

Notes on 1 Thessalonians.

Unless noted, all translations are the author's.

I have attempted to provide a grammatical tag for each verb. The following is the code.

For a detailed explanation of these, consult a grammar such as *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* by H.E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey or *It's Still Greek To Me* by David Alan Black

Listed first is Tense [PAI]

P - Present

A - Aorist

F - Future

I - Imperfect

Pf - Perfect

Listed second is Voice [PAI] - not "to be" verbs e.g. *eimi* εἶμι have no voice

A - Active

M - Middle

P - Passive

Listed third is Mood [PAI]

I - Indicative

S - Subjunctive

O - Optative

Iv - Imperative

The following are listed in this third position but are not moods

Pt - Participle

If - Infinitive

1 Thessalonian Backgrounds

We first meet the Thessalonian believers in Acts 17. In Acts 16 Paul's arrives in Macedonia where he evangelizes and then spends time teaching the new believers in Philippi. His time in Philippi ends harshly with Paul and Silas being wrongfully tried, convicted, beaten and imprisoned by the local governmental officials. After God freed Paul and Silas from their imprisonment, Paul tells the officials that he is a Roman citizen (16:27). Paul later reminded the Philippians that our citizenship is in heavens (Php. 3:20). So why would he emphasize earthly citizenship? When the local officials learn that he is a Roman citizen, they were afraid (vv. 37-38). They had mistreated a Roman citizen, acting unlawfully and could have gotten themselves into trouble with Rome. He may have referred to his Roman citizenship out of concern for this new group of believers. By letting the officials know that he was a citizen, they might be cautious about moving against this group associated with Paul. Paul may have hoped that letting the officials know he was a citizen and preventing them from secretly setting the matter aside would offer protection from any retaliation after his departure. Paul leaves this new assembly and the problems of Philippi and walks on to Thessalonica.

We do not know why Paul and his companions did not minister in the cities between Philippi and Thessalonica (Acts 17:1). Luke only tells us that they were passing through [*diaodeusantes* **διοδευσαντες** - (δια + οδος) ΑΑΡτ]. Why did they not stop at these two cities? Previously, the Spirit did not allow them to minister in certain

areas (16:6, 7). This could have been the case, but it is speculation, as the Spirit did not have Luke give us a reason.

When Paul arrived in Thessalonica, he went to the synagogue as was his custom or habit. He talked through or discussed with them [*dialogō* διαλεγω AMI]. This was his habit [*ethōs* εἶθως]. On his first apostolic trip through Cyprus and Asia Minor (modern day central Turkey), he also began ministry in each city in the synagogue, if one existed (Acts 13:14; 14:1). In Philippi, no synagogue existed and so they went to the river, the customary gathering place for Jews in cities with no synagogue.¹ Arriving in Thessalonica, which had a synagogue, Paul spent “three sabbaths” in the synagogue. This provides a time frame for his stay of about five weeks as a minimum but probably not much longer, perhaps as long as two month, though this is purely arbitrary. After the three sabbaths, Paul may stayed on longer, teaching believers privately but not able to attend the synagogue because of the conflict incited by Jews who rejected Paul’s message. They certainly did not stay much longer. Paul’s concern expressed in 1 Thessalonians 3 indicates he stayed much less than he wished. He was rushed due to opposition and concern for the new Thessalonian believers.

¹ F.F. Bruce notes that a minimum of ten men were required to have a synagogue. *The Acts of the Apostles*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951) p. 314. On the lack of Jewish men in Philippi, Lenski suggests that when Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome, colony cities such as Philippi followed suit.” R.C.H. Lenski, *Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles*, (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1934) p. 650.

Upon reading 1 and 2 Thessalonians we should be impressed by the extent of truth the believers knew. This indicates Paul had enough time to teach at some length. But Paul's habit of teaching for a few hours daily would have allowed him to convey a substantial amount of revelation in a short time. Additionally, unlike modern teachers, Paul did not have interpret what he meant. We struggle, at times, to understand and then communicate what God has given us through Paul's letters.

In the synagogue, he discussed from the Scriptures (OT). He did not engage in philosophy but worked from [*apo* **απο**] the Scriptures. Two participles indicate how he "discussed." First, he opened the Scriptures [*PAPt*]. Jesus opened the Scriptures before the disciples (Luke 24:32). Therefore, he opened as opposed to keeping the Scriptures veiled or closed. He was bringing out the clarity of Scripture, pointing to texts which proved his point. "Open" meant to plainly and clearly read, present and interpret. If interpret meant bringing some obscure meaning to the text, it would not have seemed open but suspect. Second, he demonstrated, or laid before [*PMPt*] them a case for Christ. Paul was setting before them this Biblical evidence so they could see it within Scripture. He was not debating but laying out the evidence. He was letting the Scripture make his point. He opened the Scriptures so they could see or hear what it said about Christ.

The title "Christ" in the Old Testament meant "anointed one." The Jews understood rightly from their Scriptures that this one would be anointed to be their (Israel's) king. Even at the time of Christ,

people knew and referred to Old Testament references regarding the Christ (cf. Matt. 2:2-4; 22:42; Lk 23:39; 24:46; Jh. 4:29; 7:26, 27, 31, 41-42; 12:34). Paul opened the Scriptures to demonstrate that it was necessary [*dei* δεῖ IfAI] for Christ to suffer and to rise. The imperfect tense of the verb “it is necessary” emphasizes that it was continually necessary in the past, but that time has stopped. He (Christ) does not have to suffer and rise now. He did once; it is now finished. The following two infinitives (suffer & rise) are Aorist looking at the work. By context the Aorist indicates a point; He suffered at one point and rose at one point. He does not continue to suffer (in that way) or rise. Both are finished. So, Paul proved from Scripture that Christ had to suffer and he proved from Scripture that Christ had to rise. Then Paul proved that the Christ is the Jesus. He identified that Jesus is [*estin* εστιν PI] this one. While His suffering and rising are done, He remains Jesus, that didn’t change. So the Christ was no longer some mysterious figure about whom the Old Testament prophesied. He was identified as this man Jesus, who had suffered, died and rose again.

After Paul explained the sufferings, death and resurrection of Christ and that the Christ is this Jesus, some (certain ones) were persuaded [API] (Acts 17:4). The aorist tense views the action as a whole, and therefore, does not emphasize a continued action. Certainly a believer in Jesus Christ does not reject who Christ is and what He has done for our salvation, but we do not re-believe daily. Some see Paul’s many references to continued faith in the gospel as evidence that we

must daily believe that message. It is better to understand these statements, that having believed in Jesus Christ, God presents the believer with other promises for how he can live. The natural sense of “persuaded” is that these responded to the message at that moment.

They threw their lot in with Paul (Acts 17:4). The verb *προσεκληρώθησαν* [*proseklērōthēsan* API] means to put one’s lot or inheritance with another. They were willing to share in what Paul shared, live in what Paul lived, even suffer what Paul suffered. The passive voice of the verb indicates that something else caused these individuals to be joined in purpose and destiny with Paul and his companions. The translation “joined” may give the impression that they actively joined in with Paul and Silas. Upon believing in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit places believers into the body of Christ so they are one with all New Testament believers. At the same time the Holy Spirit joins Himself, the Father and Son to the believer. These two works of the Spirit join all believers together on two levels: a mutual standing in Christ, an equal indwelling. So, the Thessalonians, having believed and salvation having begun, they were united so as to have their destiny with these other believers. It is characteristic of a new believer to join or adhere to the one having shared the good news (cp. 13:43 there the verb is *ἀκολουθέω* [*akolouthēō*] “to follow”).

Some of these new believers were from the synagogue, meaning they were Jews. Some of them were Greeks who did religious service (God-fearing-*sebomai*) and were part of the synagogue.

This last clarification indicates they were Gentiles not Hellenistic Jews. This was a large group. Finally Luke adds that many important women were in this group. Many is literally, “not a few.” These leading or important women were important within the synagogue. Luke’s identification of these two groups is important for the conflict which will arise.

Acts 13:43 states that Paul taught the new believers during the week. When the synagogue broke up until the following Sabbath, Paul met with the new believers. He was persuading them to continue in God’s grace. The tense of the verb “persuade” is imperfect emphasizing that this was an ongoing activity at that time. This is what he was doing between the Sabbaths. Second, the verb “continue” emphasizes being at ease or comfortable.” Paul was teaching these brand new believers to be comfortable with God’s grace. Whether the Gentile disciples were to live by grace or law was the topic in Acts 15, because Paul’s custom was to teach new believers to live by grace and not to live by observance of law. He taught them how to live by grace. It was part of his commission. Therefore, we have no reason to think that Paul did not do the same with these new believers in Thessalonica. Luke has already demonstrated Paul’s model for approaching a new work. He does not have to repeat it.

Zealous Jews stirred up trouble (Acts 17:5). The Jews were ones being zealous [AAPT]. The verb is translated “jealous” in an attempt to distinguish it from zeal that is good (Tit. 2:13). Zeal is simply the drive to succeed. Positively, one is not content to rest on his or her accomplishments, but pushes

one's self for greater consistency. Negatively, zeal wants to succeed at any cost. It has no regard for how one's actions might affect another believer. In Acts 13:45, the Jews were filled with this negative zeal (jealousy) because almost the whole city came out to hear Paul, while they had not previously come out to here these Jews in their own synagogue. They wanted the same success Paul had. So in Thessalonica this drive to succeed resulted in the Jews taking [AMPt] evil men who lounged lazily around the market and forming a crowd [AAPt] they were stirring up an uproar [IAI]. It is interesting how the trouble makers point at the ones not causing trouble and accuse them of disturbance. These Jews and the evil men they have incited to action caused the uproar, not Paul, his companions or the new believers.

They came against [AAPt] the house of Jason, who was apparently well-known among the believers. He was well known in the city, having become associated with this new group, but he must have also been well known among the churches of that day, because Luke can just mention him as though they know him, either personally or by report.² They were seeking [IAI] Paul, intending to bring [AAIf] him to the crowd. This word crowd *dēmos* indicates them as residents of the city as opposed to visitors or travelers. Because they could not find [AAPt] Paul and his companions, they drug [IfAI] Jason and other brothers to the city officials. They

² Think of individuals reached by missionaries whom we have never met, but we know them by name and testimony, pray for them, and look forward to meeting them one day. So, may have been Jason.

were loudly crying or shouting [PAPt] that Paul and his companions had upset [AAPt] the world and are now present [PI] here in their city. The word “upset” means to overthrow or to send into a state of chaos. As Evangelicals, we like to quote this passage to imply that the first century believers turned their world upside down with the gospel. However, the state of chaos was not caused by the believers, but by those who were jealous of the believers. Their claim is false because the gospel did not turn the world upside down [AV, ESV]. Biblical Christianity has always been in the minority. Though Christendom has sometimes prevailed in parts of the world, it is often a dim reflection of real faith in Jesus Christ and a real Christ-like life.

Before the city officials, this crowd accused Jason of harboring [welcomed as a guest *hupodechomai* PMI] a troublemaker—an insurrectionist to Rome “decrees of Caesar.” They claimed Paul was acting [PAI] against Rome’s laws. They understood Paul’s Old Testament presentation of Christ as a claim that Jesus is another king. This was true, that Jesus came as king of the Jews and will one day reign as that king. Jesus in John 18:36-37 before Pilate acknowledged that He is a King but not from this world. This is not the emphasis of the title Christ in the letters to the Church, as it now focuses on His resurrected and glorified status (Acts 2:36). In order to have a serious charge against Paul they claimed disruption against the Roman government. They exaggerated and lied, as they were causing the trouble.

The words of the true troublemakers agitated the city authorities (Acts 17:8). The authorities would

be in great trouble with Rome if it learned that they harbored or tolerated insurrectionists. To solve the problem they took a bond, presumably to secure the silence of Paul (v. 9). The NASB's "pledge" or "bond" and the ESV's "money as security" translate a noun meaning "sufficient." In the context it was likely a bond of money which Jason and others would forfeit if Paul was found to be speaking publicly. Having taken the the money, they released them.

The brothers immediately sent [AAI] Paul and his companions out at night (Acts 17:10). Luke does not tell us why they sent them away, but presumably for fear of more trouble and the great financial loss they would suffer if Paul remained and continued speaking. Paul's departure was necessary for his own safety and that of the new believers in the city. In about three to five weeks, Paul had evangelized, taught and now left the Thessalonians.

Paul's rehearsal of the events in 1 Thessalonians

1:6 - He described the reception of the gospel.

2:2-3, 12 - He described Christian life teaching.

3:1-2 - He sent Timothy (v. 6), who had returned with news. Paul writes this letter while in Corinth after Timothy's return. He addresses issues which Timothy related to him. If the Jerusalem council of Acts 15 met in AD 50, and Paul stopped to deliver the council's letter and encourage the believers in Derbe and other cities, and had some extended

time in Philippi “not a few days” Luke tells us, then they arrived in Thessalonica about AD 51.

1 Thessalonians

Greetings and Recognitions

1:1 The letter is written by Paul, Silvanus and Timothy.

Paul identifies himself as an apostle commissioned directly by the Lord Jesus Christ and gifted as an apostle by Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:8, 11).

Silvanus is an alternative spelling of Silas. He was sent by the Jerusalem church to accompany Paul and Barnabas to Antioch to confirm the matter settled in the meeting of Acts 15 (15:22). In Acts 15 Luke identifies him as a prophet. He bears the name Silvanus four times and Silas twelve times, the latter only by Luke. He acted as Peter’s secretary or amanuensis (1 Pet. 5:12 - **διὰ Σιλουανοῦ**) and so may have been the the writer for Paul in this text.

Timothy was a disciple apparently saved during Paul’s first apostolic trip to Derbe (Acts 14:6), and in Paul’s absence had grown and distinguished himself among the other disciples (16:2-3). Paul warned Timothy against placing a new believer in the position of bishop (the office occupied by one gifted as a pastor-teacher). So, Paul himself would not have taken a new believer and entrusted him with service to the degree he did with Timothy.

These three addressed the letter to the Assembly made of Thessalonian believers. These believers are in God the Father. This adds an element to the believer’s position, not emphasized in most of Paul’s writings but consistent with Jesus’ prayer

regarding the believers' position in John 17. Paul begins his second letter to the Thessalonians the same.

The Assembly is also in *the* Lord Jesus Christ. This is the more common position attributed to believers. The truth of being in Christ is common in Paul's letters and forms the foundation of Christian living. It is an imputed position in Christ (cf. Rom. 4:24; 2 Cor. 5:21). The believer is in Christ because God the Father says he or she is in Christ (Eph. 1:3 - "bless" εὐλογέω).

Grace and peace is to you. The verbless clause indicates the reality of God's grace and peace to/in the life of believers. Paul is not wishing them either, but stating that both are available and extended to the believer by God.

1:2 Paul and his companions thanked [PAI] God while making mention (remembrance) [PMPT] of the Thessalonian believers. Thanks is the recognition of God's good grace to an individual. They did this upon [ἐπι] the occasion of their worship [προσευχή].³ They did so unceasingly, that is never considered that they were finished, that they had thanked God sufficiently. Paul used this same adverb in 5:17 of the nature of the believer's worship. One should never think that he has finished worshipping, as though it is a daily scheduled duty to be done and one point and then begun again the next day.

1:3 While giving thanks, they were remembering [PAPt] the Thessalonians. This would

³ See notes on 5:17 and 25 for a development of this term.

be the cause in the Thessalonians for their thanks to God. Paul lists three activities in the Thessalonians which they remembered and for which they thanked God. First, they remembered the Thessalonians work from faith, taking **πίστεως** as a Genitive of source or cause. The Thessalonians directed faith at God's promise that He would enable them to do a work (cf John 3:21; Galatians 5:6) even that God had prepared works for them to do, though Paul may not have as yet communicated that truth (Eph. 2:10). For New Testament believers, such work is almost always directed as service to others in the body of Christ. Second, the Thessalonians had a labor from love (Genitive of source). Such labor is also for others in the body, but lays emphasis upon the exhaustion in accomplishing that work. Paul exhausted himself so that Christ would be formed in the Galatians (Gal. 4:11). To this end Paul labored, so each one would mature (Col. 1:28-29). It might involve laboring to have something to share with those believers in true need (Eph. 4:28). Elders should labor in word (anarthrous), working at how to express teaching accurately and clearly (1 Tim. 5:17). Love is the motive which pushes one beyond work to the point of labor. Third, they exhibited a patience come from hope concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. Patience is the attitude of mind which remains at ease under adversity, so that one continues to do God's will. The hope concerns our Lord, and is expressed in verse ten, awaiting His appearing to rescue us from the coming wrath. Knowing that our Lord may come at any moment produces and attitude of patience in the face of present adversities. Evidence that our eschatology

is practical, and kept the Thessalonians in God's will. Paul remembered this before God our Father, while communicating/praying.

1:4 They further knew [PfApt], the perfect emphasizing that they had come to know and that knowledge had not been altered. This is objective knowledge [εἰδότες from οἶδα] compared to experiential [γινώσκω], because Paul knew this as a fact. They knew the Thessalonians as ones God has loved. Beloved is a Perfect Middle Participle emphasizing that God loved them in the past and continues to love them. They knew the Thessalonians' election. Chosen is the noun ἐκλογῆ, also translated "election." It was evident to Paul and his companions that God had chosen the Thessalonians, as they saw the work accomplished by God in the Thessalonians. In 2 Thessalonians 2:13 Paul spoke similarly but with the verb *hairō* [in the form ἔιλατο AMI] meaning to chose, select, to take up.

1:5 They knew the Thessalonians election because [ὅτι] the gospel was caused to come to be [API] to the Thessalonians. Paul could preach the message but he could not cause that message to come into existence for individuals, or we might say, cause it to be heard, real, and welcomed. God caused the gospel to come to be. He did so not by word only, that is it wasn't only verbally announced by Paul and his companions, but by power, by the Holy Spirit and by much full assurance. "Power" [δύναμις] sometimes refers to "miracles" (Rom. 15:19; 1 Cor. 12:10). Other passages use power to indicate God's work of power in individuals by changed lives (Rom. 15:13;

1 Cor. 2:4; 2 Cor. 4:7; Ephesians 1:19). It is God's power by which He can do even more than we think or ask Him to do (Ephesians 3:20). When used of miracles it occurs in the plural (1 Cor. 12:10). This is similar to God's power changing lives. When the gospel came, God's power operated so that that gospel was real to the Thessalonians, and not merely a message heard. God said, "Let light shine in darkness" (2 Corinthians 4:6). It involved the ministry of the Spirit. The Spirit convinces the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8-11). The preaching of the gospel apart from the Spirit's convincing ministry falls on deaf ears. Finally, the gospel came with full assurance, a word meaning to be fully carried or fully supported, as opposed to tottering. When the gospel came, the Thessalonians had full assurance of the message, it wasn't received skeptically, it wasn't viewed as a possible scenario but soundly grounded truth. Each of these is true both of the message and messengers. The messengers operated by the power, by the Spirit, and presented the message authoritatively. The Thessalonians knew objectively the sort of persons Paul and his companions were made to be towards [Dative of direction] the Thessalonians and on account of [ἰδιᾶ with Accusative] the Thessalonians. The two passive verbs along with power, the Spirit and assurance are all indications that this is God's work and therefore, "your election" demonstrated

1:6 The Thessalonians were made to become imitators of Paul and his companions and the Lord. The verb is again Passive, indicating God's work in the Thessalonians. The noun imitators or mimic

[μιμηταὶ] occurs six times. In 2:14 the Thessalonians were imitators of the brothers in Judea though they had never met. They were imitators by their new faith and changed lives bringing on them suffering from their countrymen. In Ephesians 5:1 we are told to be imitators of God in expressing His kind of love as His loved children, we mimic His love, yet we know that the Spirit produces the love, so it is more than just “imitation” but is genuine. The participle δεξάμενοι describes one facet of their being imitators, “they received the word” in much adversity accompanied with joy from the Holy Spirit. Paul and his companions had suffered adversity. Paul suffered first in Damascus as the Jews tried to silence him and similarly in Jerusalem (Acts 9:23-25, 29-30). On his first apostolic trip in Antioch of Pisidia he was opposed and persecuted by some Jews (Acts 13:50). These same Jews stirred up trouble and the people stoned Paul in Lystra (Acts 14:19). In Philippi he and Silas were beaten and jailed (Acts 16:22-23). Our Lord also was opposed by His people, beaten and crucified. So, the Thessalonians became imitators of Paul and Christ by suffering, as that unbelievers responded to this new faith with persecution. Yet the Thessalonians had joy in this new salvation.

1:7 The result of God’s work in connection with the gospel was that the Thessalonians became [γίνομαι AMI] types for all those believing in the regions of Macedonia and Achaia. The verb in the middle voice indicates the Thessalonian’s personal activity in this matter, in this case they cooperated in God’s work, they became types by their response. A type referred to that which struck an

image into another object such as metal, leaving the impression, or to the image struck. The disciples saw the type or mark of the nails in the hands of Jesus (John 20:25). Moses constructed the tabernacle according to the standard of the type or blueprint which he saw (Acts 7:44). Adam served as a type, in this case the counterpart to Christ (Romans 5:14). Paul left the Thessalonians a type or example of taking care of one's self rather than having others take care of you (2 Thessalonians 3:9). In this context, the manner in which the Thessalonians turned to God in response to the gospel left a type or example for other believers. The believers who heard of the Thessalonians initially were those in Macedonia, the region in which Thessalonica was located. Their example was also heard in Achaia, the region of Athens and Corinth, the cities to which Paul went after leaving Thessalonica.

1:8 The word regarding the Lord echoed from the Thessalonians. The word is about the Lord Jesus Christ, in this case specifically the Lord, identifying Him as the Lord, the God. This fits Paul's statement in 1:9 regarding the Thessalonians turning from idols to the true God. Paul communicated the identity of Jesus Christ, that He is God (cf. Acts 13:25, 33). This message echoed out ahead of Paul and his companions. The verb "echoed" is a Perfect Passive Indicative [PfPI] emphasizing that the message echoed with the result that it continued to reverberate. However, the message was not only the cities to which Paul went, but in every place. All around Thessalonica people heard of the Thessalonians' faith. The message went out so clearly that upon arriving in

other cities, Paul had no need to speak anything. They had heard of their faith facing God. This refers back to v. 3 and forward v. 9.

1:9 When Paul arrived in other cities, the people had heard of what happened in Thessalonica and could rehearse how Paul arrived “what sort of entrance.” They heard of the character and approach which God produced in Paul. Second, they could rehearse how the Thessalonians had turned [AAI] to God from idols. Idolatry was the norm in the cities of Macedonia and Greece. For a large group of individuals to leave the idolatry and turn to serve the true God and living was notable. God is distinguished as living and true contrasted to the idols which are false gods and inanimate, incapable of hearing or responding in any way to those who serve them.

1:10 The Thessalonians also were awaiting at ease [ἀναμένω PAI] for God’s Son. The Son is coming from heaven. The Father raised the Son out from dead ones, implying that when the Son comes, He too will raise the dead (sleeping) believers. Jesus is the Son. The title Jesus emphasizing the Son’s human nature. The Son is the one rescuing us from the coming wrath. The verb rescue [ῥύομαι PMPt] is used by Paul in 2 Timothy 4:18 of the Lord rescuing Paul at death. Here the rescue is from the coming wrath, which is the anger of God during Daniel’s 70th week, the seven years of the Tribulation. In 5:9 Paul assured the Thessalonians that God has not appointed believers to His anger/wrath, but to obtain salvation. The sons of darkness are appointed to God’s wrath. Paul references here the Son’s

rescuing believers from that time. The textual problem involves the preposition ἀπό or ἐκ. The former is well supported and indicates that He keeps us away from that time (cf. Revelation 3:10; 6:16-17). The present tense fits the time of the coming wrath, when that wrath comes, the rescue will be present, but even now He guarantees we will not face that time; imminency.

2:1 Paul reminded the Thessalonians that they knew well [οἶδα PfAI] the entrance of Paul and his companions. This noun “entrance” [εἴσοδον] occurs five times, twice in this letter (1:9). In Acts 13:24 Paul used of Jesus’ appearance of a coming on the scene. He also uses it of our entrance or approach to God (Hebrews 10:19). Finally in 2 Peter 1:11 of our entrance to the eternal kingdom. In each occurrence it is an entrance and approach. So, here Paul reminds them of their approach to the Thessalonians. It did not come to be [γίνομαι > γέγονεν PfAI] empty of content [κενός], with the verb emphasizing the continuing result. The approach had meaning, it had substance and continued to have substance. The perfect extends the approach beyond the initial contact and evangelism, contrast this to the Aorist verbs in chapter one.

2:2 Though Paul and his companions had previously suffered [AAPT] and had been treated with arrogant insults [APPt] in Philippi, upon arriving in Thessalonica, they were bold [AMI] by God, (i.e. enabled by God) to speak the gospel of the God in much agony.

The expression the gospel of God [το εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ] is used eight times. Mark 1:14 involves a textual problem “gospel of the kingdom of God” and has no bearing on this passage. In Romans 1:1, it is the gospel to which Paul was set apart. Romans 15:16 helps clarify this by stating that Paul minister this gospel as a priest. Priestly work is done toward believers, not unbelievers. The purpose of that ministry was that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable.

