

Supplemental Notes:

1st & 2nd
Thessalonians

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Audio Listing

1 Thessalonians - Introduction & Chapter 1

An introduction to the earliest book of the New Testament; an amazing insight into what Paul taught these new Christians in their first three weeks. (Includes a review of the background from the Book of Acts.)

1 Thessalonians 2

The greatest missionary manual ever written.

1 Thessalonians 3

Practical examples and instructions about caring.

1 Thessalonians 4

Our Blessed Hope: The Rapture of the Church. (An issue of *ecclesiology* rather than eschatology alone.) The ultimate non-linearity.

1 Thessalonians 5

A history of “rapture-mania.” The Day of the Lord.

2 Thessalonians 1

“3rd Thessalonians”: Paul’s response to a forgery. “Pre-Tribulation,” “Mid-Tribulation,” and “Post-Tribulation” views.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-16: The Day of the Lord

One of the most important prophetic chapters in the New Testament. The revelation of the Man of Sin and its prerequisite events. The Restrainer.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17 & 2 Thessalonians 3

Exhortations: Prayerfulness, Preservation, Protection, and Patience.

I Thessalonians

Introduction

Theme of the Letter (from Apostle Paul)

- 1) Confirm the foundational truths they’d been taught.
- 2) Exhort them to personal holiness.
- 3) Comfort them concerning departed loved ones.
- 4) Remind them of their Blessed Hope.

Review of Paul in Acts (“Luke Volume 2”)

Chapter:

- 9 **Damascus Road:** Paul was converted.

Biographical Notes: Paul was born in Tarsus, the principal city of the Roman province of Cilicia, in southern Asia Minor. Born a free Roman citizen (Acts 22:28) with full rights as a citizen of Tarsus (Greek). He quotes from the Septuagint (LXX). Raised by strict Jewish parents: A Pharisee (2 Cor 11:22; Phil 3:5). Studied under Gamaliel at Jerusalem (Acts 22:3). “Saul” commemorates another Benjamite. Saul (*Saulos*), Grecianized for Hebrew *Shaoul* (“asked for”). Paul was his Roman name (“little”).

- 10 Peter at Cornelius’ house: Door opened to Gentiles.
- 13 **First Missionary Journey:** Traveled to Seleucia, Cyprus (Paphos), Perga, and Antioch in Pisidia; Paul turns to the Gentiles.
- 14 Traveled next to Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra (stoned). Afterwards, he returned to Antioch.
- 15 **Council at Jerusalem:** 2nd Missionary Journey (15:36) Traveled to Cyprus, Syria, and Cilicia.
- 16 Traveled to Derbe and Lystra. Timothy joins Paul and Silas. Traveled to Phygia, and the region of Galatia. Forbidden by the Spirit to preach in Asia.

The Vision at the ancient city of Troy: The Man of Macedonia (Luke?).
“We”: Luke joins in v. 10?—May have met him earlier in Antioch. Greek freedman of a Roman family. (Julius Caesar had bestowed Roman citizenship upon all physicians in Rome.)

Enters Europe: Philippi—Jailed and released.

Acts Chapter 17: Thessalonica

Thessalonica was the capital of Macedonia Secunda. It was founded in 315 B.C. by Cassander, son-in-law of Philip of Macedon and one of Alexander’s four key generals, who named it after his wife Thessalonike, the half-sister of Alexander the Great.

Strategic location: It has a natural harbor at the head of the Thermaic Gulf; situated on *Via Egnatia*, the main route between Rome and the East.

It was the most populous town of Macedonia, practically the capital of Greece, Illyricum, and Macedonia. (Perhaps 200,000 lived there in Paul’s day.) Cicero was in exile here in 58 B.C.

Thessalonica was almost made the capital of the world; presently the second most important city in Greece.

Antony and Octavius (the future Augustus) were here after their victory at Philippi. In gratitude for their cooperation in the struggle against Cassius and Brutus, Thessalonica was made a free city like Athens. No Roman soldiers were stationed in it; government was in the hands of a people’s assembly, from whom the “politarchs” (magistrates) were chosen. Kingdom preaching would make them fearful of losing their privileges of “free” status.

Verse:

- 2] Three Sabbaths!?! Preached entirely from the OT (including the rapture and the Second Coming!) See our briefing package, *Footprints of the Messiah*. His stay may have been longer (note Phil 4:16).
- 4] Mostly Gentile converts? (Note absence of OT references in his Thessalonian letters—also, idolatry reference in 1:9.)
- 5] Riot organized. Jason posts bond. As in Philippi, they were vulnerable to the charge of treason due to the recent expulsion of Jews from Rome.

10] Paul and Silas flee to Berea (50 miles westward; three-day journey?)

11] [Trademark passage.] They verified the OT prophecies.

15] Athens & Mars’ Hill.

Acts Chapter 18: Corinth

Paul may have been here for two years (Acts 18:11 & 18). He writes both Thessalonian letters from here, perhaps within weeks of visiting there.

Timothy had been left in Philippi, and joins Paul in Berea (Veria) and travels with him to Athens. Paul sent him back to Thessalonica. The first letter is in response to Timothy’s rejoining Paul in Corinth with his report (1 Thess 3:6-7; Acts 18:5).

I Thessalonians Chapter 1

This letter initiates the New Testament documents! Written less than 20 years after Christ’s resurrection. (Some believe Galatians was written before Acts 15.) Every chapter refers to the Second Coming.

Purpose of the Letter

- Writer’s joy at their steadfastness.
- Refute certain false charges and slanderous insinuations being circulated.
- Personal attacks; assailed motives; self-seeking; cowardice.
- Concern over loved ones who have passed on.

Chapter 1: How the Church Spreads the Gospel

- 1] The three of them were together at Corinth; no evidence that the three were ever together again.

It is remarkable how often Paul speaks of bearing up God’s people in prayer! He was a busy guy, yet he found time for prayer.

Silvanus (Roman): god of the woods; woodland. (Luke always calls him Silas; Paul, always Silvanus. Cf. Acts 18:5, 2 Cor 1:19.) He was an

esteemed member of the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:22); a prophet (15:32); Roman citizen (16:37); in hearty agreement with the Council decision regarding Gentile believers in Acts 15:22-32; fitting co-worker and preacher (2 Cor 1:19). Amanuensis for 1 Peter (5:12).

Timotheos, “honoring God; 24X (half-Jew; half-Greek). Co-salutation in five of Paul’s epistles.

Ekklesia, called out assembly; called out from their homes to assemble. LXX: assembled people of God. The church is never a building, “The sanctuaries are chewing gum.”

Lord: from YHWH in LXX.

Jesus: Derived from the Latinization of the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew Joshua, which is an abbreviation for Jehoshua, “YHWH is salvation” (Mt 1:21).

Christ: Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *Meshiach*, or Messiah, the anointed one.

“In” God: Not spatial, but positional; a vital, organic union which makes possible the sharing of a common life.

Grace (Greek), *chairein*, to rejoice, greetings; Peace (Hebrew), *shalom*, peace, prosperity, well being; prosperity in the widest sense. Grace: free and unmerited favor of God; Peace: result of receiving the grace of God, it’s that precious sense of inner tranquility and well-being from being reconciled to God through Christ.

First three chapters: **personal**.

Second two chapters: **practical**.

- 2] Thanksgiving: a priority; continual. Give thanks in everything (5:18; 2 Cor 4:15; 9:11ff). “The Spirit of Christ is the oil that feeds the lamp of praise.”

Affection: he tried twice to return (1 Thess 2:17-18).

3-10] **The Grounds of Thanksgiving**: virtues; election; results witnessed.

- 3] These three graces would be featured later in the Corinthian letter: the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labor of love.

Faith vs. “works”....

Patience (steadfastness): active constancy in the face of difficulties.

Hope: future, yet completely certain.

Love (*kopos*): fatiguing labor to the point of weariness.

Greek words for Love—Storge, Eros, Phileo, Agape: *Agapao* (v): to be totally given over to (Cf Jn 3:19; et al.). *Agape* (n): God’s love (Cf 1 Jn 4:10).

Faith, love, and hope conjoined: 5:8; 1 Cor 13:13; Gal 5:5f; Col 1:4f; Heb 6:10-12, 10:22-24; 1 Pet 1:21f. Faith rests on the past; love works in the present; hope looks to the future.

Each looks outward:

Faith looks **back** to a Crucified Savior;

Love looks **up** to a Crowned Savior;

Hope looks **on** to a Coming Savior.

Geometry of Eternity: open hyperbola intersects our linear time right “now.”

The Church is **distinguished** by these three...faith, hope, and love.

[Characteristic of Paul’s writing: If he finished his sentence, it would have been complete and well designed. But his thoughts continue to verse 5 and beyond. They grow like living things rather than being constrained by rules... sometimes, “Finally, my brethren,” means only a few chapters to go!]

