more than those He has saved and made His own.

Christians are therefore instructed to rejoice evermore because there is never any just cause not to. Christ has given His people victory in the world, and there is no other power in the world able to successfully remove it from them.

1 I Thessalonians 5:17 Pray without ceasing.

If a man has a genuine relationship with the Lord, it will be proven in his prayer life. Since prayer is that means, whether rendered for thanksgiving or for seeking direction or even earthly forgiveness, through which believers reveal their great affection for and dependence upon God.

He who prays unceasingly is aware of his great need for God in his life. No man also will genuinely seek God's counsel, if he has not genuinely purposed to keep God's commandments.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 5:17

That Christian is in a bad state of mind who has suffered himself, by attention to worldly cares, or by light conversation, or by gaiety and vanity, or by reading an improper book, or by eating or drinking too much, or by late hours at night among the thoughtless and the vain, to be brought into such a condition that he cannot engage in prayer with proper feelings. There has been evil done to the soul if it is not prepared for communion with God at all times, and if it would not find pleasure in approaching his holy throne.

1 I Thessalonians 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

It is the will of God that those called to Him should remain thankful.

The opposite of showing spiritual thankfulness is fleshly murmuring, and the scripture is abundantly clear about what God thinks of this sinful attribute.

The opposite also of being thankful, is being unthankful. This condition, though rarely thought of as spiritually evil, is exactly that.

II Timothy 3:2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

Selfishness is one of the greatest sins, and those who love themselves, are not only covetous and proud, but also unthankful and unholy.

When men are therefore ungrateful, and especially so towards God, this reveals their fallen condition of being separated from Him.

It is also this condition of being unthankful that, the scripture reveals, results in darkened spiritual understanding.

Teaching us also that at his core, an unthankful man, is a spiritually blind man.

Romans 1:21 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.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 1:21

Neither were thankful - The obligation to be "thankful" to God for his mercies, for the goodness which we experience, is plain and obvious. Thus, we judge of favors received of our fellow-men. 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.

Ultimately, it is only when men respond with genuine thankfulness to the Lord, that reveals whether they are fully aware that the source of their every blessing is God.

I Thessalonians 5:19 Quench not the Spirit.

When a man is filled with God's Holy Spirit, and has been baptized with Christ's own supernatural nature through a baptism with fire, then this will produce a tremendous amount of spiritual energy, manifesting itself in the spiritually baptized one's heart.

Every person also in the Old Testament or New who truly possessed the Holy Spirit walked, spoke, and preached as if it was, spiritual fire driving them. The same is true today for those filled with God's Spirit. It is for this reason that the scripture reveals that men should not quench the Holy Spirit's working in their lives. By this it is meant to not put out or dampen the Spirit's workings in the soul.

The Bible also often reveals the Lord's own nature as that which is described as fire.

Hebrews 12:29 For our God is a consuming fire.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Heb. 12:29

For our God is a consuming fire - This is a further reason why we should serve God with profound reverence and unwavering fidelity. The quotation is made from Deuteronomy 4:24. "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." The object of the apostle here seems to be, to show that there was the same reason for fearing the displeasure of God under the new dispensation which there was under the old. It was the same God who was served. There had been no change in his attributes, or in the principles of his government. He was no more the friend of sin now than he was then; and the same perfections of his nature which would then lead him to punish transgression would also lead him to do it now. His anger was really as terrible, and as much to be dreaded as it was at Mount Sinai; and the destruction which he would inflict on his foes would be as terrible now as it was then.

It was in a burning bush that God first revealed Himself to Moses (Exod. 3:2-6). Upon also Mount Sinai, it is said that the mountain was wrapped in smoke when the Lord descended upon it in the form of fire, and the whole area trembled violently (Exod. 19:18). God also led Israel through a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exod. 13:21).

When David received his vision of the ancient of days, he perceived the Lord sitting upon a throne ablaze with flames (Dan. 7:9). So also, when the Lord spoke to Israel on Mt. Sinai, He spoke out of the midst of a fire (Deut. 4:22). Psalms also speaks of a spiritual fire devouring all before the Lord, whilst a tempest raged round about (Ps. 50:3).

In the New Testament, it was revealed that the Messiah, Jesus Christ, would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Luke 3:16). Hence, on the day of Pentecost, when the disciples were in the temple at Jerusalem, obeying Jesus's command to wait for the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4), the scriptures state that the Holy Spirit descended upon them in the form of a rushing mighty wind, and cloven tongues as of fire (Acts 2:1-4).

Scripture also reveals that the Lord will try every man's work with fire to determine whether it passes His test for true holiness and sincerity (I Cor. 3:13).

Fire is therefore often used to denote the presence of the Lord and, if necessary, His anger and judgment for sin.

Lastly, Jesus Christ, in John's vision of the resurrected and ascended Son of God (Rev. 1:1-2), possesses eyes 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. 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 those who refuse to be separated from it. (See Revelation 20:9; Daniel 7:9-10; Jude 1:7.)

By understanding that the Lord likens Himself to fire, emblematic also of the Holy Spirit, we should be able to recognize the great importance of Paul's command to the Thessalonians to *quench not the Spirit*, either in ourselves or others around us.

To do so is to seek to minimize God's presence in our lives, and ultimately to inhibit the great transformation purposed for our salvation.

If a man then quenches the Spirit, he will do so, only to his own detriment.

Session 12

An Exposition of I & II Thessalonians

I Thessalonians 5:20–28

Scriptures

<i>I Thessalonians 5:20</i>	<i>John 3:20</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 5:25</i>
<i>I Corinthians 14:1</i>	<i>Isaiah 5:20</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 5:26</i>
<i>I Corinthians 14:24–25</i>	<i>Proverbs 8:13</i>	<i>Luke 7:45</i>
<i>I Thessalonians 5:21</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 5:23</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 5:27</i>
<i>Proverbs 14:15</i>	<i>Romans 12:1</i>	<i>I John 3:2–3</i>
<i>I John 4:1</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 5:24</i>	<i>Exodus 34:29</i>
<i>Romans 10:9–10</i>	<i>I Corinthians 1:9</i>	<i>II Corinthians 3:18</i>
<i>I Thessalonians 5:22</i>	<i>Philippians 1:6</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 5:28</i>

I Thessalonians 5:20 Despise not prophesyings.

Despise not prophesyings.—The highest outward or charismatic manifestation of this inward fire was the gift of “prophecy” (1Corinthians 12:28; 1Corinthians 14:1; 1Corinthians 14:5; 1Corinthians 14:39), which was an inspired and inspiring preaching. The despondency of the Thessalonians 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 (Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers, I Thess. 5:20).

The Greek word for *prophesyings* is #4394 *prophēteia*. According to *Strong’s Concordance*, it means: prophecy, prophesying; the gift of communicating and enforcing revealed truth.”

HELPS Word-Studies defines *prophēteia* as: “(from 4396 /*prophētēs*, ‘prophet,’ derived from 4253 /*pró*, ‘before’ and 5346 /*phēmí*, “make clear, assert as a priority”) – properly, what is clarified beforehand; prophecy which involves divinely-empowered forthtelling (asserting the mind of God) or foretelling (prediction).

Thayer’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.

These definitions reveal that prophecy deals with the unseen and invisible.

This includes the secrets of men’s hearts that they wish to conceal (I Cor. 14:24–25) or future events that cannot be known unless spiritually revealed by God (Gen. 6:13, 17).

It is prophecy that the scriptures reveal should be greatly desired to be brought forth in Christ’s Church.

I Corinthians 14:1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

Along with *love*, the church, when it gathers together, because of its need for further understanding of God and His will for man, should earnestly desire the gift of prophecy to be manifest amongst her.

Hence, in the church, that which should be the most highly esteemed, together with divine love, is the speaking forth of prophetic truth. And just as love should be hot, and not lukewarm, no preaching or teaching should be spiritually engaged in, unless men are both inspired and led by the powers and influences of God's Holy Spirit.

It is sadly common for those who lack the fire of God in themselves and the baptism of Christ, to both avoid and condemn the spiritual fervor of the Holy Spirit in Christ's true saints.

The Greek word for *despise* in this verse is #1848 *eksouthenéo*, "(from 1537 *ek*, 'completely out from,' which intensifies *outheneo*, '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."

We learn that not only those outside the church but also many who claim to be in her, will despise, and set at naught, the gift of prophecy. Hence, the very specific word of God that the Lord sends to inspire faith and correct sin in His people can be set at naught, pushed aside, and ultimately treated with contempt by many who claim to believe in God.

This was the habit of rebellious Israel, who rejected the prophets' inspired words, and it is still clearly present today, when many who profess to follow the Son of God, reject the Holy Spirit's movement in the church.

Lastly, when actual inspiration of the Spirit is present in any assembly, those who are unbelievers or unlearned, will recognize the presence of God, and come to realize for themselves, that God is among them. It is also inspired prophecy which lends itself as a strong catalyst for prompting sincere religious worship.

I Corinthians 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:

²⁵ 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.

There is no doubt that the church does not worship God as it should, simply because God's presence is not regularly felt by her. Because also there is a lack of spiritual fire manifested forth through prophecy, God's people are unaware of the nearness of God, and His ability to see their sin, and/or come to provide for their necessary aide.

In regards to the gift of prophecy being manifested in the church, 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, 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.