That offering involves the Gentiles being set apart by the Holy Spirit by practical living. The offering of the Gentiles involves presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice; this also is practical living (12:1). It involves the Gentiles living in obedience to God, this too is practical living (15:26). In 2 Corinthians 11:7, Paul states that he did not charge the Corinthians for His announcing this good news to them. Paul never charged unbelievers to hear the gospel for initial salvation, but he had the right to ask believers for support. Therefore, this again refers to a message for believers. Here in 2:8, Paul states that they imparted the gospel and their lives because the Thessalonians had been caused to become [API] beloved ones to Paul and his companions. They worked day and night to not burden these new believers (2:9). This further indicates that Paul announced this message to the Thessalonians after they believed the gospel. In slightly different terms Paul references this message in 1 Timothy 1:12 as the good news of the glory (reputation) of the happy God. That good news is the measure or standard [κατά] of whether Old Testament doctrine is healthy for New Testament believers. Under Law, God presented Himself as faithful and kind to those who obeyed the Law but also one Who visits the perversities of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate him (Exodus 20:5; 34:7; Numbers 14:18; Deuteronomy 5:9). God committed to Paul the message of this way of life by grace (cf. Ephesians 3:2). Part of the basis of that message involved knowing that God is happy; it is God's nature. Knowing God to be a happy God does not motivate

people to obey from fear of what God might do to them, but out of gratification for God's kinds acts toward them. The last plain reference to this good news contrasts believers to unbelievers (1 Peter 4:17). Unbelievers cannot accept the grace of God and God's gracious work for them, thinking they can earn their future salvation. The believer's life acts to judge the unsaved by contrast. If judgment begins with our poor testimony, what will be end of those refusing to accept God's identity. To them, God will repay to each according to their works; they will get what they wanted (Romans 2:5-6). The gospel of God extends God's work for the unsaved beyond initial salvation to God's identity for the benefit of the believer. Paul stated that this gospel was about encouraging and soothing believers to live (walk) in a manner worthy of or consistent with the God who called them into His kingdom. It is living consistent with grace, with our identity in the Father and in Christ, and consistent with His in-working power (1:1; 2:13; cf. Colossians 3:3; Ephesians 4:1).

2:3 Paul describes their speaking of this good news about God to be exhortation⁴ or encouragement [παράκλησις]. The nature of this word demonstrates that Paul is not referring to an evangelistic message to unsaved people, but a good news intended to encourage believers either for the sake of comfort or to action. (Acts 2:40). In its over 100 occurrences, only one time other than this passage does it have a tie to evangelism. Paul had already rehearsed in chapter one the evangelistic portion of their visit, during which

⁴ The ESV and NIV have "appeal."

people believed the gospel, moving from being unbelievers to believers. Here Paul rehearses their teaching ministry with the new believers, and that teaching ministry was an encouragement and done so regarding the previously mentioned gospel about God.

The Thessalonians suffered persecution and were tempted by the Tempter. Part of that temptation which Paul addresses may have been that Paul's message or teaching was in error. The Tempter could have pointed to the recent persecution as evidence suggesting Paul had less than pure motives. The Tempter may have suggested that had Paul's message been true and had his motives been pure, the Thessalonians would not have found themselves under this recent persecution from their fellow Thessalonians (i.e. unbelieving citizens). So Paul addressed three potential conclusions regarding his message and motives. His act of encouraging these believers was not from error or an attempt to lead people astray. Paul was concerned that the believer know the truth, not something deceitful, not something to take them down a path which would be unhelpful. Such error might be rejection of God and pursuit of the flesh (Rom. 1:27), man's cunning to divide believers as opposed to guarding the unity of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:14), disregarding a fellow believer (Jas. 5:20), perverting grace as a license for immorality (2 Pt. 2:18), denials of Christ's humanity (1 Jh. 4:6), pursuit of money (Jd. 11). Paul knew his message well, the Lord having personally appeared to Paul on more than one occasion to reveal what Paul was to say (Gal. 1:11-12; Acts 26:16). It was not from uncleanness, an attitude

which sexualizes everything. Paul did not serve from some inappropriate sexual desire for the people. Neither was Paul's service from guile. Guile is a form of deceit, but deceit exercised for selfish purposes, it baits someone to capture them. The bait seems innocent but is in reality intended for one's harm.

2:4 Paul's message of encouragement was not intended to please [PAPt] men, but to please God. They had been approved [δοκιμάζω PfPI] to be entrusted [πιστεύω APif] with the good news. Paul was the steward of the dispensation of the grace from God (Eph. 3:2). It is required of stewards that they be found faithful/dependable (1 Cor. 4:2), and Christ Jesus our Lord did consider Paul faithful (1 Tim. 1:12). Spiritual gifts are by the grace of God and often called grace gifts or things of grace (Eph. 4:7; Rom. 12:6). One cannot earn his or her spiritual gift. Paul, therefore, is not speaking of his apostolic gift but of this area of service in which he exercises his apostolic gift. Many gifted as pastor-teachers do not fill the office of bishop, in fact Paul listed for both Timothy and Titus the qualifications they were to seek in men to be placed as elders in the churches (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9). While an appropriate gift was necessary, these individuals needed to demonstrate faithfulness in the listed areas if they wished to serve as elders. So, to Paul was committed a message and service regarding our life under grace. The Spirit did not send Paul into that work until he had proved himself faithful for over 7-10 years, during which time, he learned to practice what the Lord had taught him by revelation. He learned to live by grace himself. Having

demonstrated himself to be dependable to the truth God revealed to Him, God committed to him this good news.

So, having been proved faithful, Paul did not alter his motives but spoke to please God, not men. God could testify to this as He approves hearts and knows Paul's motives to be pure.

2:5 Paul lists four activities in which he did not engage as demonstration of his sincerity towards the believers. He did not use flattering words. The adjective **κολακεια** described excessive flattery, serving only the ego of the one at whom it is directed, and normally insincere, but designed to win them to one's side or favor. For this Paul again employs the passive verb **γίνομαι** indicating that God did not cause them to operate in a manner such as this. Second, they did not cover up covetousness, for they were not covetous, and so did not need to hide it from view by their words and service. The noun **πρόφασις** was that which is visible in front, for the purpose of hiding something which is behind it. Again, he appealed to God as his witness.

2:6 Third, they were not seeking [PAPt] glory from anyone: men, the Thessalonians, or other similar ones (i.e. other believers). Glory here would be reputation. Paul did not wish to build his reputation upon the Thessalonians, using them as a boasting point for his own purposes, his own aggrandizement. All too many do not have the best interests of others at heart but their own advancement, and others serve only as stepping stones along that way.

2:7 Fourth, though they had the authority to be heavy or burdensome as Christ's apostles, they did not avail themselves of such privilege. Paul refers to this privilege elsewhere (1 Cor. 9:14, 17-28; 1 Timothy 5:17-18). He charged the Ephesians elders not to require remuneration from the spiritually weak believers but to help them along freely (Acts 20:35). Paul refers to himself, Silas and Timothy as apostles, not those commissioned by the Lord during His earthly ministry, but those who are apostles by gifting from the Lord (cf. Ephesians 4:11). They were caused to become [API] gentle among the Thessalonians. The noun $\nu\eta\pi\iota\omicron\iota$ occurs as $\eta\pi\iota\omicron\iota$ in several older texts, the *nu* either being added by misreading or slip of the eye from the ending of the preceding verb, or dropped for similar reasons. This would be the only passage in which Paul uses $\nu\eta\pi\iota\omicron\iota$ in a positive sense, as he uses it of those who cannot articulate truth. The context lends itself to $\eta\pi\iota\omicron\iota$ describing them as gentle. He ties this to the manner of a nursing mother handles her own children. A nursing mother does not act like an inarticulate child, but is gentle. He uses this adjective also in 2 Timothy 2:24 where Timothy is told not to fight but be gentle.

2:8 Having an intense yearning [PMPT] toward the new believers, they were of the good opinion (Imperfect -IfAI) to impart [AAInf] to the Thessalonians in addition the gospel of God (see notes on v. 2) their very lives (souls). The use of $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ for "life" emphasizes the life as it involves one's feelings, emotions, and senses, one's normal human aspirations. So to impart their "lives" was

to put the needs of the Thessalonians before their own interests and aspirations. They did this as the new believers were caused to become [API] loved ones to Paul and his companions. The word yearning [ομειρομαι] is rare in Greek, occurs only here in the New Testament and according to W.E. Vine, refers to affectionate desire which rests in a memory.⁵

2:9 Paul cited their labor and exhaustion as evidence of imparting their souls to the Thessalonians. They had both labored [κόπος] and put themselves to hardship [μόχθος] by working [PMPT] night and day so as not to add a burden [επιβαρέω AAIInf a verb related to “burden” in v. 7] to the Thessalonians. They did this while they heralded with authority the gospel of the God. Again this demonstrates this gospel to be for believers not unbelievers, as you do not charge the unsaved to hear the gospel, but those who are believers and benefit from teaching can be asked to help with the care of the teacher. So Paul and his companions would teach and also work all night so as not to be a financial burden to the new saints.

2:10 The Thessalonians and God were witness to the conduct of Paul and his companions. They were caused to become [API] carefully fitted, righteously, blamelessly toward the new believers. The first word “carefully fitted” [ᾄσιος] describes that which carefully meets God’s demands for service. Lightfoot compares the adverbs ᾄσιως and δικαίως as man’s duty toward God and man’s

⁵ *Collected Works of W.E. Vine, Vol. III.*

duty toward man respectively. This fits, as “righteousness” for New Testament believers often involves acts of love towards fellow believers. Their conduct was blameless, they did nothing for which they could be blamed in their conduct as they served the benefit of believers. Note again the Passive verb “caused to become” reflecting God’s work in their lives. Charges regarding the conduct of other saints reminds us that the passive is God’s work, as believers learn to let God do His work, to cooperate in that which God has set before them.

2:11 The Thessalonians knew [PFAI] this well. They had been the recipients of the service by these apostles. The apostles had treated the Thessalonians believers as a father deals with his own children. This again evidences that Paul refers to his ministry of teaching believers not of evangelizing. The un-evangelized and unbelievers are not like children to a father. That relationship exists after salvation.

2:12 Like a father to his children, the apostles encouraged [PAPt] the Thessalonians. Encouragement is the act of urging or encouraging a certain attitude and/or action in another. Encouragement follows teaching, urging others to put into practice that which they have learned. The apostles were encouraged upon learning how the Thessalonians were living in the Faith while undergoing necessity and adversity (3:2, 7). The apostles encouraged the Thessalonians about how to live, expressed by the verb “walk” (4:1). They also encouraged them to abound (overflow) even more in love to the saints (4:18). They were to edify one another (5:11). They encouraged them regarding specific responses to specific types of

individuals with specific needs (5:14). These and many other teaching comprised their encouragement.

The apostles also soothed [PAPt] the Thessalonians. This activity is similar to encouragement but involves tenderness. It can add the idea of consoling and implies some form of agitation, pain, suffering or grief in the one being consoled. It occurs twice in John 11, of those consoling the sisters regarding the death of their brother (vv. 19, 31). It is addressed the struggles of one's soul (feelings, senses, emotions; Philippians 2:1). In 5:14 it is directed to those of small soul who are more highly emotional, and unable to remain calm under various pressures.

Finally they testified [PAPt]. This verb means to bear witness to, and always indicates one has some first hand experience from which to testify. All three of these terms are pointed to the infinitival phrase, "that you walk worthy of the God who calls you to His own kingdom and glory." Paul used the infinitive "walk" [PAInf] in a metaphorical sense of living one's life. Romans 8:4-5 clarifies that this metaphorical sense involves framing one's mind with information, thoughts or interests (cravings) from either one's flesh or the Spirit. The walk to which they were encouraged is one worthy of God, that is they demonstrate themselves to be God's loved children (cf. Ephesians 5:1; Philippians 2:14-15). It is also to be worthy of His (God's) kingdom and glory. Paul taught that we enter the future form of the kingdom of God through tribulation (Acts 14:22; 2 Thessalonians 1:5). Such adversity can shake some believers (3:2-3), thus requiring not only encouragement but soothing.

The testimony was Paul's first hand experience of suffering as he worked for the kingdom. Worth means balance or consistency, their walk should match what they believe, that to which they hold true.

2:13 Because of Paul's behavior and habits in bringing the truth of the gospel of God to the Thessalonians believers, he thanked [PAI] God unceasingly [he never considered himself finished] that receiving [PAPt] a word of report (hearing) from them (Paul, Silas, Timothy) about God (objective Gentive), they welcomed (received) [AMI] it not a word from men but as it is [PI] truly a word from God. The phrase λόγον ἀκοῆς ...τοῦ θεοῦ clarifies again the gospel of God is a message about God not about initial salvation. The final phrase (a relative clause) describes God as the one working [ἐνεργέω PMI] in them the ones believing [PAPt]. This adds to the meaning of the gospel about God. It tells them about being in God, but also that God works personally in them. The verb *energeō* emphasizes a direct immediate work as opposed to a work through an intermediary. Therefore, the believers are not only in God the Father but also, God the Father is in them (John 14:10, 11, 20, 23; 17:21, 23; 2 Jh. 9).

Believers can share fellowship with the Father and Son by using eternal life (1 John 1:3). When the believer uses the same life the Father and Son has, they have fellowship. The Father has made us sufficient to have a part in the inheritance with the saints in light (Colossians 1:12). Light is the manifestation of God's life. That

life is manifested through the believer when we live as God's children (cf. 1 John 5:1-2). It is God's seed that constitutes us His children, and combined with eternal life can be manifested in activity. The indwelling Father, Son and Spirit provides the believer benefits, each distinct but necessary to oneness.

2:14 The Thessalonian believers were caused to become [API] mimics/imitators of the churches in Judea. The passive verb ties to the last verse and the work of God the Father. Believers are children of God with the capacity to live to God's glory, to manifest God's proper reputation as His children. The noun *mimétai* does not mean merely to imitate an observed behavior without a reality. The Thessalonian saints had never met the Judean believers, but because of the change of life within both groups, both experienced persecution. The churches being [PAPt] in Judea are also in Christ Jesus. Both groups share the same position, though different earthly locations. The Thessalonians were imitators of the Judean churches because they suffered [AAI] the same things by [υπο under the exercise of] their country men (other Macedonians) according as [καθώς - adv. of standard] the Jews suffered under their country men. Acts records the persecutions which were directed at the early church in Judea, first against the leadership in Acts 4, 5, and then against Stephen in Acts 7, and the whole church in Acts 8-9 until the salvation of Saul (Paul) at which time it experienced some peace (9:31).

2:15 Paul details the animosity of the unbelieving Jews. They killed [AAPt] the Lord Jesus and the prophets (OT prophets). Jesus had accused them of being sons of those who had killed the prophets (Matt. 23:37; Lk. 11:47, 49). They persecuted [AAPt] “us.” While this could include the early believers, who were mostly Jewish, Paul personalizes this statement because he was the object of persecution first in Damascus and then in Jerusalem, and persecution to the degree that they wished to kill him (Acts 9:23, 29). They are not pleasing [PAPt] to God. Israel refused to submit to God’s righteousness (Rom. 10:2-3). Murder [φόνος] and hostility [ἔχθρα] are works of the flesh (Gal. 5:20-21a) which are expressed as persecution. Those walking by flesh are not able to please God (Romans 8:8). Not only did they not please God but they were contrary to all men. Roman had problems with Israel. Israelis in Paul’s day were obstinate to God’s and God’s plan. They were unbelievers and as unbelievers exhibited such works of the flesh as made them a nuisance to other peoples.

2:16 Paul explained their character of contrariness by the participle “forbidding” [PAPt]. They did not want Paul and his companions to speak [AAInf] to the Gentiles so the Gentiles might be saved [APS]. This persecution had begun during Paul’s first apostolic trip (Acts 13:50; 14:2), it followed him on this second trip beginning in Thessalonica, then to Berea, and most recently in Corinth. By this action they filled up their sins. The infinitive verbal phrase εἰς τὸ ἀναπληρῶσαι expresses purpose “to fill up.” Certainly the Jews did not look at their actions as sin, but because of

their attitude toward God, they were indeed filling up their sins always. So God's wrath had arrived [AAI] upon them. Writing about AD 52 or 53, in 17 years (a short while) God did pour out some of His wrath upon Jerusalem. God's wrath in full will be poured out during Daniel's 70th week but this involves a sample.

Wrath [ὀργή] is intense anger. In the LXX it chiefly translates ἤλα the heat⁶ and flare of the nostrils as an expression of one's anger or fury. Jehovah has anger from which He might destroy His people from the face of the earth (Dt. 6:15; 7:4), though He is slow to anger (Ex. 34:6). A day of Jehovah's anger is coming (Zeph. 2:2, 3). In that day, the earth and heavens will be shaken (Isa. 13:13). Jesus issued woes for those who will face this anger on the people of Israel (Lk. 21:23). For those who do not obey the Son (during His earthly ministry), the wrath of God is at ease over him, as though it hangs over his head waiting to drop (Jh. 3:36). In the present time, a quality of sample of God's wrath is revealed upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (Rom. 1:18). It is a sample because it is not God's wrath undiluted and it is not His wrath in its totality. It is small glimpses of His anger. Some of those small glimpses may be through the mediation of world rulers (Rom. 13:4-5). At the same time

⁶ A verb form of this word ἠἠλα meant "to bake" by exposure to heat.

unrepentant men treasure (store) up wrath for a day of wrath and revelation of God's righteous judgment (Rom. 2:5). They get both forms of God's anger (Rom. 2:8). God's wrath comes upon them for those very types of activities (Eph. 5:6; Col 3:6). God desires to display His anger and to make known His power (Rom. 9:22). This verse is important because it demonstrates something about God's nature which we sometimes omit because we do not always appreciate it. Believers will be saved from the wrath and God has not appointed us to experience His anger (Rom. 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9). This full form of God's wrath/anger will come during Daniel's 70th week (Rev. 6:16-17; 11:18). That form is His undiluted anger and mixed double to what He did toward God's servants (Rev. 14:10; 16:19; 18:6). When the seven last plagues are poured out on earth, God's wrath reaches its completion (Rev. 15:1). From that point, God shows only righteous judgment but no fury. This display or sample is diluted because it does not wipe out Israel.

2:17 Paul and his companions were separated from [APPt] the Thessalonians for a short time -an hour. The participle "separated" is a form of the verb "to orphan" or "to be orphaned" emphasizing separation within a familial relationship, which Paul has been emphasizing in the context with metaphors of a nursing mother and a caring father. The hour is simply to remind them that in the larger plan of God, it was a short time, though

from a human point of view, this may have been a two or three months since. The apostles were diligent [σπουδάζω AAI] to see [PSInf] the Thessalonians face to face with much craving (lust). Such statements assure the Thessalonians that the apostles wanted to see and be with them as opposed to being glad to be out of Thessalonica and away from the problems in the city. This is important because the Thessalonians remained in their city and continued to endure the problems of opposition as Paul had just reviewed with them. This desire to see them was in much craving, one of several good uses of *epithumia* also translated lust, the moral character determined by context.

2:18 So why had Paul not returned if he so desired to see the Thessalonians again? They desired [θέλω AAI] to come [ἔρχομαι AAInf] to the Thessalonians. Paul singled himself out. Twice Paul had desired to come to the Thessalonians but Satan (the adversary) hindered [ἐνκόπτω AAI] them. The word “hinder” meant literally to “cut in” as to cut in front of. The term was used of the military tactic of making cuts in or breaking up the road so that horses and chariots could not advance. In Acts 16:6-7, twice the Spirit did not allow the apostles to go where they planned. We do not know how the Spirit did this, but it may have involved Silas, being a prophet, giving a prophecy that the Spirit did not want them to continue in that direction and then giving Paul a vision by which they were called to help in Macedonia (16:9). Paul assumes the Thessalonians understand Satan’s identity and that it does not surprise them to hear that he hindered them.

Satan is the adversary because he opposes God. His kingdom is opposed to God's kingdom and is a kingdom of darkness in which he exercises authority (Acts 26:18). Satan has ministers who pass themselves off as ministers of righteousness, a righteousness without God (2 Cor. 11:12-15). He will work in a specific man to produce signs and lying wonders (2 Thess. 2:9). He played a role in the death of Antipas (Rev. 2:13). Though this passage does not state his direct involvement, Christ's tie to Satan's settled-down-at-home dwelling does appear to tie his death to a movement by Satan in others. Revelation 12:9 and 20:2 equates Satan and the devil,⁷ where the latter title identifies him as the slanderer. Jesus identified the Jews in John 8 as children of the devil who did what the devil craved for them to do, and by identifying the devil as a manslayer, He indicates that they two were manslayers because they wished to kill Him (Jh. 8:44). Peter states that the devil exercised his power against the people causing them pain and suffering (Acts 10:38). The devil could act so as to throw some believers into jail through means of human beings (Rev. 2:10). He is the ruler of the authority of the air and works in the sons of disobedience (Eph. 2:2). These sons of disobedience are described as sexually immoral, unclean,

⁷ Not every occurrence of **διαβολος** refers to the Devil, some referring to slanderous individuals (cf Tit. 2:3).

covetous-idolators (Eph. 5:5-6; Col. 3:6). Beyond the use of humans, Satan also employs other spiritual beings (fallen angels) who act as evil government individuals (Eph. 6:12). These rulers of this age were involved in the crucifixion of the Lord (1 Cor. 2:8). Though Satan is a source of temptation for the believer, for Paul to have blamed Satan for a temptation to which Paul gave in, would have been shirking his responsibility to respond properly. This hinderance appears more overt as in the persecution which brought about Christ's crucifixion or Antipas' death, and their opposition to Christ in John. Most likely moving men in Thessalonica and other cities to oppose and make Paul's return impossible at this time.

Question: what was so special about Thessalonica that Satan did not want Paul to return to that city. Consider how much had happened in a short space of time: evangelism, teaching, leadership put in place. All that in 5-6 weeks. This does not seem normal to how we operate. Yet Paul had not been able to teach some things, and this might negatively affect these believers. So Satan did not wish for Paul to return.

2:19 This verse is verbless, a common Greek means of expressing with emphasis a reality. The Thessalonians were not a conquest. Paul did not view them as mere converts about whom he could brag about his work. Rather the Thessalonians are Paul's hope, joy, crown of boasting. Paul states this idea regarding the Philippians in Php 4:1. In

4:17, Paul will state that we will “all together” [ἅμα] be caught up to the Lord. Paul does not anticipate going before the Lord alone, but together with the saints. This agrees with the shared hope of our calling (Eph. 4:4). Paul’s emphasis upon suffering also agrees with his eager desire and hope that Christ would be magnified in whatever situation Paul was (Php. 1:20). In this letter, our hope is living with Christ (1:3; 4:13; 5:8). Therefore, Paul hoped (with certainty) that the Thessalonians would be present. The Biblical nature of this hope is not in question, but sure.

Second, they are Paul’s joy. Paul rejoiced over the Thessalonians (3:9). Joy is the ability to accept with appreciation an event, benefit, experience. For the believer, joy is produced by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22), so that He enables believers to specially appreciate what God is accomplishing. He will eventually tell them to always rejoice (5:16). Produced by the Spirit, our joy is not based upon circumstances which make us happy but the Spirit-given ability to recognize God’s work in an event. Our joy is in the Lord, recognizing who is in charge (Phl 3:1).

Finally they are designated the crown of boasting. While boasting seems inappropriate, Paul states that if we boast, we should boast in the Lord (1 Cor. 1:31). Every believer can boast in the Lord, because it is a shared position with its attendant benefits. Crown [στεφανος] refers to a woven wreath given to the winners of a game. Such a wreath was evidence of winning and therefore served as a means of boasting in one’s accomplishments. Paul names several such crowns

related to various activities: incorruptible for exercising self-control (1 Cor. 9:25); of righteousness for living righteously from love for the sake of other saints (2 Tim. 4:8); of life for bearing up properly under temptation (Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10); unfading for using one's spiritual gift properly (1 Pt. 5:4). Paul describes the present crown of boasting as a crown of joy regarding the Philippians (Php. 4:1). The presence of the Thessalonians served as the apostles' boast that they simply were willing to go and be used with the Thessalonians. Salvation is God's work. We are merely channels through which the message is given. So Paul referring to his boast, claimed he would not boast in anything that Christ had not worked through him to get the Gentiles to live in obedience (only believers; Rom. 15:18). So also Paul claimed his boast was that he had operated in sincerity and had not resorted to wisdom of his flesh, but operated by God's grace (2 Cor. 1:12).