Divine Election

Luke 4:23-29(?)

- 4] Brethren: Born into the relationship. Paul uses this word 60X; 14X in 1 Thess; 7X in 2 Thess = 21.

OT: national election. NT: individual and spiritual (Jn 13:18; 15:16; Acts 9:15; Jas 2:5; 1 Pet 1:10).

Love and election connected: 2 Thess 2:13. Election protects us from thinking of salvation as dependent on human whims and roots it squarely in the will of God. Left to ourselves, we do not wish to leave our state of untroubled sinfulness.

Assurance, not presumption;
holiness, not moral apathy;
humility, not pride;
witness, not lazy selfishness.

When did God first start dealing with YOU? You are not an afterthought: Eph 1:4. [Wilbur Smith: "I'm glad He chose me *then*. Now he might change His mind!"]

Knowing...the election of God. *How?* Their lives (new life) evidenced it (Cf Acts 1:18). To all of Macedonia and Achaia! You, not your words, are your witness.

Church is God centered:

Chosen by Him;
Rooted in Him;
Drawing its life from Him.
Exhibiting this life in a faith that works, a love which labors, and a hope which endures.

5] Words + Power: *...of the Holy Spirit!*

We must never divorce what God has married. Namely, His Word and His Spirit (Eph 6:17). He himself is given to them as the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 4:8); to perform His sanctifying work in their lives (2 Thess 2:13). To ignore or inhibit His manifestations is to "quench the Spirit" (1 Thess 5:19).

The Spirit without the Word is weaponless;
The Word without the Spirit is powerless.

[The Word + The Spirit = The Koinonia House logo.]

Opposition: Riots there (and in Berea). (Acts 17:5, 13.) Affliction "with joy of the Holy Spirit." How about us? Is it coming?

6] The authentic Gospel always arouses hostility because it challenges human pride and self-indulgence.

7] Example: *tupon*, the mark left by a blow, as when a die strikes an image on a coin; Paul was discouraged when he arrived in Corinth (1 Cor 2:3).

Corporate blessing:

But he had the right perspective: the blessing of God was evident in the work he was doing.

Personal blessing:

It is proof of a healthy Christian life when it becomes an example to others.

8] Macedonia and Achaia were the northern and southern provinces into which the Romans divided the ancient land of the Greeks (Cf. Acts 17:6).

Execheo, derived from *echos*, a loud noise, trumpet, thunderclap. Their "word of mouth" was more powerful than any media blitz...

9] Serve, then wait.

Turn: a radical change of allegiance. Re: Lystra (Acts 14); Athens (Acts 17); from Thessalonica, Mt. Olympus was about 50 miles south of their city. Turn *from* idols (God-substitutes). What are yours? Work? Career? Sports? USA?

To serve (as a slave) the living (and active) and true (real, genuine) God. Beginning a new life of service.

Every idolater is a prisoner, held in humiliating bondage. We become like the gods we worship (Ps 135:18).

Salvation does not begin with giving up something, but with *receiving* someone.

[Prophetic hope drives one toward personal holiness and evangelism.]

10] "To wait for His Son" ("wait" only here in NT) (Sustained expectation; most frequently mentioned doctrine in New Testament: 1 out of every 13 verses!)

Parousia (mentioned in every chapter of both letters). Resurrection: public declaration that He will complete what He has begun. Prophetic Deliverer from the wrath to come.

“Wrath is the holy revulsion of God against that which is a contradiction of his holiness.”

He brings us completely out of the reach of future judgment.

Verses 9&10 give the fullest account of Christian “conversion” in the New Testament:

- 1) a decisive break with idols; turning; faith.
- 2) an active service of God; fruit of love.
- 3) a patient waiting for His Coming; the Blessed Hope.

“turned...to serve...to wait....”

Conclusion

Does YOUR life manifest your election? Is your study of the Word accompanied by the illumination of the Holy Spirit?

1 Thessalonians Chapter 2

1-12] An elaboration of 1 Thess 1:9, “what manner of entering in we had unto you”; why and how he preached.

13-16] How ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God— hearing; listening; doing.

1] Service; a vital living for God. They were not guilty of a superficial religion.

Missionary’s conduct: the way a Christian should act. (Each of us is a missionary.) The Thessalonian church existed because Paul had stopped by. Paul was there only three weeks—long enough time to start a riot!

A success story. How did he do it?

2] Preaching with boldness amid conflict. *Eparresiasametha*, eight syllables (?). Speaking out publicly; making a public declaration. (Secret believers do not lead souls to Christ.)

Roman flogging was no light matter. They were arrested on a false charge; stripped of their clothes, publicly beaten without a trial, thrown into prison with their feet in stocks. *Contrary to Roman law!*

Sit-down strike: If any of Paul’s opponents charged that Paul had a police record, he would’ve been quite willing to have the facts known. It was not Paul but the magistrates who had reasons to hide the truth. He arrived in Thessalonica still bleeding.

“Contention,” *Agoni*: athletic contest, arena; a struggle, a battle [doesn’t imply tactlessness, devoid of common sense]. They had courage in spite of persecution. Christian courage springs from the knowledge that God is OUR God. (God is raising sons, not vegetables.)

Was Paul ever “careful”? When a Christian starts being “careful” in serving the Lord, the power goes out of his message. Never does the Holy Spirit lead one to “pussyfoot” around.

3-6] Paul’s preaching was according to the Word of God. [Missing today.] “Not of deceit nor guile,” pure in its content and in its intent...not adulterated by human philosophy and human speculation (the K-House mission).

The most dangerous kind of preaching is that which is partly true.

[v 3, 4: Characteristically Pauline: First sweep away the false; then with the ground cleared, set forth the positive presentation of the truth.]

Temples in town: Aphrodite & Astarte, and the temples of Apollo and Zeus and Ares. Also, Dionysiacs and the Cabiri (with phallic emblems).

These letters were written from Corinth, which was notorious for its moral degeneracy. Prostitution was a sacrament; the priests owned the harlots in town (as in India today).

Guile (*dolo*): “catching a fish with bait”; trickery; any crafty method for deceiving or catching the unwary.

4] “Have been approved of God”: *dedokimasmetha*, “putting to the test” as coins being tested for genuineness, or for full weight. Not a self-chosen work. Has God given you the truth? What are you doing with it? Once you’ve been given the Good News by God, you’re a trustee.

(A fiduciary?..) You may not whittle it down. You are held accountable. Don't break your trust.

[Ten talents... capital + interest (Heb 13:17).]

“Pleasing God?” Can a Christian do (x)? (Wrong question: *Should* he? Is it pleasing to God?) What is the “message” in our entertainment media today?

To take credit is not Christian. “It’s amazing what you can get done if you don’t care who gets credit for it!” Paul always chose God’s approval over man’s; to do otherwise would disqualify God’s messenger (Gal 1:10); He would not compromise his message to gain human favor, yet was anxious to please men if he could (1 Cor 9:20-22; Rom 15:2); even this, for their welfare (1 Cor 10:33).

Testing (proving) our hearts: (Ps 17:3; Jer 11:20; Acts 1:24).

Kardia: the very depth of inner life. [See our briefing pack, *The Architecture of Man*, and Nancy’s Bible Study, *The Way of Agape*.]

- 5] Flattery: “soft soap = 90% lye.” Smooth-tongued discourse giving a favorable impression to gain over others *for selfish advantage*. The early church was plagued with people attempting to cash in on their Christianity. Livelihood through pretensions, just like today.

Cloak: Spacious pretext which conceals the real motive.

Covetousness, *pleonexias*: a desire to have more of that to which one does not have a just right. [The only commandment of *intent* (vs. overt acts).] Paul appeals to God, the only One who knows the heart.

Cf. Jewish magicians, Elymas at Paphos (Acts 13:6-11).

- 6] No apostolic title in salutation in this epistle (v 6: list of what he *did not* do; v 12: list of what he *did* do.)

Law: “Don’t” do this and that. Grace: “It is done.”

Cf. v 9: Not a financial burden to them (2 Cor 11:9; 12:16; 2 Thess 3:8; 1 Tim 5:16). Support valid (1 Cor 9:6-18).

- 7] Loving care: “A nurse for her *own* children” not just his “duty.” Met people in Thessalonica he never knew before; how he loved them now as trophies of grace!

Cherisheth, *thalpe*: To warm; as birds covering their young with their feathers to warm and protect them (Deut 22:6 LXX; Ps 91).

- 8] Not just the Gospel; but ourselves! The antidote to professionalism.
- 9] Night and day: (Hebraism; also the Athenians); 1 Thess 3:10; 2 Thess 3:8; 1 Tim 5:5; 2 Tim 1:3; also Acts 20:31; 26:7). No 40-hour weeks for Paul. (In the days of Thomas Jefferson there was great agitation for a 60-hour work week: 10-hr days vs 12 for a 6-day week.)