I Thessalonians 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

All things in the church must be examined to see if they are truly of God and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

This includes not only using spiritual discernment to perceive true Christians over those who only profess Christ but even more importantly doctrines that are said to come in His name (Matt. 7:21–23).

Ultimately, discerning of spirits is necessary to ensure that nothing that does not have its source in God is allowed into His church.

The simple believe every word, and because they have no fixed doctrines or truths to be governed by, they will often embrace and seek to spread many things not inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Proverbs 14:15 The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.

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;

There is not one thing, nor one spirit—nor one man who professes to walk by the Spirit—that should be considered as the Lord's without careful biblical scrutiny.

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.

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.

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 Spirit 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.

The means by which Christians should test those who claim to come in God's name is, first, by the Word of God and, second, by the Spirit, Christ sends to the saved. Assuredly, if Christ's lordship is not stressed or obedience to His word not demanded, though a man may use the name of the Lord and claim to speak through being influenced by the Spirit of God, he has no real relationship with Christ at all.

For there are none sent by the Lord who do not stress and embrace Christ's lordship over their own lives and revere the high spiritual position given the Son over all men.

Practically speaking, a faithful response to Jesus Christ and His words reveals those ultimately called by Christ and those who are not.

Therefore, if a man has not Jesus Christ as his Lord, and is not filled with both the power and fruit of the Holy Spirit, we know that he has no true relationship with the Savior.

Romans 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.

¹⁰ For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

To confess Christ is to confess Him as Lord.

The Greek word for *confess* is #3670 “*homologēō* (from 3674 */homouí*, ‘together’ and 3004 */légō*, ‘speak to a conclusion’) – properly, *to voice the same conclusion*, i.e. *agree* (‘confess’); to profess (confess) because in full agreement; to align with (endorse).”

When a man properly confesses Jesus as his Lord, he is in full agreement with Christ's lordship over his life and will both inwardly and outwardly, willingly consent to any demand the Son of God places upon him.

True Christians, therefore, are not hesitant to embrace the spiritual rank that asserts Jesus as their Lord, nor will they stumble at Jesus's exalted position among men or the heavenly commandments given by Christ to men.

Determining whether something has its real source in God can be easily done by examining how men react to Christ's lordship over their own lives and how joyfully they receive the Word of God brought through Him. Simply because, if a man loves God, he will obey the Son of God. By this we can know those who are truly saved by the Lord Jesus and those who merely utter His name.

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); but take care! put everything to the test.” That the warning was needed, or would be needed soon, is shown by 2Thessalonians 2:2. 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), (3) with enlightened common sense (1John 4:1), 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—but “good” in the sense of “genuine,”

I Thessalonians 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

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 any other thing that might have the appearance of it.

Evil is the work of the devil, and fallen man. This world also, because it is under the influence of Satan, attempts to lead people away from the goodness of God and towards doing the evil of himself.

Undoubtedly, he who engages in and practices sin hates the light.

John 3:20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

Hate is a strong word, yet that is exactly what exists in those who, because they abide in darkness, inwardly despise and are repulsed by God’s light.

The Greek word for *hate* is #3404 *miseó*. “From a primary *misos* (hatred); to detest (especially to persecute); by extension, to love less — hate(-ful)” (Strong’s Concordance).

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.) Its presence makes manifest and reproves 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.

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.

...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 also try and change the definition of what God considers divinely good.

Isaiah 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!

It is not enough for evil men to depart from the light; since they will also attempt to pervert what true light really is. Therefore sinners, after apostatizing from the truth, will regularly assert that sin is righteousness and righteousness is sin. Not content with merely breaking God’s commandments themselves. Those who enjoy sin will seek to deceive other as to what truth really is.

Benson Commentary, Isa. 5:20

Woe 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.”

To fear the Lord is to hate evil, and all who possess this reverence for God will share this sentiment.

Proverbs 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.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Prov. 8:13

The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.—Because there can never be any truce between the kingdoms of light and darkness (Matthew 6:24), so if we are the friend of one, we must be the enemy of the other.

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 apostle knew that for the Thessalonians believers' bodies, souls, and spirits to be accepted at Christ's coming, God would have to sanctify them.

What is true of sanctification is also true of being found blameless. Hence, only God can so cleanse a man that he will be found blameless in God's sight.

Man's sin is such that it takes divine power to cleanse him. No man, therefore, has the ability to cleanse himself of that which defiles his soul and causes pain in his life. This work is solely the Son of God's, and without Him, men could never be redeemed from their fallen and ruined fleshly state.

The Greek word for *blameless* is #3648 *holokléros*. *Strong's* defines it as “complete, entire.” Its usage is “complete in every part, sound, perfect, entire.” What *blameless* indicates is that every part of the Christian, his body, soul, and spirit, will be preserved blameless by the Lord Jesus.

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,

Jesus saves the whole man, his whole being. Hence, men should not think that just because the Spirit returns to God at death, that the entire man will not be ultimately fully restored at Christ's second coming.

Benson Commentary, I Cor. 5:23

sanctify you wholly — ... The word *ολοτελεις*, here rendered *wholly*, signifies *every part of you*, and every part *perfectly*; implying that every faculty of their souls, and every sense and member of their bodies, should be completely purified, and devoted to the service of God.

God saves the entire Christian, so all that the Christian both is and has should be used in service to the Lord. Because all that man is will be saved at Christ's second coming, the entire man should be yielded to God for His service in preparation for that day.

Romans 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.

I Thessalonians 5:24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

Since it is God Who calls, it will be God Who does. The faithfulness of God therefore extends far beyond merely calling men to Himself, and will continue until what God has called men to, is fully entered into.

Thankfully, all weight and responsibility for the believer being found fit for heaven rests on the One Who has called him to heaven. The faithfulness of God thus demands that what God has started, He will finish.

It is this sentiment concerning the faithfulness of God that both First Corinthians 1:9 and Philippians 1:6 speak to.

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

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.

Philippians 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:

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Phil. 1:6

Paul affirms here that that work was begun by God. It was not by their own agency or will; compare the notes on John 1:13. It was on the fact that it was begun by God, that he based his firm conviction that it would be permanent. Had it been the agency of man, he would have had no such conviction, for nothing that man does today can lay the foundation of a certain conviction that he will do the same thing tomorrow. If the perseverance of the Christian depended wholly on himself, therefore, there could be no sure evidence that he would ever reach heaven.

It is important to note, that the call of God has its source in God and not man.

The work of salvation has always been the Lord's work, and because of this, it is also through His own power that He shall complete it.

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.

Not only did Paul realize that God was the source of his strength, but also that other believers' prayers were necessary to ensure his future welfare and continued ministerial success.

No man can go it alone, and none should think they have to if they are among Christ's chosen people.

There is also no doubt that if believers pray for those sent to preach Christ, such prayers will not go either unheeded or unanswered.

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 demonstrated this respect and affection by sharing a *holy kiss* on the cheek, hand, or head, just as the woman kissing Jesus's feet was an act of great respect and love for God's Son. It was for neglecting this proper respect that Jesus corrected Peter for.

Luke 7:45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

It is hard to speak of kissing and not remember the deceptive and devilish kiss of Judas when he betrayed Christ (Luke 22:47–48). While Judas feigned friendship through a kiss, his heart was actually set on betrayal. Yet the biblical custom of a holy kiss is observed throughout God's Word (Rom. 16:16) and is seen in I Samuel with ordination (I Sam. 10:1), in Exodus as a display of deference and respect for those older than us (Exod. 18:7), and many other times when people wanted to show affection for a spiritual brother or sister in Christ.

This teaches us that, at times, there is no greater way to show 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, wisdom should be used lest that which is purposed to be spiritual and holy is thought to be sensual and carnal, greeting one another in this biblical manner is spiritually appropriate for true saints.

I Thessalonians 5:27 I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

We have here not only Paul's charge to the Thessalonians but also his charge to all of us who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ as well, that the epistle penned to the Thessalonians should be read by all the holy brethren.

The Greek for *charge* is #1775a *enorkizō*. It means "to adjure." Its word origin is #3726 *horkizō*, which means "to make (one) swear, to adjure." The usage is "I adjure by, charge solemnly by" (Strong's Concordance).

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; *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, even today, that Paul's epistles to the Thessalonians should be both read and preached in Christ's church. By doing so, the return of the Son of God can maintain and hold the proper place it is purposed to have in believers' hearts.

What also caused the Thessalonians to sound out the Word of the Lord, which evidenced a great evangelical spirit being present within them, was their sincere and genuine belief in Christ's second coming.

They knew that Jesus would soon return, and so they joyfully sought to tell others of Him.

Ultimately, hope in Christ's second coming is the mark of a true Christian. Simply because only those who expectantly and longingly wait for Christ's return, will be those saved by Him.

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.

³ And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Barnes Commentary, 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.

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. 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 navigates by, forms his character.

Consequently, when men set their eyes on holy things they, similar to Moses when he beheld the glory of the Lord on Mt. Sinai, can also be changed in the process.

Exodus 34:29 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.

Benson Commentary, Exod. 34:29

At this time of his being in the mount, he heard only the same he had heard before. But he saw more of the glory of God, which having with open face beheld, he was, in some measure, changed into the same image. This was a great honour done to Moses, that the people might never again question his mission, or think or speak slightly of him. He carried his credentials in his very countenance; some think, as long as he lived he retained some remainders of this glory, which perhaps contributed to the vigour of his old age; that eye could not wax dim which had seen God, nor that face wrinkle which had shone with his glory.