Can we simply say, that Paul viewed the Thessalonians being present among the saints when our Lord appears [a noun, not verb - παρουσία] as his reward, as his joy, as his hope? Is this *stephanos* a literal victor's wreath, or does Paul look at their presence? The casting of *stephanoi* in Revelation 4:10 appears literal. Though being in the presence of God and having received our final salvation, seeing God's finished work in the lives of others is a hope, joy and crown. Our present selfish ambition (work of the flesh - ἐριθεία) makes it hard to think about and appreciate a future in which our works are not recognized. Certainly God is not unrighteous to let our work and love escape His attention (Hebrews

6:10). Yet living by grace and finishing by grace is not contrary to this. Some have lived by grace, God calls attention to this, at least momentarily, not to make anyone feel a failure, but to display His grace worked through the lives of others. Ephesians 2:8-10 states that our salvation (past into present-Perfect tense participle) is not by works so no one can boast, but then immediately tells us that we are the product of God's work, because He has created us in Christ unto good works (v. 10). That creation identifies us as members of the new man which is one aspect of being in the body of Christ. Those good works may be broad but include the exercise of our spiritual gifts on behalf of other saints.

2:20 Paul states simply that they are [PI] their glory (reputation) and joy. As John would later write that if his readers would fellowship along with him, it would fill his joy full, and that he had no greater joy than to hear his children (those he evangelized) walking in truth (1 Jh. 1:3-4; 2 Jh. 4), so these believers were Paul's glory and joy.

3:1 So then [διο] when the apostles could not bear it [PAPt] they were of the good opinion [AAI εὐδοκέω] to be left [APInf] in Athens alone. The verb στέγω has the idea of to cover over and so to put one's hand up or over so as to ward off or keep at bay. The idea being that Paul could no longer keep their longing to see the Thessalonians at bay (2:17-18), Paul was left alone, where the verb καταλείπω gives stronger emphasis to being abandoned as their purpose. Paul could not return to Thessalonica at the present due to the bond put up by Jason and perhaps others. Paul did not wish them to lose that money, and so for their sake, he purposed to be abandoned alone in Athens so that Timothy could return.

3:2 We sent [AAI] Timothy. Paul states he is alone, and Acts 17 indicates that Timothy and Silas later joined Paul in Corinth. Therefore, the "we" ending, while possibly editorial may have been the agreement of all three men, or of Paul and Silas, with Paul also sending Silas back to Berea, though where Silas was is unstated.

Paul identifies Timothy as "our brother." He was most likely saved during Paul's first stop through Derbe in Acts 14:6-7. By the time Paul returned to Derbe in Acts 16, Timothy had distinguished himself among the disciples to the point that Paul wished to take him along (Acts 16:3-4). Timothy was not a new believer, no novice, for Paul would not have committed the care and setting in order of deficient teaching for the Thessalonians to a novice. He sends back one who has grown in the 1-2 years since he first responded to the gospel. Timothy was a co-worker from God [Ablative of

source] in the gospel regarding the Christ. This good news may refer to the death and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4; Rom. 1:16) or to the good news about “the Christ” that entity comprised of Christ as the head seen in union with His body.

Timothy’s task in Thessalonica was to establish [AAInf] the saints. The infinitive verb **στηρίζω** is a causative from of **στήκω** to stand, or stand firm, so meaning to cause to stand firm, or cause to stand in strength. Always important in the Christian life, Paul was concerned that if they lacked strength to stand firmly, they would be shaken (3:3). Timothy was also to encourage [AAInf] them on behalf of their faith.

Paul’s use of **τῆς πίστεως** [articular noun] is not simply their specific faith, but a reference to their Christian lives. “The Faith” often refers to the sum total of promises God has made to New Testament Christians and in relationship to which, believer live their Christian lives. Paul’s short stay may have precluded his ability to open and explain more than a few of God’s promises. Sending Timothy back provided the opportunity to explain more promises, providing the Thessalonians a firmer basis on which to stand in their Christian life. In this very letter, Paul references some promises. They knew how God did not desire them to live their Christian lives in immorality, imply they knew how He promised to provide them experiential freedom from their sinful nature, but they did not know that God would step in to deal with a believer who takes advantage in these areas of other believers. New Testament believers will be caught up to meet the Lord, but had no time to

explain about those believer who might die before the Lord comes for us. They knew they were not destined to face God's anger but to specially possess salvation, but did not know that God would preserve the entirety of their being: the spirit, the soul, the body. More to the point, as will be seen in the following verses, the Thessalonians did not know what to make of the intense adversity and persecution both they and the apostles were experiencing. By explaining other promises and God's work with respect to those promises, Timothy could encourage them regarding their faith.

3:3 Paul's first concern was that the Thessalonians would be shaken [PPInf] by the tribulations [intense adversity, trouble or pressure] they experienced. The verb shake was used of a dog shaking or wagging its tail. Paul reminded them that they are placed [PMI] for this very thing. The middle voice brings out the personal note that this is for them. This raises an interesting question: why has God placed believers to face this kind of adversity? Romans 5:1-5 indicates it is part of God's maturing process in our lives. 1 Peter 1:6-7 states that it is to prove (same word as in Romans 5) your faith. Hebrews 5:8-9 uses the Son as an example of maturing through suffering. 1 Peter 1:4-7 it proves their faith. 1 Peter 4:12-19 indicates it gives believers an opportunity to share in the sufferings of the Christ. Through those sufferings judgment begins with us, as the world experiences God's judgment from how they treat us, and yet we are being saved with difficulty. So, if our salvation appears so-so, what is the end of those who disobey. They are responding to

believers living so-so at the present, and yet even to this they are resistant. So, where will they appear if they disobey the good news, resisting God's much tougher standard. Peter's language parallels what Paul writes in 2 Thessalonians 1:4-9 and Philippians 1:28-30, that we suffer and this says something about us and about the unsaved in the world. Therefore, God uses our suffering to mature believers and to say something about the world.

3:4 Paul reminded the Thessalonians that he had told them this ahead of time [AAI]. Paul had not hidden the future problems from the new believers. He told them we are about [PAI] to be troubled, put under adversity [PPIf]. Indeed, what Paul told them would happen did happen [AMI].

3:5 Paul was unable to bear [PMPT], **στέγω** being a holding up or out, to hold up a covering, so reaching a point at which one could not hold up the proper attitude (covering) regarding what these believers were facing. So Paul sent [AAI] to find out [know-AAIf] the Thessalonians' faith. "The Faith" refers to the Christian life viewed as the collection of promises God makes to New Testament believers.⁸ He was concerned that the one tempting [PAPT] had tempted [AAI] them. The one tempting refers to Satan. Matthew 4:3 identifies him by the same participle, translated in English "the Tempter." Temptation can come from the flesh, Satan and the world. However, temptation related to persecution arises from

⁸ Not every occurrence of "the faith" [ἡ πίστις] refers to this collection of promises, sometimes it simply refers to a specific act of faith.

Satan. In Revelation, Satan brought persecution by imprisoning some believers (2:10). Prior to the cross Satan used the fear of death to manipulate and enslave people (Hebrews 2:14). Satan, the spirit other than the Holy Spirit, had tempted Timothy to be cowardly and to hold his tongue not speaking the gospel. So with the Thessalonians, Paul was concerned that the temptation might have brought them to silence, to comprise for the sake of a quiet life. As a result the labor of Paul and his companions might come to be [AMS] vain, emptied of content. Paul wasn't even concerned about the outcome of action but with a change of what they knew. Temptation might cause them to change their doctrine, to alter what Paul had taught them. Such a change would affect their actions. If one should think that living the Christian life resulted in good things, earthly pleasures or prosperity (cf. 1 Timothy 6:5), the reality might cause one to rethink the Christian life and pursue love for the world. If one thought that living the Christian life would be met with appreciation by the world (Peter's readers thought it was strange), reality would make them consider not using the fruit from the Spirit. If one thought that Jesus was coming with certainty before any fellow believers died, and now some had died, some might be tempted to give up their hope in the Lord's soon return for us. These were potentially Paul's concerns.

3:6 So, with this concern, when Timothy came [AAPT] from Thessalonica and brought good news [AMI] of the Thessalonians' faith and love, Paul was encouraged [API, v. 7]. The faith and the love often go hand in hand, as faith in God's promise

results in the believer exercising love towards other saints. Timothy also informed Paul that the Thessalonians were longing [PAPt] to see [PfAIf] Paul and his team in the same way that the team longed to see the Thessalonians. Just as Paul had assured the Thessalonians in chapter two that he was not glad to be out of Thessalonica and would even return if possible, so Paul is assured that the Thessalonians are not glad that Paul is gone from them. Knowing that the city officials had made Jason and others put up a bond that Paul would cause no further trouble in Thessalonica, one might have thought they'd be happy he was gone. They were not.

3:7 So this encouraged [API] the team. The encouragement was based upon [επι] the Thessalonians' faith. It made the pressure and adversity of the team worthwhile. Though ἀνάγκη (<ἄγχω=compress) is often "necessity" (Heb. 9:16; Rm. 13:5) it also means to be "pressed" (gives rise to its common translation). It occurs in Luke 21:23 of Daniel's 70th week, a time which will press all people on the earth to respond appropriately to God's anger (wrath). Believers will demonstrate appropriate character for those saved and the unsaved will of necessity shake their fist at God. This pressure causes someone to act or respond in some manner. Paul experienced the necessity or the press of giving the Thessalonians enough encouragement and teaching. The adversity was the hostility from without directed against Paul, his companions and the new believers. He combines being pressed with the adversity with one article to remind them that these two were a shared experience of the

apostles. He combines these two words in 2 Corinthians 6:4 with the addition of **στενοχωρίας** - to be squeezed (cf. 2 Cor. 12:10). They endured the press and the pressure

3:8 **Ὅτι** introduces cause of Paul's attitude. We live [PAI] if [ἐὰν] you stand [PAI] in *the* Lord. Does Paul mean that his Christian life depends upon others living theirs? Certainly the attitudes which make up the fruit from the Spirit allow the believer to rise above circumstances, however, Paul's God-given ministry focused upon teaching believers that they might grow and live to God's glory. Learning that indeed the Thessalonians were living by faith and were living out love not only encouraged Paul but made him live, provided impetus to continue evangelizing and teaching believers. Paul uses these two together several times (without the article 1 Th. 5:8; 1 Ti. 1:14; 2:15; 2 Ti. 1:13) and in close context (e.g. Gal. 5:6; Eph. 1:15; Col. 1:14; 2 Th. 1:3; Phm 5; 1 Tim. 1:4). Faith does not always end in an act of love but commonly does.

Stand in *the* Lord, though indefinite in Greek and so in seven of twenty-three occurrences in 1 Thessalonians, it is definite as a name or title. In its indefinite form it is tied to Jesus Christ in 1:1; 4:1 and by context in 4:6, 17. Many of the definite occurrences are "the Lord Jesus Christ" or "the Lord of us Jesus Christ." Though Paul frequently refers to Jesus Christ as Lord and our Lord, he uses it with greater frequency in these two letters than in any of his other letters. In the face of adversity, remembering who is truly the Master, the one truly in charge of your life. Standing in the

Lord, they not only have set their minds to who they are in Christ (Col. 3:1-2) but have taken their stand in that position, to stand ready to resist Satan, the Tempter (cf Eph. 6:13-14).

3:9 Paul asked what thanks they were able [PMI] to repay [AAIf] to God about the joy with which they rejoiced [PAI] about the Thessalonians before God. Joy is the acceptance with appreciation of what does or provides. It is part of the fruit the Spirit produces (Gal. 5:22; 1 Th. 1:6), but focuses upon God's plan and what He has accomplished, perhaps through the individual rejoicing or others (Php 2:2; 1 Th. 2:19, 20; 1 Jh. 1:4; 2 Jh. 12) Paul recognized that the state of the Thessalonians ultimately goes back to God's faithful work.

3:10 Paul informed the Thessalonians that he overflowed (adv) supplicating to see [PfAIIf] them and to adjust [AAIf] the things lacking in their faith. Supplication consists of communication involving something unknown, in this case whether he would be able to return. Paul not only wished to be present with the Thessalonians, but be present so that he could address areas of truth for which Paul ran out of time. They were deficient/lacking in these areas and Satan might take advantage of what they did not know. Paul wanted to fix this, by teaching them more. Some of these areas Paul will address in the remainder of the letter. Examples of deficiency: not knowing God's promise to resurrect believers who have died prior to the Rapture (1 Th. 4), the appropriateness of believers suffering for the name of Christ (2 Th 1), the clear fact that believers will not enter the day of the Lord (2 Th 2).

3:11 Paul expressed his wish to come to the Thessalonians wishing that God would make their way to the Thessalonians straight [κατευθύνω AAO]. The verb is Optative expressing wish without certainty. He did not know if it was God's plan for a smooth trip. Paul wished for an unhindered trip, to encourage them again that he did wish to be with them.

3:12 He further wished the Lord to make the Thessalonians increase [AAO] and abound [AAO] in love for one another and to all the saint even as Paul's team did toward the Thessalonians. The Lord is the One in charge of this wish because He is the Lord of the body and the one who directs the ministry of the gifts (1 Cor. 12:6). The love is to other believers in keeping with the new command (John 13:34). "To all" refers to those believers beyond the boundary of Thessalonica. Paul's wish was that their love would increase, more acts of love in response to more opportunities to love. The second verb "abound" means to overflow. The love is not contained but overflows. Paul does not know that they will love more, that it will abound or that it will be contained and restrained. Therefore, his wish. His nature of the Optative hinges upon whether the Thessalonians will align or continue to align their will with God's revealed will.

3:13 The goal of Paul's wish is that God would establish [AAIf] the hearts of the Thessalonians blameless in holiness. The verb στηρίζω means to cause stand firm [-ίζω ending]. The infinitive finds its time in the main verbs. Therefore, Paul is uncertain as to when this will happen, but he does not question God's work of establishing believers.

When established they will be blameless [ἄμεμπτος—free of defect, free of blemish]. This is part of Christ's work for His church (Eph. 5:25-27). In Christ we are without blemish and holy (Eph. 1:3-4). Paul's desire is for this to be accomplished before God our Father when our Lord Jesus Christ is present with His saints. This follows the Rapture, when we arrive in heaven and are presented before the Father. Before Him we have been cleansed of anything which might have been cause for accusation.

Increasing and abounding love is tied to this blamelessness. Why? We have problems because we often tie blemish to "sin." But our sins were dealt with at the cross by Christ. So what might cause a blemish? To not fulfill the one command which Christ has given to His Church, to miss those good works which God has previously prepared for those who are part of the new creation, or grumbling and arguing while serving (Php. 2:14-15). Paul and his team behaved blamelessly to the Thessalonians by not burdening them but teaching and soothing them (2:9-12). If we fail to live out this love, their might be reason to point a finger at us. Jesus warned Ephesus that He would remove their lamp because they had left their first love (Rev. 2:5). Paul warned of the worthlessness of ministry done apart from love (1 Cor. 13:1-3). God takes seriously our acts of love or lack thereof. This increasing and abounding in love can be endangered by persecution. The hardships and pressure put upon the Thessalonians could cause them to turn inward and be consumed with themselves and their safety. It could cause them to withdraw from serving in love, from being

identified with other saints. Paul later had to write the Hebrews about not abandoning the assembly of saints and to prod one another on to love and good works (Heb. 10:24-25). Therefore, as Paul wished that the Lord would make them increase and abound, it was that they would not allow the adversity within their city to distract them from their mission-to love one another. When they arrive in heaven, they will stand their without blemish. John suggests that believers should abide in Christ so they would have no cause to be ashamed (1 Jh. 2:28). Mature love has no fear. If they matured in His love as they too should act, they would be free of fear (1 Jh. 4:17-18). This was Paul's wish for them.

4:1 Paul now asked the Thessalonians to live in a manner in keeping with what Paul had taught them. He will point out some specifics. He asked [PAI] them and encouraged them [PAI] in *the* Lord Jesus. Encouragement [παρακαλεω] means to call alongside, therefore to call to join in action or attitude, not a call to do better than the one encouraging. In *the* Lord Jesus emphasizes His authority over the assembly. The following chart demonstrates how frequently he used κύριος [LORD] in 1 Thessalonians. It was vital that they know He is in charge of the circumstances and events which the church was experiencing but also that He is in charge of

Book	occurrences and per K
Rom	43 . 6
1 Cor.	66 9.6
2 Cor	29 6.4
Gal	6 2.7
Eph	26 10.7
Php	15 9
Col	16 10
1 Thess	24 16.2
2 Thess	22 26.7
1 Tim	6 3.7
2 Tim	16 12.9
Tit	0

Book	occurrences and per K
Phlm	5 14.9
Heb	14 3

the church itself. They will answer to Him and He directs the church's service and activity. The Thessalonians had already received [παραλαμβάνω AAI] how they must [δὲι PAI] walk [PAIf] and please [PAIf] God. During Paul's short stay with them, he had taught them about the Christian way of living. "To walk" refers to their lifestyle. Romans 8:4-5 indicate that one's lifestyle begins with one's attitude or frame of mind [φρήν -n/ φρονέω -vb]. The believer's walk or lifestyle should be characterized by newness of life (Rm. 6:4), by a standard of love (Rm. 14:15; Eph. 5:2; 1 Jh. 2:6; 2 Jh 6), in keeping with our position in which we are called (1 Cor. 7:17), through faith (2 Cor. 10:2), in the works God prepared for us (Eph. 2:10), our calling in Christ (Eph. 4:1; Col. 2:6), as children characterized by light (God's life; Eph. 5:15; 1 Jh 1:7), in wisdom toward those outside the body (Col. 4:5), in a good visible form toward those outside (1 Thess. 4:12), in truth (2 Jh 4; 3 Jh 3, 4). How much of this Paul had communicated to the Thessalonians is not stated, but he had communicated something of the proper lifestyle for one who is a son of God and a child of God. Paul also taught believers to please God. Believers are told to bear the weaknesses of the weak and not to please themselves (Rm. 15:1-3), to be pleasing to all by all means as opposed to seeking one's own things (1 Cor. 10:33). Paul said of the Jews that they were not pleasing to God for the acted contrary to

all who God sent: Jesus, the prophets, and Paul (1 Thess. 2:15). However, Paul was also cautious about pleasing men instead of please God (2:4; Gal. 1:10).⁹ To be pleasing to God then means to seek to please others before yourself. In a manner similar to loving God by loving His people, we please Him by putting others before ourselves. This will be key to the following issue. Paul recognized that the Thessalonians were walking [PAI] in this manner. His request and encouragement was that they also increase [PAS] even more in this lifestyle.

4:2 The Thessalonians knew well [οἶδατε PfAI] what charge Paul had given [AAI] to them through the Lord Jesus. Through the Lord Jesus emphasizes Paul not relying upon his own authority or ideas but upon that of the Lord. The use of οἶδα rather than γινώσκω may indicate that while they knew the charge, some were struggling with the practice, hence Paul's following instructions.

4:3 Paul cites God's desirous will [θέλημα]. It is anarthrous indicating that this is not the totality of what God desires for believers, but is a facet a quality of His desire for them. God desires the believer's sanctification, that the believer be set apart. Sanctification indicates first: set apart to, in this God and His will, and second: set apart from in this case sexual immorality. The Thessalonians lived in a culture in which sexual immorality was the norm, being interwoven in the Greek and Roman worship system. "Sanctification" is articular because in setting believers apart to

⁹ This brief survey has considered only ἀρεσκω and ἀνθρωπαρεσκος forms.

Himself, believers are set apart from the world. Sexual immorality is one facet of the world's fallen activities, and the one which Paul present addresses. So believers are to abstain [ἀπέχεσθαι PMIf, < απεχω - to abstain, have away from]. The middle voice of the infinitive emphasizing personal responsibility in this abstinence as well as personal benefit when so doing. πορνεία as sexual immorality includes adultery and homosexual activity¹⁰ but is distinct from such an attitude expressed by “uncleanness” and from lewdness [ἀσέλεια] which may involve both the above in an unrestrained, unashamed public display. 20 centuries later, we are amazed that Paul would have to tell believers not to engage in sexual immorality, but it was necessary because the Thessalonians being saved (at least some of them) out of the Gentile lifestyle did not know that such actions were unacceptable, as frequenting prostitutes and doing so especially for religious purposes had been the norm.

4:4-5 As opposed to the common lifestyle of the pagans, the believers were to know [οἶδα PFAIf] to obtain [κατάομαι PMIf] their own vessel in sanctification and honor not in passion characterized by lust like the Gentiles. This verse has two primary interpretations. The first is reflected in the ESV and NIV's translation, “that each of you should learn to control your own body.” The second interprets the word “vessel” (NIV's “body”) to be a wife, thus meaning that each

¹⁰ Both these are listed separately from sexual immorality in 1 Cor. 6:9.

should know to obtain a wife. The former interpretation at first appears to degrading both to women and to marriage as though it is intended mostly to gratify a sexual yearning, and for this reason some prefer to first interpretation, though the verb **καταομαι** does not mean to “control” but to acquire, to obtain, and so “control” goes beyond the semantic limit of the verb. The second interpretation is not truly offensive. Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:1ff, encouraged men not to touch women but because of sexual immorality husbands and wives should have their own respective spouse (1 Cor. 7:2, 9). Paul held a high view of marriage, but recognized that marriage brought with it responsibilities and concerns which made life harder especially in times of difficulty (1 Cor. 7:28-35). The second interpretation is preferred by grammar and context. Rather than living in the immorality of the pagan society, the believers were to living in a marriage relationship where God-given desires are properly addressed. Paul elsewhere addresses not only the sexual side of this relationship but the proper love and submission, care, fondness and acts to please one’s spouse (Eph. 5:22-33; 1 Cor. 7:33-34; Tit. 2:3-4). So, their relationship to a spouse should be one of sanctification, being set apart to God and treating one’s spouse in that same manner, and in honor, treating one’s spouse with the value she has because she too is God’s, she too is set apart to Him.

5 The gentiles did not so relate in their marriage (not absolutely), but treated their spouses in passion and lust. Does this mean that a Christian marriage has no passion and has no

intense desire? No. But in being set apart to God, the believer does not raise his desire by interest in the attractions of other women and then attempting to gratify those desires with one's wife. This would have been out of character with God's design for marriage. Neither was a Christian husband to acquire a wife merely to satisfy his sexual desires in an acceptable manner. Marriage is more than sex. Marriage involves, as previously stated, love, care, fondness. The love of the husband for the wife is to be characterized by the same kind of love that Christ showed the Church. His love was not merely demonstrated to satisfy some personal desire through the Church. So, the husband in love and care lays down his life, perhaps even foregoing sex for the benefit of the spouse. How often even to today do people marry only because of a physical attraction without any personal interest in the wellbeing of the other?

6 Paul further explains the problem with two infinitives: to transgress [ὑπερβαίνω] and covet [πλεονεκτέω] [both PAIf]. The former occurs only here in the NT, παραβαίνω and παράβασις being common. It meant to go over or beyond a boundary. The second infinitive normally refers to coveting or wanting more. The two combined in this context with "his brother" indicate that one does not step over the boundary of marriage and covet another man's wife (recall the tenth command of the law). τῷ πράγματι indicates this is not just any matter, but that at hand. The brother could also refer to one's spouse, so that one goes beyond the boundary of his or her marriage and covets something outside his or her marriage. This would do wrong to one's spouse.

Paul warned that God will avenge or make this matter right. In Hebrews 13:4, Paul wrote that the marriage bed is honorable, what happens between a husband and wife is private and treated with honor. Those who commit adultery, who do not remain in the boundaries of their marriage, God will judge them. He disciplines (Heb. 12:6). Behaving properly in these matters is not merely a matter of testimony, but one which God takes seriously. Paul had told them before [AAI] and strongly witnessed to this matter.

7 God hasn't called [AAI] believers to [ἐπι to rest upon?] uncleanness but in [ἐν] sanctification. Ephesians 4 states that our call is into Christ. In Christ believers are freed from the sin nature's dominion by God counting them to have shared in Christ's crucifixion to the sin nature and resurrection of life to Him (cf Rom. 6:4, 10-11). Sanctification is our being set apart to God, and believers are set apart to God in Christ. Jesus spoke of this in His prayer, in which He is the Word by which believers are sanctified (cf. Jh. 17:17-19; 1:1). Ephesians 4:2ff list a number of areas and benefits to which believers were called in Christ.

8 Paul warned the believers that if they reject [AAPT] this, they aren't rejecting his advice but God's charge. God is the one giving His Spirit to believers. The Spirit leads believers to their position in Christ, and in so doing provides freedom from this very matter (Gal. 5:17; Rom. 8:2).

9 Having addressed a perversion of love (sexual immorality), he turns to a proper form of love, fondness. The Greek *philé* [φίλη] in NT times bore similarities to *agapé* but was also distinct.

Jesus' talk with Peter in John 21 illustrates that such a distinction was recognized, as Peter was grieved that on the third questioning, Jesus used *phileō* [the verb] instead of *agapaō*. While both are forms of love, the former denoted fondness and friendship while the latter a more stronger deeper friendship. Here, Paul uses the compound noun "brotherly fondness." The word stands in contrast to the immorality addressed in the previous verses, as fondness or friendship did not involve and would not involve such inappropriate actions.