Doulos? Bondslave [“Coeur d’Alene” = “Heart of the Bondslave.”]

“Tentmaking”? (Acts 18:3, *skenopoios*=?) Tents made of Cilicium, the hair of a species of shaggy goats, a flourishing occupation in Tarsus. “Tent-tailor”? Tallits?

The Talmud required that every Jewish father must circumcise his son, instruct him in the Law, and teach him a trade. “He who teacheth not his son a trade doth the same as if he taught him to be a thief.”

Jews did not have salaried teachers. Saul’s father was of means, and may have been a textile merchant. Paul seemed to support himself:

- At Thessalonica his income from his work was supplemented by contributions from Philippi (Phil 4:15);
- He worked at Corinth (Acts 18:3); Paul refused to accept support from the Corinthians (1 Cor 9:11-12).
- And he worked at Ephesus (Acts 20:34).

His independence was important to him and his ministry: It cut off criticism (2 Cor 11:7-12); set a worthy example (2 Thess 3:7-9); proved his unselfish love for them (2 Cor 12:13-18); and allowed him to share his meager means with those in need (Acts 20:34-35).

- 10] Their behavior confirmed their belief.
- 11] “As a father with his own children”: education + discipline. [All participles in the plural, indicating that all three were engaged in this work.]

12] Cf. Heb 4:2: “Word...mixed with faith.” Walk, *peripatein*: *peri*, around; *pateo*, to walk: to walk about = moral conduct. Present tense, marks the habitual conduct of daily life.

Paul was never content merely to gain large numbers of converts without seeking to induce them to walk worthily of the Lord they had professed.

[“Are you saved?” Do you hate sin the way God does?]

Walk worthy...*because* we are saved in keeping with our destiny; Cf. a child born into a royal family...

Callesh you: Present active participle, *tou kalountos*, and the plural pronoun *humas*: God is continually calling them.

Kingdom of God: centers in the person of the King. Now a reality; with a future manifestation (Lk 1:32-33; Mt 25:31; Rev 2:26-27; 20:4).

God, and no other, establishes the kingdom.

13] Word of God: OT Scriptures (Acts 17:2-3). Not humanly originated: [These 66 books written by 40 authors over thousands of years is an integrated message system.]

How to “hear” [Eyes: symbols distort the word(s).] Proof of the Word follows....

14] “Followers”=Imitators. Not superficial “stony-soil” hearers (Mt 13:20-21) Persecution is proof.

[15-16: Vitriolic outburst without parallel in Paul’s writings.]

Five participles: First two are aorists and picture the past violent manifestations of their opposition; the remaining three are present tense and provide a sad evaluation of their opposition.

Violent manifestations: Killed the Lord Jesus and the Prophets. [Verb *killed* between Lord and Jesus: separation in the double name brings into striking relief the Divine glory and the human character of the Slain.]

Christ Himself accused the Jews of killing their prophets (in Mt 23:31, 37; Lk 11:47-48), and in the parable of the wicked husbandman. He pictured

His own murder as the culmination (Mt 21:33-41). This charge repeated by Stephen before the Sanhedrin (and Paul) in Acts 7:52.

“Please not God”: A deliberate understatement for effect.

Contrary to all men: Roman historian Tacitus charged the Jews with “hostile odium” toward all men, and Gentiles generally regarded Jews as an unsociable and unfriendly race. While the nation was divinely called to be a separated people, they had become a sinfully exclusive and bigoted nation. Paul understood that their hostility to non-Jews was grounded “not in their natural make-up, but in their rejection of the Gospel,” and their determination to thwart its progress.

16] Forbidding to speak to the Gentiles: An obstructionist. Also, jealous of Paul’s success. The hardest opposition to take is the one by your own loved ones. Opposition of the world is most clearly revealed by the faithful preaching of Christ.

“Fill up”: Common Hebrew image of a measuring cup (Cf. “vials” in Rev 15).

Punishment withheld until it is full, ripe, etc. (Cf. Amorites, et al.), Paul’s outlook was dark indeed. But God will not make a full end (Jer 30:4-11; 31:35-37; 33:20-22). Fuller teaching in Rom 9-11.

17] Taken from you, bereaved of you: aorist passive participle: separation forced upon them. *Aporphanisthentes*, a compound form, used only here in NT: lit. “to be orphaned; bereft of parents”; also used in a more general sense.

Only three weeks together; 8-9 months after first meeting; demonstrates ties of brotherhood among believers.

18] Hinder: to break up the road. Impassable.

19] Our (real) hope. Crown of rejoicing. Paul was not content to be saved himself.

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1 Thessalonians

Chapter 3

Chapter 1: Salvation
Chapter 2: Service
Chapter 3: Sanctification (through 4:12)

- 1] If the unbelieving Jews were so relentless in their antagonism to the Gospel as to hound the missionaries all the way to Berea, what might they be doing to their followers at home? Paul was anxious (like a parent with kids at “boot camp”). They were his “crown of rejoicing” (2:19).

Five crowns:

of righteousness, 2 Tim 4:8;
of glory, 1 Pet 5:2-4;
of life, Rev 2:10;
incorruptible crown, 1 Cor 9:25-27;
of rejoicing, 1 Thess 2:19,20.

Stephanos, a festive garland earned in an athletic contest. “...at that day” (1 Tim 4:8) at His appearing. [The funeral “gone to his reward” is without foundation.]

Hymn: Holy, holy, holy, All the saints adore thee, Casting down their golden crowns, Around the glassy sea...

Rev 4: *Pre-seals, pre-judgments...*

Timothy “delegated.” It’s not easy to be left in Athens “alone.” Athens was the intellectual capital of the world, but a deeply pagan challenge; intellectual curiosity coupled with moral indifference; hopelessly estranged from God.

- 2] “Minister,” *diakonos*, deacon. (Originally, “table waiter.”)

“Establish”: Strengthen, fix, make firm or solid. (Paul’s labors: Acts 15:32,41; 16:5; 18:23; Rom 1:11; 16:25.)

“Comfort”: To call to the side of. *Com*, with; *forte*, strength.

- 3] Some things we will only learn the hard way. Pray that “our lessons not be wasted.” Suffering was appointed; not incidental. Beneficial purpose (Mt 5:10-12; Jn 16:33; 8:17-18; 2 Tim 2:10-13; 1 Pet 4:12-14). [There are very few mistakes I’ve missed.]

The devil is often more to be feared when he fawns than when he roars.

- 4] “To suffer affliction”; to oppress, distress, trouble, afflict by the application from without.

[Bed of roses? Remember—they have thorns.] In the world you will have tribulation, Jn 16:33. (Not the Great Tribulation—2 Thess 2 will deal with this.)

If we suffer with Christ we shall also reign with Him (2 Tim 2:12). Paul said not to be anxious (Phil 4:6); but he seems anxious here!

- 5] Lots of repetition. Paul was very stirred as he wrote. Time break: Timothy’s return. Paul had moved to Corinth; worked at his trade; preached in the synagogue (Act 18:1-5).

- 6] **Satan** is referred to in every major section of the New Testament. He is supreme in the realm of evil spirits (Eph 2:2; 2 Thess 2:9). He is always opposed to God and man’s best interests (Gen 3; Job 1-2; 1 Chr 21:1; Ps 109:6; Zech 3:1,2). Source of affliction (2 Cor 12:7). Takes away the good seed from the hearts of men (Mk 4:15). Sows evil seed in the world (Mt 13:39). As “god of this world, he blinds the minds of the unbelieving (2 Cor 4:4). He tempted the Lord (Mt 4, Lk 4); and His followers (Lk 22:3, 1 Cor 7:5).

He hindered Paul’s missionary work (1 Thess 2:18); sought to gain advantage over the faithful (2 Cor 2:11). A deceptive “angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14); like a roaring lion (1 Pet 5:8); chief among the enemies to be subjugated at the end (1 Cor 15:25). He’s defeated already (Col 2:15). He cannot touch any child of God without permission (Job 1,2; Luke 22:31,32).

Christians may defeat his purposes here and now (Eph 6:16).

It’s the art of war—more by carefully concealed surprises than by an ostentatious display of force. He has persuaded a frivolous and shallow generation that he no longer exists but as a phantom of the past; a popular joke.

- 7] Fourth time in this chapter that Paul has mentioned their faith.
- 8-10] Our Challenge: Paul's whole heart was wrapped up in the spiritual prosperity of these his children in the faith.
- Prayer Life...Study of the Word...Soul winning.
- 8] "Now you're really living, if you are standing fast in the faith." Standing fast. Rom 11:20; 2 Cor 1:24. "To me to live is Christ (Phil 1:21) What matters *most* to us?"
- 9-10] A picture of Paul's great heart. Also, love is being contrasted with lust. [vv 6-10: Greek pronoun for "you" used 10X!]
- 10] Fervent, continual prayer. (Here in 5:13 and in Eph 3:20. Nowhere else in NT.) Praying that looks toward the spiritual welfare of others is always appropriate.
- Perfect: (complete); to be completely equipped. He was not doubting their salvation because he speaks of "knowing, brethren, your election" in Chapter 1:4.