II Corinthians 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.

Practically speaking, as men behold the glory of the Lord, they are simultaneously changed into Christ's image. Hence, one of the great keys to spiritual transformation, is by *beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord*.

This principle for true spiritual transformation is so much greater than when men seek to change themselves through a very unhealthy preoccupation with self. Teaching us that it is not by beholding ourselves that men are changed, but only by their beholding the glory of One, greater than themselves.

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 (I Thess. 1:1) reminding all the Thessalonians that it was by the grace of God that they were saved.

This leaves us with a simple truth that Christianity, at its core, is a religion of grace, the only form of religion also that sinners like ourselves could remain faithful to.

Thankfully, this grace comes to us as a gift from God, a grace we must also possess, if we are to be received by the Lord Jesus, at His glorious return. Amen.

Session 13

An Exposition of I & II Thessalonians

II Thessalonians 1:1–12

Scriptures

II Thessalonians 1:1
II Thessalonians 1:2
II Thessalonians 1:3
Galations 4:6
Romans 8:9
II Thessalonians 1:4
Proverbs 3:5
II Thessalonians 1:5
II Thessalonians 1:6

Proverbs 11:21
Isaiah 13:11
Hosea 4:9
II Thessalonians 1:7
Hebrews 4:9–11
Matthew 16:27
Psalms 2:12
I Peter 4:5
II Corinthians 5:10

Luke 12:2
II Thessalonians 1:8
Hebrews 10:29
II Thessalonians 1:9
II Thessalonians 1:10
II Thessalonians 1:11
II Thessalonians 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:

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.*

II Thessalonians 1:2 Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians begins much like the 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 so His grace and peace might be given to men where previously they deserved only wrath and judgment.

Grace is the disposition of God that desires good for the sinner, 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 sin against Him they can be forgiven if they sincerely repent for their sins. This tells us that it is God's will that no man should die for the sinful nature he was born into. Divine grace is meant to prevent this.

God is willing and able to forgive the penitent, as seen in His sending His Son to die for their sin. It is also solely through the Lord's grace that any are saved. If there were no grace, there could be no true salvation.

The Greek word for *peace* is #1515 *eiréné*, meaning “one, peace, quietness, rest.”

HELPS Word-studies defines the word as “1515 *eirénē* (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 their Lord, there exists a state of harmony, tranquility, and peace with God.

Christ’s ministry to die for sin was purposed to establish peace between God and man, so when men surrender their lives to Christ and His Lordship, an armistice with God begins. Ultimately, by believing in and submitting to God’s Son, men display their willingness to come under God’s government. Therefore, peace becomes available to them.

II Thessalonians 1:3 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;

In Paul’s first letter he referenced the work of faith and labor of love of the Thessalonians. In his second epistle he writes about how the Thessalonians’ *faith* had grown and their *charity* towards each other abounded.

Faith and love sprouting in people’s lives proves true spiritual growth and genuine godly advancement. Possessing *faith* and *love* likewise exhibits that men are walking in God’s will for their lives.

There is also no such thing as true spiritual development without the increase of these two divine fruits of the Spirit.

Hence, whereas knowledge, even if it is biblical, is not an accurate measure of God’s salvation or spiritual growth, manifesting the fruits of the Holy Spirit given by Christ to the saved surely is.

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

The possession of the Spirit of God’s Son proves heavenly sonship.

Yet if a man has not the Spirit of Christ and the fruits of the Spirit associated with it, he should not think himself as saved.

Romans 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.

Understandably, those whom God makes His children will always manifest the divine qualities of their Father, and this is most visibly seen by them possessing *faith* and *love*.

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 patience is needed to endure until the divine time arrives when deliverance comes.

Every trial has an end, and through sufficient faith and trust in the Lord, all trials for the Christian can be both endured and eventually overcome.

He who endures unto the end shall be saved, and he who trusts God fully with his life shall not be disappointed. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation.

Faith is the Greek word #4102 *pistis*, which *Strong's Concordance* defines as “faith, belief, trust, confidence; fidelity, ...”

The gift of faith strengthens men 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 something bearable that, without God's personal presence in the heart, would prove unbearable.

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

Ultimately, at the base of any true walk with God is a sincere and honest trust in Him.

Hence, if a man does not trust the Lord when suffering trials, we know that very little true faith in God exists in him.

Practically, faith can do so much more for the human heart than a room full of biblical knowledge ever could. Since it is not merely head knowledge that allows men to endure religious persecution and worldly trial, but rather only a sincere trust in God's sovereignty over all things.

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:

That the righteous will be persecuted in this world is spiritual proof of their worthiness to enter the kingdom of God's Son.

The servant is not above his Master; therefore, elements of what Christ suffered must also be experienced by His people. Yet though tribulation will come and must be endured, this same tribulation proves true Christians worthy of inheriting the kingdom of God prepared for them.

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 troubled, the Lord finds it a just judgment to recompense tribulation to those troubling them.

Hence, God counts it as a *righteous thing* to recompense tribulation to those who seek to emotionally or physically harm His children.

All fathers maintain a right to defend their own, and our heavenly Father is no different. It is therefore right and proper in heaven's eye to recompense tribulation to those who persecute God's saints.

What men sow, they shall also reap; therefore, those who incite trouble and bring consternation to the saved will have tribulation recompensed to them by God.

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 common misbelief of most sinners that God has no right to punish the wicked. Yet is not divine law higher than human law? And cannot heaven do what the earth regularly engages in, by punishing criminals? Should then the Lord not be afforded the right to execute heavenly justice, just as civil authorities routinely punish those who commit earthly crimes?

It is thus unreasonable to believe that God should not be allowed the same right as men in order to maintain a civil society where sin and crime must be punished, lest evil completely overtakes good.

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 would consider anyone truly loving who turned a blind eye to sin or did not bring justice to the victim? Is not justice a part of love?

Yet despite the opinion of sinners and their foolish thoughts concerning proper justice, God maintains His right and will never relinquish it because of the opinions of man.

Proverbs 11:21 Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.

All sin is against God and shall not be tolerated by heaven, though many who now regularly engage in sin vainly hope it will be.

Isaiah 13:11 And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

Ultimately, it also makes no difference if the sinner is a priest, prophet, or a pastor; all breaking of divine law will receive the same punishment.

Hosea 4:9 And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings.

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,

Matthew Poole's Commentary, II Thess. 1:7

Rest with us. Us, the apostles and ministers of Christ, we and you shall rest together; as we have partaken of troubles together, so we shall of rest. And you shall enjoy the same felicity with the apostles themselves, in the same state of rest. And though now place doth separate us, yet we and you shall rest together, which will the more sweeten this rest to you and us.

The *rest* that Paul speaks of that both he and the other apostles possessed is that *rest* produced when one remains confident in Jesus Christ's return to bring both salvation and justice to the earth.

This patience of faith and confidence in God's justice provides rest to the soul, whereas without it the heart will only be troubled and filled with anxiety.

Believing that God is ultimately in control and Jesus will soon be revealed from heaven is what produces rest in His people.

One of the divine ways that believers can gain and maintain spiritual rest while under trial is through the labor of faith.

Hebrews 4:9–11 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

¹⁰ ***For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.***

¹¹ ***Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.***

No man can remain deeply troubled in this life if his real hope is Christ's return to the earth.

Matthew Poole's Commentary, II Thess. 1:7

And as Christ himself is already entered into his rest, Hebrews 4:10, so he will come again to take his people into the same rest with him.

When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.

Accompanying Jesus's return in glory will be the angels of might, or *mighty angels*. This accompaniment reveals Jesus' heavenly authority over the earth.

The presence of these *mighty angels* is not needed to raise the dead but to assist the Son of God in rendering punishment on those who have rejected God and disobeyed the gospel of His Son.

At this time Christ shall repay every man for his deeds, whether religious or evil.

Matthew 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.

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.

The brilliant display of Christ's authority, made visible by His coming in the *glory of his Father*, with flashes of lightning and heaven's host accompanying Him, is an exhibition of how God has made Jesus fit and worthy to judge all things.

There is a certain glory, brilliance, and radiance that God alone has, and this glory, brilliance, and radiance will be made astonishingly visible when it accompanies the Son of God at His return.

It shall therefore be as God that the Son of God shall judge the world. By openly displaying His glory to earth's inhabitants, Christ shall communicate to all men His divinely appointed authority to represent the Father and execute His judgment in the world.

No doubt, this celestial display of heavenly might shall cause all those who have rejected Christ's rule to tremble.

Psalms 2:12 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.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ps. 2:12

Kiss the Son - Him whom God hath declared to be his Son Psalm 2:7, and whom, as such, he has resolved to set as King on his holy hill Psalm 2:6. The word "kiss" here is used in accordance with Oriental usages, for it was in this way that respect was indicated for one of superior rank. This was the ancient mode of doing homage or allegiance to a king, 1 Samuel 10:1. It was also the mode of rendering homage to an idol, 1 Kings 19:18; Hosea 13:2; Job 31:27. The mode of rendering homage to a king by a kiss was sometimes to kiss his hand, or his dress, or his feet, as among the Persians. DeWette. 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. The meaning here seems to be either "lest ye are lost in respect 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) - 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 Christ will quickly become aware of their fate at His coming.