Cognates of *philos*: *philé*, *phileō*, *kataphileō* (kiss), as well as names based on this noun occur 138 times. This word occurs six times. Paul encouraged the Romans to have unhypocritical love [*agapé*], and that love should be expressed by brotherly fondness and fond family affection [*philostorgos*] (Rom. 12:10). This passage is helpful as it demonstrates a distinction, as *agapé* can be exercised by means of *philé*. In the context of believers who are abandoning the assembling together, it was necessary rather to let abide (continue at ease) brotherly love (Heb. 13:1). Being friendly toward one another is necessary and more appropriate than avoid each other. Similarly, Peter's readers were undergoing persecution and avoiding being seen. They needed to purify their hearts from the influence of the sin nature by obeying the Truth (God's provision for experiencing freedom from the sin nature's dominion). By doing this they would be able to exercise unhypocritical brotherly love and love one another with intensity (stretching out)(1 Pet. 1:22). Titus 3:4 ascribes the verb to God, and from it producing salvation (regeneration, 3:5).

The Thessalonians had no need of this. In 1:4 Paul cited their labor from love. Here he states that they were God-taught to love [ἀγάπη] one another. This love is the outworking of God's love for the believer (Jh. 15:9-10). The one who guards Christ's commands (to love) are at ease (remain at ease) in His love. God loved believers when we were sinners and hostile enemies (Rom. 5:8-10). When the believer appreciates and is at ease in God's love, directing love to other saints is the natural outflow. Believers are God-taught first by recognizing the example of God's love. Second, the Spirit will produce love as part of the fruit for those who follow His lead (Gal. 5:16-18). The love they are taught to exercise is *agapé*, not first *philé*, as it fulfills the new command.

10 The Thessalonians were indeed doing this (i.e. loving) toward all the brothers in Macedonia. Thessalonica was situated in Macedonia, therefore they were exercising love to other believers outside their city but within the same province in which they lived. Love implies activity and those near to them would provide good opportunities to serve in love. At a time in which it was harder to send help, personnel or material, it makes sense that they had directed love in the vicinity. Since they are loving, all Paul can do is encourage them to love even more [PAInf - περισεύω].

11 The four infinitives further explain how they can abound in this love, therefore και extends the thought "even" to make their ambition [PMInf φιλοτιμαέομαι] to be silent [PAInf ήσυχάζω-to be quiet or calm as opposed to boisterous, obnoxious and this due to agitation]

and to practice [PAInf πράσσω] or in this case do or busy one's self as in attend to "one's own things" [τὰ ἰδία] and to work [PMInf ἐργάζομαι] with one's own hands. To be annoying and neglectful regarding one's needs and expecting others to attend to them is neither loving nor does it express fondness for the others. Working to be quiet rather than boisterous and outspoken is loving, as boisterousness can draw undesired attention and persecution not only on the individual but on fellow believers. The infinitive "to work" combined with the instrumental noun "hands" indicates manual labor. Though Paul may have intended this as a metaphor generally for work, it may simply mean that the many of the believers of the Thessalonian church did manual labor as opposed to management. This would agree with Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 1:26-28, that not many believers are noble. The largest majority of believers are nobodies from the world's point of view. Paul charged [AAI παραγγέλω] the Thessalonians to behave in this manner. He refers to this again in 5:14 as those who are disorderly and again in 2 Thessalonians 3, as those who had quit working, expecting others to foot the bill. The Church set the precedent in Acts 2 and 4 that those who had shared what they had so that those in need were not needy. Though this is far from Jerusalem in Greece, the present references indicate that the custom had been carried over to the Gentile churches. These texts also indicate that believers had taken advantage of this by expecting others to meet their needs while doing nothing to meet those needs themselves.

12 This type of love expressed to the brothers by attending to their own matters and needs rather than burdening others to do so will also result in a witness toward the unbelievers. They should walk [PAS] appropriately toward those outside the assembly so that they have no need. Metaphorically it indicates one's lifestyle. Paul employs this verb four times in this letter (2:12: 4:1). In the first instance it is to walk worthy of the God who called them into His own kingdom and glory. Their lifestyle should exemplify one who is in God's kingdom. Then in this context he used it twice in 4:1 regarding their lifestyle which reflects being set apart to God (4:2ff). In the present verse it is the lifestyle which appears proper to those outside the church. The adverb "properly" [ESV, NASB] indicates that which is of good appearance. The world watches believers. If they observe believers withdrawing from the responsibilities of normal life such as working to feed one's self and pay one's bills, they would not deem this as good. This would appear lazy. Such believers would appear to be mooching of others, and indeed they would. However, if they watch believers not only work hard to care for their own needs but even have extra perhaps to address the needs of others, that is good.

The Lord Comes For His Own

13 The last section of this chapter addresses one of the areas of truth for which Paul ran out of time to teach. He expressed in chapter three his concern for how this would affect their faith. So Paul assures the Thessalonians that he does not wish [desire, PAI] for them to be ignorant [PAInf] about those who are sleeping [PMPt]. Paul had

explained the Lord's return for us, and so the Thessalonians were awaiting His coming (1:10). He did not have time to explain what happens to those believers who die before the Lord comes. This potentially causes believers to grieve [PMS] like the rest who have [PAPT] no hope.

The participle sleeping refers to believers who have died. Matthew uses it of those believers who had died and came out of their graves in connection with Christ's resurrection (Matt. 27:52). Jesus used it of Lazarus (Jh. 11:11), though His disciples did not understand that He spoke of death (Jh. 11:12-13). Luke uses it of Stephen's death (Acts 7:60). Four times Paul used it of believers in 1 Corinthians 15, among which verse 51 most importantly ties Christ as the first fruits (sample) of the resurrection of those who are sleeping, because only those who are believers will be raised like Christ. All will be raised, but not all will be like Christ. So, in the present text, those sleeping are fellow believers. Sleeping is appropriate because the body awaiting resurrection has not come to full ruin but is sleeping.

The participle sleeping is κοιμάω [*koimāō*] not καθεύδω [*katheudō*] as in 5:7. The former is used of believers who have died. The latter describes believers who are spiritually asleep, acting as though they are already dead, or acting no different than the unsaved. Therefore, Paul appealed to the Thessalonians to not sleep (5:6), which is certainly not an appeal to not die, as they have no control over that event, God having determined the days of a man's life (Psa. 139:14-16; Job 14:5; Deut. 32:39). The latter describes the

virgin witnesses sleeping while they should have been awake and waiting (Matt. 25:5), and similarly of Jesus' disciples in the garden (Lk. 22:46). Paul wrote the Ephesians believers to awake, to rise out from among dead ones, indicating that the lifestyle of believers can sometimes sadly look no different from unbelievers (Eph. 5:14). In the present text, those who sleep are not spiritually inattentive but have physically died.

In the time between Paul's departure and the recent arrival of Timothy from Thessalonica, apparently a believer or some believers had died, leaving the Thessalonians in a state of grief. Paul does not state that believers have no grief when a fellow believer dies. He did not want their grief to be like unbelievers who have no hope. The verb "grieved" is in the Subjunctive mood indicating the potential for grief but not its certainty. The unbeliever has no legitimate hope for any good future following death. Their only hope is this life. Whereas believers hope for something better, a glorified body and a future with God. The Greeks and Romans among whom the Thessalonians lived did not expect resurrection. Their philosophical view of the physical world led them to reject a future physical existence. So, though Paul had told them that Christ was coming back for them, they may have wondered if those believers who had died (were sleeping) had missed this event. So what would they do?

Biblically, hope is not something imagined or for which one merely wishes. Biblical hope is based upon a promise from God. Paul spoke of Christ and the resurrection as "the hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20). God had promised Christ and His

resurrection to Israel and this produced in Israel hope. Israel looked at the dry bones of their ancestors as proof that their hope had been destroyed, that they were cut off from God's future promise of resurrection and life in the land (Ezk. 37:11). When the youth and powerful of Judah were being deported to Babylon, God promised them that their children would return to their own land, they would have hope (Jer. 31:15-17). Biblical hope rests on God's promises. Non-biblical hope rests on an individual's own wishes or plans, so the hope of the profane is cut off (Job 27:8). While happy is the nation whose God is Jehovah, those who trust in a horse for victory have trusted in a lie (Psa. 33:17). Paul warned rich believers of hoping in uncertain riches, uncertain because they can be stolen or lose value (1 Tim. 6:17). Because unbelievers have never believed in the Jesus Christ of Scripture, while they will be raised on day only to face eternal judgment, that resurrection is nothing in which they would like to hope. However, for the New Testament believer, God has promised not only future resurrection but future glorification, an instantaneous change into Christ-likeness (1 Cor. 15:51ff; 1 Jh. 3:2).

14 Paul assumes his readers have believed [PAI] Jesus died [AAI] and arose [AAI]. This is the essence of the gospel. No one is a Christian who has not believed this message today. The use of the Indicative mood in the first part of this conditional statement assumes it to be true of the Thessalonians. Assuming this, the conclusion of the condition is that God will lead [FAI] with Him those who have fallen asleep [APPT] through Jesus. Scripture reveals that Christ is the one who will

return for us (Jh. 14:3; 1 Thess. 1:10; Php. 3:20). This is one of several passages which refers to the Son as God. It is not the Father who will bring these sleeping believers with Him but God the Son. Second, these believers are sleeping through Jesus. The participle is passive meaning someone else caused them to die. Jesus is the one with the keys of death (Rev. 1:18). When a believer reaches the time appointed within God's decree for him or her to die, Jesus is the one who affects that death in time. Jesus lays emphasis on His humanity, and it was as man that Jesus died, not in His deity. Third, He will lead [ἄγω-agō] them in close association with [σὺν - sūn] Him. While the bodies of believers remain here in whatever state (buried, burned, destroyed), the spirit and soul of the believer depart (Jas. 2:26) and are with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8). Believers enter a kingdom at death indicating activity in some form (2 Tim. 4:18), and are not in a state of soul sleep. Those martyred believers during Daniel's 70th week cry out for vengeance from their souls while in a state of death (Rev. 6:9). When Paul rehearsed his death, he revealed that he had been caught up to the edge of the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:1-4). From their place of rest in the third heaven, God the Son will lead believers who have died back to the earth that they be resurrected.

15 What Paul reveals [speaks PAI] now is by a word from the Lord. The Lord had specifically explained to Paul the future of believers, including those who have died. Paul assures believers that those of us who are living [PAPt] and remaining [PMPT] to the Lord's presence will absolutely not go ahead [FAI] of those who have been made to

sleep [API]. One of the strongest arguments for a Pre-tribulation rapture of the Church and a signless coming of Christ for His Church is Paul's expectation to be among those who are living when the Lord comes. Paul included himself in the "we those living and remaining" and the verb "will precede." Paul did not view the Lord's coming for the Church as an event in the distant future, but expected it during his lifetime.

The term "coming" [*παρουσία parousia*] means to "be alongside" from *ousia* - "to be, or exist" and *para* - "alongside." Matthew quotes Jesus using this term four times of His coming at the end of Daniel's 70th week, and event distinct from that which Paul is addressing in our present text (Matt. 24:3, 27, 37, 39). Paul used it of the arrival or presence of fellow believers and of himself (1 Cor. 16:17; 2 Cor. 7:6-7; 10:10; Php 1:26; 2:12). The emphasis is more than just a coming, but of the presence with another as a result of a coming. It views the Lord's coming in terms of His presence with His saints (1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 5:23).

Paul employed a double negative to emphasize the absolute negation of any idea that living believers will enter into glory prior to believers who have died. The verb *φθάνω* [*phthanō*] means to arrive or advance. Jesus used it of the arrival of God's kingdom (Matt. 12:28). When Paul arrived among the Corinthians, he arrived with the gospel of the Christ (2 Cor. 10:14). Paul also used the verb of the progress which believers had made in their Christian lives (Php 3:16). In this context, Paul assures believers that living believers will absolutely not make any advance regarding or

compared to those sleeping, where the Accusative case of the participle “sleeping” functions as a comparative object to the subject “we.” Hiebert states, “The living will have no advantage over those fallen asleep; they will not meet the returning Christ ahead of the dead, nor will they have any precedence in the blessedness of His coming.”¹¹

16 The Lord Himself, making clear that the one coming is not the Father or the Spirit, but our Lord Himself, and we should be reminded again that He is called God in verse fourteen. The Lord Himself will descend [FMI] from heaven. He descends with a shout of command. Compared to His call for Lazarus to come out of the tomb, this may be a call for all those believers who have died to come out from their graves, their souls and spirits being reunited with their bodies. Next is the voice of the archangel. Does he charge all opposing spirit beings to stand aside for this upward call of believers? There is also a trumpet of God. No attempt should be made to classify this with one of the seven trumpets in Revelation. 1 Corinthians 15:52 indicates “the last trumpet.” Paul having spent a year and a half in Corinth had explained the coming of the Lord. The question in 1 Corinthians 15 also addresses the issue of resurrection but the glorification of saints does not seem to have been in question. The trumpet in question may be the first in a series of two or three, the first calling out the dead, the second calling up the saints, the third resulting in their glorification.

¹¹ Hiebert, op cit, pp. 197-198.

Accompanied by these events, the Lord descends from heaven. Heaven is anarthrous and singular. Paul uses both definite and anarthrous for all the heavens or any one heaven in particular. The third heaven is the location of God's throne and into which Paul was caught (2 Corinthians 12:2). For this reason, Paul is referring to the location of God's throne.

The dead in Christ rise [FMI] first. In the first half of this verse, Paul mentions a shout, perhaps like Christ's call to Lazarus, here He calls for those in Christ. This is another demonstration that the Rapture is pre-tribulational and not at the second coming. This resurrection involves those in Christ. The unsaved are not in Christ, therefore this is not part of a general resurrection. Old Testament saints were not and are not in Christ, therefore, this does not include the believers of the Old Testament. Those in Christ are neither Jews nor Gentiles, yet those are precisely the identities of believers during Daniel's 70th week. When Christ comes at the end of the Tribulation, He judges first His slaves- the Jews and then the sheep and goats- the Gentiles. Therefore, neither of these groups are in Christ. This resurrection is the distinct resurrection of those believers who have died as part of the body of Christ. They rise first, that is, before anything happens to those of us who are living and remaining.

17 Then we the ones living [PAPt], the ones remaining [PMPT] will be caught up [FPI] in clouds to a meeting of/with the Lord in *the* air. This is the second time in this context that Paul expressed the hope that he would be among those living and remaining when the Lord comes for us (cf. v. 15).

Paul did not think of the Lord's coming for us as some far distant event, but a soon coming, one in which he would participate as a living believer. Though some, generally unbelievers or liberal evangelicals, treat this text as obscure and therefore not suitable for developing any serious understanding of the Lord's coming for us, 1 Thessalonians is one of the books generally considered to be authentic by higher critics (again, usually unbelievers who reject the authenticity of some or all of God's Word). We do not question the authenticity of Pau's writings, and must take seriously his personal anticipation of being alive when the Lord comes for us.

We will be snatched up together. This phrase begins with the adverb ἅμα [*hama*] meaning "all together" and the preposition σὺν [*sun*] indicating closeness. This combination corrects a common misunderstanding regarding the Rapture, that the dead are raised and are with Jesus first and then the living go to Him. Rather, the dead are raised first, meaning they are not standing on the earth along with those who are living and remaining. Now, all together those resurrected and those living and remaining are caught up to the Lord. All believers who make the body of Christ will be caught up at the exact same moment, will all meet the Lord at the exact same moment, will all see the Lord as He is at the exact same moment and will therefore all be changed at the exact same moment. This further emphasizes the unity which God has implemented for the body of Christ during its history on earth and its future with God.

The verb “snatch” or “caught up” [ἄρπάζω *harpadzō*] occurs 14 times in the New Testament. In nearly every passage the word has a sense of force, seizure by force and in some passages violent force. So Jesus spoke of those violent people who attempted to seize the kingdom, indicating they wished to control it and make what they wanted, and so they also attempted with Christ Himself (Matt. 11:12; Jh. 6:15). The word has the sense of violent seizure of property in a robbery (Matt. 12:29). Jesus used it of the forceful seizure of sheep by wolves (definitely violent) and that no one could do this to His own (Jh. 10:12, 28-29). A Roman military official sent soldiers to seize Paul by force from a crowd that he feared would literally tear Paul to pieces (Acts 23:10). Note, being a Roman military official, his thought is not likely to be an exaggeration, he had likely witnessed other violent riots. Paul twice applies it to himself at the point of death, perhaps indicating that even the believer does not simply float away at death but must be taken to his or her place of rest with some force (2 Cor. 12:2, 4). It also describes Satan’s attempt to seize and destroy Jesus even at birth and as a young child (Rev. 12:5). We may conclude that this snatching of saints to meet the Lord, involves snatching them from a violent world that would seek to harm them and is a snatching to safety with Him. It may also involve a snatching by force as some portions of the body of Christ will not be anticipating the Lord’s coming, not loving His appearing and may need to be removed by force from this world with which they have fallen in love (cf. 1 John 2:15ff; James 4:1-4). The snatching is in clouds, most likely not the glory clouds of

heaven, or moisture clouds of our sky, but clouds of believers moving together to meet the Lord.

Believers then go up in the air to a meeting of the Lord. The noun ἀπάντησις [*apantāsis*] is a ceremonial or celebratory meeting. The witnesses celebrate the coming of the bride groom and brothers celebrated Paul's arrival in Italy (Matt. 25:6; Acts 28:15). We will celebrate the Lord's presence with us, our seeing Him as He is, since we do not see Him now (1 Pet. 1:8; 1 Jh. 3:2). That meeting will be in the air. Again, this distinguishes the Rapture from the events of the second coming. In the second coming, the Lord comes and places His feet on earth and after defeating the nations gathered to fight against Him, His angels gather His elect, both Jews and Gentiles from around the world. The Gentiles are gathered when He is sitting on His throne. In the Rapture, we go up into the air to meet Him there. Tied to 3:12-13, He then takes us and presents us before our God and Father. His coming in that passage is literally His presence not here but in heaven with us.

Finally, Paul assures the Thessalonians, and this way we will always be with the Lord. In what way? In close association [σὺν], in a celebratory assembly with Him. From that point, wherever the Lord goes, we go. We will remain in close association with Him.

18 So encourage [ΠΑἪ] one another with these words. Paul didn't intend primarily an exposition on the Lord's return. Paul didn't want believers to grieve as those with hopelessness. If we know this truth and we encounter believers who do not and they grieve over the death of fellow believers, we

are obliged to share this with them, to call them alongside for encouragement, to join in the hope grounded in this great promise of God. One another indicates that this is only of value to believers. Unbelievers will never have this hope for the have not believed in Jesus Christ. This is the future of all New Testament believers whether they know this or not.

The Contrast Between Believers and Unbelievers Respecting the Day of the Lord

In the section of 5:1-11 Paul charged the Thessalonian believers to consider their actions compared to the unbelievers. Believers are now sons of day and their lives should reflect this truth. This section also demonstrates that the believer's view of God's future plans (eschatology) has practical effects on one's lifestyle, on one's attitude. It further demonstrates that Paul did not relegate eschatology to some minor point of truth. In his short stay of one to two months, Paul had not only taught the Thessalonians about God, Jesus Christ, the ministry of the Spirit in their lives, but had at least introduced God's decree (cp. 1:3) and eschatology. He says of these matters, that they had accurate knowledge and didn't need more information. The previous section addressed a matter Paul had not touched upon, the place of believers in Christ who had died. Despite his accurate teaching on these matters the opening verses of 2 Thessalonians 2 reveal that believers, though having accurate teaching, can still be shaken from their proper mind. Believers need to regularly review and familiarize themselves with the truths of God's Word. The influence of others who would like to deceive (give a false impression *exapataō*) believers regarding God's plans, as well as living among the unsaved who have no hope for a future can be strong affecting one's hope and lifestyle. John assured his readers that those who have the hope of seeing Christ as He is and being like Him purify themselves as He is pure. What we believe about the future impacts us.

5:1 Paul now addresses how believers should both view and respond to their knowledge of God's future plans. The Thessalonians did not need [have a need, $\epsilon\chi\omega$ - PAI] for Paul to write to them [PPInf]. The phrase "concerning the times and seasons" opens with the preposition *peri* combined with the genitive form of the nouns times and seasons. This construction looks at a general idea, therefore, Paul had not explained every detailed facet of God's plans on these matters, but had at least sketched or outlined the plans. Both nouns are articular so that according to Grandville Sharp's observed rules of nouns, articles and the connective $\kappa\alpha\iota$ these are two distinct matters. Times are the more limited events within God's plan, and seasons refers to the larger events. Therefore, times [$\chi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$] may refer to the Rapture, one short even within God's plan, while seasons [$\kappa\alpha\iota\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$] may refer to the whole Day of the Lord, a time extending about one thousand and seven years. This opening statement would indicate that Paul taught the Thessalonians to anticipate that the next event would be Our Lord coming to take us from this world, and the next event would be the Day of the Lord, and very likely Paul would have explained that Daniel's seventieth week made up the first short period of the Day of the Lord followed by the Lord's kingdom, which itself would then become the Father's kingdom (cf. 1 Cor. 15:24-25) thus beginning eternity with new heavens and new earth (Isa. 65:17). Paul himself may not have known many of the precise details at his time. Our Lord revealed many other details to John which he wrote in the book of Revelation, some of which he identifies as mysteries meaning

Paul would not have known them during his lifetime.

5:2 The Thessalonians knew as a fact [οἴδα PfaI] accurately that the Day of the Lord comes [PMI] without warning. The expression “the Day of the Lord” occurs over twenty times in Scripture, the majority of occurrences being in the Old Testament. It is a time in which men will wail (Isa. 13:6), comes with cruelty, fury and burning anger (Isa. 13:9), a day of clouds (Ezek. 30:3), of destruction (Joel 1:15) and terrifying (awesome, Joel 2:11), of darkness (Joel 2:31; Amos 5:18). It is that time in which the Lord Jesus Christ will exercise judgment over the earth, first in the angry judgment upon the disobedient of Israel, the nations, and Satan’s kingdom, and then during the thousand years when He will sit upon His throne and decide with righteousness and fairness over all the world. Scriptures depict that day coming like a thief, unexpected, without warning (2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15). Jesus had warned His hearers (Jews) that their race would not pass away and that that day (the Day of the Lord) would come upon them suddenly like a trap (Lk. 21:32-34). Paul had explained this to them. They knew the Day of the Lord would come, but did not know when. If Church believers might know when the Day of the Lord comes, they would be able to approximately deduce when the Lord will come for His Church. It is not God’s purpose for believers to attempt to deduce this time, but always live in anticipation that He may appear for His Church in the next moment. Church believers are to be those who are loving His appearing (2 Tim. 4:8).

5:3 The following verses contrast the “they” and “them” to the “you,” “we” and “us.” They “they” being unbelievers (5:3), while the “you” refers to believers (5:4). Whenever the unsaved should say [PAS] peace and safety. The unsaved world wants nothing more than to live life on their terms free of problems. They operate in selfishness (cf. Rom. 2:7-8). In this blind sense of self-security, they will be taken by surprise. The noun “suddenly” [not an adverb] is literally “suddenness” a word derived from *aphanes* meaning not plainly visible. The idea of suddenness arises from its unseen quality. It is unexpected. No portent hangs on the horizon warning of a coming change. The noun acts as a modifier in combination with *holethros* “destruction.” The noun “destruction” refers to the death and destruction of the body (1 Cor. 5:5), of the firstborn in Egypt (Heb. 11:28), of the eternal destruction of being eternally separated from God for those who refused to love the truth and worshipped the man of lawlessness (2 Thess. 1:9). It is used figuratively of the miserable life one brings upon one’s self by pursuing wealth (1 Tim. 6:9). When the unsaved of earth do not expect it, this sudden destruction will stand over [*ephistemi* PMI] over them. Jeremiah, Jesus and Paul compare this coming event to the severe birth pains which come upon a woman unexpectedly. Being pregnant, she knows they are coming, but she does not know when. When it comes, they will not escape [AAS].

5:4 Paul contrasts those unbelievers who will unexpectedly experience this destruction to the Thessalonian believers. Believers (you brothers)

are [PI] not in darkness so that the day of the Lord should overtake [καταλαμβάνω AAS] them. The verb “overtake” is used with a positive sense of mental apprehension (Eph. 3:18), or obtaining something (Php. 3:12). Negatively it describes a demon seizing a boy to do him harm (Mk. 9:18) and of the Jewish leaders capturing a woman in the act of adultery (Jh. 8:3, 4). In both the last instances the idea seems to be that of a sudden unexpected trap or seizure. In this case the day is not mentally apprehending but coming unexpectedly. Darkness stands in contrast to light, the latter being the manifestation of God’s life (Jh. 1:4), so that darkness is its absence either because one does not have the life, or because while having the life, one does not live it out so that it is plainly visible. Because believers are joined to the Lord and have this life, and are not in darkness being unaware of God’s plans, that day will not take them.