11-13] Paul's Prayer:

- 11-12] The most dangerous thing in our spiritual experience is to rest on our oars. "That we may see your face" (2:17, 18; 3:6). This petition to return was not granted until several years later.
- 11] God rules in the affairs of men. Notice how Paul links the Father and Son. Most impressive as it occurs incidentally. Full deity ascribed to the Son. (Held from the earliest date.)
- 12] "But..." He loves them selflessly. No preacher can call on men to do what he himself is not prepared to do.
- "Lord," *kurios*, familiar to readers of OT as the name of God. consistent with "the road to Damascus" experience..
- 13] Every chapter deals with the Lord's Coming. "Perfect": Fitting together, to order and arrange properly. Mending broken nets or setting broken bones; to complete. Nowhere in the Bible is the word perfect used to mean sinlessly perfect. To be equipped and complete; *unblamable* in

holiness before God. Heb 12:14. When one follows, he has not yet attained perfection, but it will be attained when we see the Lord.

2 Pet 1:21: "Holy men of God..." OT writers were not "perfect," but they were set apart for God's holy use. Be not preoccupied with this present life. "Unblamable" before God. Nothing less than the very highest standard will do for the Christian. Conversion is only the beginning. "Life after birth" (vs. life after death).

Three words are used both of the rapture and His Second Coming: *Epiphaneia*; his appearing. Every eye shall see Him. *Apokalupsis*; revelation. His glory was veiled in the gospels, except at the transfiguration and in the garden of Gethsemane. *Parousia*; His presence; *para*, along, *ousia*, form of "to be"; to be alongside of, to be present (2 Cor 10:10; Phil 2:12). His coming. We should be in a growing experience; we should be learning more of Him.

Today's lack:

given to a real prayer life; given over to the study of God's Word; given to soul winning.

Holiness: Greek word in OT used only of God Himself. In the New Testament, found only here and in 2 Cor 7:1. The believer belongs to God: he is set apart entirely for God's service.

"At the coming..." *at anytime*. Imminence a key doctrine of the church. It's not a new idea.

"Holy Ones"? Angels or Believers? Angels: LXX, Ps 89:5; Dan 4:13; 8:13; Zech 14:5. Also associated with the Second Coming in NT: Mt 13:41, 25:31; Mk 8:38; Luke 9:26; 2 Thess 1:7.

Angels never seem to be called simply "holy ones" in NT. (Cf. Chapter 4:13-17.) These are inconclusive arguments; both associated in His Return.

Three words are used for "the Coming" of the Lord: *Epiphaneia*, His appearing; *apokalupsis*, His unveiling or revelation; and *parousia*, to be alongside; His presence. (2 Cor 10:10; Phil 2:12.)

All three words are used of Christ's coming for His church; and for His coming to set up His kingdom on the earth.

I Thessalonians

Chapter 4

Three issues are covered in this chapter: Private moral lives; everyday living in love toward each other; and questions concerning the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

- 1] Finally then = transition. “As for the rest...” A transition from doctrinal to practical.

First two verses: Not specific behavior, but the whole walk (Rom 12:1, 2). So you present your accelerator foot as living sacrifice...or your tongue?

Be not conformed...but be *metamorphosed* by the renewing of your mind. [The butterfly] Sanctification is the rise and development of the new life...Phil 1:6, “He which hath begun a good work in you (justification) will perform it (sanctification) until the day of Jesus Christ (glorification.)”

Do we hate sin like He does?

The “Way”: Acts 9:2, 19:23, 24:22. He that is the slave of Christ is the freest of Men (Jn 8:36; 10:10). To please God is the true aim and end of the Christian walk. Even as ye do walk. A recognition of their walk: 1:3; 7-8; 2:13-14; 4:9-10; 5:1; 4-5 (6X).

- 3] Sexual purity: In Greece, sexual sins were winked at (like today). They refused to allow the practice of the Christian Church to be determined by the ideas of contemporary society (the politically correct tolerance).

NT: Every believer is holy; set apart for God. Sanctification, *hagiasmos*, is the process; holiness is the final state.

Fornication = all forms of illicit sexual intercourse. The Body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:13-20) and belongs to God. Remember, this epistle was written from Corinth! Adultery was a common subject of poetry and the arts. The new morality is only the old immorality brought up to date.

- 4] Vessel = the body, the vessel of the soul.

- 5] The God-empowered man rules his body. Passion is always used by Paul in the bad sense.

“The Gentiles”: the nations. In the usual sense it’s non-Jews. Here, it’s used as non-Christians (?). (Cf. Rom 1:18, 28.)

Suppression of the knowledge of God leads to idolatry; idolatry leads to immorality; immorality leads to death.

- 6] Sexual sins rob others. Virginity and the expectation thereof; a defrauding. No “victimless” crimes (it injures those in whose love they live).

God is an avenger: (Deut 32:35; Ps 94:1; Rom 12:19). Not settling private scores, but the administration of evenhanded justice. Paul applies Old Testament YHWH expressions to Christ. (The sanctity of a commitment: in marriages; in business....)

- 8] Sin against the Holy Spirit. Paul usually thinks of the Spirit as given once for all. Here, “giveth” = present, “continually gives.” This is God’s supreme gift.

- 9] Early church characterized by love. Tertullian quotes the heathen as remarking in amazement, “Behold how these Christians love one another.” Thessalonians demonstrated love: (cf 1:3; 3:6).

- 10] Christians must never be weary of well-doing.

- 11] Three sources of trouble: mental excitement, meddlesomeness, and idleness.

Earning their living: excessive relaxation from Second Coming expectations! Their excitement about the future must not keep them from productive work. [No exhortations to the wealthy; no warnings of the deceitfulness of riches, although there was much wealth in Thessalonica.]

Study to be quiet. Be ambitious to be unambitious? Seek earnestly to be still. Mind your own business. [Gossip is the most painful of sins...]

Manual labor was disdained by the Greeks, it was left to slaves. Jews honored all forms of labor. All should be done as unto Christ (Col 3:17; Eph 4:28). The Lord was a carpenter (Mk 6:3).

- 12] “Need of nothing.” A Christian cannot be a parasite. Are you robbing your employer? Short change is thievery. Self-support, where possible, is a moral duty.

Every chapter in Thessalonians deals with the Lord’s Coming:

- 1: v 10, Last verse
- 2: v 19
- 3: v 13, Last verse
- 4: vv 13-17 (climactic)

The Ultimate Non-linearity: The Rapture of the Church in I Thessalonians 4:13-18

The Rapture of the Body of Christ: One of the outstanding prophetic passages in the New Testament. (More one of *ecclesiology* than eschatology!) The Old Testament saw both comings in one picture. Introduced in John 14.

Before the millennial kingdom, He would leave and go to heaven; He would prepare a place for them in heaven; and He would come back to receive them unto Himself. He would take them to glory *before* He set up His kingdom on the earth. Note: It was a promise to the *Church* that the Holy Spirit would take up residence in them and that a specific place was reserved for them—separate from their return to the Earth (Zech 12, 14:4-9).

“If the literal sense makes common sense, seek no other sense (or you’ll end up with nonsense).”

The early Christians were looking for some to be taken home without dying. The Thessalonians were not concerned about their salvation, nor that Christ would be coming for them. They knew that there were a number of resurrections. (They called their burial places *koimeteria*, dormitories...cemeteries.)

Their question was “when?” (Their concern argues for an early date for this epistle.)

- 13] Ignorant: *Agnos*, Greek; *Ignoramus*, Latin. (Rom 1:13; 11:25; 1 Cor 10:1, 12:1, 2 Cor 1:8). Hope. Heathens are hopeless. The Blessed Hope (Titus 2:13).

How *certain* is our hope? It depends upon our certainty concerning the death and resurrection of Christ. His resurrection is God’s seal and evidence for ours.

Those who do not take His coming seriously have not been at the cross enough. Pulpits that do not declare His death and resurrection can hardly expect to preach His Return. Do you really love the Lord’s appearing? As a living expectation?

- 14] Paul did receive direct communications from the Lord (Acts 9:5-6; 22:17-21; Gal 1:12; 2:2; 1 Cor 11:23).

“Asleep in Jesus”: We go immediately into the presence of God. (*Body* sleeps; “soul sleep” is not Scriptural.) Phil 1:23; 2 Cor 5:8 (Note v. 3, 4!) First fruits (1 Cor 15:20) imply later fruits.

- 15] The question was not: Is the Lord coming? Are we going to be with Him? But rather, what is going to happen *to our loved ones* who have preceded us in death? The uncertainty of life. *Linear assumptions in a non-linear universe.*

“Prevent” = precede. When will the dead in Christ be raised? Answer: The dead in Christ will be raised (just) before we go to see the Lord. Incorruptible bodies (2 Cor 5:4). **1 Cor 15:49-51-52:** A “Mystery:” a previously unknown secret now revealed.