Men are commanded to repent for their sins against God because on the Lord's appointed day, Jesus will execute justice on all who have rejected divine rule.

Jesus inherits this right from the Father because He is both the Son of man and the Son of God.

As the Son of man, Christ inherits the right to judge Adam's descendants, and as the Son of God, He possesses the divine and inherited right to rule all creation in God's stead.

Because Jesus died and was resurrected, all men, regardless of their current state, whether living or dead, shall be required to stand before Him.

I Peter 4:5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

It is in accordance with God's will that the entirety of mankind must stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

No man will escape this future reality, simply because all shall receive what they have done in their body. Every man shall reap as he has sown, and the day of Christ's judgement will prove this.

II Corinthians 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.

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.

At the end of every human trial, men must stand before a judge and be pronounced guilty or innocent. Christ's final judgment of man will operate the same way.

Once all the evidence has been presented, though it is already known by the One Who searches and knows the hearts of all men, all that is left is for the gallery to hear is the Son of God's final verdict. The solemnity of this occasion should prompt every man to deeply ponder what and who they are living for.

Religious sincerity shall be tested, and religious hypocrisy will be revealed.

Nothing shall remain covered that is not revealed, nor anything hidden that shall not be made known.

Luke 12:2 For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

It is this divine justice that the righteous crave. More than anything, the Lord's people desire justice in the earth, perhaps even equal to the possession of salvation itself.

Jesus's coming in the clouds in His Father's glory will reveal that this time of promised justice has arrived.

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 will be those who have rejected His rule. It is not a small thing to set at naught the good news of the gospel, purposed to save the sinner, nor is it an insignificant act to choose to disobey He Whom God has purposed should rule the world.

Undoubtedly, most men do not consider it a great offense to reject the gospel, nor do they deem it as a spiritual crime to not obey Christ's words. Yet the Scripture is clear as to the consequence for any who set at naught Christ's sacrifice.

Hebrews 10:29 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?

Ultimately, there will be greater consequences for refusing the grace brought through Jesus Christ than even when Israel rejected the law of Moses. This also teaches us that rejection of all divine rule, whether revealed by Moses, God's servant, or Christ, God's Son, will be met with what heaven deems as worthy punishment.

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); 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)—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), and one who deserved to die.

That Christ is said to return to the earth *in flaming fire* reveals that through His power, purification of the earth will be accomplished. And just as fire purifies, so will the Son of God return purity to the world that He will eventually rule.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 1:8

In flaming fire - This is a circumstance which is not noticed in the account of his appearing in the parallel place in 1 Thessalonians 4:16. The object of the apostle here seems to be to represent him as coming amidst vivid flashes of lightning. He is commonly described as coming in clouds, and to that common description there is here added the image of incessant lightnings, as if the whole heavens were illuminated with a continued blaze.

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); also His giving of the law at Sinai (Ex 19:18). Also it shall accompany His revelation at His advent (Da 7:9, 10), symbolizing His own bright glory and His consuming vengeance against His foes (Heb 10:27; 12:29; 2Pe 3:7, 10).

taking—literally, "giving" them, as their portion, "vengeance."

know not God—the Gentiles primarily (Ps 79:6; Ga 4:8; 1Th 4:5); 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); and as

the heathen persecutors who might have known God by the preaching of those whom they persecuted. Secondly, all who “profess to know God but in works deny Him” (Tit 1:16).

obey not the gospel—primarily the unbelieving Jews (Ro 10:3, 16); secondarily, all who obey not the truth (Ro 2:8).

As these verses clearly reveal, no man shall be given impunity if he has, by willful decision, chosen to reject a knowledge of God, evidenced by disobedience to Christ’s words.

Since Jesus has been declared the Son of God, it is paramount that men respond to His authority as God.

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 exhibited on those who do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ is eternal removal from the glory of His presence. This is not simply destruction, but exclusion from all that is holy, glorious, and good.

Ultimately, only those who have received Jesus Christ and have been made sons of God through Him shall be allowed to remain in and enjoy the glorious future of His reign.

Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary, II Thess. 1:9

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.

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;

Ultimately, the complete salvation of the chosen will be counted as Christ’s greatest triumph. Through also their heavenly transformation, shall the world know the true glory of Christ.

Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 1:10

The general idea is, that Christ in that day will be manifested in a glorious manner, and that the source of his highest triumphs will be what is seen in the saints.

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 would continue to grow so they might be found worthy of their heavenly calling, and through obedience to God’s Word receive all the good God had purposed for their lives.

In short, Paul prayed that what God had begun by exercising His power to produce faith in the Thessalonians might be finished, resulting in their being completely brought into all the good things God has purposed for them.

II Thessalonians 1:12 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.

In this verse we have what true faith in the Son of God will produce in those who genuinely make Him their Lord. It is that Christ's name will be glorified in and among His people. Whereas the whole world seeks to promote its own name, those saved by the Son of God are purposed to bring people's attention, gaze, and interest to Him who has, through His own sacrifice saved them.

Thus, for the saved it is Christ's name that will be most exalted in their lives, and not their own.

Nothing proves true Christian identity more than when Jesus's name is glorified in His people. It is this exaltation of Christ and His glory that also reveals those who have been begotten by Him.

Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, II Thess. 1:12

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;

An Exposition of I & II Thessalonians

II Thessalonians 2:1–9

Scriptures

<i>II Thessalonians 2:1–3</i>	<i>Daniel 7:3–4</i>	<i>I John 4:1</i>
<i>Acts 1:7</i>	<i>Daniel 7:5</i>	<i>II Thessalonians 2:6</i>
<i>Matthew 24:36</i>	<i>Daniel 7:6</i>	<i>Daniel 2:21</i>
<i>Deuteronomy 29:29</i>	<i>Daniel 7:7–8</i>	<i>II Thessalonians 2:7</i>
<i>Romans 11:33</i>	<i>Daniel 7:9–10</i>	<i>II Thessalonians 2:8</i>
<i>Matthew 24:22</i>	<i>Daniel 7:11–14</i>	<i>Revelation 1:13–16</i>
<i>II Thessalonians 2:4</i>	<i>Daniel 7:19–21</i>	<i>II Thessalonians 2:9</i>
<i>Daniel 2:31–44</i>	<i>Daniel 7:22–27</i>	<i>Matthew 24:24</i>
<i>Daniel 7:1–2</i>	<i>II Thessalonians 2:5</i>	

II Thessalonians 2:1–3 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

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.

³ 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;

Concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the churches being gathering together unto Him, we learn a very significant truth—that this event will not occur, that the day of Christ will not come, until there first commences a great *falling away* from the faith, directly influenced by the revealing of the *man of sin*, the great instigator in leading the world away from the worship of God to become worshipers of himself.

Ellicott 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); 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) 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 arrogance (Ephesians 6:12).

When sin reaches its peak, led by the *man of sin* influencing men to betray God, Jesus Christ will return to not only destroy the *son of perdition* but also to remove all ungodly rebellion once and for all.

Thus, when the *man of sin* is revealed and sin is embraced as righteousness should be, very soon afterward the Son of God shall appear with heaven's glory to destroy all who have, by freedom of choice, rejected God's rule over their lives.

The apostle therefore strongly asserts that the day of Jesus Christ will not be at hand until there is first a great falling away from the faith, coinciding with the man of sin, the son of perdition being revealed in the world.

No doubt there were at the time many foolish thoughts and conjectures concerning the Son of God's return and the beginning of the day of the Lord. Yet when Jesus's disciples asked Him when He would restore the kingdom to Israel, His answer was;

Acts 1:7 It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

Certain things, like the times and seasons when biblical prophecy will be fulfilled, are not intended for even saints to know accurately.

These secret things are purposed only for God's knowledge until the appointed time for their fulfillment.

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

Again, God chooses to keep some things secret, and no amount of persistent inquiry by man can make them known.

Deuteronomy 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.

Thankfully, it is enough for the people of God to concern themselves with things that have been revealed and not foolishly inquire about those divine mysteries not purposed for any human being to know.

Faith *cometh by hearing*, and *hearing by the Word*; consequently, no true faith will ever be gained or advanced by searching for those hidden revelations of God that He, by His divine wisdom, has said no man should become aware of until the day of their fulfillment.

Romans 11:33 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!

McKnight qtd. by 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.

Benson Commentary Continued, Rom. 11:33

For who hath known the mind of the Lord ... Or who hath been his counsellor? — Who hath given him advice respecting either the planning or managing of the affairs of the universe?

Human curiosity can do more to damage faith than strengthen it. And though the mystery of iniquity is already at work, it has not been seen or experienced in such a manner that sin has completely overthrown the truth.

Yes, sin is rising, and at an alarming rate, but this does not mean that the day of Christ is immediately upon us or that we can pinpoint the exact time of Christ's arrival.

For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first (II Thess 2:3).

Ellicott 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), 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; 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.

Man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.

With all great movements of evil, which this final apostasy from the faith will be, there needs to be a figurehead, someone for people to congregate around and who will validate their sinful desires. This someone is revealed in prophecy as the *man of sin ... the son of perdition*.

He will have a direct relationship with Satan and shall be at the center and assume the top position of what was previously thought to be Christ's church.