5:5 Believers are [PI] sons of light and sons of day. The sonship of believers in the New Testament is based on one’s position in Christ and then in practice as one lives out that position (cf. Eph. 1:5; Rom. 8:14). Sonship emphasizes a privileged status within the family, of one allowed to represent the family, illustrated by God the Son representing the Father. Neither light nor day have articles, emphasizing a quality of light, a sample of the light and likewise of day. Believers have the privilege of living out light and living in the day, of manifesting God’s life in activity. Believers can lay hold of eternal life, put it into use in their interaction with one another as well as the world (cf. 1 Timothy 6:12, 19). Paul is driving to the point that believers, so privileged, should, are

perhaps even obliged to live out that life. In a world absent of God's life, believers are privileged to live it out and to shine like small lights in the middle of a crooked and perverted race (Php. 2:15). Being of the light means more than escaping the coming time of the Lord's judgment on the earth, but of presently living out light. Believers are not of night or darkness. Believers have the life consisting of light (Jh. 8:12), but at times may walk (live their lives) in darkness, not manifesting that life (1 Jh. 2:6). This, however, is not God's plan for the believer.

5:6 With this in mind, Paul urges the Thessalonian believers to not sleep. "Let us not sleep [PAS] but let us be watching [PAS] and sober [PAS]." The verb "sleep" is **καθευδω** not **κοιμαω** as in chapter 4. The latter referred to the physical death of believers, and Paul is certainly not saying, "Let us not die" because believers have no control over whether they physically live or die, the lifespan of a believer having been determined by God and written in His book. The meaning of **καθευδω** is the opposite of watching and being sober. It is slumber as opposed to alertness, dozing while one is to be on duty. Watching and being sober are probably metaphors for one's attitude. Rather than being alert, paying attention to one's God-given responsibilities, one acts as those who have no hope, who have no future with God. If everything seems to be calm and pleasant, believers can slip into the same comfortable laziness of the world. The subjunctive verbs "let us" are cohortative, calling all believers to join in a watchful and alert attitude. We are to make good use of our time.

5:7 Those who are sleeping [PAPt] are sleeping [PAI] in the night and the same is true of those getting drunk. Again, both participles and verbs are metaphors for the attitude of those who are unsaved. They slumber, paying no attention to God's revelation both general (creation) and special (Scripture). They have no interest in knowing that different and severe is coming. They enjoy their rest of ignorance, absent of God's life and unable to see with the eyes which remain blind, as contrasted to the blind man who knew he could now see. Further they are being drunk [PMPt and PAI]. The participle and verb likely refer to both literal drunkenness due to consumption of alcohol and drunkenness resulting from anything which numbs or dulls one's senses. The purpose of drunkenness may be to avoid recognizing God and that God will hold mankind accountable. Such drunkenness metaphorically can be achieved by throwing one's self into work, into bettering the world, into entertainment or recreation, anything to distract one's attention from the reality that there is one God and we all answer to Him. (This is a little preachy and deductive from this context but I think it is Paul's point).

5:8 Since we are of the day [literally, "being [PAPt] of day], Paul encouraged his readers, "let us be sober" [PAS]. In light of the previous comments, Paul appeals for the Thessalonians to be alert, unencumbered by anything which would distract or suppress their attention from that which God has for them to attend. They pursue this soberness by putting on [PMPt] a breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet hope of salvation. About eight years after penning these words, Paul will

picture our defense against Satan's attack as an armor. Most anywhere one went in the Roman empire the authority of that empire was constantly before them in the form of soldiers. They were accustomed to seeing soldiers standing ready. Whereas the believer facing Satan has taken up the shield and the sword, the believer standing alert is holding neither, but dressed in readiness. In the illustration of Ephesians six, the breastplate is righteousness, that which the believer has in Christ and which cannot be altered by one's behavior. The helmet is salvation, that which has been applied to the believer and is secured to him by God's grace. When facing Satan, who brings upon us doubts, and throws up uncertainty, it is necessary to focus upon which does exist, not what will. In the present text, Paul pictures the believer as being alert, standing guard against malaise. So the breastplate consists of practical righteousness in the form of faith and love (cf. Gal. 5:6). Faith believes a promise from God, but if that promise implies (and it often does) action, then faith results in activity. So, also love is an attitude which acts appropriately toward the object one's love. Acting in faith and love, living out practical righteousness constitutes living in the light, manifesting God's life in activity. The hope of salvation looks beyond the present to what God has promised: glorification, blamelessness and holiness in His presence. Paul later states that Christ gives the crown of righteousness for one who is loving His appearing (2 Tim. 4:8). A love for the Lord's coming for His Church should result in righteous conduct. The hope of being like Christ, causes the believer to purify himself (1 Jh. 3:2-3). Looking to God's promised future affects our lifestyle; it sobers us in

our daily living, to not live with the stupor of those who see nothing beyond this life (Rom. 12:11-14; 1 Cor. 7:29-31; 2 Pet. 3:10-12) (agnosticism, atheism, or nothing but some similar form which continues afterwards (reincarnation, “heaven on earth” of Jehovah’s Witnesses, the eternal family of various cults). It puts our suffering in perspective (Rom. 8:22-25; 1 Pet. 1:13). It encourages us to serve because we realize our life is bigger than this life (1 Cor. 15:29-33). It reminds us where our true citizenship exists (Php 3:20-21). Believers see an entirely new and distinctive future planned by God and anticipation of that future should result in righteous activity and living in hope.

5:9 The appeal to live as believers not as the unsaved and the hope of salvation in particular is because God has not destined [placed ἔθετο AMI < τίθημι] us for wrath but for the unique possession of salvation through means of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Day of the Lord is a time of God’s wrath, of His anger, poured out upon disobedient Israel, the nations and Satan’s kingdom (1:10; Rom. 2:5; 6:16-17; 11:18; 16:19; 19:15; 15:1). Revelation 15:1 uses θυμὸς for God wrath or anger. This noun is the heat which expresses itself through ὀργή. The Church has not appointment with God’s anger. Even when God deals in a negative manner, such as discipline, with believers it is from His love (Heb. 12:6). While some have attempted to suggest that the Church needs purification and Daniel’s 70th week will serve that purpose, they have not understood that God is not motivating believers to righteous activity by the threat of His anger or judgment but by His grace (cf Eph. 3:2). It is the hope of seeing Christ as He is and being like Him

that is to move a believer to purity, not the threat of experiencing God's anger. Therefore, God has not planned for His Church to experience His anger (wrath). Rather, at that time when He will pour out His anger, the believers who are the body of Christ, the Church, they will uniquely obtain salvation. This is our glorification with Christ. We will be present with Him, when He begins His angry judgment on the world. The final phrase "through our Lord..." is the snatching away in chapter four. We do not arrive at this final salvation by any other means than His personal presence and catching us up to be with Him. He comes for us, snatches us into His presence, changes our humble bodies to be like His body of glory, and precedes back to the third heaven where He presents us holy and without blame before His Father, and in this way, we will always be with the Lord.

5:10 He died [AAPT] in our place [*huper*]. By His death He bore our penalty. No such penalty remains for the Grace believer. The goal, however, was not strictly to free us from the penalty or from being objects of His anger. It is that whether we should watch [PAS] or sleep lazily [PAS] we altogether will live [PAS] with [σὺν] Him. Some would suggest that believers earn the right to be with Christ, or that some will get to go earlier than others (partial rapture), or some will share closer fellowship. Rather, Christ work so thoroughly addressed our need that even if believers should be spiritually lazy and living like the unsaved, they too all together with [ἅμα] those being alert will live in close association with Christ. The adverb ἅμα as in chapter four emphasizing a total

togetherness and this further reinforced by the preposition of close association [σὺν].

5:11 Like Paul's conclusion in 4:17, remembering our future contrasted to the future of the unbelievers calls believers to encourage [PAIV] one another and build up [PAIV] one to one. The encouragement is to live differently than the unsaved, to live as ones who are awake and watching as opposed to sleeping and inattentive like the world. They throw themselves into their lives to avoid thinking about their future. Believers future is great and involves the possession of salvation, so their present lives should reflect this. They should also build up one another. Whereas encouragement is a call to action or a call to join, building up or edification involves teaching for the purpose of believers growing, becoming stronger, more stable. Believers who do not know about our future or the future of those who have died will remain immature and lack stability. The future contains too many uncertainties for them. Therefore, if some believers know these truths, they should share them, explain them, and help other believers appreciate them so that they too are built up. Paul states, "just as you do [PAI]." Paul knows they are doing. They were sharing with one another what they knew. Paul had sent Timothy back to them, and he returned with a report of how the Thessalonians were doing. In that report, Paul evidently learned that they were sharing truth with one another. They were looking out for the needs of other saints, and some of those needs were met by getting their thinking straight on specific truths, even truths about our future.

Concluding charges regarding activity between believers

5:12 Paul requested the Thessalonian believers as an equal [PAI] to respond to one another. The verb ἐρωτάω emphasizes a request among peers. Rather than calling on his apostolic authority, Paul appealed as one of them, as brothers, for the Thessalonians to act. He asked them to “know” [οἶδα PAIf] those laboring [PAPt] among them. The verb emphasizes recognition, knowledge by sight. The NASB translates this “appreciate” and Matthew 7:11 has simply “you know to give” probably having the sense of “know how to.” Though some sense of appreciation or favor may be in Paul’s mind, certainly he reminds his readers to know these people as those who are looking out for them. He wants them to know their leaders by putting into practice what those leaders teach. Paul refers to them as “laboring among you” using the verb κοπιάω, to work to exhaustion or weariness.¹² Service to other believers can be exhausting and while faith is the basis of the work (ἔργω), love will move one to exhaust him or herself for this cause (1:3). Paul combines this participle with two more “have charge over” [NASB] and “give...instruction” [NASB]. Grammatically, these three participles share one definite article forming a Granville Sharp construction. Plural nouns or participles are excepted from this rule, as the nouns or participles

¹² Thayer has “to grow weary, tired, exhausted, (with toil or burdens or grief).” and then “to labor with wearisome effort, to toil.” *Thayers Greek-English Lexicon*, electronic edition, OakTree Software.

do not treat each as being the same person/s but rather that the persons share something in common. Those laboring in this manner may not be just pastor-teachers, but teachers, and those with the gift of helps and the gift of organization. These common individuals share some form of leadership within the Thessalonian assembly.

In addition to laboring, they stand before Church to place the believers in order for the Christian life and service. This verb *προΐστημι* literally meant to stand before. It is translated leads, manage/s, rule, and engage (Rm. 12:8; 1 Tim. 3:4, 5, 12; 5:17; Tit. 3:8, 14-NASB).¹³ This variety of meanings demonstrates an adherence to tradition and a recognition that in some passages the meaning differs from tradition. Mounce defines this verb, “to set before...to set over, appoint with authority...to preside, govern, superintend.”¹⁴ Despite the translation “rule” in 1 Timothy 5:17, the idea is more of one standing before others to put matters in order. So bishops (pastors) and deacons are to have their families in order and all believers are put good works in order.¹⁵ It seems to have the

¹³ The ESV differs only in the two Titus passages with “devote.” The AV uses some form of “rule” more frequently while in Titus it has “maintain.” The NIV has “direct the affairs of the church” in 1 Timothy 5:17.

¹⁴ *Mounce Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. William D. Mounce, Rick D. Bennett, Jr., Teknia, 2011. Accordance edition hypertexted and formatted by OakTree Software, Inc. Version 3.4

¹⁵ This verb takes its object in the Genitive case, so οἴκου, τέκνων and ἔργων in the appropriate texts.

sense of organization of those within a family or one's good works. It can be added on the 1 Timothy 5:17 passage that Paul likely refers to back to the matter of the bishop having his family in order, and so one who does this well, having more time to devote to how to teach what he knows, is worthy of double honor, and idea closely related to our present text. The feminine noun form of this verb occurs in Romans 16:2 where Paul applies it to Phoebe where she has exercised this ability for many as well as Paul himself.¹⁶ Paul uses the participle of a service gift in Romans 12:8, and this passage aids us in connection with Titus, that believers "in the Lord" need direction. They need others to point out opportunities for service, and how to operate in the Lord so that service is acceptable. One responsibility of the Church's leaders is to help the people know how to serve and how recognize opportunities for service. "In the Lord" is where they are to serve, He is master.

The third participle "give you instruction" has been traditionally translated "admonish." It has the sense of to put in mind and in this way to warn by clarifying a point and telling another "think about it." Colossians 1:28 distinguishes it from teaching but in connection with teaching it charges another to think about the implications of truth on one's conduct. In the Colossians context, Paul had announced who Christ is and how believers are related to Him, and with this warned, admonished or told them to think about it as others were attempting to lead them astray by

¹⁶ Again, though using the noun, Paul has genitive form of "many" [πολλῶν] and "me myself" [ἐμοῦ αὐτοῦ].

philosophy and human traditions. Therefore, these leaders were also using truth to warn believers against deception.

5:13 These individuals who served the body of Christ within a local assembly were to be recognized not in some honors ceremony but by paying attention to what they were teaching the believers. However, now Paul appears to encourage this recognition ceremony with the words “esteem them very highly.” Esteem [PMIf] means to lead one’s mind to consider. How they are to consider them is designated by the adverb “very highly,” an adverb meaning to overflow excessively. This isn’t a passing consideration of these individuals but a serious overflowing attitude toward them. They are to do this in love, indicating that the recipients of the teaching work desire what is best for those teaching. They do not respond in this way because of some office or position but because of [δὶα with accusative] their work. To be gifted and even to have a “position” but not do or attend to the work of that office deserves no respect. Paul wrote Timothy that the elders, and some of these individuals were elders, were worthy of double honor not because they were elders but because they maintained order in their families and expended themselves not only on what to teach but how to teach it (“word” has no article and therefore, is not the Word of God, but word in general, how to speak or say what one has learned. Additionally, he takes time to teach *didaskalia* which is truth that does not govern the practice of New Testament believers. It has value as all Scripture does, but won’t be the larger focus of the a pastor’s teaching and believers do need to

know even that type of truth and how to relate to it.

Paul then charged them “be at peace [PAIV] among yourselves.” Upon writing the Hebrews, he told them to be persuaded [πείθω PPIV] by their leaders and yield [ὑπέικω PAIV 1x]. He reminded the Hebrews that their leaders are watching with alertness¹⁷ for their souls (emotions/lives) and they will give a word (account). Paul wanted the leaders to be able to offer this report with joy and not being strained. To do so would have no benefit for the Hebrew believers. The leaders do not teach, exhort, and organize believers for their own personal benefit or health but for that of the believers. If those believers do not yield to that teaching and encouragement, all the work of the leaders benefits the saints nothing. If the believers were fighting among themselves, not applying peace in their relationship to one another, they would be failing to live as members of the body of Christ. The believer is charged to be at peace with all men on his part (Rom. 12:18). Christ is our peace, and peace should characterize our lives as our God is the God of peace (Rom. 15:33; 16:20-in both passages practical peace among saints is in view). The Philippians needed to be reminded of this as they struggled with serving together (Php. 4:9). The Hebrew saints were tending to selfishly look out for themselves and not one another, but should serve as their great Shepherd and empowered by the God of peace (Heb. 13:20).

¹⁷ Cp to Acts 20:28 and Paul’s charge to the elders.

5:14 Having addressed them with how to respond to their leaders, and beginning with the idea of peace in themselves, Paul turns to how they should react to fellow believers. He encourages [PAI] first, to admonish [PAIV] the unruly brothers. For a definition of admonition see verse 12. The unruly are those who are out of order [based on the root *tassō*]. God reveals an order for believers, how we relate to Him and one another (cp Col. 2:5; 1 Cor 14:40). Paul uses *tagma* in 1 Corinthians 15:23 of the order of resurrections, “each one in his own order or platoon.” In 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 7, 11 Paul uses this same term to describe those who refuse to work and expect the church to pay their way. They are out of order, they are not submitting to God’s proscribed design for believers in the Church, for they should be working to feed themselves and to help others. In the present context, the unruly are likely those who do hold the leadership in proper regard and so they do not submit to the organization and admonishment which the leaders present. Therefore, one way the rest of the assembly can support the leadership of the church is to admonish or warn those believers who refuse to submit to the leaders.

Next, they are to soothe [PMIV] the small souled. The verb “soothe”¹⁸ translates παραμυθεῖσθε, “to exercise a gentle influence by words; to soothe,

¹⁸ “encourage” ESV, NASB, NIV, and “comfort” AV, NET

comfort, console."¹⁹ It twice refers to those who came to comfort Mary and Martha on the death of their brother (Jh. 11:19, 31). Paul was comforting the Thessalonians to walk worthy of the gospel of God (2:12). Prophecy provides soothing and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3). These soothing words address the soul with its pain (Php 2:1). This comfort is directed at those of small soul.²⁰ The soul being the seat of emotions and therefore influence one's decisions needs to be addressed. Some people's souls are small, overly sensitive, overly emotional, and these individuals need special soothing of words. These words are not insincere statements to humor a person's struggle, but directing them to truth which will help. So knowing about the future of those believers who have died can encourage but could also soothe those grieving (1 Th. 4:18). The Philippians could be soothed by knowing what Jesus, Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus did in serving, even when they had struggles. Those words can soothe those who are struggling with serving. Paul soothed the Thessalonians about how to face the same kinds of struggles he faced when he was with them (2:9, 14, 19-20). Some problems in the church involve those who are highly emotional, as such individuals can be disruptive to the function of the assembly. Paul designates an appropriate and kind way to address

¹⁹ Mounce *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds William D. Mounce, Rick D. Bennett, Jr., 2011, <http://www.teknia.com/greek-dictionary>, electronic version Oak Tree Software.

²⁰ "Fainthearted" ASV, ESV, NASB, "disheartened", "feeble-minded" AV, "discouraged" NET.

their problems. All in the church helping with those who are overly sensitive is supportive of the local church leaders.

They are then to uphold [PMIV] those believers who are weak. While “weak” [*asthenia* ἀσθενής] can refer to those physically weak or sick, Paul here refers to those weak in the faith (cp Rom. 14:1; 15:1; 1 Cor. 8:7, 9-12). To be weak in the faith is to lack or have a poor grasp of God’s promises to the New Testament believer, or even to be inexperienced with believing those promises and so being weak, one impairs his or her own Christian life, thinking that certain activities might end or impair God’s love and grace toward them. Upholding the weak is to support them, to share the truth they need to learn. It may involve showing and explaining God’s promises so they can believe them and live a stronger Christian life. Paul reminded the elders of Ephesus that they should not demand, expect or perhaps even take any remuneration for taking hold of the one’s being weak to help them along (Acts 20:35). God has also provided a gift which specifically attends to such people. All in the church addressing those who are weak, for all, if they’ve been saved for more than a short time, should know something about God’s promises which they can teach to others and so support the leaders of the church.

Finally, they are to be longsuffering [patient PAIV] toward all. Though our modern translations have some form of patience, the word involves the long withholding of one’s temper as opposed to a short

temper.²¹ This character trait is listed as part of the fruit which the Spirit produces in the believer (Gal. 5:22). It is nearly always directed to people. A shortness or hostility towards others evidences carnality not the Spirit's work. The Spirit produces in us the ability to be kind to others as well as to not be hostile towards them. Having tempers controlled and properly relating to others supports the leadership of the local church.

15 In addition to not being angry with one another, they should also watch [PAIV] so that none of them repays [AAS] evil for evil. Evil is that which lacks in character. One person may engage or interact with another believer and not reflect Christ-likeness and therefore, even good-intentioned actions can leave something to be desired. Perhaps from our fallen human nature or as part of a Satanic temptation, we might be tempted to respond in kind. So in chapter 4, when one believer takes advantage of another, one might feel justified in doing the same. In the case of the unruly or disorderly brother who mooches off his fellow believers, others might be tempted to respond in kind, for Paul uses a related verb to “do evil”²² for “don’t **lose heart**” in 2 Thessalonians 3:13. One might become so frustrated with others

²¹ In older versions “patience” translated a noun [*hupōmoné* ὑπομονή] and verb meaning to “remain at ease/home under.” It involved the idea of maintaining proper character under some adversity. New versions now translate this root endurance and endure.

²² *Engkakeō* ἐγκακήσητε - to lose heart, to be evil within, or literally, lack character within.

not living right that they in turn do not live properly.

Rather, Paul encourages them to always pursue [PAIV] the good for one another and to all. Good [*agathos*] is that which involves a sense of well-being and contentment. We ought to pursue that which is beneficial or good for our brothers. We ought to desire the well-being, their contentment, even their happiness. In his second letter to them, he is desired that God would fill them with all good-pleasure of goodness (2:11). Goodness can involve the exercise of our spiritual gifts for the benefit of other saints, hence “good works” (Eph. 2:10). God also wanted them to do that which was beautiful or appreciably good (2 Th. 3:13).²³ Their work from faith and labor from love, even patience from hope can all be with the intent of goodness for the sake of other saints (1:3). Admonishing the unruly is ultimately for his good and is therefore, good. Encouraging others in their grief can be good. Helping believers weak in the faith can be good. Soothing the small souled can be good. Supporting the leaders of the church as they properly do the work God has given them can be good. They first direct goodness to one another, fellow believers, others of the same kind. But they can also demonstrate this goodness toward others. Goodness to unbelievers will not involve some of these activities. You do not admonish the unsaved regarding their behavior, soothe their emotions, or give them any promise but that of being forgiven and righteous with God. However, many

²³ *kalopoiēō* **καλοποιέω** - to do well, to do that which is fitting, appropriate, hence beautiful.

opportunities for goodness toward them remain for the Grace believer.

16 - The next eight statements like the last, “pursue the good” are imperatives. In the context of Paul’s opening “we ask you” (v. 12) where the verb *erōtaō* emphasized equality between speaker and audience, these imperatives are exhortations. Paul encourages the Thessalonians in these following areas both for their own benefit (though six of the verbs in the active voice) but also as a means of holding their leaders in high regard. The following behavior is that to which the leaders would normally be calling them.

“Rejoice [PAIV] always.” Joy is part of the fruit from the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). It is an attitude of appreciation and acceptance for the person, thing, of circumstance which God has before the believer. Joy is not happiness [μακάριος] or gladness [ἀγαλλιοῦ]²⁴ (1 Pet. 4:13-14). So one may rejoice in a good situation, such as a report or seeing someone not seen for a long time (2 Jh. 4:3; Col. 2:5; 2 Tim. 1:4). One may also rejoice in poverty (2 Cor. 8:2); the seizure of one’s possessions (Heb. 10:34); suffering for Christ (1 Pet. 4:13); making up the persecution lacking elsewhere in the body of Christ (Col. 1:24). Because of conflicts in the Philippian church, Paul told them to rejoice in the Lord (Php. 3:1; 4:4). Joy requires the believers to be following the Spirit’s lead. Rather than grouching about circumstances and individuals, rejoicing always would mean they Thessalonians are

²⁴ This verb derives from a root meaning to leap, an intense gladness.

listening and obeying their leaders' teaching and in this way, it would show the level of regard they have for them.

17 “Unceasingly worship [PMIV]” This verb, often translated by some form of the word “pray”²⁵ does not refer to general communication, but of worship of God. It was a term directed only to the gods at the time of the New Testament. Paul placed it second in a list, demonstrating that it is not the main general or overall term (1 Tim. 2:1; Php. 4: 6). Paul and Silas “worshipping they hymnized God” (Acts 16:25).²⁶ We may know what to ask when under adversity or suffering, but what to say in worship can escape us (Rom. 8:26). This term is commonly combined with other words for communication, demonstrating that Paul saw it as another in a list of communication terms and not the lead term (e.g. Eph. 6:18; Col. 1:9). While some passages appear as though Paul means “asking” with this term, it is equally possible that he means that he worships God in, around, and on the

²⁵ Lexicons are not helpful here. “Prayer” is the chief definition given with little consideration directed to a more precise definition of this term. Few note that apart from this term, the letters written to the Church have barely any reference to “worship” as the Greek word *proskuneō* occurs only four times in the letters to the Churches and only 1 Corinthians 14:25 refers (possibly) to a New Testament believer. All other references are to Old Testament saints or unbelievers.

²⁶ Translations often have “prayed and sang hymns” however, not conjunction “and” occurs and “pray” is a participle tied to the verb “hymnize” so that in this context “pray” or “worship” indicates how they hymnized.

circumstance or person for which he makes a request. Paul's use of this term twice as often as the other terms demonstrates that he did not conceive of asking God without also worshipping God. In our present text, this worship is to be done unceasingly. This adverb emphasizes that one is never finished. One cannot worship God and then claim to be finished worshipping for that hour, day or event. Rather, our worship pauses but it never done. Worship focuses our attention upon the nature and character of our God and serves to remind us who our God is, who this One is from whom we ask for a need. In this way, worship helps stabilize us and can even alter what we might consider asking as it changes in light of God's character. Focusing upon God demonstrates appreciation for the word taught about God.

18 "In everything give thanks/be thankful [PAIV]." In the first century, this term was an act or statement of appreciation for a benefit received from another. It is built on the root *charis* meaning grace or favor, and the prefixed with *eu* indicating something as good or well, hence "good grace" or "good favor." Due to the New Testament's emphasis upon God's grace as the believer's way of life, to recognize God's "good grace" takes on new significance. The New Testament believer has numerous opportunities and situations for which to recognize God's good grace. In fact here Paul says "in everything." At no time is the believer ever separated from God's grace and so one can always come back to that grace. Even the one who has fallen from grace as he or she attempts to live by law rather than grace in Christ (Gal. 6:4), can simply remember that position in Christ and

recognize God's grace. One is thankful for food to eat (Rom. 14:6); for other saints, even if most are carnal (1:2; 1 Cor. 1:4); for God's work on behalf of believers (Col. 1:12). One filled by the Spirit is thankful always (while being filled) for all things (Eph. 5:20) and thankful in whatever he or she might do in the name (character) of our Lord Jesus (Col. 3:17). Paul even reminds the Thessalonians that we are obligated to thank God always when we consider the salvation He has planned and given to us, especially when contrasted to the future of those who do not believe (2 Thess. 1:3; 2:13). Thankful people are an encouragement to their leaders.