Jesus’ Resurrection Body

- Could appear and disappear at will: Luke 24:31; John 20:19.
- Could move through solid walls: John 20:19, 26. [at least ten dimensions?]
- Could be seen and felt; palpable: Matt 28:9; Luke 24:36-42.
- He could eat food, although it wasn’t apparently necessary: Luke 24:41-43.
- Though glorified, He could be recognized: Luke 24:30-31.
- No more experience of death, aging, crying, mourning, sorrow, or pain: Rev 21:4.

All believers will be given new bodies like the glorious body of the Lord: Phil 3:21; 1 John 3:2. (Otherwise, we’d be better off if we died at age 25!?) However, resurrection implies *death*. Oldest book of OT: Job 14:14; 19:25-27.

Not all are going to die! Some of you hearing this will not experience death! (Cf. Enoch and Elijah). Rapture is a transformation: Phil 3:20-21; transformed in a moment (1 Cor 15:52): *atmos*, something that cannot be divided; (i.e., “atom”) A quantum of time = 10^{-43} seconds! Christ comes for His own. John 14:1-3.

16] Shout (of command). See John 11: Lazarus. (Otherwise, all would have “come forth.”) John 5:28f. The sound not understood by others? Voice from heaven in Passion Week, John 12:28-30, and on the Damascus road, Acts 9:7; 22:9.

Voice of an (!) Archangel: (not necessarily Michael, as referred in Jude 9.) Battle with the forces of darkness (Before Eden?); Eph 6; Dan 10.

“Trump of God”: Only here, and at Mt. Sinai. Assembly. Not to be confused with the Seven Trumpet (Judgments) of Revelation. Those assemble no one; they are not symbols of salvation; they are not symbols of deliverance; they are symbols of judgments on a Christ-rejecting world.

“Last Trump” of 1 Cor 15? Not the last trump in the Bible: another trump calls the elect in Mt 24:31. There are also trumpets in the millennium. [Cf., Feast of Trumpets, in the *Feasts of Israel* briefing package.]

U.S. Naval Academy Bell System: 1st, muster; 3 minutes later, Late Bell; 4 minutes after that, “Absent” Bell. “Last?” of a series. Not final.

“Dead in Christ” -40X in NT. [Lewis Sperry Chafer; Salvation: 33 things that occur instantaneously upon trusting Christ.] We are baptized into one Body.

What is the Church? A living organism called “The Body of Christ” Eph 1:22-2. It’s not just a “figure of speech”: but an actual organic reality. Every believer is mystically joined into a living union with Jesus Christ (and with each other!). 1 Cor 12:12-28; Gal 3:27-28 [Cf. immortality: 1 Cor 6:15-20]

Ekklesia, first mentioned by Christ: Mt 16:18 (Peter’s confession was the foundation, not Peter himself: the *petros*, masculine, does not agree with “rock” (*petra*), neuter, as it must do.) It is by this confession of faith (in Jesus) that one enters into the one true “Church,” the body of Christ.

“I will be in you..and you in me..” (John 14:16,17,20) “In Christ” 165 X in the epistles. Mystery: Col 1:26,27; 2:12; 1 Cor 12:12,13; Gal 3:27,28. During the Church period, there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile: 1 Cor 10:32, 12:13; Rom 10:12; Gal 3:27-28; Col 3:11 Cf. Dan 9:27 and Rev 6-18—Israel is distinct.

The Gentile is judged in Matt 25:31-46; the Jew in Ezek 20:34-44. Bride returns *with* Him, already adorned (Rev 19:7-9, 11, 14).

17] *Harpazo*, to seize, or to snatch away by a force which cannot be resisted; as when the centurion ordered his troops to take Paul by force in order to rescue him from a possible lynching. (Acts 23:10.) Latin, *rapturo*; Vulgate “The Great Snatch.”

Clouds—Regular feature of theophanies: Sinai, Ex 19:16; 24:15-18. Tabernacle, Ex 40:34; Solomon’s Temple, 1 Kg 8:10,11; In Ps 97:2, clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. Dan 7:13 (Mk 13:26, 14:62; Rev 1:7); Transfiguration, Mt 17, Mk 9:7; Ascension, Acts 1:9 (Literal? v.11).

The church will be removed as suddenly and as mysteriously as it began.

Hebrew Marriage

1. Betrothal (*shiddukhin*): The prospective groom’s traveling from his father’s house to the home of the prospective bride, paying the purchase price, and thus establishing the marriage covenant (*ketubah*).
2. The groom’s returning to his father’s house and remaining separate from his bride during which time he prepared the living accommodations for his bride in his father’s house;
3. The groom’s coming for his bride at a time not known exactly to her; she lives in expectation until he surprises her on his return.
4. His return with her to the groom’s father’s house for the *huppah* (wedding ceremony), to consummate the marriage and to celebrate the wedding feast for the next seven days (during which the bride remained closeted in her bridal chamber).

In Rev 19:7-9, the wedding feast is announced; assumes the wedding has previously taken place. The Church is described as the virgin waiting for her bridegroom’s coming: 2 Cor 11:2; also in Eph 5:22-23.

Rev 21: The wife of the Lamb; previously taken to the groom's father's house. Other Passages: Rev 3:10.

Earth-dwellers

- 1) They are the ones who murder the Tribulation believers, 6:10.
- 2) The wrath of God contained in the judgments called "the Three Woes" will specifically fall on them, 8:13.
- 3) They will murder the two special prophets of God and rejoice over their deaths, 11:10;
- 4) The message given by these two prophets will torment them, 11:10.
- 5) They will worship the Roman Antichrist and their names are not in the Lamb's Book of Life, 13:8, 12.
- 6) They will be deceived by the miracles of the False Prophet, 13:14.
- 7) They will be intoxicated and blinded by the false one-world religious system, 17:2.

In contrast to the "heaven dwellers" (Note: Rev 13:6!).

All dead will not be raised. OT saints? C.I. Schofield says "yes"; L. S. Chafer says "no." "Dead in Christ" in every other place clearly refers to saints of *this* dispensation, Dan 12:1-2. Resurrection of the OT saints occurs after the tribulation.

"Comfort one another..." Implies a pre-trib expectation. [This aspect will be amplified when we get to 2 Thessalonians!] OT: Isa 26:19-21, Zeph 2:3, Psa 27:5.

OT Rapture Models?

- Enoch vs. Flood
- Sodom and Gomorrah (Lot)
- Daniel 3: Where was Daniel?
- Ruth: during the Threshing floor scene, at Boaz's feet

Caveat: (Rapture-itis) We are heading into battle, Eph 6.

Do you want to be one of those who believes he will be removed before the going gets rough?

The Thessalonians were not heading into "the Great Tribulation," but they were heading into the persecutions of Nero, Diocletian, et al.

Key issues: Are YOU really trusting Him? Are you "in" the Body of Christ?

* * *

I Thessalonians Chapter 5

Review

Chapter 1 (last two verses): "How you turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven."

Chapter 2: The greatest missionary manual ever written.

Chapter 3: Caring (v 6).

Chapter 4: The Blessed Hope.

The second half of this distinctively eschatological section of the epistle. Following the catching away of the saints, there will come upon this world the *darkest* period it has ever known: The Day of the Lord. The Time of Jacob's Trouble. The Great Tribulation.

What is more certain than death...and judgment? How can we sinners get ready for it?

Now Paul deals with what was *already known* to them.

- 1] "Times and seasons": Acts 1:7; note plurals. (also Dan 2:19-22) *Chroni*; chronology; *kairoi*, a crisis; opportunity (Dan 2:19-22). Example: Jonah and Nineveh. 40 days from "ground zero"! Repentance caused a change! 2 Chr 7:14... There *is* hope for America: God!

Acts 1:6-8 Not for you to know: Mark 13:32 (!)

A History of “Rapture-mania”

Since the early years of the church: Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin, Augustine, and others evidenced various views of His imminent return during their lifetimes.

Specific dates were predicted:

Joachim of Flores in 1260.

Militz of Kromeriz in 1365.

Joseph Mede, 1660.

John Napier, the famed mathematician, in 1688.

Pierre Jurieu of France, 1689.

William Whitson, 1715, then 1734, then 1866.

J. A. Bengal, 1836.

Joseph Worlf, 1847; etc.

William Miller, 1843, again in October 22, 1844.

C. T. Russell, 1874.

E. C. Wisenant’s “88 reasons for 1988.”

Predictable? Mt 24:36; 25:13; Mk 13:22 Mt 24:44. Protection? “The *whole* counsel of God.”

- 2] “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.” Jesus used the same analogy (Mt 24:43). The problem with burglars is that they don’t tell us when they are coming. No advance announcement of their arrival; no warning postcard....