He will possess no shame in rejecting the Godhead and divine law and shall assert himself as the new ruler of man. He is termed *antichrist* simply because he is the embodiment of sin and against He who died to remove it from the world. Sin is descriptive of his evil nature, and he shall seek to lead others to join him in embracing its full realization in their lives.

We have seen in this world's history figures who were shadows of the Antichrist, Hitler being the most recent. Yet no matter how many in recorded history have attempted to take on this role, this new leader of the world will be exponentially greater and vastly more influential. The Anichrist's war will not simply be directed at other governments but against heaven itself.

The casualties of this coming prophetic conflict will dwarf previous human wars, such as World War II, in which an estimated forty to fifty million people died. So great, the Scriptures teach, will be death throughout the earth during this future time that unless the day is cut short, no human life will be saved. As with the destruction of Jerusalem, without divine intervention, all would undoubtedly perish.

Matthew 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.

Though estimates are varied, as many as perhaps half of the world's entire population will perish during the Antichrist's ascension to prominence and worldwide authority.

Yet it shall be because of the his appearance and rise in religious and governmental influence that Jesus Christ will be given the heavenly direction to return and assume His rightful position as God's heir of all things.

The appearance of the Antichrist and the calamity and treachery he shall bring to the world shall be met and supernaturally overthrown by the one sent by God to save the world. Thus, along with the *man of sin* shall appear from heaven the Son of righteousness, God's true Christ.

Evil will not be allowed to conquer, simply because the God of the heavens, who is only good, will not let it.

Sin will be met with punishment, and unrighteousness will be replaced with justice, and this shall be accomplished by God's Son.

Jesus Christ will assert heavenly power to eternally remove sin from the world and destroy its new human representative.

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 see the hubris of this *man of sin*, as he will assume the position of God. In short, because of his jealousy of the one true God, he will allow no one but himself to be worshiped and followed.

In the Antichrist's eyes, none are worthy of worship except for him, and he shall not tolerate any who reject his newly instituted religious system of government.

Practically there will exist, at least from an authoritative standpoint, only one religion, and the *man of sin* will oversee and enforce it as the new religion of this world. Very likely, not only will all Christian worship be removed, including every institution or church that promotes faith in Jesus Christ, but all other forms of worship too.

Therefore, just as the shadows of the types of the Antichrist in the past sought to assert themselves above all that came before them, political and religious, so shall the *man of sin* do the same.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, 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, and; Medo-Persia had Cyrus; Greece had Alexander, 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 general context of the *man of sin's* place in biblical prophecy and how he shall precede the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is important to at least briefly look at the four Gentile kingdoms Daniel prophesied would lead to His appearance.

In Daniel chapter two we have the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, symbolizing the great Gentile kingdoms that would arise, beginning with his own and ending with the *man of sin's* universal dominance.

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.

³² ***This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,***

³³ ***His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.***

³⁴ *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.*

³⁵ *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.*

³⁶ *This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.*

³⁷ *Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.*

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.*

³⁹ *And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.*

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.*

⁴¹ *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.*

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.*

⁴³ *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.*

⁴⁴ *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.*

From the fourth kingdom (Rome), which will have *the strength of iron*, shall come a divided kingdom, represented by the feet and toes consisting of iron and clay, partly strong and partly weak.

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.

Daniel chapter seven relates his dream, in which the four kingdoms are represented by animals coming from the sea.

Daniel 7:1–2 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.
² ***Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.***

Ellicott Commentary for English Readers, Dan. 7:2

The great sea.—In general (e.g., Joshua 15:47), these words imply the Mediterranean. Such cannot be the meaning here, so that according to Daniel 7:17 we are justified in explaining the “sea” to mean the nations of the world, which are compared to the sea (Isaiah 27:1; Psalm 46:3). The raging of the winds from the four quarters of the sky points to the various political and social agitations which disturb the world's history, and lead to the changes and revolutions which mark its progress as it tends towards the end.

Daniel 7:3–4 *And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. ⁴The 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 simplification’s sake, we will include from Benson’s Commentary the primary characteristics of these beasts, or kingdoms, that shall arise from the sea.

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, 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 מריתו 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.*

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 chief likeness 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: see Bishop Newton and the note on Isaiah 13:18. *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.*

Benson Commentary, Dan. 7:6

After this I beheld, and lo, another like a leopard — “This third kingdom is that of the Macedonians, or 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; Cassander 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 thousand, 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.

⁸ 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.

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. *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 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 Halicarnassus 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 are ten kings or kingdoms: see also Revelation 17:12. And these answer to the ten toes of the image, Daniel 2:42. 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 in which ten kings or kingdoms, corresponding to the ten toes of the image, are not united until God's will deems they should be.

We know from Thessalonians that this time cannot come until the little horn, which has a *mouth speaking great things*, arises to preeminence in the church and the world to unite the earth against the Lord and against 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.

¹⁰ 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.

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.

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 abound in the Scriptures to illustrate the majesty and glory of God. Compare Revelation 4:5, "And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices." Exodus 19:16; Habakkuk 3:4; Psalm 18:8.

Ellicott 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.)

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.

¹² As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

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.

¹⁴ 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 already been fulfilled. What he prophesied about Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece, and part of his prophecy of Rome's dominance, is now recorded history. All that is left is for the *little horn* with a *mouth speaking great things*, issuing forth from the *fourth beast* and the remnants of Rome's influence, to exercise authority in the world. Again, this is represented by:

Daniel 2:33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

Daniel then goes on to wonder about the truth of the *fourth beast*, diverse and unique from the others, who made *war with the saints and prevailed against them*.

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;

²⁰ *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.*

²¹ *I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;*

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.

When the fourth beast wars with the saints, God shall give the kingdom to the Son of man and His saints.

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.

²³ *Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.*

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.*

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 and the dividing of time.*

²⁶ *But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.*

²⁷ *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 shall 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* out of *this kingdom* are ten kings who will *arise*, and one will be more predominant than the others. The *little horn*, the *man of sin*, will make war with the saints and prevail against them, ushering in the return of Christ: *the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days* (v. 13). The *Son of man* 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).

With respect to this fourth kingdom sprouting from Rome, Albert Barnes's Commentary states,

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Dan. 7:24

It would be proud, and ambitious, and particularly arrogant against God: "and he shall speak great words against the Most High," Daniel 7:25. The Chaldee here rendered against - לִצְדָּה *letsad* - means, literally, at, or against the part of it, and then against. Vulgate contra; Greek πρὸς *pros*. This would be fulfilled in one who would blaspheme God directly; or who would be rebellious against his government and authority; or who would complain of his administration and laws; or who would give utterance to harsh and reproachful words against his real claims. It would find a fulfillment obviously in an open opposer of the claims and the authority of the true God; or in one the whole spirit and bearing of whose pretensions might be fairly construed as in fact an utterance of great words against him.

The rebellion orchestrated by the *little horn* spoken of in Daniel will be a universal condemnation of God's laws lead by him, the apostasy that began in Genesis with Adam and Eve departing from God's Word shall be allowed to grow until it has engulfed the entire world.

Because a great majority of this world's inhabitants shall freely and willingly join themselves to the *man of sin* and his rebellion against God, heaven, in the person of Jesus Christ, shall intervene one last time to deal with sin.

The book of Revelation reveals other cataclysmic events that will transpire at this time. There will be a great tribulation, one the world has never seen before and will never see again. Yet after a short period of three and a half years, Jesus will return to destroy the Antichrist and establish peace on earth. The Lord shall overcome evil, and evil will no longer exist. Hence, with the removal of sin and all its ungodly proponents, harmony, peace, and unity, not only between God and man but between man and man, shall return, and all this shall be accomplished by the power given to the Son, enabling Him to rule all things according to God's will.

II Thessalonians 2:5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

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.

False prophets, unknown to most, have as their primary objective to bring doubt upon the true Word of God. Thus, whenever those not led by the Holy Spirit make claims concerning the future of the world, or anything else for that matter, which do not come to pass, people are left to wonder if any revelation said to come from God can be trusted. For this reason God's Word reveals that we should *try the spirits*, or those who claim to be speaking by the Spirit, lest false prophecies and prophets are mistakenly thought to be true.

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.

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 much has been speculated about what power withholds the Antichrist's arrival on the earth. The simple answer is that it is God. Like with many things, the simplest explanation is often the right one. So if the Thessalonian believers were troubled about the many false and misleading prophecies of the day, they needed only to be reminded that the God of the heavens remains in control of coming world events.

Daniel 2:21 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.

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, stretching into far-distant times, Daniel was led to ascribe to God the control over "all" the revolutions which occur on earth.

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 a concealed force that seeks to promote sin and rebellion against God. This power can be observed in government, media, and many other places where men hold an extensive amount of influence in the world, as well as in the general direction of sins spread in the world.

And though this force is not as widespread as it one day will be, the *mystery of iniquity* is at work today, leading people away from God and encouraging them to live their lives according to their own sinful and carnal desires and pattern themselves after he who introduced sin in the world.

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. *The mystery of iniquity*, therefore, is a scheme of error, not openly discovered, whose influence is to encourage iniquity. *Doth already work* — Ενεργεῖται, *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:

Regardless of whatever glory, power, and might the *man of sin* accumulates during his brief time of rulership, it shall be quickly dissolved when *the Lord* comes in the power and glory of the Father. Whatever delusions the Antichrist has tricked the world into believing concerning his authority to rule as God will also be exposed as a lie when the Son of man, Jesus Christ, returns to the earth.