19 "Do not quench [PAIV] the Spirit." The verb "quench" [*sbennumi*] means to extinguish a fire, to suppress or stifle.²⁷ To quench the Spirit is then to suppress or stifle the work of the Spirit in one's life, or through another believer. They had experienced the Spirit from the beginning (1:5). He had produced joy in them even under adversity (1:6). The Spirit could give them liberty from their sinful nature, with which some appear to have been struggling (4:8). The Spirit also leads, produces fruit, fills, gives and has given gifts for the benefit of the body, (Gal. 5:16, 22; Eph. 5:18; 1 Cor. 12:7). Believers can do priestly service by the Spirit (Php 3:3). The leaders should certainly be teaching and encouraging others to live by the works of the Spirit and to welcome the ministry of the Spirit through others. To not do so, or refuse such service would be to quench or suppress the Spirit's work in one's life or another's.

²⁷ Thayer, op cit.

20 “Do not despise [PAIV] prophecies.” Prophecy was one of the four gifts given to equip others for service in the body (Eph. 4:11). Prophecy was a foundational gift for the Church (Eph. 2:20). Prophecy is not forth-telling, but foretelling. It always tells something about the future either to encourage a certain behavior or to discourage a certain wrong activity. This letter has included several prophetic statement all of which encourage the believers: to live while awaiting the Lord from heaven who will rescue us (chp 1), to consider our present activity in the face of adversity (chp 3), who have lost believing loved ones (chp 4), to recognize that our lifestyle and attitude toward the world should be different than those who live without the expectation of any change or judgment (chp 5). To despise is to refuse to recognize any authority in the claim or action. This may tie directly to the quenching of the Spirit in the previous statement, for the Spirit has given the gift of prophecy and gives the individual words of prophecy to the prophets. Some may not appreciate the value of prophecy to the Christian life. To despise prophecy would not be holding their leaders in high regard, as the leaders may teaching them the prophecies which had been revealed. Teachers do not reveal prophecy but can teach what is revealed. Prophets speak the new prophecies not yet revealed. In this way, some of the prophets may even have been leaders at that time. Paul states in 1 Corinthians 13:9 that prophecy was to cease when the complete prophecy arrived, or when God had said to the Church, all He was going to say for the present time.

21 “All things prove [PAIV].” The verb “prove” means to test expecting success or to find something of value. It was used of assaying ore for its purity. John warned his readers to not believe every spirit but to test them (1 Jh. 4:1). He ties this testing with false prophets. He told them to test the spirits by what they said about Jesus Christ and His physical nature (v. 2). Paul indicated that spirits acted as the intermediaries of these prophecies but that the prophets remained in control and did not have to speak simply because a spirit revealed something (1 Corinthians 14:29-32). There, Paul did not use “prove” but “discern” or “judge through it” as other prophets considered the prophecy spoken. A gift for discerning of spirits follows immediately Paul reference to prophecy in 1 Corinthians 12:10, indicating a connection. Here, Paul writes “all things” which is a neuter plural pronoun. Prophecy is a feminine noun, and the neuter often refers to different terms of mixed gender. It is difficult to determine what they are proving aside from the prophecies. They are not to despise the prophecies but are to prove them. In addition to the prophecies, like John wrote, they are testing the spirits who convey the prophecies to the prophets.

They prove prophecies and spirits expecting something good, but are to be aware that if the prophecy contradicts what they know to be true, such prophecies are to be rejected. So, Paul states hold fast [PAIV] to the good [καλός] or that which has an appreciable beauty to it. Paul means here, the prophecies which prove to be genuinely from God.

22 Abstain [PMiv] from every appearance of evil has been applied broadly to many areas of life. However, the noun “appearance” [εἶδος here εἶδους] answers to “good” [καλός] in the previous verse. Prophecy foretold something, and nearly always tied to some encouragement for the present or charge to act in the present. So the false prophecy/teaching that the resurrection had already passed overturned the faith of some believers (2 Tim. 2:18). Teaching that we are already in the Day of the Lord shook some of the Thessalonians (2 Thess. 2:1-2). For the Church, prophecy is intended to edify, encourage and even soothe believers (1 Cor. 14:3).²⁸ The misuse of prophecy in the two previous Scriptures demonstrates the problems caused when one does not prove all things and stand apart from or hold away those which prove to be evil. Paul used πονηρός to indicate that this evil spreads; it will infect others and even other areas of truth—no truth stands apart or alone, but truth is intertwined. Both New Testament words for evil [κακός and πονηρός] refer to some lack or deficiency in character, that is, someone or something is not as one should or could expect. A prophecy which lacks from God’s plans will spread error and so disrupt what God desires for His people.

God will complete what He began

23 Most texts separate this verse as a new paragraph. The critical Greek text does this also

²⁸ We should take note of the misuse of prophecy to frighten people into better behavior or even salvation.

with verse 22. However, neither needs to be a new paragraph. Both fit Paul's purpose. Verse 22 adds a further charge to Paul's list of imperatives (fifteen in all, three more occurred in 5:11) which began in verse 13 with "be at peace." Verses 21-22 addressed the importance of accurate prophecy. Verse 23 may suggest an area of evil prophecy: some of you may not be fully set apart when the Lord comes for us. This opposes Paul's assurance concerning them.

God is the God of peace. Paul uses this exact phrase five times. In Romans 15:33 and 16:20 is reminds them of the peace God has established with them, and so guarantees their future as well as makes them watch those who do not promote this peace in the churches. In the midst of some disagreement/s regarding serving together, Paul assured the Philippians that the God of peace is with them (4:9). The God of peace will adjust the Hebrew saints, despite their exclusion from the temple rituals and Jewish society (Heb. 13:20-21).²⁹ Additionally, in 2 Corinthians 13:11 he has "the God of love and peace," encouraging a church agitated by false teachers passing themselves off as apostles and treating the saints like merchandise. Each of these encourage the reader in the midst of a situation where peace would normally be absent. Each reminds them of God's character and what He is and will do, despite those circumstances.

Based on Paul's usage of this phrase in other texts, it is likely that some false prophecies had agitated the Thessalonians. So, if the false claim were true

²⁹ In addition, all Paul's letters assure the readers that they have peace from God.

in 2 Thessalonians 2 that the day of the Lord was already present, this would not cause the believers peace but stress as they considered the severity of that time. 5:1-11 seem to indicate that the error Paul will mention in His second letter to them, was already being promoted to some degree. Some lacked peace due to their lack of knowledge regarding those who had died (4:13-17).

Paul wishes that the God of peace would sanctify (set apart) [AAO] the Thessalonians entirely and that they would wholly be guarded (keep safe) [τηρέω-APO] blamelessly when our Lord Jesus Christ is present for us. Paul uses two Optative verbs “sanctify” and “guarded” to express His wish.³⁰ The Optative mood (a form of a Greek verb) expresses a state furtherest removed from reality, because it is a wish. It does not mean that it is unlikely to happen, but there is no certainty that it will happen. Paul’s use of the Optative does not throw doubt on whether the Thessalonians will be whole in the future. His uncertainty involves the question of timing: in the present or at our Lord’s coming for us (i.e. the Rapture). The next verse expresses his ultimate assurance, but he is concerned with how they are doing now while they live in anticipation of that future. This is the second time Paul has used the adverb “blamelessly” (2:10) and the related adjective blameless (3:13).

³⁰ “The optative is the mood of strong contingency; the mood of possibility.” H.E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, (Toronto, ON: The Macmillan Co, 1955) p. 172. It often expresses a wish.

Two words indicate the entirety of these two wishes. The first, “entirely” [ὄλοτελεῖς] describes whole or complete maturity, that one has reached God’s intended end or goal. The second, “complete” [ὀλόκληρος] refers to all the parts that make up a person or thing. The first term looks at our maturity or growth, a path along which God is moving or carrying us. A different term with a similar idea occurs in Hebrews 7:25. This maturity involves being set apart to God, implying growth in God being the chief object of one’s life. The second word recognizes that all our parts must be kept safe blamelessly for the former to be true. Paul expresses man’s nature as consisting of spirit, soul and body. He placed a definite article before each one to distinguish them. These parts operate together and so constitute other parts: mind, heart, strength. Certainly the spirit is distinct from the body as the latter is dead apart from the first (Jas. 2:26). Similarly, Paul distinguishes between the soul and the spirit: the former being our sensory interpretive center and the latter our objective, non-sensory part with which we relate to God (Heb. 4:12; Php 1:27; 1 Cor. 15:44-46).

The human spirit of believers has been born anew (Jh. 3:3-6). The body and soul await our Lord’s appearing. However, the believer can bring to bear the benefits of salvation on both so that service can be done from the soul (emotional center; Col. 3:23) and through the body (1 Cor. 6:20). Therefore, though unsaved, even these parts can be brought inline (Heb. 10:39).

Excursus on the spirit and soul

While much of Christendom holds a dichotomist view of man's nature; man is immaterial and material, and treat the spirit and soul as synonymous, several New Testament passages treat the spirit and soul as distinct components of man's makeup. They both constitute man's immaterial nature and yet are distinct. These distinctions are vital to understanding our experience and living the Christian life.

The two are sometimes just used as a metonymy for a human being: spirits, souls. Sometimes they refer to our life (Mt. 2:20; Jas. 2:26).

Some texts distinguish the two.

1 Thess 5:23 - Each component has a definite article thus distinguishing it from the other parts.

Heb. 4:12 - Though the distinction may be fine, God's Word is able to help the believer see the distinction between the two parts. For the Hebrews, how they felt with their soul seemed to conflict with what they knew in their spirit.

1 Cor. 2:14-15 - The adjectives soulish (natural) and spiritual distinguish the unsaved man from the believer. The unsaved man only welcomes what he can examine with his senses, while the believer with the ability to be spiritual can discern value in the things from God which cannot be evaluated with the senses (cp 2:9).

1 Cor. 15:44-46 - Our present body is soulish (natural) geared to respond to our soul and our future body will be spiritual (geared to reflect our spirit).

Php. 1:27 - The Philippians needed to stand in one spirit and work as a team in one soul (mind).

How are the two distinct?

The spirit

1 Cor. 2:11 - The spirit of an individual and only that individual knows objectively [οἶδα] his own matters. Therefore, spirit knows objectively apart from experience or senses.

1 Cor. 14:14-15 - The spirit is not equal to the mind [νοῦς] though it is part of the mind. A person may worship or psalm to God in a different language and knows that it is to God and therefore is something appropriate, but his mind does not understand what he says, so his experience is limited.

14:19 - One should speak in the known language of whatever group one assembles so that all can appreciate what is said.

Eph. 4:23 - The human spirit is part of the mind (partitive genitive).

Lk. 1:47 - Mary's spirit was very glad.

The soul

The soul is the seat of one's senses and sensory emotions.

Lk. 1:46 - Mary's soul made much of God (she really lifted Him in her feelings).

2:35 - A sword would pierce Mary's soul (i.e. immense sorrow).

Jh. 12:27 - Jesus' soul was very agitated.

Acts 14:2 - They stirred up and made the peoples' souls evil (spiteful).

Mt. 26:38 - Jesus' soul was deeply grieved/sorrowful.

1 Pet. 1:22 - We need to purify our soul so we can have an unhypocritical brotherly love.

Php. 2:20 - Timothy had a soul equal to Paul's because he genuinely cared about the Philippians.

The Old Testament also draws distinctions

Isa. 26:9 - The soul craves after or sighs after and the spirit seeks for God.

1 Ki. 11:37 - The soul craves after or sighs after (same verb as Isa. 26:9).

Nu. 11:6 - The soul may loathe or abhor a food.

Prvb. 6:30 - One steals to fill up/satisfy his soul.

Ps. 77:6 - The spirit searches diligently through what one sings while his heart meditates (speaks through it).

Prv. 18:14 - The spirit contains a man in his sickness, but if a spirit is struck who can lift it up? The spirit helps us keep it together.

Both have problems

2 Cor. 7:1 - The spirit can be smeared (metaphorically) with that which defiles it.

Jas. 1:8; 4:8 - The soul can be divided. One can crave for two disparate things.

1 Pet. 2:11 - The flesh acts as a soldier against the soul. It is the weak element. It appeals to what one craves rather than what one knows objectively.

Cp. this with Rm. 7:23 - where “wars against is **αντιστρατ**- the mind. Therefore, the soul is part of the mind.

Heb. 6:19 - The soul being swayed by pain and grief requires an anchor.

Heb. 12:3 - The soul may faint at hardship.

Rev. 6:9 - The soul seeks vengeance.

24 Countering the likely false prophecy, Paul assures them that the God that called [PAPt] them will do it [FAI]. God called them to salvation and He will finish what He has begun (Php 1:6; Rm. 8:29ff). This seems to be an issue in more than one church (either the fear of those struggling, or suggestion of those acting critically) that believers were uncertain of the future state. The fear was most likely that the state of some believers would be inferior to that of others. Our future state and responsibilities rest with God and His purposes, not in our performance. Our performance touches only on how much of that is accomplished prior to the Rapture.

25 Paul asked the Thessalonians to worship [PMIV] (pray) generally [περι] for Paul and his companions. The verb occurs twice and the noun once (5:17; 1:2). See the notes on 5:17 for some development of this term. Jesus told the Samaritan woman that worship of God was going to change (Jh. 4:21-24). At that time under the Old Testament dispensation, worship focused on physical posture (falling, kneeling, kissing the hand or foot) and a physical location (the temple). Jesus revealed that worship would be in spirit (i.e. the human spirit). New Testament worship focuses upon God's character, by communicating in one's spirit back to God who we know God to be. The Old Testament (Gospels) word *proskumeō* [προσκυνέω] involves a physical act or physical posture. It meant to do "*homage by kissing the hand...homage by prostration...to bow one's self in adoration.*"³¹ Due to the physical emphasis, this word is conspicuously absent in the letters to the Churches, occurring once of a New Testament believer (1 Cor. 14:25).³² The verb and noun *proseuchomai* and *proseuchē* in the letters to the churches replace the physical term. Cremer notes that the verb form occurs seldom in the Greek translation of the Old Testament "because the more concrete expressions of request, complaint,

³¹ Mounce *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. William D. Mounce with Rick D. Bennett, Jr., 2011
 Accordance edition hypertexted and formatted by OakTree Software, Inc. Version 3.6

³² It occurs twice in Hebrews (1:6; 11:21) of angels and an OT saint. Revelation 3:9 involves unbelievers.

vow, thanksgiving prevail.”³³ He notes that the noun occurs, representing the Hebrew noun *תפילה* [תפלה], derived from a verb meaning to “fall” indicating a physical posture before God. The Greek verb is used only of communication to a god, because worship alone was appropriate to a deity. It is built on the noun *euchē* meaning to vow. This vow was only made to bargain with a god: I’ll keep this vow if you do this for me. In Romans 9:3, if it were possible and he knows it is not, Paul would vow or bargain with God to be cut off from the benefits of the Christ (e.g. freedom from law) so that his fellow Jews could be saved.³⁴ The problem with *proseuchomai* is that it appears in some passages to mean general communication with God including asking, and not worship. So even here “pray for us” as rendered in our English Bibles looks like “ask for us.” However, the background of this term and the use of the preposition *peri* encourage us to grasp Paul’s thought. He wanted them to worship around [*peri* “for”] him and his companions. It alters the way in which we think of worship. Thinking about other believers and their needs should cause us to focus not only on the need itself or on the request for the need, but also on God’s character. So, the believers in Acts 4 saw the need for boldness and that moved them to worship God in terms of His creative power and sovereign exercise of that power in the matters of Christ’s death.

³³ Herman Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1962) p. 720.

³⁴ He knew better than that in God’s plan, but states that he would if possible.

26 Paul charged them to greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. A holy kiss is not passionate but friendly like a hearty, friendly handshake is distinct from lovers holding hands. It was their form of greeting among close friends, and so Paul encourages them to do so.

27 Paul adjured or put them under oath [PAI-enorkizō] by the Lord, the one in charge, that the letter be read [APIf] to all the brothers. Some were illiterate, but even more likely is that it was the easiest way to be sure all knew Paul's encouragement and warnings. Since many issues in the letter involved actions towards one another, it is necessary that all get to hear the letter so all can be encouraged both in hope and in action.

28 The grace, by which we live, is with you. Not might "be", but it is. Verbless clauses use the Indicative form of "to be": am, is, are. This is assurance. That grace is from our Lord, the one who is in charge, Jesus, the one who is man and died for sins, Christ, the one who is anointed, being raised from the dead and now glorified.

The second letter to the Thessalonian believers

The writers and recipients are the same as the first letter and so see introductory notes.

Whereas the first letter had time cues in chapter three regarding its writing, this letter bears no such notes. It does not appear that the letter was written too long after the first. The only indicator of some time having passed is that another error has entered, which Paul addresses in chapter two, and the problem of lazy believers implied in 1 Thessalonians four has grown worse. If the first letter was written early in 51, this was written only a few months later.

As noted, an error regarding the Day of the Lord had been proposed probably through a letter written by someone passing themselves off as Paul. This error was causing distress to the Thessalonians were still spiritually young believers. Paul will address this. Persecution had also intensified according to chapter one. This may have given rise to the false letter, someone suggesting that the persecution meant they were in the day of the Lord. This also necessitated a clarification regarding persecution, its purpose and effects.

1:1 Paul, Silvanus and Timothy again address the Thessalonian church. Still together and still concerned for the needs of this assembly, they together write this letter. Though attributed chiefly to Paul, because all three are mentioned we should assume they all were born along by the Spirit in the writing of this letter, so it communicated precisely what God wanted said.

The Thessalonians are in both the Father and the Son. Jesus expressed this (Jh. 17:21). Paul later expressed this in Colossians 2:2 (the longer reading). The believer's position is in both and a unity results from knowing and properly relating to that truth. This truth knits believer's hearts together.

2 Paul reminds them that God's grace and peace are theirs. Grace is God's unmerited favor by which He provides benefits to believers without regard to merit, which is important because the believer does not merit God's benefits. Peace is the calmness of mind despite circumstances good or adverse. This will be vital in the follow section in which Paul addresses their adversity. The Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are the source of this grace and peace. Both extends various aspects of grace to the believer. The Father counts the believer to be in Christ by grace (Eph. 1:6) and the Lord Jesus Christ is where the grace exists. Both provide peace. God has reconciled us to Himself (2 Cor. 5:19) and in this way made peace. The Lord Jesus Christ also promised His disciples that they would have adversity in the world but peace in Him (Jh. 16:33). He is also the basis of peace as He took the world's hostility toward God and so also the consequences. He now is the believer's position where he finds peace with God and between saints (Eph. 2:14-17).

3 Paul was obligated [PAI] to give thanks [PAIf] to God always generally [περὶ with the Genitive case] for the Thessalonians. To give thanks is to recognize God's good grace, to see the benefits of His grace extended to one's self or other believers. He acknowledges the

Thessalonians as brothers. Brothers is a term which relates us in Christ, as those who share a common position (Php. 1:14; Eph. 6:21; Col. 1:2). It also seems tied regeneration, for in Hebrews 2:11 Christ is not ashamed to call us brothers, we all being out of one, that is the Father, for in our humanity we share together. Christ became like us in His humanity in order to be merciful as a high priest, to be understanding toward us (Heb. 2:17).

This thanks is [PI] worthy. This word worth meant in balance, as often worth was determined by weight in balance scales. Paul's thanks is worthy to God because the Faith of the Thessalonians is growing [PAI] and their love is increasing [PAI]. Their faith does not grow in size but in consistency. They have more consistently believed God's promises to them. As one learns to believe one promise or set of promises, God often allows the believer to recognize additional promises. God's promises are recorded in the New Testament letters written to the Church and portions of Acts, John 13-17 and the first three chapters of Revelation. One of those promises involves serving other believers in love (Gal. 5:6, 13-14). So, their love also increased as they more consistently loved one another. Paul had learned that this was not an odd believer here or there who loved, but each one of the whole group was learning to love more consistently. One another, a reciprocal pronoun, indicates this is love among believers, and specifically in the Thessalonian church, as that group with whom they assembled provided them the best opportunity to demonstrate love.

4 As a result, Paul boasted [PMIf] about the Thessalonian saints among the Churches. They

wanted other believers to know what God had done in their lives. Paul's admonition, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:31) is appropriate because every believer has the potential for this boast because all this is God's work. The chief part of the believer is to cooperate with what God does or has provided.

Paul boasted about the Thessalonians' patience and faith in their persecutions and adversities with which they were putting up [PMI]. Patience involves remaining at ease or comfortable under an adversity. It then means to maintain the proper character. Rather than using adversity and persecution as excuses for bad behavior, patience maintains good behavior. They also continued to believe God's promises by faith. Rather than become so discouraged as to doubt that God had any good intentions toward them and for them, they believed His promises. He told His disciples before His final ascension that He would never abandon them but is with them all the days, until the consummation of the age (Matt. 28:20b). Paul repeats this promise (Heb. 13:5). This promise applied meant that "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what men will do to me" (Heb. 13:6). Persecution comes from a verb meaning to pursue, to chase. It came to mean the harsh treatment inflicted on another at the end of a pursuit, or even during the pursuit, such that it seems relentless. In Antioch of Pisidia, the Jews filled with jealousy started a persecution against Paul and Barnabas so as to throw them out of the city limits (Acts 13:50). Paul viewed his pre-Christian actions against the believers as "persecution unto death" and imprisonment (Acts 22:4). Adversities

(AV tribulations) referred to pressure which could come as a result of circumstances or from men. Stephen saw the harsh treatment of Joseph by his brothers and others as well as the circumstances which accompanied famine as adversity (Acts 7:10-11). It is necessary that believers enter the kingdom of God through adversity, it is God's plan (Acts 14:22). Paul viewed marriage as bring pressure or adversity on an individual, because added a person or persons (children) for whom one had to care (1 Cor. 7:28). Adversity is God's means of growing us as we have patience under it (Rom. 5:3). It seems that the difference between these two terms is that persecution involves harshness and ferocity while adversity may simply mean to pressure, or to make another's life hard or difficult: hard to find a job, a place to stay, not welcomed, etc.. The Thessalonians were bearing up [ἀνέχω]. They were tolerating both persecution and adversity without retaliating. Paul warned that believers will reach a state in which they will not tolerate the proper teaching of the Old Testament but will want it taught to tickle their ears (2 Tim. 4:3). Gallio the provincial ruler in Corinth did not tolerate the Jews bringing Paul on charges involving their religion (Acts 18:14). This verb meant that like Christ, when the Thessalonians were treated harshly or put under pressure, they did not retaliate, but bore up under the circumstance. Responding in this way, demonstrated God's work expressed through their patience and faith.

5 The Thessalonians' patience and faith in their persecutions and adversities were a display of God's righteous judgment that they would be

counted worthy [APIf] of God's kingdom. Here, God's righteous judgment is not against unbelievers or disobedient individuals, but for those who live righteously. The Thessalonians allowed God to work through them. The kingdom of God is the sphere of salvation, especially where the effects of regeneration operate (Jh. 3:3-6). Regeneration as it relates to the Son involves the possession of the Son and eternal life (Jh. 3:16; 1 Jh. 5:11-12). As it relates to the Father, it involves being God's child, with His kind of nature because God's spiritual DNA is in the believer (1 Jh. 5:1; 3:9; 2 Pet. 1:3-4). Regeneration is affected by the Holy Spirit and its benefits are worked out as the fruit (Gal. 5:22-23). The exercise of patience exhibits God's power to remain at ease under adversity. The use of faith and love even while undergoing persecution exhibits the Spirit's work of producing fruit and the believer using that fruit in a given situation. To be counted worthy in this case indicates their conduct matched or was balanced to God's provision; they used properly what God has given them. God judged their conduct to be worthy of the kingdom. They were visibly living out that kingdom in how they responded to the persecution and adversity.

The noun "proof" or "evidence" is a word indicating the result of "displaying" [ἔνδειγμα < ἐνδείκνυμι], therefore the display or proof. This is the only occurrence of this word though the verb occurs eleven times, often with the idea of God showing something about Himself or about others, perhaps His work in them.

They suffered [PAI] for [ὑπέρ] the kingdom of God. Such suffering resulted from the message they proclaimed regarding salvation and from their new lifestyle. The verb “suffer” is present tense, indicate it was their reality, not just a potential for them. Paul stated that the Thessalonians had turned from idols to serve the living and true God (1 Thess. 1:8-9). The abandonment of the idols and their temples was not well received by those who remained loyal adherents. Further, Paul’s preaching was received by belief and unbelief, and the unbelief was often hostile as in Acts 13-14 and Thessalonica itself as well as Berea. The hostility first directed to Paul in Thessalonica is now directed at the Thessalonian believers themselves following Paul’s departure.