Previously taught: Mt. 24:43-44; Lk 12:39-40; a regular part of apostolic teaching: 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 3:3; 16:15.

Day of the Lord

OT - denotes the day when God intervenes in history to deal with wicked men directly and dramatically in fearful judgment, and to establish His kingdom.

Sorrow for the unsaved; joy for the saved. Isaiah 13:9-13 (conspicuous). Amos 5:18-20 (“from the frying pan into the fire”). Zephaniah 1:14-18 (“Day of Wrath”). Joel 2:1-3, 10, 11, 15, 16 (“All inhabitants of the land will tremble”). Matthew 24:21, 22 (Technology now available). Jeremiah

30:7 (“Time of Jacob’s trouble”). Malachi 4:1 (For those who are not yet saved, there is no comfort in this message). Revelation 3:10 (“kept from the hour”).

Isa 13:9-13, Amos 5:18, 20, Zeph 1:14-18; 2:1-2 Joel 2:1-3, 10-11, 15-16 Jacob’s trouble: Jer 30:7; contrast with v. 4. Rev 6:12-14; 16-17 (Wrath: cf Isaiah, Zephaniah, et al.).

Result of the uncertainty for the unprepared: Cf. days of Noah (Mt 24:37-39; Lk 17:26-27) and Lot (Lk 17:28-30).

- 3] Peace and safety: Only here in NT. From what do they feel themselves secure? (2 Thess 2:10-12).

Thief: No warning; unexpected. Travail: No escape; unavoidable.

“Destruction”: Not physical annihilation, but rather the eternal separation from Christ of the lost. 2 Thess 1:9; opposite of salvation awaiting believers (vv 7-10).

“Cometh” (*epistatai*) = to stand upon or over, to stand by; by surprise. “Travail” = birthpangs. 7X: NT: Mt 24:8; Mk 13:8; OT: Isa 13:8-9; Jer 4:31; Hos 13:13; Mic 4:9.

- 4] What does that mean? Important contrast with the unbelieving world. Not by surprise; Mt 12:29.

- 5] Note *chiasmus*; rhetorical figure: (“X”) light, day vs. night, darkness, Cf. frequency with Paul: Rom 10:9-10; 1 Co 4:10; 2 Co 6:8. We are transplanted into the kingdom of the Son of God’s love; Col 1:13. No “twilight zone” here!

- 6] “Let us watch” = opposite of “sleep” (indifference to spiritual realities). All true prophetic teaching has an application. The imminence of His return is an impelling motive to be living for Him every day.

Demands morally and spiritually wakeful activity, being on the alert against the assaults of sin and unrighteousness; Mt 24:43-44; Mk 13:33-36; Lk 12:37.

His return one of the chief objects of Christian watchfulness; 1 Cor 1:7; Tit 2:13; Heb 9:28; 2 Pet 3:12.

- 7] Not intoxicated by the stimulants of the world—glamour, pleasures, appearances....
- 8] We are not only a watchman, but a warrior; a soldier guarding himself against a surprise attack. Cf. Eph 6:14:

Breastplate: protected the heart.

Faith: inner attitude

Love: outward expression

Helmet: “around the head” crown; invited special attack of the enemy.

Hope of salvation: antithesis of the wrath in next verse...

Triad: faith, hope, love: 1:3; 1 Co 13.

- 9] “Not”: Emphatic by position.

Day of the Lord = Day of wrath (Cf. Isa 13:9-11; Zeph 1:14-16 vs. Rev 6:12-14) as in 1:10, wrath is used in its eschatological sense.

Translation of the church at the beginning of Day of the Lord; assures that the believers will not have a part in the coming great tribulation, when God’s wrath falls upon a Christ-rejecting world (Rev 6:15-17; 14:10; 19:15) Rev 3:10.

The divine calling necessitates a human response. Partial rapture? If so, I haven’t found anyone qualified to go! Remember Lot. Righteous by NT standards: 2 Pet 2:7-9; yet removed as *prerequisite* to the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Salvation: (3 Greek words)

from the *penalty* of sin: the Cross “*Tetelestai*” (past tense);

over the *power* of sin (present);

from the *presence* of sin (future).

How many of your sins were yet future at the cross?

- 10] That the significance of Christ’s death is NOT discussed in the Thessalonian epistles demonstrates that this doctrine (vs. Galatians) was not questioned at Thessalonica.

This was at the heart of apostolic preaching (1 Cor 15:1-3) at Corinth at the very time this epistle was being written (1 Cor 2:1-2; 1:17-18).

- 11] Edify: edifice; build up. *Parakaleo*; encourage (5:11); comfort (4:18). Not only our theology and our hope but the mainspring of our Christian life and testimony. We are not to leave it to an elite of professional comforters or counselors.

Section 2: Exhortations

- 12] *Adelphio*, brothers: 5X in vv.12, 13, 25, 26, 27. We belong to the family. The solicitous tone indicates that the writers were aware that difficulties did exist regarding the subjects now being dealt with. (Us!)

- 14-22] Twelve distinct exhortations: Testimony toward Leaders (12-13), toward Christian Brethren (14-15), and toward God (16-23).

“Know” them: Appreciate them. (An unusual meaning for *oida*, now supported by extra-canonical usage.)

“Labor..over..admonish”: One class of men discharging a threefold function. “Elders”: their organization was simple; not an organized hierarchy. “Them” = plurality of elders. Apparently continued their secular employment for livelihood.

- 13] No church could grow spiritually without its members being at peace among themselves.

[14-15] Testimony to Christian Brethren

- 14] (1) To warn them that are unruly: “Unruly,” disorderly; a military term denoting a soldier who did not keep ranks, neglecting duties, falling into careless habits;

- (2) To comfort the feeble-minded: “feeble-minded” (“small souled”) = fainthearted

- (3) To support the weak,

[These three groups are already identifiable in Ch 4: Disorderly: idlers of vv.11-12; fainthearted: anxious of departed loved ones in vv.14-17; and the weak: those suffering from temptations to lapse into immorality in vv 2-8.]

- (4) Be patient toward all men.

These, however, are no Thessalonian peculiarity...

- 15] (5) See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

A Christian's life consists of doing good and suffering evil.

[16-23] Our testimony Toward God

- 16] (6) Rejoice evermore: shortest verse in the Bible: 2 short words in Greek; [John 11:35 = Three longer words in Greek!]

Rejoicing = living in the will of God; trusting the Lord.
vs. sin of murmuring, Cf. Ex, Deut, Num....

Letter to Ephesus, Rev 2:1-7: They "lost their first love" vs. Ps 51:12, "Restore unto me the joy of my salvation...."

"Always" = *Pantote*: Favorite of Paul—6th time in this epistle; 27X in Paul's letters + 15X in NT [42 = 6 x 7]. Paradox of joy amid suffering: 2 Cor 6:10; Rom 8:18 2 Cor 4:16-18 2 Cor 12:10; Col 1:24.

Philippian letter = A descant on this theme.

Christian sadness, depression = mistrust of God's power, providence, and forgiveness. [Examples of hymns, psalms, creeds, confessions in NT: 1 Cor 15:3-5; Phil 2:6-11; 1 Tim 3:16; Rev 4:8, 11; 15:3-4.]

- 17] (7) Pray without ceasing. Adverb; constantly recurring Maintaining times of prayer. Daniel: 3X/day. Note Paul's constantly interjected prayers in this and other epistles. Each congregation would accept the responsibility to engage in serious intercession. Prayers not limited by time or place; if you are not in a right place to pray, you are not in the right place.
- 18] (8) In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. "In," not "for."

No simpler recipe for a happy Christian experience. In every circumstance of life, no matter where God puts you and no matter what your difficulties are, in those circumstances you can thank God for all He has done for you (Job 1:21; 2:10).

Not just when you "feel like" it. This may have to be a contrary-to-feeling choice. (See Nancy Missler's study, *The Way of Agape*.)

Rom 8:28 (the 3 most important words are the first 3!) Cf. Paul & Silas in Philippian jail: Acts 16:25

"In Christ Jesus": He is the pattern and source of such a life.

- 19] (9) Quench not the Spirit. *Sbennumi*: Extinguishing lights or fires. "Do not put out the Spirit's fire." The Holy Spirit is there to minister to us. He is there to teach us, to guide us, to direct us, to rebuke us, to show us the way to unfold the Scriptures, to give us joy and peace and love, and to transform our lives and our character and our experience.

"Quenching" = just saying "no" to God. Image as a flame: tongues of fire in Acts 2:3; John the baptist, Mt 3:11; from Isa 4:4 [Opposite problem to that of Corinth...]

"...rather, let him both shine and burn within us." He loves us. How else could we "grieve" Him? (Eph 4:30).