For then both the counterfeit and the Genuine shall be examined side by side, and it will be seen how foolish rebels were who trusted in one who possessed only an illusion of spiritual power while simultaneously rejecting God's true heavenly power, personified in God's Son.

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 glory, shall consume and destroy the *man of sin*.

Good shall overcome evil, and light shall be proven to be much greater than darkness. Christ, therefore, shall destroy with the brightness of His coming the one who deceived a great part of this world.

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.

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.

It is worthy of note that Jesus is spoken of in Scripture as appearing in light, possessing a brilliant countenance likened to the sun.

This is the true image of the Son of God now, though sadly, most still only view the Lord Jesus as He was in His human form on the earth.

Revelation 1:13–16 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.

¹⁴ ***His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;***

¹⁵ ***And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.***

¹⁶ ***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.***

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,

The apostle informs the Thessalonians that the man of sin's coming is directly linked to Satan, and therefore he will have the same illusion of power.

See, the devil has no inherent divine spiritual authority; thus, he must resort to deception and lies to maintain influence over man.

The *man of sin's*—Satan's—progeny will do the same. This *son of perdition* will possess only illusion of power, signs, and wonders, yet the Spirit of Christ which lives in His people will prevent God's elect from falling prey to his deceptions.

Matthew 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.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Matt. 24:24

If it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect - So nearly would their pretended miracles resemble true miracles as to render it difficult to detect the imposture; so much so, that if it were possible they would persuade even true Christians that they were the Messiah. But that was not possible. His real friends would be too firmly established in the belief that he was the Christ to be wholly led away by others. Christians may be sometimes led far astray; they may be in doubt about some great doctrines of religion; they may be perplexed by the cavils and cunning craftiness of those who do not love the truth, but they cannot be entirely deceived and seduced from the Saviour. Our Saviour says that if this "were possible," it would be done then; but it was not possible. Compare the notes at John 10:28-29.

Session 15

An Exposition of I & II Thessalonians

II Thessalonians 2:10–3:5

Scriptures

<i>II Thessalonians 2:10</i>	<i>I John 3:2</i>	<i>II Thessalonians 3:2</i>
<i>II Thessalonians 2:11</i>	<i>II Thessalonians 2:15</i>	<i>II Thessalonians 3:3</i>
<i>Galatians 6:7</i>	<i>James 1:22</i>	<i>II Timothy 2:12–13</i>
<i>II Thessalonians 2:12</i>	<i>II Thessalonians 2:16</i>	<i>II Thessalonians 3:4</i>
<i>II Thessalonians 2:13</i>	<i>II Thessalonians 2:17</i>	<i>Ezekiel 36:26–27</i>
<i>II Thessalonians 2:14</i>	<i>II Corinthians 1:3–4</i>	<i>II Thessalonians 3:5</i>
<i>Colossians 1:27</i>	<i>Acts 16:5</i>	<i>I John 4:16</i>
<i>Matthew 17:1–2</i>	<i>II Thessalonians 3:1</i>	

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 the truth and count it as their greatest joy, they place themselves in a position fertile for deception.

Ultimately, it is the engrafted Word that saves a man's soul and the kept Word that keeps him from sinning against God. Both will only be accomplished when men love the truth, without which they can easily be deceived.

Hence, at the core of all apostasy is the reality that those who apostatized held no real affection for the truth, which itself reveals no real affection for God and the holiness contained in His divine nature.

It is this absence of love for God and His Word that sets the table for human deception by evil forces.

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.

The Antichrist is said to lead people towards unrighteousness through deceit. Iniquity is such an odious thing, so much so that even those born in sin will not fully embrace it without a level of deception.

Hence, for sin to fully grow, deceit is needed to make good be perceived as evil and evil be embraced as good.

The people most susceptible to the Antichrist's deceptive and controlling methods will be those who, because of an affection for sin, took pleasure in unrighteousness.

When a deep and affectionate love for truth is absent, all that is left for men to have affection for, is sin. What people love directly affects what they believe. This is why a man's appetites will eventually determine his destiny.

The heart and what it cherishes most, whether God or the world, greatly determines what is believed. So, if sin is embraced and not God, it is impossible to escape deception.

Observe as well that love for the truth is directly linked to love for God. Therefore, when men cease to love the truth, it sends a very clear message that love for self, sin, and the world is preferred above God.

II Thessalonians 2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

Though Satan and the man of sin begin the process of deception in those who love not the truth, it is God 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.

No one can resist God, abandon His will, and not pay harsh consequence for their actions. To those who love not the truth, God will send 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, 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 τῷ ψευδεῖ may be translated, *so that they will believe a lie*.

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.

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.

It is an observable law that what men sow, they shall reap.

This justice is constantly executed by a sovereign God, and none can escape bringing into their lives what was sown in their hearts. The English idiom “the chickens have come home to roost” informs us that even in an ungodly world, men are somewhat aware that their previous actions will result in future consequences. However, Geoffrey Chaucer's idea in “The Parson's Tale” cannot remotely compare to what God's Word reveals on the subject.

Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

If men refuse to love the truth, God will ensure they believe a lie.

This teaches us that even in unbelief and rebellion, God maintains control over all things by yielding to men exactly as they have sown.

II Thessalonians 2:12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Here we see God's universal judgment, that *all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*. The emphasis here is that *all* who love sin and follow the *man of sin* in embracing it shall be *damned*.

Thayer's Greek Lexicon defines *damned*, the Greek *krinó* #2919, as: "to separate, put asunder; to pick out, select, choose."

This teaches us that those who will be damned and judged by God shall be selected and separated out for their sin.

The scripture states that *all might be damned who believed not the truth*, revealing that *all*, without exception, who engaged in sin shall be damned by God. Apostasy is worthy of judgment, and God shall make sure it is executed upon all who love sin over righteousness.

II Thessalonians 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks always 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 Thessalonians, who had exhibited a belief and a love for the gospel.

Whereas damnation awaits the deceived, salvation and sanctification awaits those who choose Christ.

It should be emphasized that since God is God, He can just as easily sanctify a soul for heaven and cleanse it of sin as He can send one to hell because of love for sin. The Lord's power to cleanse should not be thought less than His power to damn. Both will be in operation at Christ's coming and carried out to fulfill God's purposed end.

Men can know that God has chosen them for salvation by their being sanctified by His Holy Spirit. This spiritual baptism, performed by the Son of God, renders men fit for heaven and proves spiritual election by God.

Ultimately, possessing the Holy Spirit certifies heavenly sonship and confirms inheritance in heaven.

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.

II Thessalonians 2:14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ now possesses a *glory*, and those who have believed upon Him will share in it. Hence, as dark and dreary as the apostasy and the man of sin's rise to power will be, equally as brilliant will be the glory of the Son of God and the spiritual glory He will give to those saved by Him.

In truth, there is no gray area between light and darkness, no middle ground that any man will be allowed to stand on. Thus, God's final judgment for man must fall into one of two camps. Either men will be glorified because of their connection to the Son of God or be condemned because they chose the pleasure of sin.

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. Thus, it is not simply that a man will enter a land of heavenly bliss, but rather that those called by Christ shall obtain and share in the *glory* of Jesus Christ.

Saints, therefore, shall possess a portion of the Son of God's celestial glory. This is the true hope of the gospel, and it provides great spiritual encouragement when believed.

Colossians 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:

Children share the characteristics of their father, and the children of God are no different. Because of their faith, God's new sons are purposed to share in the glory of the first begotten Son of God.

And though this coming glorification will not be equal to Christ's heavenly position as the Head of all things, it will be of the same constitution and worth as His glorified body. One record in God's Word that hints at the glory of Jesus is found in Matthew's gospel, detailing the events of His transfiguration.

***Matthew 17:1-2 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,
2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.***

It was not accidental that Jesus led His disciples to the top of a mount to reveal to them His future glory. This symbolized that it would be necessary for Him to ascend into heaven to receive His full glorified reward from God.

The word for *transfigured* is the Greek #3339 *metamorphoó*. *HELPS Word-studies* defines it as "(from 3326 /*metá*, 'change after being with' and 3445 /*morphóō*, 'changing form in keeping with inner reality') – properly, transformed after being with; transfigured."

This word is also where, in English, we get the terms "'metamorphosis' and 'metamorphize.'" By this, we can see that the glory that is now Christ's cannot be likened to any earthly body, including the tabernacle Jesus walked in while on this earth.

Christ's transfiguration was purposed for Peter, James, and John to observe so they could see His glorified state. No doubt, this sight of the Lord Jesus in heavenly glory did much to encourage the disciples that their faith in Christ was warranted, and it provided them the spiritual confidence to remain faithful despite the troubles that lay ahead.

Meyer's NT Commentary, Matt. 17:2

was *transfigured*, in the way about to be described. That is to say, His external aspect was changed (“non substantialis, *sed accidentalis fuit transformatio*,” Calovius); His face gleaming like the sun, and His raiment being so white that it shone like light. He appeared in outward heavenly δόξα, which μεγαλειότης (2 Peter 1:16) was the foreshadowing of His future glorified state (John 12:16; John 12:23; John 17:5; John 21:24; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Matthew 13:43). The analogy presented by Exodus 34:29 comes short in this respect, that, whereas the brightness on the face of Moses was the result of God’s having *appeared before him*, in the case of Christ it proceeded from His own divine *nature and life*, the δόξα of which radiated *from within*.