6 It is (verbless) righteous with God to repay [ἀνταποδίδωμι AAIf] those who trouble [PAPt] believers with trouble. Paul does not use **the** Tribulation and the context does not support that idea. The noun *thlipsis* [θλίψις] occurs 43 times in the New Testament. Often times it refers to general adversity or pressure. Jesus even promised the disciples that we would have adversity in this world and we can boast in it (Jh. 16:33; Rm. 5:3). Though Jesus warned of great tribulation which is unprecedented (Mt. 24:21), and which culminates with the celestial bodies ceasing to shine and the sign of the Son of man appearing (Mt. 24:29-30). Paul also states that God will repay [ἀποδίδωμι] to each man according to the standard of his works (Rm. 2:6), and for every soul of man who works evil [*kakos*-lack in character], He repays adversity/pressure and tightness (Rm. 2:9). This states to every soul of man, not to some. Jesus also

promised to throw those who commit adultery with Jezebel (a self-proclaimed prophetess in the Thyatira church) into great tribulation (Rev. 2:22). Revelation 7:14 records a vast number of people coming out of the great tribulation (7:14). With the exception of two verses in the gospels, eight of the ten occurrences of the verb “to trouble” [θλίβω] refer to the experience of the believer. Jesus’ words in Matthew 24 and Revelation 2:22 appear to refer to a time distinct from the typical adversity believers face, a time Jesus claimed will be unprecedented. Scripture also refers to this as the 70th week of Daniel 9. However, in the present text and in Romans 2, it appears that Paul applies this term to divine punishment in the Lake of Fire. This is supported by the timing of the following statement.

7-8 When He repays to them adversity, He repays the believers being troubled [PMPT] relief with us. Paul is assuring the Thessalonians will receive relief from God together with Paul and his companions. It will be the shared experience of all who comprise the body of Christ. While we (dispensationalists) might be inclined to interpret this as a reference to the seven year tribulation, it seems better that this refers to punishment resulting from either the judgments at the end of Daniel’s 70th week or the Great White Throne judgment at the end of the 1,000 years. Our relief is not received at that time, but was given at least seven years prior when He came for His church. However, relief stands in contrast to the adversity which the unbelieving receives. Their trouble will be eternal (v. 9), while our relief likewise is eternal.

We receive relief when the Lord Jesus will be revealed [FAI] from heaven with His powerful angels, in a flame of fire giving [PAPt] vengeance to those who do not know [οἶδα PFAPt] God. They do not even have an objective knowledge of God, much less an experiential knowledge. Further, they are not obeying [PAPt] the gospel concerning our Lord Jesus. The gospel presents the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Creator who came into this world as man and died for our sins, was buried and rose again the third day (1 Cor. 15:3-4). If one believes that good news, he does not work (Rom. 4:5) but only believes. To not obey the gospel means one does not believe that good news, and may continue doing good works in an attempt to earn favor with some deity, but certainly not the God of heaven and earth.

Flame of fire is used of the torment of the rich man in Luke 16:24. It is used of the nature of angels or situations in which they served (Acts 7:30; Heb. 1:7). Three times it describes Jesus' eyes, depicting His omniscience (Rev. 1:14; 2:18; 19:12). Here, flame of fire describes Jesus' revelation. "Revelation" or unveiling refers to the Rapture of the Church (1 Pet. 1:7-9; 4:13; 1 Cor. 1:7), but also to revelation of truth from Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:12; 2:2). The present text uses revelation of the second coming at the end of Daniel's 70th week. When He comes accompanied by the armies of heaven (Rev. 19), He will come in a flame of fire.

9 When the Lord Jesus comes, those who have disobeyed the gospel and do not know God will pay [τίνω FAI] the penalty [δική]. This is the only occurrence of this verb meaning to pay the

price of a penalty or fine. Doubled with the noun *diké* from “right” it indicates the God is righteous in determining what these individuals owe for their actions. God pays them eternal whole destruction [ὄλεθρος³⁵]. It is used of the destruction of the flesh of the man engaged in incest (1 Cor. 5:5). It comes on them when they claim peace and safety (1 Th. 5:3). It describes the destruction experienced by those who determine to be rich (1 Tim. 6:9). This last passage is helpful as it demonstrates this does not mean cessation of existence, but destruction from a desire or intended goal. They wish an existence apart from God. They do not desire what they view as the limitations of answering to God. However, God designed man to bear His glory to live in dependence with God. Apart from a relationship with God, man has proved sinful and self-

³⁵ The root verb ὄλλυμι does not occur in the New Testament but ἀπόλλυμι occurs 90 times. It is used of Herod destroying all infant boys (Mt. 2:13), of the disciples’ fear in the storm (Mt. 8:25), of ruined wineskins (Mt. 9:17), of the disciples’ view of the alabaster box of ointment poured on Jesus (Mt. 26:8), of the desired effect from a spirit throwing a boy into fire (Mk. 9:22), of the lost sheep, coin, and son (Lk. 15) and so often of something lost, and frequently of death as a destruction of life. It is also used of ruin caused to a brother by one’s actions (Rm. 14:15; 1 Cor. 8:11), of God destroying the wisdom of the wise (1 Cor. 1:19). It is the end of those whose god is their belly, and are enemies of the cross (Php. 3:19). It occurs combined with the noun in 1 Timothy 6:9. Neither the verb nor the noun indicate cessation of existence but ruination from an intended purpose, an end to one form of life, or lostness for enjoyment and useful purposes as in the sheep, coin, and son. It is the opposite of save (Jas. 4:12).

destructive. Genesis 6:5 states that man's imagination was only evil all the day, where evil describes calamity and disaster. Man's plans bring him to ruin. God's design in the garden was good, the opposite of calamity. God grants them what they desire, to be away from God, so their ruination which they desire is away from the presence of the Lord and away from His glory characterized by inherent strength [ἰσχυρός]. No one will be consigned to the lake of fire without personally being judged by the Lord. All will then stand before Him in His glory as they are judged (Mt. 25:31). For a moment they are privileged to see Him in the visible manifestation of His strength and are then eternally sent away. Their ruination is not reversible but eternal.

While modern minds struggle with what this accomplishes, this context reminds us how helpful this knowledge was to those believers who were suffering greatly at the hands of the unbelieving.

10 He will judge them when He comes [AAS] to be glorified [APIf] by His saints. Again, this is not the Rapture, but the second coming when He returns from heaven to earth accompanied by His glorified Church-now-bride. Paul described this in Romans 8 as unveiling of the son of God, and the glory/reputation of the children of God, the placement (practical) as sons and full redemption of our body (Rm. 8:19-23). We have but one third of our total salvation in this present. When our Lord comes for us, He will finish what has been started. At the second coming, we will be made manifest to the world, and creation will be released from its corruption when He comes. In our present text, He is glorified, or His reputation is made visible by

means of (not “in”) His saints. Our liberation, full redemption, and manifestation all say something about Him and His reputation; He has taken clay pots and made them vessels to bear His glory as God’s sons and children. This is certainly a key part of our relief.

He will also be the object of amazement [APIf] by all those believing [AAPt]. They will see in us the effect of simply believing, not acting independent or adding anything to the good news (as per the lost previously mentioned). Believers heard and responded in faith to the good news, and God did the work of saving, and finishing that work in these believers. As if this is not sufficient, Paul explains that their testimony was believed [API] by the Thessalonians in that day, that is the day Paul testified to Christ’s death and resurrection. The gospel of Christ is God’s power to salvation. It is an uncomplicated message, yet powerful to save those who believe (Rm. 1:16).

As the Thessalonians suffer for the profession of faith, Paul has encouraged them regarding their future and the future of their persecutors. He assures them that they suffer for their faith and testimony.

11 Persecution/trouble can cause people to excuse their bad behavior, but Paul prayed [PMI] that God would count them worthy [AAS] of their calling. The believer’s calling is into Christ, to a unity, to a position as God’s sons, therefore it is a heavenly calling (cf. Eph. 4:1-3; Php 3:14; Heb. 3:1). It is not based on earthly status or our works (1 Cor. 1:26; 2 Tim. 1:9). The calling is one not many (Eph. 4:4). To be worthy is to live a life in balance

to God's work, meaning God says they are sons and they live in balance to that. Believers are to walk worthy of their calling, of the Lord, of God (Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10; 1 Th. 2:12). In addition they are to function as citizens worthy of the gospel of the Christ (Php 1:27). So, believers should live in balance to the value of the gospel, of the Lord, or our God. How we live shows how we value these. Paul also desired that God fill full all good pleasure of goodness and work of faith in power. God works in the believer on behalf of His good pleasure (Php 2:13). His good pleasure involves our being placed as sons and His plan for the dispensation of the fullness of times (Eph. 1:5, 9-10). Paul's future wish for the Thessalonians ties to they (and we) being made plainly visible as God's sons in that kingdom in which we will share Christ's reign, so that He (God) heads up all things by the Christ (cp. Rom. 8:19-23). The Thessalonians were taking patiently suffering at the hands of the Gentiles, and so could know the promise that they will jointly reign (2 Tim. 2:12). Even the Corinthians who were not living well were told they would judge the world and angels, and this as part of that kingdom rule (1 Cor. 6:2-3). God counts believers worthy and fills full His good pleasure, moving them towards the glorified state in which they will reign with Christ. He does not accomplish those works in those believers who are not living consistent with His calling. Carnal, ensnared or worldly believers cannot do God's will, and therefore cannot glorify Him in activity.

12 The purpose of living consistent with God's calling so that His good pleasure and work are filled full to glorify [APS] the name of Jesus Christ.

God's intent for us is that we should be to the praise of His glory (Eph. 1:12). His name refers to both His title and His character. We live His character and so express the reputation [glory] of Who He is. This is measured by the grace of God even our Lord Jesus Christ. The nouns God and Lord Jesus Christ are connected with the conjunction **καί** and a single definite article, and so are the same person.³⁶ Paul does not mean God the Father and Lord Jesus Christ, but God even (or who is) Lord Jesus Christ. Paul often closes His letters stating that the Lord Jesus Christ is the source of grace (Rm. 16:20; 1 Cor. 16:23; 2 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 6:18; Php. 4:23; 1 Th. 5:28; 2 Th. 3:18; Phm 25). **κατά** indicates the standard of how we glorify God. We do not glorify the Lord Jesus Christ by living by law. Grace living is consistent with who we are in Christ and grace living is how we glorify the name of our Lord. He is glorified by means of you, by how we live with respect to who He is. This serves as an important reminder in the face of their adversity and persecution.

The Day of the Lord and the Departure of Church Saints/the Body of Christ

2:1 Paul turns to correct a misunderstanding of God's plans triggered by the sufferings of the Thessalonians (2:1ff). Paul begins his appeal, asking [**ΠΑΙ ἑρωτῶμεν**] them as brothers to consider our future. He asks on behalf of both parts of the Rapture: our Lord's appearing or

³⁶ This is a Granville Sharp construction, article - singular noun - **καί** conjunction - singular noun.

presence [*parousia*] and our gathering/assembling [*episunagōgē*] to Him. In his first letter to them, he reminded them that our Lord will descend and we will then be caught up to Him (1 Thess. 4:16-17). Our Lord's descent is His appearing or presence, and our being caught up to Him is our gathering. They know this. So on the basis of this truth Paul appeals to them.

2:2 He appeals for them to not be quickly shaken [A_PInf]. The verb "shaken" is used of a reed shaken by the wind (Matt. 11:7), of shaking to settle down the contents of grain (Lk 6:38). Of significance is the shaking of the house in which the Church met in Acts 4:31, and of the prison by an earthquake in 16:26. Metaphorically it describes a mental shaking by those trying to cause trouble for Paul in Berea (Acts 17:13). So here Paul is concerned with the Thessalonians being shaken from their minds. "From" indicates a clear state of mind to one which is addled and unclear, so the NASB translates it "composure." He does not want them to be alarmed [P_PInf *θροεῖσθαι*], a word meaning to sound an alarm and deriving from a mournful or alarmed song. Jesus warned the Jewish followers of not being alarmed by rumors of wars (Matt. 24:6). This shaking or alarm might be caused by a spirit, likely giving a false prophecy (see comments on 5:20-22), or through a word by someone present speaking, or through a letter, perhaps by someone trying to pass themselves off as Paul. Whatever means might be employed, the intention is to claim that the day of the Lord is present [P_FAI], where the perfect means it arrived and remains. Paul already distinguished the day of the Lord in chapter five of the first letter. He

contrasted believers from those are the objects of the day of the Lord with its divine punishment.

2:3 Paul warned the Thessalonians that they should not allow anyone to completely lead them astray [AAS] by any means [*tropos*]. This statement itself indicates that the idea of the day of the Lord being present is in error. This is why Paul began by appealing to our Lord's appearing and our gathering to Him. If we are still here, if He has not yet come for us, the Day of the Lord is not present no matter how convincing prophecy, word or letter. The Greek *tropos* combined with *médēna* [μὴδέίς] and translated "not by any means" demonstrates that some will go to great lengths to lead believers astray. The verb *exapataō* derives from *apataō* meaning to deceive by giving a false impression. The present verb is a stronger form, indicating that some might look at the severe persecution and pressure against the believers by the unsaved and give the false impression, "Clearly this must be the day of the Lord. How could it be any worse?" This conclusion can shake or alarm the mind. Paul had explained the the Thessalonians the nature of the day of the Lord (1 Thess. 5:1). To have someone attempt to get them to think they are in the day of the Lord due to their adversity would likely involve comparing what they knew with what they were experiencing.

Two events must precede the Day of the Lord: the apostasy, the man of lawlessness is unveiled. The word "apostasy" NASB, "rebellion" ESV, NET, NIV, "falling away" AV, ASV, NKJV are attempts to translate the Greek *apostasia* [ἀποστασία]. This noun means "a departure" or "a standing apart." It

is most commonly understood to mean a doctrinal departure or rebellion and this is seen in Acts 21:21. However, in Acts 21:21 the nature of the standing apart is “from Moses” it is not clear without something stating what one is standing apart from. It is noun of the verb *aphistēmi* [ἀφίστημι]. The verb indicates physical departure as well as spiritual rebellion. Anna did not **depart** from the temple (Lk. 2:37). The devil **left** Jesus after tempting Him (Lk. 4:13). Jesus will tell evildoers to **depart** from Him (Lk. 13:27). Gamaliel counseled the Sanhedrin to **stay away from** the disciples (Acts 5:38). After delivering Peter, the angel **departed** from him (Acts 15:38). Paul **withdrew** the disciples synagogue (Acts 19:19). The Roman soldiers **let go** or **stood back from** Paul on learning he was a Roman (Acts 22:29). Paul asked the Lord three times that his thorn in the flesh would **leave** him (2 Cor. 12:8). The Lord calls His to **abstain** from evil (2 Tim. 2:19). Three passages also indicate a departure though it is not physical (Lk. 8:13; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 3:12). Each passage requires the reader to recognize from what one is told to depart. Neither noun nor verb indicate the nature of the departure. So, in our text, we need to look for that from which one departs. The immediate context does not indicate a doctrinal departure of departure from the living God. Paul will indicate such a departure later in this context, but without this word. However, in 2:1 Paul appealed for their response on behalf of **our gathering to Him**. That’s a departure from this earth into the presence of our Lord. So, first, the Day of the Lord cannot come unless first we depart from this world to be with the Lord.

Second, the Day of the Lord cannot come unless the man of lawlessness, the son of destruction is revealed. The Day of the Lord, the seven final years of Daniel nine begin with this man, identified as the prince who is coming, making a covenant or treaty with the many for seven years (Dan. 9:26-27). By using “first” with “departure” Paul also indicates that we must depart before the man of lawlessness can be revealed. The Thessalonians did not need to worry about the man of lawlessness or look for him because he will not be revealed until we depart; modern Christians should learn from this that it is foolish to attempt to identify a man who is not yet revealed. The Thessalonians could know that this man was not yet revealed, had not yet come and made this treaty, therefore, they had a second reason that the Day of the Lord is not yet present.

2:4 Paul describes the character and activity of the man of lawlessness as one who sets himself against [PMPT] or opposes and exalts himself [PMPT] over [ἐπί] all that is called [PMPT] God or object of worship. “God” has no definite article which combined with the participle “called” covers the range of any being or man-made item identified as a god. Scripture reveals there is but one true God (1 Thess. 1:9; 2 Chrn. 15:3; Jer. 10:10), but many demons pass themselves off as gods and receive worship (1 Cor. 8:5; 10:20). Daniel 11:36-38 refers to this man as the king who does according to his will or pleasure. He places himself over and makes himself great over every god and speaks incredible things against the God of gods. The

second noun “object of worship” *sebasma*³⁷ in Greek indicates anyone or thing which is feared or treated with great fear and respect and so served. A related form *sebastos* was a title of the Roman emperors and our English Bibles translate it Augustus. This second term broadens the reach of the man of lawlessness. Not only does he lay claim to be over all that is called god, but even lesser beings so honored and treated as lesser gods, he assumes himself to be superior to them.

While popular Christianity calls him the anti-christ (a misapplication of John’s statements in his letters), Revelation identifies him as the beast coming up out of the sea (Rev. 13:1). His description is reminiscent of Daniel’s descriptions of the beasts coming out of the sea, depictions of four world powers. The beast in Revelation 13 receives from Satan his power, throne and authority, which agrees with Paul’s details in 2 Thessalonians 2. The beast is a conglomerate of seven world powers and their leaders. One of those leaders was as slain to death (Rev. 13:3). The perfect tense participle “slain” emphasizes that he was slain and remains slain, making it clear for the reader that this man really died, he didn’t just appear to die. The verb *sphadzō* often has the idea of slaying a sacrifice, and John uses it three times to refer to Christ as slain or sacrificed to purchase a people for God (Rev. 5:6, 9, 12). The use of the term here may imply that the death of this man is compared by himself and the world to Christ’s

³⁷ The *-ma* ending noun derives from the verb *sebadzomai* “to fear, be afraid” and *sebomai* “to revere, to worship.” [J.H. Thayer, op cit. electronic edition].

sacrifice, making him the ultimate human pretender to Christ's being. Furthermore, he was healed of this death-wound (Rev. 13:3). It does not state that Satan animates a lifeless body making it appear dead. John used the word "healed" to indicate this man does return to life. Revelation 11:7 further supports the genuineness of his death and resumed life, stating that the beast ascends up from the abyss. The death and healing from death also indicate that this head of the beast is a single man and not a government. The whole earth (the people of the earth) were amazed at the beast (Rev. 13:3). While the world has rejected and mocked the bodily resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, when this leader comes back to life, the world will be amazed. Their amazement gives way to worship of the dragon (Satan). In the same way that the Son was raised to the glory of the Father (Rom. 6:4), so these direct their worship to the dragon who has enabled the beast. This beast operates in this capacity for forty-two months, the last three and a half years of Daniel's 70th week (Rev. 13:5). The beast speaks blasphemy against God and His temple and will be worshipped by all earth-dwellers (Rev. 13:6, 8). Paul states that this man will sit [AAIf] in the temple of the God (2 Thess. 2:4). This supports the teaching that the Jews will rebuild their temple so they have a place to sacrifice (Dan. 11:31, 36, 37). Sitting in the temple, he will claim he is God. All this constitutes the abomination which makes the temple desolate (cf. Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15). The Gentile blasphemer, claiming to be God while sitting in God's temple is so horrible to the Jews that they recognize the temple is deserted, and though it may be rebuilt, God is not present.

2:5 Paul had already told the Thessalonians these facts, and asked if they remember [PAI] that he told them [IfAI]. The imperfect tense indicates Paul was repeatedly telling them these facts while he was [Ppt] with them. A truth sometimes mocked by segments of Christianity and treated with sensationalism by others was so important to Paul that he repeatedly told the Thessalonians these facts even though his total time with them was short.

2:6-7 The Thessalonians also knew [PfAI] the One withholding [PAPt] *katechō*. He will withhold until the man of lawlessness is to be revealed [APIf]. The mystery of lawlessness is already operating [PMI]. In every generation, Satan has had an individual ready for this role, however he can't yet bring that one on the scene while the One withholding is withholding. By designating this a mystery,³⁸ we know it was not a truth revealed prior, but new information. While Satan's work of having a man ready has been ongoing, God only revealed this at the time of Paul. When that One comes to be [AMS] out of the way, his work of withholding will end. While the Thessalonians knew the identity of this One withholding, Paul does not state His identity plainly. Gospel preaching, the nation of Israel, the Church, believers binding Satan have all been identified as the one withholding, though with little support. Many have suggested that it is government, or specifically the Roman

³⁸ The NIV's "secret power" and NET's "hidden power" are not helpful and do not represent well Paul's normal use of the word "mystery," a term which Paul defines for us on three occasions (Rm. 16:25; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26).

government. Revelation indicates that this beast is engaged in government and receives support of government. The Roman empire ended 1,500 years ago and the man of lawlessness did not arrive. Government, not even the Roman government is the one withholding. Others have suggested that Satan himself is withholding until the right time. However, verse seven indicates that the One withholding comes to be out of the way. That means Satan would leave, though the present text and Revelation 13 state that Satan has an active role in this man's career. The solution lies in the use and change of the neuter participle in 2:6 and the masculine participle in 2:7. In the Upper Room, Jesus similarly spoke of the Spirit with both masculine and neuter pronouns. In 2:7 the verb "taken" [NASB, NIV] and "is" [ESV] translates *ginomai* in the middle voice. This verb means "to be, become." The middle voice indicates that he does this himself, as opposed to the passive translation "taken." This restraining one leaves or "comes to be out of the midst" of the location where he restrains and does so on his own, not because he is taken. Additionally comparing Genesis six and Romans one, the Spirit wrestled with or restrained mankind but as they strained against God's design, He "let them go." So, here, the Spirit fits best as the One who withholds the man of lawlessness. At the right time, the Spirit comes to be of His own accord out of the midst. Following the Church's departure, the Church with whom the Spirit dwells both corporately and in each individually, the Spirit Himself will depart, ending His restraining work.

2:8 Once the Spirit departs, the lawless one is revealed [FPI]. He does not reveal himself but as the passive indicates, he is revealed. Verse nine indicates this is Satan's doing. The Lord will slay [FAI] [overthrow NIV] this one by the breath from His mouth. "Destroy" means to lift or carry up and away, and used by the Greeks of removing or killing a nuisance. Luke used this verb of the Jew's actions towards Christ (Lk. 22:2; 23:2; Acts 2:23; 10:39; 13:28), as well as the apostles (Acts 5:33; 9:23; 12:2). When Christ returns to earth and the armies of the earth are gathered to fight against Him, He will slay them by a sword going out of His mouth, a metaphor like breath of His mouth (Rev. 19:15, 21). His word being so powerful, He can speak and creation comes into existence, or He speaks and people are killed. However, the verb *anairēō* "destroy" refers here to the beast being seized and cast alive into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20). He is killed with second death, but never dies physically. This is no problem as all the unsaved will be physically raised before they are consigned to the lake of fire.

The Lord will also render him idle [FAI *katargeō*] by the appearing of His presence. The word appearing [*epiphaneia*] occurs six times always of our Lord's appearing. Once time it refers to His first coming (2 Tim. 1:10), three times it is His appearing to get His Church (1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:8; Tit. 2:13), and twice His second coming at the end of Daniel's 70th week (2 Tim. 4:1). By His being present, He stops this man from continuing to oppose God and His people.

2:9 The presence of the man of lawlessness is [PI] according to or by the standard of Satan's in-

working. Satan is designated “the Satan” his title derived from the Hebrew שָׂטָן *satan* meaning adversary. The man of lawlessness opposes God and is empowered by THE ADVERSARY. This title does not mean that Satan is a threat to God, but he opposes God, and even so through this man. The in-working [*energia*] indicates Satan’s direct personal work as opposed to a work through means of another. Between the noun and verb forms of this word, it occurs 29 times in the New Testament. Satan personally operates in this man to accomplish his ends. He does so by power, sometimes “miracles,” by signs or that which in this case points to this man’s credentials to be world-ruler and god, and by means of lying wonders. Lying wonders involve that which cause amazement or wonder in the beholder. They are “lying” because they support false claims of this man. He does genuine supernatural works, not mere illusion, but the source of his supernatural power is Satan. Christ did powers, signs and wonders as did the apostles to verify their claim to be Israel’s king (Christ) and His apostles.

2:10 Satan’s work in this man involves all unrighteous deception. This noun refers to a false impression, giving the impression that something or someone is greater or more accurate than another, though it is untrue. The genitive noun “unrighteousness” [wickedness NASB] indicates the content and point of the deceit. Satan gives the impression that all this unrighteous activity is good, is right, will lead to a proper end. Paul states that Satan’s ministers are ministers of righteousness (2 Cor. 11:15), that Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light, so it is not

surprising that by his miraculous works through this man, he gives others the false impression that they are pursuing genuine righteousness.