- 20] (10) Despise not prophesyings. Be ready to recognize the messages of God when His servants speak. (1 Cor 14:3) Apply v. 21 (below).
- 21] (11) Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. As the Bereans: Acts 17:11 "Prove": A favorite of Paul: 17 of 23 occurrences in NT.
- 22] (12) Abstain from all appearance of evil or "abstain from every form of evil" (does not denote semblance as opposed to reality). Form = sort, kind, or species.
- 23] Sanctify = to set apart, to consecrate. Does not mean "the absolute eradication of all inbred sin." As we reviewed in 4:3, there is not even one scripture which treats it from that standpoint. We'll deal with this in 2 Thess 2:13.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth; John 17:17. Have you read your Bible thoroughly? "Has the God of peace sanctified you wholly (thoroughly)? Note the trichotomy of man: spirit, soul, body (cf. Tabernacle model). Paul differentiates between *psuchikos* (soulish) and *pneumatikos* (spiritual); 1 Cor 2:14-15 and 15:44.

Natural death: Separation of body and soul;
Spiritual death: Separation of soul & spirit? (2nd death?) Genesis 3;
Cross; etc.

24] Phil 1:6: What He starts, He finishes!

25] Postscript: Three further exhortations and a final benediction.

Paul believed in the efficacy of prayer. He opens his letters by assuring them he is praying for them; he closes his letters urging prayer on his own behalf.

- 27] 1) First letter inaugurated a new practice in the churches;
2) He felt so strongly about the importance of letter to all;
3) Letter a substitute for personal trip; disappointment, neglect;
4) Sought to guard against garbled teaching;
5) Primary intention one of comfort to all;
6) Troublemakers might refuse to read or pay heed;
7) Elders might suppress parts of contents.

28] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

II Thessalonians Chapter 1

(“3rd Thessalonians”)

Followed 1 Thessalonians by only a few months. Persecutions had begun. Pliny, the Elder: “It was in Thessalonica that the first Gentiles were killed in the Roman Empire. The local Roman governor in that part of the country said that every Christian had to bow before a statue of Augustus Caesar. He had been deified and statues of Caesar were erected everywhere. Christians who didn’t obey the edict were persecuted.”

It was in Thessalonica that they dreamed up the procedure of offering a cask of wine on the altar to Venus or Caesar, and then publicly taking it out to the marketplace, sprinkling all the vegetables, meat, and other goods, announcing that it had all been dedicated to the god. Anyone who bought or ate any of it thereby worshipped a false god. Christians

who stopped buying in the marketplace as a witness immediately became marked. The first crucifixions, the first burnings, and the first great persecutions of Christians began then. Prompted by the circulation of a spurious letter, apparently an intentional forgery, teachings were that they were already in the Day of Lord.

Chapter 1

1] Opening is practically identical to 1 Thess. Silas and Timothy still there.

“Unto”: Epistles are written *to* the church, *not from* the church. Nothing authoritative comes *from* the church. It doesn’t teach; it is to be taught.

“In”: God our Father and...

2] Grace always comes first...the greatest need of the human heart.

3] “Bound”: The word for paying a debt. He owes it to them to thank God for them.

Agape: “Charity”: Latin, *caritas*; once meant love dispensed to others; benevolent goodwill motivated by Christian love. (Present usage: a dole or handout) Their faith continued to grow in faith. An answer to Paul’s prayers in 1 Thess 3:12; 4:1, 10.

[*Hope* is not mentioned: an unwarranted interpretation of the Christian hope was creating confusion in their minds...]

Practical problem: How should we deal with Christians who are doing well in their discipleship?

1) “Well Done”? Borders on flattery, promotes pride and robs God of His glory.

2) Privately in prayers and say nothing? Permits discouragement...

3) (Paul’s) He thanks God for them, and tells them he is doing so. Affirms without flattery; encourages without puffing up.

Are we *growing* in faith each day? Do you trust the Lord in ALL things? Or do the urgent things preempt the important?

Tribulation works patience; patience experience; and experience hope (Rom 5:3-4).

- 4] "Patience" = "Remaining under" (the load). The storm measures the sailor, not the calm sea. [Paul had his own trials in Corinth, from which this letter was written.]
- 5] (See persecution detail above.) Cf. Rev 6:9-11. We are not left on this earth in order to be popular. We are here to cause a ferment, an uproar, hatred, and strife (Mt 10:34).
- 6] The principle of just requital lies at the basis of our belief in a moral universe. Not good but evil creates a moral problem for us. Present injustices require a future retribution.

A world in which justice was not done at last would not be God's world at all. Vengeance is mine; I will repay (Rom 12:19). Retribution is pictured as overtaking men in the world to come; but there are passages which indicate that it may also operate here and now (Rom 1:24, 26, 26).

All that live godly in Christ will suffer persecution (2 Tim 3:12). If you suffer with Him, you shall also reign with Him (2 Tim 2:12). He that serves the Lord for reward has simply exchanged one form of selfishness for another.

- 7] Day of the Lord: vv 7 - 10 in contrast to 1 Thess 4, 5: *For* His saints; now *with* them. Mt 25: Judgment of the Gentiles; Ezek 20: Judgment of the Jews.
- 8] Cf. Isa 66:15, 16. Also Ex 3:2; Rev 1:13f. Vengeance: no vindictiveness, but simply the administration of unwavering justice. Another example of how the early church ascribed the functions to the Lord that the OT reserved for YHWH.

Makes God guilty of not keeping His unconditional covenants to the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the Jews.

- Promise of the Land: Gen 12:7; 13:15-16; 17:7-8.
- Promise of the land, a kingdom, and a greater Son of David (Messiah) as King: Ps 89:27-37.
- Promise of restoration to the land of Israel from worldwide dispersion and the establishment of Messiah's kingdom: Jer 31:31-37; Ezek 36, 37, 38, 39 etc.

- Promises that a remnant of the Israelites will be saved: Rom 11:25-29; Zech 13:8,9; Isa 10:20-22.

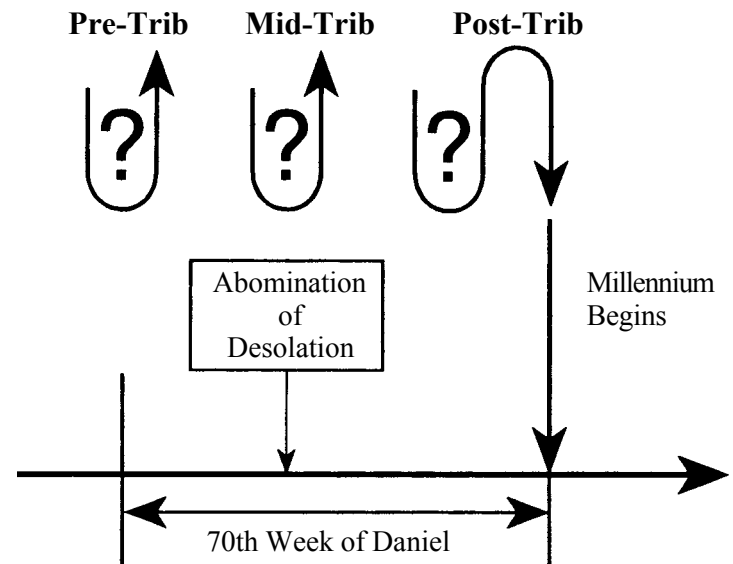
Amillennialism began with Augustine (A.D. 345-430) upon the allegorizations of Origen. Foundation for anti-Semitism (Jer 31:35-37). Reviving again.

Post-Tribulationists: Robert Gundry, George Ladd, Walter Martin, Pat Robertson, Jim McKeever.

Mid-Tribulationists: Norman B. Harrison, J. Sidlow Baxter.

Pre-Tribulationists: J. Dwight Pentecost, John F. Walvoord, Charles C. Ryrie, Feinberg, Fruchtenbaum, Charles Dyer, Grant Jeffrey, Chuck Smith, Tim Lahaye.

Pre/Mid/Post-Tribulation Views:



- 9] Very little in Scripture about heaven; even less about Hell. (Jesus said more than anyone else.) These verses say it all.

No annihilation; it's just not in Scripture.

Eternal destruction = *Separation* from the Lord, the final disaster, *forever*.

- 10] Glorified “in”, not “among” them, as in a theater or stadium; not “by” them, as if they will be spectators, the audience who watch and worship; not “through” or “by means of” them, as if they will be mirrors which reflect his image and glory. But rather *as a filament*, which itself glows with light and heat when energy passes through it (after John Stott, p.149).

A theater isn’t changed by the play which is performed in it. A mirror is not affected by the images it reflects. We shall be changed. (Transfiguration an example.)

- 11] “We constantly pray for you.” It is prayer which links the future with the present. Although the future of God’s people is secure, but we should not presume upon it. Live a life worthy of the destiny that God has in store. Paul is mindful that they still had to live out their faith in the hard world of men who oppose themselves to the things of God.

“Work of faith”: Faith is always busy.