Once Christ’s power has miraculously transformed believers’ bodies, they shall not only see Jesus as He actually is, but be provided with the necessary spiritual ability to behold the entire spiritual world.

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.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 3:2

see *him*—not in His innermost Godhead, but as manifested in Christ. None but the pure can see the infinitely Pure One. In all these passages the Greek is the same verb *opsomai*; not denoting the action of seeing, but the state of him to whose eye or mind the object is presented; hence the Greek verb is always in the middle or reflexive voice, to perceive and inwardly appreciate [Tittmann]. 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 quite another to fully obey it. It is important to understand this, as many mistakenly believe that hearing the Word is equal to obeying it.

James 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

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.

Practically, it makes no difference how we are exposed to the Word of truth, either by *word* or *epistle*. Whether He speaks to us through the Spirit or writing, the Lord’s Word comes from Him and should be believed and obeyed.

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,

Because of the Father's and Son's love, saints are given *everlasting consolation and good hope through grace*. The comfort given to the Christian at his new birth is both everlasting and eternal.

This informs us that once born of God, the comfort of God will never leave us. It has been given to us by divine means, and it shall not be taken away, even in death.

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.

It is not simply that God loves His children and gives them hope, which every sinner lacks, but that He comforts their hearts and establishes them in every good word and work.

In this supernatural process, the peace and strength that dwell in God and are a characteristic of His Being are transmitted into the hearts and lives of His people.

II Corinthians 1:3-4 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

⁴ 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.

It is the will and work of God that the saved are filled with His supernatural comfort and peace.

The Lord has always been the great and sustaining strength of His people. Therefore, when believers are *established in the faith* and comforted when facing trials, it is because of God's care for His own.

Acts 16:5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

Whenever saints are grounded in the truth, it is because of God's power and influence in their lives. Whether this establishment occurs through the Holy Spirit or Christ's ministers, the One to be praised is always God.

Through the Father's presence in His people's lives, they shall be established in the Christian gospel and grow confident of its truth and revelations.

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:

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 3:1

Finally, brethren, pray for us - That is, for Paul, Silas, and Timothy, then engaged in arduous labors at Corinth. This request for the prayers of Christians is one which Paul often makes; see the notes, 1 Thessalonians 5:25.

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.

Concerning prayer, there lies a very important truth; it is that whatever a man believes is his greatest strength is what he will lean on when setting about to do a work. Hence, if men believe that it is through their own power and ability that the gospel is advanced and believed in, it is to themselves that they will turn to for strength.

A man’s prayer life, therefore, or perhaps a lack of it, reveals the true source of his confidence. For Paul, it was God; for most, it is self.

Every true Christian’s desire is that when others hear the truth, God will be glorified from it. For the true Christian it is God Who is sought to be glorified, and not self. When truth is sincerely believed, this is what will actually happen—God will be glorified as men come to realize the glorious nature of His person.

II Thessalonians 3:2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

When men cease to call upon the name of the Lord, wickedness grows. And the more sin develops in sinners, the more wickedness you will see manifested from them. Where there is sin, evil deeds and actions will follow.

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 (1Th 1:5, 6), 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 and light, He is also faithful. This is seen in His faithfulness to uphold His promises, provide forgiveness for sin, and receive those called to heaven through His Son.

The Lord is faithful and this shall be proven when He establishes His saints and keeps them from evil.

How a man views God also directly affects his confidence in Him. Hence, if he does not believe that God is faithful, it will be difficult for him to gain and maintain consistent trust in the Lord. Consequently, at the foundation of any true walk with God, is held a firm belief in God’s faithfulness.

There is another great truth that should be considered concerning God’s faithfulness; it is this: if men deny God, His faithfulness demands that He will deny them.

So that just as God is faithful to preserve saints from evil, equally faithful will He be to send sinners to hell.

II Timothy 2:12–13 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

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.

Just as God remains faithful to those who obey His will, His faithfulness demands that He cannot save those who do not.

Ultimately, God cannot treat the faithless as faithful.

II Thessalonians 3:4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

At the base of all Christian ministry should be confidence in the Lord. Hence, Paul's confidence that the Thessalonians would obey the gospel brought to them, lay in the fact of his confidence in the Lord, working in them to do so.

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 Jde 1:24; Revelation 3:10; Proverbs 28:26.

Paul's confidence that the Thessalonians would do all that the Lord had commanded stemmed from the fact that he knew God was now their strength.

Whereas sin had been dominant in the Thessalonians before conversion, now holiness would manifest itself in their hearts as the greater power. And though sin could still tempt these new children of God, it could no longer control them.

The ability to obey the gospel had been provided by God, through giving the Thessalonians new hearts that would keep God's commandments.

Ezekiel 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.

27 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.

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; 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.

God's Spirit inspired the Thessalonians to obey the gospel, and that same Holy Spirit directed them to grow 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; and John [the] Baptist's ministry was to make crooked things straight, Isaiah 40:4. The turning [of] man's heart and ways towards God makes them straight. David prays, Psalm 119:36: *Incline my heart unto thy testimonies*; *ybm-jh* ... Or as he prays God to unite his heart to his fear, Psalm 86:11; so here Paul, 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.

Love is the divine quality that, when manifested in Christians, reveals their true knowledge of God and the higher spiritual realm. Ultimately, all who are truly born of God through the Spirit will manifest a deep love for not only their Savior but those born of Him. This is something a merely religious man can never possess.

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.

Ultimately, divine love is that spiritual fruit that confirms true relationship with God. For those who dwell in love, dwell in God, and He in them.

Hence, whenever divine love is present, we can know that that person indeed has fellowship with the Lord Jesus, and the Lord Jesus with him.

The patient waiting for Christ.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Thess. 3:5

And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God - So direct your hearts that you may love God. "And into the patient waiting for Christ." Margin, "patience of Christ." The marginal reading is in accordance with the Greek, and seems best to express the apostle's meaning. The prayer of the apostle was, that they might have the love of God in their hearts, and "the patience of Christ;" that is, the same patience which Christ evinced in his trials.

Session 16

An Exposition of I & II Thessalonians

II Thessalonians 3:6–3:18

Scriptures

II Thessalonians 3:6
II Timothy 4:2
Galatians 5:9
II Thessalonians 3:7–9
Acts 20:35
Matthew 10:8
II Thessalonians 3:10
Philippians 2:12–13
Matthew 7:13–14
Romans 8:6

II Thessalonians 3:11
I Thessalonians 4:11
II Thessalonians 3:12
Galatians 6:4
II Thessalonians 3:13
Acts 10:38
James 4:17
II Thessalonians 3:14
II Thessalonians 3:15
II Thessalonians 3:16

Philippians 4:7
Proverbs 16:3
II Thessalonians 3:17
Galatians 1:11–12
II Thessalonians 3:18
John 1:17
I Peter 3:18
II Corinthians 5:15

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.

Though the Thessalonians were *brethren*, Paul and the other apostles with him maintained the spiritual right to *command* them regarding certain behaviors in the church.

Gift ministries, like apostles and prophets, are placed by Christ. Because of this, they 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 for true ministers to come in God's name, hold forth His Word, and reveal His will to man. This is a heavenly charge and should not be taken lightly.

II Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.

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. 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 had the subject much at heart, and never lose an opportunity of making the gospel known.

In season - εὐκαιρῶς *eukairōs*. In good time; opportunely; compare Matthew 26:16; Luke 22:6; Mark 14:11. 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 - ἀκαίρως *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 gift ministries have been called by Christ for ministry, they are given the spiritual inspiration to speak for God when prompted by the Holy Spirit.

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*) . . . ‘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 Him to do so. To think otherwise is to know nothing of the strict subjection that the Lord Jesus demands from the spiritual ministries He has placed in His church.

For true servants, Christ’s will is always superior to their own, and the influence of the Spirit of the Lord is greater than human flesh.

Ultimately, God gives no man spiritual authority over another unless he is first willing to subject himself to Christ’s Lordship.

This ecclesiastical order encourages unity and harmony in the body of Christ and provides the means for spiritual growth.

Withdraw.

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.”

The Thessalonians were commanded to avoid fellowship with those who were unruly and did not obey the spiritual doctrines given to them, those who had refused Paul’s apostolic authority and lived as they chose, and not as God willed.

The Greek word for *disorderly* is #814 *ataktós*, defined as “properly, disorderly (‘breaking rank’); insubordinate to God’s Word and hence fruitless (unproductive) – because lacking proper order (discipline).”

When men, even those who claim to be brethren, are insubordinate to apostolic instruction and refuse to yield to its authority in their own lives, the believers of God who have chosen subjection to Him should avoid having religious fellowship with them.

With this strong collective response, it is hoped that those who have sinned become ashamed and repent for their sin.

To *walk disorderly* does not mean to take a false step here and there. Instead, it is a consistent habit of breaking rank by not submitting to gospel instruction. Rebels, or in this case, even slackers, should not be fellowshiped with because the Lord does not want their sinful behavior to act as leaven in a humble and holy group of saints.