This deceitful work is only effective with those who are perishing [PMPt], that is the lost. The middle voice of the participle “perishing” indicates that they willingly with their own interests pursue the ends which bring about their own ruination. They are not forced down this path, but choose it. They do this in part because they choose this wrong path in place of which [ἀνθ' ὧν translated “because of”] they did not receive [AMI] a love for the Truth that they be saved [APIf]. The Truth states that only one True God exists. Only that one true God can save, create and is worthy of worship. For believers, only that one true God can liberate from sin and do any work worthy of reception. Romans one records man’s historic rejection of the Truth, wanting to displace God with created beings, and not wanting freedom from their sinful desires, but straining to fulfill them until God “let them go.” So, here, those who will accept this false impression previously rejected the Truth. They did not want to accept one true God and answer to that one true God. They refused His provision for salvation, choosing rather their own course which leads only to their own ruin.

2:11-12 Because they have already rejected the Truth, God sends [PAI] to them an in-working error that they will believe [AAIf] the Lie. They will be led astray from any common sense, or clear evaluation of this man’s actions and claims. They will believe the Lie, which is the opposite of the Truth, claiming that the creature can replace the Creator, and do what the Creator alone can do.

They will accept the deification of this man, because from their early days, men have replaced God. Now they will believe this man is god and worship him as though he is (Rev. 13:8, where “worship” is to fall down in worship”). They will be judged [APS] (v. 12). God personally acts in them to be lead astray (error). He can do so because this is His judgment upon them for their rejection of Him and His gracious provision of salvation. These are judged because they did not believe [AAPt] the Truth but they took pleasure [AAPt] in the unrighteousness. It is not unrighteousness in general, but “the unrighteousness.” They acted unrighteously by removing the perceived encumbrance of an all-powerful God to whom they had to answer. They wanted their way, strained at God’s restraint (by the Spirit, see vv. 6-7), and were of the good opinion (too pleasure in) that their unrighteous activities were better.

This extended description not only of the man, his source of power, but especially of those who will believe his claims, assures the Thessalonian believers that God has plans for those who are persecuting and adversely pressuring them. They can look around and see this very character working in the unsaved of their city, people who refuse the one true God and do so because they want a god who OK’s their pursuit of their pleasures; they want to freedom because the very sins in which they are bound are their source of pleasure.

2:13 The Thessalonian believers stand in contrast to these others and this due to the work of the God. Paul acknowledged that we are obliged [PAI] to thank [PAIf] **the** God always. **The** God

references the Father. The Thessalonians were ones loved [PfPPT] by *the* Lord. The Lord loved them in the past and continues to love them. God loved the world by sending the Son, but His continued love is extended only to those who have believed in Jesus Christ. This is Lord without an article, and though Lord does occur without the article with a definite sense in some contexts, here it likely is a general reference to all three persons of the Trinity; all three having and continuing to love the saints. Though the objects of the world's hostility, the Thessalonians are assured they are the objects of God's enduring love. Their obligation to thank God is because the God (the Father) chose [AMI from *aireō*] them from a *quality of* beginning. This word is not the root for elect/chose but to choose out, select or take. The middle voice shows God's personal interest in choosing. According to Ephesians 1:11 states that all things He does are according to the counsel/determination arising from His will/desire. God chose us because of His desire not because we were desirable. Nowhere in Scripture are we said to have been desirable. This is illustrated by God's evaluation of man in Romans three and His words to Israel (Deut. 7:7; Ezek. 16:1-29). "From a beginning" refers to the time in which God chose them as part of His decree. "From a beginning" indicates that while chosen in eternity, the decree is not eternal. While God knows all things, it was not until this "beginning" that they were chosen in God's decree. God chose them to a quality of salvation, where the anarthrous noun would encompass the whole of salvation: regeneration and Spirit-baptism in the past, growth or maturing in the present, final glorification in the future. That salvation is

accomplished by sanctification from *the* Spirit and faith concerning truth. Peter also references this sanctification (1 Pet. 1:2). The Spirit first sets believers apart by placing us into Christ by Spirit-baptism (1 Cor. 12:13). The Spirit now sets believers apart in practice by leading them to their position in Christ (Rom. 8:2) and in so doing providing freedom/victory regarding sin. This salvation is also by faith concerning truth. Truth is also anarthrous. Initial salvation starts with faith in the gospel, in the recognition of one true God who has provided us salvation through the death burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our present tense of salvation continues also involves an aspect of the Truth by recognizing that God alone can liberate us from the sin nature's dominion and so we walk by the Spirit to not fulfill the lusts from the flesh (Gal. 5:16).

2:14 God called [AAI] us to this (which - accusative relative pronoun), referring to this salvation by sanctification by the Spirit and faith concerning truth. "By the Spirit" and "truth" are important because each contrasts our situation to that of the unsaved who have rejected God and that work which God alone can do. God's call is to salvation. Even Paul's call to be an apostle was part of his salvation, not a later event. "Ministerial calling" does not align with the New Testament use of "call." That this is salvation is supported by "through the gospel." The goal is the special possession of glory, that of our Lord Jesus Christ. When Christ comes for us, we will be like Him (1 Jh. 3:2), and He will change our humble bodies to be like His body of glory (Php. 3:21). "Our Lord Jesus Christ" is a simple Genitive of description, so

that this glory is His kind of glory, that is the glory characteristic of His human nature.

On “calling” - The verb κἀλεω occurs 148 times in the NT. Most of those occurrences are calling someone, something or sometime a name (e.g. Lk. 1:13, 31; 1 Cor. 15:9). It then is used of calling someone to come to a location or state. So Jesus’ family came to call Him to themselves where this a literal calling to a location, in this case where they are (Mk. 3:31). It is used figuratively of calling individuals (sinners) to a state of repentance (change of mind; Lk. 5:32).

Calling to salvation falls under this latter usage of a call to a location or state, where salvation is a state (Rom. 8:30; 9:24 (25-26 note comparative not identical due to adverb ὡς); 1 Cor. 1:8; 7:17, 18, 20-22; Eph. 4:1 (in Christ) for which compare to Col. 3:15; 1 Th. 2:12; 4:7 (like Eph. 4:1 this refers to the life that matches the calling); 1 Tim. 6:12).

Under this same idea can be classified Scriptures which refer to the location of God’s work or blessing though not salvation specifically (Rom. 9:7, 12).

The noun κλήσις occurring 11 times refers mostly to the call to

salvation (1 Cor. 1:16; 2 Th. 1:11) but also to the life which matches that calling (Php. 3:14).

When used other than calling with a title or name, “calling” refers to God’s call to salvation and life which is part of that salvation. No text supports a call to ministry or service, apart from that ministry or service which is given as one’s gift, and this is really just a life which matches one’s salvation. If one is given a gift, God expects the individual to use that gift. No evidence in the NT supports the idea that God later extends some call to “preach” or any other matter or service.

15 On the basis of this great salvation and the Thessalonian’s place in God’s plan, Paul charges them to stand [AAIv] and hold fast [PAIv] the traditions which they were taught [A P I] . Instructions for Christian living is never imposed as a rule, but the logical flow from a salvation initiated by God, secured by Christ’s work, applied by the Spirit, and welcomed/received by us by faith alone. Paul uses “tradition” of that received from the Jewish fathers and human philosophy (Gal. 1:14; Col. 2:8). Paul mentions traditions twice in this letter (3:6). The second reference addresses brothers who are acting disorderly. In the first letter, Paul contrasted this disorderliness to recognizing those organizing them in the Lord (1 Thess. 5:12-15). Some of those traditions involved proper responses to the different types of people

in the assembly and their individual needs. Paul taught the tradition of taking care of himself even though he had authority to demand others to do so (2 Thess. 3:6-9). These disorderly people had stopped working and became busybodies, fussing about others' business (3:12). These believers may also have struggled with losing heart in doing good (3:13). Remember this charge is based on a proper view of our great salvation. They may have received these traditions through a word (verbal communication through Paul or Timothy) or a letter sent by Paul and his companions. The first letter reinforced previous traditions and taught new traditions

16-17 Paul expresses his wish for God to encourage [AAO] and strengthen [AAO] their hearts. Paul expresses His wish or prayer (by use of the Optative mood) to God. It is both the Lord Jesus Christ and the Father who will do this. - Interesting that He does not mention the Holy Spirit. As in many passages, Paul has no problem tying the work of the Son and Father together, as both are God. The Father is the one having loved [AAPt] us and having given [AAPt] us an eternal encouragement and good hope by grace. His love He demonstrated by sending the Son (Rom. 5:8; Jh. 3:16). He also has given us an eternal encouragement. Eternal most likely means that this encouragement relates to or exists in eternity. Following Paul's encouragement regarding our Lord's appearing and our gathering up to Him and considering the suffering they presently endure, the Thessalonians can look forward to future benefits following the Rapture. That encouragement is also a good hope. It is a good

[ἀγαθος] because it causes us to have a sense of well-being. The Rapture is a happy hope (Tit. 2:13), and a hope that comforts (1 Thess. 4:17-18). That good hope is by grace (cp 1 Pet. 1:13). Our future is by God's grace, not by our works. We cannot earn a better future as Israel could.

So, God encourages and strengthens the believers. It is not "by" but in or to, because if it is "by" then my works encourage and strengthen me, and that flies in the face of our salvation by God's grace. The goal is in every work and good word. God has planned works for believer and we are not to lose heart in doing those good works (Eph. 2:10; Gal. 6:9). While the believer awaits the Son from heaven she or he continues to do those good works to God's glory and the encouragement of other saints.

Summary: Though the Thessalonians are facing persecution and adversity, Paul assures them they are not in the Day of the Lord but God has chosen them as a demonstration (first fruits) of His salvation and hardship is one means by which that is demonstrated, so Paul encourages them to keep on keeping on in their God-given works and speaking but to do so by God's encouragement and power.

3:1 τὸ λοιπὸν "The rest" translated "finally" in some Bibles introduces some remaining matters.

Paul tells the brothers to worship [PMIv]. Worship is communication to God about God, recognizing His character and work. However, the preposition περὶ translated "for" us leads many to understand

this as a general term for communication. However, the preposition used with the genitive case has the idea of generally for or about as the communication moves around them, meaning that the Thessalonians were to be worshipping God as they thought about Paul and his companions. It is as important that the Thessalonians be thinking about God and His work as that they immediately address Paul's needs. Sometimes worship of God moves one to ask for another, here, asking or thinking of another moves one to worship God. They request (no term for asking is used) that the Word of the Lord might run (PAS) and be glorified (PAS). The word of the Lord or about the Lord may be the gospel. However, in this context, Jesus Christ is presented as Lord emphasizing His deity and His position over the body, that He is in charge. In chapter two, the man of lawlessness asserts himself as God, while Christ alone is God. In 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, the Thessalonians had turned from idols (false gods) to serve the living and true God, who is Jesus Christ. In 1:9 the first *theos* [ΘΕΟΣ] is articular and the second is anarthrous viewing the whole God-head. The gospel delineates not everything which is true about Jesus Christ but what is necessary to be saved, and the fact that He is God is part of that message. By "run" Paul means that the gospel is unhindered or moves freely. In 1 Thessalonians two, Paul indicated that they were hindered in trying to return to Thessalonica. Paul also met with resistance in trying to communicate the gospel.

As people respond to the gospel message, it is glorified for its reputation is expressed. Romans

1:16 states that the gospel is God's power to salvation. When someone believes that message the reputation of that message as an expression of God's power is seen. As seen in 1 Thessalonians one and two, this was true of the Thessalonians themselves. καθὼς καὶ πρὸς ὑμᾶς “accordingly/ as also facing you,” that is, what it did with you.

Paul's third request for them to make when worshipping God was that they would be rescued from (PPS) out of place and evil men. ἀτόπος translated “perverse” [NASB, NET], “wicked” [ESV, NIV], “unreasonable” [AV, ASV, NKJV] is literally “out of place, not fitting”³⁹ but the Greeks also used it with the moral sense of “improper, unrighteous.” T.S. Greene adds “improper, amiss, wicked, ... noxious, harmful.”⁴⁰ The description “evil” indicates a deficiency of character which spreads. The Greeks used it to describe harm that one brings or causes, and so Paul experienced harm at the hands of such people. Paul had run in with such people in Damascus early in his Christian life, then in Jerusalem when he fled to Damascus. Several years later on his first apostolic trip he met with vicious men in Iconium, Lystra, and on this his second trip in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea and most recently with the philosophers of Athens who did not do him physical harm but in obstinacy maligned Christ and the good news and laughed Paul out of their

³⁹ Abbott-Smith, op cit. p. 67.

⁴⁰ Thomas Sheldon Greene, *Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970) p. 26. Mounce states similarly, op cit. p. 1101.

meeting. Paul knew it was part of God's will for him to suffer (cp Acts 9:16), in fact it is God's will for all His people (Php. 1:29; 1 Pet. 4:19; 5:10; 2 Tim. 3:12). However, Paul wished to avoid this constant disruption to his proclamation of the gospel or even while teaching the saints.

He explained that all do not have the faith or for the faith is not of all. That all do not believe is obvious to us and the Thessalonians. Can this include believers who do not have the faith and therefore do not act appropriately? Or is Paul concerned about being rescued and the word running because he hasn't had a chance to communicate the faith to all saints. The Thessalonians and Bereans are examples of believers Paul felt he left prematurely and did not get to teach all they needed. So in 1 Thessalonians 3:2-5, 10, Paul knew they lacked things (3:10) and Satan had twice hindered Paul and his companions from returning (1 Thess. 2:18), perhaps by the use of such men.

3:3 Even though some lacked in the faith, the Lord (Jesus Christ) is [PI] or remains faithful. He is Lord and as Lord is in charge of the body and its works. He causes its growth by His use or ministry through various members (Eph. 4:16).

He will strengthen [στηρίζω FAI] or cause to stand firmly (cp 2:19; Rom. 16:25) so they are not pitched back and forth by these adversities and persecutions. He will also guard [φυλάσσω FAI] them from the evil one. God provides His own strength and the armor for believers to resist (not fight) Satan (Eph. 6:10-18; Jas. 4:7-8). If He has provided these, what is He guarding? It is Paul's

assurance that God would not allow His own to be tempted beyond what He knows they can bear (1 Cor. 10:13). With the minimal teaching and Paul's concerns both here and in 1 Thessalonians three, they knew some things but not everything they needed. Paul would have to fill in other details, and for this he had sent Timothy (cp Jude 24).

The evil one is Satan, who deficient in character by his own choices, as he was and is discontent with God's place for him. He wishes to spread his corrupt nature or choices among others and so as Jesus said he is a manslayer because his corrupting influence brought about man's death. As the evil one he cares not for others but only for himself and so spreads his ideas among the Thessalonians so that in grief and frustration over the adversity and persecution they might stop doing God's will.

3:4 Paul assured the Thessalonians of God's plan for them. He was persuaded [ΠῦΑΙ ΠΕΠΟΪΘΑΜΕΝ to be well supported, assured or confident]. Their confidence in God and His work with the Thessalonians is "in *the* Lord."⁴¹ Paul's confidence did not rest on the Thessalonian believers but in the Lord. He knew the Lord would do what He promised, to never abandon His own (cf Heb. 13:5-6). This confidence is over (ἐπὶ (ἐφ) "you" where the Thessalonians are the object of the Lord's work. He has given Himself (Eph. 5:20ff - δίδωμι with the idea of giving in dedication to the Church as His future bride).

⁴¹ Lord may be definite by use or the anarthrous construction could be to more than one person of the godhead acting in concert.

Paul's confidence is further validated because the Thessalonians were doing [PAI] what Paul and his companions had charged them [PAI παραγγέλλομεν to charge with a responsibility] and they will do it [FAI]. Like Paul's confidence in God (Php. 1:6) validated by the Philippians' action (Php. 1:7f), and so also here.

3:5 Paul wished for their hearts to be straight (PAO). Heart [καρδία] is the source of decisions and so also actions. If their hearts are straight and the Lord would do that into God's love and Christ's patience, they could continue to do God's will of using love properly despite adversity and persecution. Patience assures that they won't alter that character even when it is difficult for any reason. The Optative expresses Paul's wish, because the Lord will work, but does not force believers to do right or have the right attitude. Some believers proclaimed Christ for the wrong reason (Php. 1:15, 17), yet God continues to work, even in these. So, the individual needs to align his/her will with God's (including a proper attitude). The patience of the Christ could be patience related to the Christ as Jesus Christ with His body. It more likely refers to the patience Christ demonstrated (cf. Rev. 3:10). Christ took His cross patiently as well as the opposition from people who contradicted and challenged His teaching and miracles. Demonstrating this love and patience reflects on both God the Father and on Christ.

Disorderly Brothers

Paul now turns to address those who have stopped working and are allowing the Church to underwrite their laziness.

3:6 We charge [PAI]. Paul begins a new instruction, though this issue was addressed briefly in 1 Thessalonians 5:14 in the three word phrase “admonish the disorderly.” He does so in the name or character of the Lord. **ονομα** may be Paul’s authorization, but it just as likely refers to his attitude toward the Thessalonians and the individuals who are not behaving properly. Our Lord, as Paul quotes Him in Acts 20:35 said it is more happy to give than receive. This encourages work in order to help others, rather than mooch. The charge is expressed by an aorist infinitive (of purpose) to stand back [**στελλω**]. In the middle voice the verb meaning to put in order adds the idea of shrinking back and so to draw back from and this is supported by the ablative preposition **ἀπό** with the ablative adjective and noun - **παντός ἀδελφοῦ**. Paul does not deny that these individuals are brothers. They are disorderly [adv. **ἀτάκτως**] or out of order as they walk [PAPt - Ablative]. Their way of life⁴² which is indicative of their attitude is one that does not put him/herself in the proper order of place and activity. Not only are they walking disorderly but also (**και** may be ascensive- “even”) not by the measure [**κατά**] the tradition which they received (**παραλαμβάνω** AAI) from Paul and his companions. See note on 2:15 for “tradition.” Tradition is not bad of its self. Tradition should never trump revelation or alter the interpretation of revelation. However, the tradition of which Paul writes is part of Scripture

⁴² “Walking” describes how they live or order their lives

and so beyond human or institutionally imposed tradition.

3:7 The Thessalonians knew objectively [PFAI] how it is necessary [PAI] to mimic [PMIf] Paul and his companions. They did not act disorderly [AAI] when they were among the Thessalonians. The verb *mimeomai* occurs four times (3:9; Heb 13:7; 3 Jh. 11). In Hebrews 13:7 believers are to watch the outcome of their leaders' conduct and mimic or imitate their faith. It is the faith and what it produces that is copied, not mere conduct, observed and imitated. The noun occurring six times involves being an imitator of God by exercising His love (Eph. 5:1). Paul appealed for the Corinthians to become imitators of him as he became all things to all men (1 Cor. 11:1). Their imitation (no verb) would not involve watching how Paul acted like this but of the attitude and lifestyle of being more concerned for others than themselves and this agrees with the charge in Ephesians 5:1. The Thessalonians became imitators of the brothers in Judea, though they had never seen those believer to copy activity, they could suffer the same for the cause of Christ (1 Thess. 2:14). However, in our current text, they did observe the way in Paul and his companions took care of themselves and left an example.

3:8-9 Specifically, Paul and company did not each [AAI] bread as a gift from anyone. On the contrary, they were working [ἐργάζομαι PMI] in labor [κόπος] and exhausting labor [μόχθος] night and day so they would not burden [ἐπιβαρέω AAIf] any of the Thessalonians. Paul said this same thing in his first letter to them (2:9). He asserted that he

communicated for believers night and day (1 Thess. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:5; 2 Tim. 1:3). While others worked in one part of the day and rested the other, Paul taught believers when they were free and worked when they rested so that he would not burden them in caring for his material and physical needs. Acts 18:3 indicates that Paul was trained in the trade of making tents, either fully making tents or cutting the material, fabric or leathers used in making tents. This was how he earned his way. Paul received support from the Philippians twice after leaving Philippi (Php. 4:15-16). So, Paul did receive support from other churches which may have eased his working responsibility. He had [PAI] the authority to require support (v. 9) and told the Corinthians that the other apostles received it, even support for a wife as in the case of Peter (1 Cor. 9:4-5). However, Paul appears to have refused that support from the people where he was serving at a given time. In part Paul did this to demonstrate [give [AAS] an example] to imitate [PMIf] the importance of giving and not encourage laziness among God's people who might want the same support a leader received. The church in Jerusalem helped anyone in need and this continued among the churches for each other later as a collection was taken up to support those in Judea in need.

3:10 Paul reminded them that they were charging [IAI] them that if any does not want [PAI] to work [PMIf] they were not to eat [PAIv]. The imperative is one of negative permission, "He is not to be allowed to eat" in the sense that the church had no responsibility to provide for him in

his laziness. It isn't that he cannot work and needs support but has no desire [*thelō*] to do so.

3:11 Paul and company heard [PAI] that some were “walking” [PAPt] or conducting their lifestyle by framing their mind in a disorderly manner. They were not working [PAPt] but being busybodies [PMPT]. The contrast of work to a busybody is lost in translation. The word work *ergadzomai* is the base of the verb busybody which is *periergadzomai* where the preposition *peri* adds the idea of around so, one “works around” not on his or her responsibilities but working on everyone else's issues. Thayer writes of this noun, “*busy about trifles and neglectful of important matters, especially busy about other folk's affairs.*”⁴³ The noun is used of young widows who being supported by others might tend to be idle about their own needs and gossip and meddle in other's business (1 Tim. 5:3). The word is also used in Acts 19:19 with reference to “magic” as it was often considered an attempt to alter other's circumstances so as to render them favorable to you. Rather than taking responsibility for one's own actions and attitude, one attempts to influence others. If one has too much time on one's hands due to not working, one wastes his or her time on other people.

3:12 They charged [PAI] and encouraged [PAI] such individuals in the Lord Jesus Christ to eat [PAS] their own bread by working [PMPT] with quietness. Quietness [ἡσυχος] emphasizes a calmness as opposed to boisterous protestation. They need to work without complaining and

⁴³ Thayer, op cit. #4021

making a big deal about their hardships or how laborious their work. They feed themselves by their work rather than that of others.

3:13 To the rest of the Thessalonians, Paul charged them to not lose heart [AAS] in doing good [PAPt]. To not lose heart [ἐγκακέω] involves being **in a lack of character**. Giving up or losing heart is not the way God intended us to be. He intends us to operate as His sons and children, to reflect His character in daily living. God does not give up but remains faithful by His nature, for He is truth. In this context, growing weary or losing heart would be to act like the those who are not working and are disorderly. Perhaps the laziness of others can so frustrate some that they give up working also.

3:14-15 Paul closes his instructions with two points. First they are to mark [PMIv] so as to not associate [PMIf] with those who do not obey [PAI] what Paul has said through means of this letter. To associate means to mingle with and in relationships to share a close association and attention. Paul used it twice in 1 Corinthians similarly warning them not to mingle with brothers who were acting unrighteously (5:9, 11). The purpose is that these insubordinate brothers might be shamed [APS]. Thayer explains this verb, “properly, to *turn about*, so in passive even in Homer; *tina*, properly, to turn one upon himself, i.e. to *shame one*.”⁴⁴ Such individuals are brothers despite their unrighteous activity, so they are not to be considered [PMIv] an enemy or one who is an

⁴⁴ *ibid*, #1788

hostile. By contrast Paul charges them to admonish [PAIv] them as a brother. Admonish is to put one in mind of facts or truth so as to encourage a change of behavior or attitude so one avoids unrighteous or inappropriate activity, in this case going back to work and cease letting the church finance their laziness.

3:16 Paul wishes for the Lord to give [AAO] to them **the peace**. Paul describes the Lord as the Lord of the peace. Paul calls God the God of peace who works the peace between saints (Rom. 15:33; 16:20), sanctifies believers completely (1 Thess. 5:23), and raised Christ as shepherd from the dead (Heb. 13:20). Each of these involved a situation in which peace is needed: getting along with others, wondering whether you will be all God planned for you, uncertain about your future living under grace. “God of peace” may mean He is the source of this peace, but more likely that He is characterized by peace. God is a calm being, not troubled and agitated. That peace affects how God operates and responds to others. This is the only place in which the peace is tied to the Lord, where the Lord views Jesus Christ as the One in charge of the body of Christ. Believers living out of order by not working disrupt that peace among believers. So Paul wishes for the Lord to give the Thessalonians this peace, which He will only do if they cooperate. No peace will be experienced if they persist in their rebellion.

Regardless of whether individuals will function so as to experience the Lord’s peace, He remains with all the believers. The preposition *meta* emphasizes a witness but less close than *sun*. Only those believers living in peace within the body

experience the closeness, but the Lord remains with all.

3:17 Paul closed with a greeting by his own hand, not just a closing signature but closing words. Paul regularly used a secretary, Silvanus being one of them. It is not certain whether he did this due to his eye problems. He closes Galatians with a statement about “large letters” which has been interpreted literally due to his poor vision, and metaphorically of great sincerity and care for his readers (Gal. 6:11). Paul’s closing is [PI] the sign or mark in all his letters, it was how he writes [PAI].

3:18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is generally with [*meta*] you all. God’s grace is not just with some believers, for whether a believer enjoys the experience of God’s grace, He continues to deal with them by His grace.