Galatians 5:9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

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 principle...—comp. Matthew 16:12; Luke 13:21. . . . 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.

Bengel’s Gnomon, Gal. 5:9

[*One wicked man destroys much good, Ecclesiastes 9:18. 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;

⁸Neither 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:

⁹Not 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. Instead, he set an example for how all Christians should labor in the church. Using the example of a laborer, Paul hoped to impart the idea that all true followers of Jesus Christ should work to give and not themselves be carried by others.

Acts 20:35 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.

It is important, if not critical, that those who call themselves Christians realize the importance of work. No Christian assembly should allow laziness or idleness. This extends even to evangelism. However, many have taken the title of “Christian” yet choose to carry no weight whatsoever in advancing the gospel.

The truth is that no man should think that he has met the spiritual criteria of being a servant of Christ until he has labored not only to care for his own needs but also to help others as well.

Idleness, though not recognized by many as spiritually harmful, is one of the great dangers to any society. The law of Christ demands not only bearing one's own burdens but also assisting with the burdens of others.

Jesus told His disciples because they had been given freely to, they should do the same for others.

Matthew 10:8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

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.

II Thessalonians 3:10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded 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.

There is no ambiguity in the apostle's words here: the very clear and forceful command is, *if any would not work* or choosing not to, though physically able, *neither should he eat*.

If this biblical standard were applied today, much that has been done to promote supposed Christian charity would need to be abandoned. Because unfortunately, for many, Christianity is nothing more than a welfare state.

Yet, make no mistake about it; if men are unwilling to work to feed themselves or care for their own needs, there is little chance that they will exert the necessary faith, energy, and obedience to do God's will, which is essential for obtaining His salvation.

Ultimately, all men have a degree of responsibility for their own salvation. And as Philippians exhorts believers, all should be willing to labor, especially in regards to their own salvation.

Philippians 2:12-13 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.

¹³ *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

Though men are saved by grace and not by works, this does not imply that they carry no personal responsibility for salvation. Ultimately, God works in the called to do according to His own good pleasure, inspiring them to pursue the narrow gate that leads to salvation.

Matthew 7:13-14 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

¹⁴ *Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

Ultimately, it is the Lord Who works in His people to pursue spiritual things that will result in them finding both life and peace.

Romans 8:6 *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

Barnes's Notes on the Bible, Rom. 8:6

To be spiritually minded is to seek those feelings and views which the Holy Spirit produces, and to follow his leadings.

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. 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. . . . 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.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, 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 (1Ti 5:13). Contrast 1Th 4:11.

The Word of God is very clear on how people are to conduct themselves in the Lord's church: by working with their own hands and quietly going about their own affairs and responsibilities.

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;*

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.*

The command given to the Thessalonian assembly, *if any would not work, neither should he eat*, is now directed toward the individual offenders.

There is no doubt that silence and industry are more profitable in ministry than meddling and being a busybody. It should be enough, therefore, for all Christians to be about their own business and prove their own work, as doing so leads to godly contentment and genuine spiritual happiness.

Galatians 6:4 *But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.*

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.

There is hardly a more accurate representation of manifesting Jesus's true heart that when His people do good in His name. This behavior encapsulated the Savior's earthly walk, and it should be reflected in those saved by Him.

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.

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* should be the Christian's main purpose in life, a heavenly charge that is abundant in scripture.

Yet, when men know to do good, but do it not, then as far as God is concerned, evil has been committed. The absence of doing good therefore, when it is known it should be done, is viewed as nothing less than sin in God's eyes.

James 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

It is not enough for men to abstain from pursuing evil; if they do not pursue good. Simply put, if a man does not seek to do good, it is impossible for him to walk in any real, true unity and fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

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." The proposition in the verse before us is of a general character, but probably the apostle meant that it should refer to the point specified in the previous verses - the forming of plans respecting the future. The particular meaning then would be, "that he who knows what sort of views he should take in regard to the future, and how he should form his plans in view of the uncertainty of life, and still does not do it, but goes on recklessly, forming his plans beastingly and confident of success, is guilty of sin against God."

Still, the proposition will admit of a more general application. It is universally true that if a man knows what is right, and does not do it, he is guilty of sin.

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 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. The highest privilege conferred on a mortal, besides that of securing the salvation of his own soul, is that of doing good to others - of alleviating sorrow, instructing ignorance, raising up the bowed down, comforting those that mourn, delivering the wronged and the oppressed, supplying the wants of the needy guiding inquirers into the way of truth, and sending liberty, knowledge, and salvation around the world. If a man does not do this when he has the means, he sins against his own soul, against humanity, and against his Maker; if he does it cheerfully and to the extent of his means, it likens him more than anything else to God.

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 as offenders those who break spiritual rank and think themselves above spiritual authority.

Likewise, it is not transgressive nor unrighteous to refuse companionship with the proud or unruly. If men then have chosen to be disobedient to God's will for their life, then they should not be fellowshiped with. This is the gospel's command, and any who profess to follow it, should obey its message.

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.)

II Thessalonians 3:15 Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Christians are instructed to separate themselves from those who *walk disorderly*. However, if such people are brethren and are themselves truly saved, then they should not be thought of as enemies.

This teaches us that there is a great difference between those who are weak in the faith and those who publicly break rank and, even when corrected, reject apostolic authority.

Ultimately, men are known by their fruits and should be dealt with accordingly. Men's actions reveal who they truly are, whether they are merely young in the gospel or have indeed set themselves against it.

II Thessalonians 3:16 Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.

Here we have the apostle's wish and prayers for the Thessalonians, that the *Lord of peace*, Jesus Christ, would impart to them spiritual peace.

Every true Christian knows the inward stabilizing force of the Christ Spirit within, which produces the spiritual fruits of joy and peace. This spiritual peace, which has God as its source, surpasses human understanding. Ultimately, Paul prayed for the Lord Jesus to impart that supernatural encouragement which is His alone.

Philippians 4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Phil. 4:7

And the peace of God - The peace which God gives. The peace here particularly referred to is that which is felt when we have no anxious care about the supply of our needs, and when we go confidently and commit everything into the hands of God. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee;" Isaiah 26:3; see the notes at John 14:27.

Which passeth all understanding - That is, which surpasses all that people had conceived or imagined. The expression is one that denotes that the peace imparted is of the highest possible kind. The apostle Paul frequently used terms which had somewhat of a hyperbolic case (see the notes on Ephesians 3:19; compare John 21:25), and the language here is that which one would use who designed to speak of that which was of the highest order. The Christian, committing his way to God, and feeling that he will order all things aright, has a peace which is nowhere else known. Nothing else will furnish it but religion. No confidence that a man can have in his own powers; no reliance which he can repose on his own plans or on the promises or fidelity of his fellow-men, and no calculations which he can make on the course of events, can impart such peace to the soul as simple confidence in God.

God fills His people's hearts with peace, enabling them to continue doing His will in their lives. Consequently, at the core of every faithful Christian walk, God's peace will be found.

At the same time, no man can remain faithful to God if divine peace is withdrawn. Because of this, when one is no longer strengthened supernaturally by God, all desire and energy to do His will is lost. Thus, without the Lord's own presence in the saved, they could never remain faithful to Him.

The Lord be with you all.

It is spiritually necessary for those called to heaven through God's Son to depend on Christ's presence in their lives. By committing our burdens to the Lord—those things we could never accomplish on our own—our plans and hopes for the future have the hope of being fulfilled.

Proverbs 16:3 Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Prov. 16:3

Commit thy works unto the Lord.—Literally, roll them upon Him, as a burden too heavy to be borne by thyself. "Thy works" signify all that thou hast to do. (Comp. Psalm 37:5.) God provides such works for us. (Comp. Ephesians 2:10.)

And thy thoughts shall be established.—Thy plans shall prosper, for they will be undertaken according to the will of God, and carried out by His aid.

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. These epistles, thirteen or perhaps fourteen (including *Hebrews*) in number, were later made part of Christ's doctrine for the Christian church. Because they came from Paul's own hand, they had the proper spiritual authority to be received as revelation from Jesus Christ.

Ultimately, it was Jesus Christ who taught Paul, and Paul who communicated this revelation to the Thessalonians.

What is true concerning Galatians is also true of Paul's other letters to early Christians.

Galatians 1:11–12 *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.*

¹² *For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Though an unspiritual man cannot understand this process of receiving heavenly revelation, those who have received Christ's Spirit can attest and bear witness to the fact that spiritual things can only be received spiritually. This reaffirms that the gospel of Jesus Christ did not originate in man but from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

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.

II Thessalonians 3:18 *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

The *grace* spoken of is that grace and favor that comes from God and has its source in His Son.

John 1:17 *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

True Christianity is a religion of divine favor, spiritual gifts, and heavenly blessings. These realities become available through exposure to and belief in the Son of God. It is He Who reveals the true nature of heaven, and He Who, through the sacrifice of His own life, provides a path for sinners to be accepted by God.

I Peter 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:*

It is reasonable, then, that since Jesus died for us and continues to strengthen us while on this earth, we should live for Him. Since Christ has brought us to God, then it is only fitting that we should live the remainder of our earthly lives for Him.

II Corinthians 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.*

This has been our heart in writing and publishing *The Word of the Lord: An Expository Study of I&II Thessalonians*.