- 12] “Name”: Summed up the whole character of a person. [New name: Rev 2:17...secret?]

Are we living our lives as a means of bring glory to the Savior? Are we really manifesting Christ as His trophies of grace, that we belong to Him and that He belongs to us?

Eschatology

The rapture is not a doctrine to argue about: it is a doctrine to *live*. Some believe He is coming after the Tribulation. Some believe that He is coming before; some believe He is coming during. How does your interpretation affect your life? Does it do anything for you? If your view has no effect on your life, then you might reconsider what you believe.

End = total apostasy. Luke 18:8 (Greek requires a negative answer to the rhetorical question).

II Thessalonians Chapter 2

The heart of the epistle. The most important prophetic passage in New Testament. It deals with an eschatological error from the belief that the Day of the Lord was already present. It’s key issue is the identity of “the Restrainer.”

[Irregularities in the Greek implies that it was given in dictation.]

- 1] “Brethren”: Common Christian concerns. Coming and gathering: the government of the two nouns under one article clearly indicates a single event. It’s a summary of 1 Thessalonians 4.

The blessed hope of being caught up to the Lord at His coming is the most intelligible preservative against the false and disquieting rumor that the day of His judgment of the earth had come.

- 2] “Be quickly shaken”—rashly. Be shaken: Passive tense points to an outside force. “Troubled,” frightened, alarmed.

“Day of Christ” is incorrect: **Day of the Lord** is correct. The traditional Jewish expression for the day when God would intervene in history to destroy His enemies and establish His Kingdom. (Will last over 1000 years: Great White Throne at the end.) Re: Joel, Zechariah, Isaiah, Amos, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Malachi, Zephaniah....

In that Day, Christ will rule with a *rod of iron* over the entire earth (Ps 2:9; Rev 2:27); He will administer absolute justice (Isa 11:1-9). Also, Isa 11:10-12; Zeph 3:14-20.

Paul responds to a spurious letter, falsely claiming apostolic authorship; the early church had to discern authenticity of false documents.

- 3] Warns against deception. (Us, too.) *Two* events must occur *before*. Two events: two verbs, emphatic by position, serve to distinguish the two events.

1st: *apostasia*; deliberate abandonment of a formerly professed position or view; a defection; a rejection of a former allegiance. Used to denote a political or military rebellion. In the LXX: a rebellion against God: Josh 22:22. In NT: Acts 21:21; 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 3:1-9; 4:3-4; Heb 3:12.

Definite article points to “the great revolt” of the end time: 1 Tim 4:1-3; 2 Tim 3:1-5; 4:3-4; Jas 5:1-8; 2 Pet 2:1-22; 3:3-6; Jude. Nowhere does the Scripture speak of the rapture as a “departure.” In the rapture, the Church is passive, not active. It is initiated by the Lord and done by Him (v.1).

2nd: *Revealed*, aorist tense: a definite time when the veil will be removed. His revelation will herald the fact that the Day of the Lord has actually arrived.

“Perdition” —opposite of salvation.

- 4] An anti-theistic revolt; replacing all existing forms of worship. “All that is called God”: all heathen divinities. Overshadows Vatican, Islam, New Age, etc. Self-deification, in its climax. “Anti-christ” = pseudo-christ.

Naos, inner “Holy of Holies.” (vs. Greek, *hieron*, temple complex). Paul’s use of the definite article excludes any other than God’s Temple.

Early church fathers (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, V.30.4) understood a literal, eschatological Jewish Temple (Mt 24:1); Satellite TV implied.

Satan’s parody of Christ: His *parousia*, coming 2:9, 2:1; His *apocalypse*, revelation 2:3, 1:7-8; his gospel, the lie, 2:11, vs. the truth, 2:10,12.

He will brook no rival, 2:4; with all power and signs and lying wonders, 2:9; empowered by Satan, 2:9.

Note: The popes have never claimed for themselves exclusive divine honor. Romanism does not oppose all that is called God, etc. They, or the line, are not a unique eschatological person.

- 5] Obviously, an essential part of Paul’s early indoctrination of his ministry.

The Restrainer

- 6] Neuter present participle presents this restraint as an impersonal operative force. The restraint prevents the premature manifestation of the man of sin as the very embodiment of iniquity. A “fullness of time” for Christ (Gal 4:4); so also for the man of sin.

- 7] “Mystery,” now divinely revealed. (Paul uses the term in connection with revelation and publication: Rom 16:26; 1 Cor 2:6-12; Eph 1:9; 3:3-5; Col 1:25-27.)

“Iniquity” (“lawlessness”), with a definite article, denotes the definite aim of the devil to overthrow the law of God and establish his own rule (not merely disorder and violation of the law in general). Lawlessness = asserting the absence of moral absolutes; right and wrong, etc. (Sound familiar?)

“Work”: The active operation of some supernatural power. (Paul in 1 Thess 2:13; the working of the Word of God in the readers...) While the individual has not yet been revealed, the spirit that will dominate his career is already operative.

“Let” = (Old English) restrains; holds back.

“Until”: There is a **time limit** upon the present restraint. This all cannot happen while the church is still in the world.

“Be taken”; aorist tense = a definite event. Subjunctive mode leaves the time undetermined.

“Out of the way” = “Out of the midst.” (!)

“He” The neuter participle of v 6 has been replaced by the masculine participle, “the one restraining.” Suggestions have included: Roman emperor(s); the Roman empire; human government generally; Paul (?); Satan; Elijah; Michael; the providence of God; the Holy Spirit; etc.

Only God has ever restrained sin. (Gen 6:3) And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh. (Also, Job 1 and 2: It was God’s hedge that restrained Satan.) It is the Holy Spirit who restrains. Isa 59:19: “The Spirit of the Lord shall restrain him....”

At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit assumed a special relationship to the Church as its Indweller: John 14:16-17. (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19, etc.) He came to abide with the Church forever. (!?)

After completion of His work in the Church, He will resume the relation to mankind that He had before Pentecost. The Greek word for Spirit is neuter (v 6); the personality of the Restrainer in v 7 is masculine. (Also so in John 15:26; 16:13-14; Eph 1:13-14.)

Three prerequisite conditions, still today:

- 1) Apostasy had not come (?);
- 2) Spirit of God had not been taken away;
- 3) Man of Sin not yet revealed.

8] “And then...” Emphatically asserts that the career of the lawless one will run its course *following the removal* of the Restrainer. Yet, his final doom is also asserted.

Isn't it interesting that we are *never* instructed to look for the rising up of this sinister personage who occupies such a large place in prophecy?!

[*Textus Receptus* omits “Jesus,” but there is manuscript evidence for its inclusion.]

The Man of God vs. the Man of Satan

“Spirit,” “breath” of His mouth...”the *epiphany* (shining forth) of His presence”

9] Three terms: Comprehensive description of miracles.

Power: Denotes the cause of the miracle; the inherent power producing it;

Signs: Point to the significance lying behind the miracles;

Wonders: Indicates the abnormal nature, and the astonishment they produce.

These three terms are used to designate the miracles of Christ (Acts 2:22) and the apostolic Church (Heb 2:4).

He is a liar by nature (John 8:44). On whom? “Them that perish.”

10] Their cause for perishing lies within themselves: their rejection of God's provision (John 3:19).

11] God uses their choice of evil as the very instrument to punish their sin. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins (Prov 5:22).

“*The lie*”; specific. Effective aorist tense; specific occasion.

12] Willful rejection of truth has resulted in the love of evil; evil had become their good. Have YOU really trusted Christ? Or are you vulnerable to this deception?

Practical Issue: Will the Church (you?) go through the “Great Tribulation”? Caveat: This doesn't mean that there won't be substantial persecution, etc., forthcoming shortly.

II Thessalonians Chapter 3 (incl. 2:13-17)

Review: Chapter Two

They were upset due to Day of the Lord having already begun? Why were they upset? Missed the rapture or Paul taught them falsely? If they were “post-Trib” they wouldn't have been upset!

13] Echoes v 1:3: Obligation to give thanks.

Chosen when? *Free will vs. predestination...heilato humas ho theos.* The entire statement has God as its subject, made emphatic by being placed after the verb and object; middle voice of the verb: “He chose you for Himself.” Aorist indicative: choice as a past fact; entirely of divine initiative (Cf. Eph 1:4; Col 2:7; 2 Tim 1:9; Tit 1:2; Rom 8:29, 30).

[The Geometry of Eternity...] If you are a believer in Jesus Christ you need never worry about your election! Acts 2:23: Determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

Sanctification process: Jn 16:7-11; convicting work of the **Holy Spirit** [“Seats saved? ...not even under conviction!]

Eph 4:30; Grieve not...sealed. 1 Cor 12:13; One body. 1 Cor 6:9,10; Sinners...yet justified. Phil 1:6; What He starts, He finishes.

[Rapture = ecclesiology vs. eschatology!]

15] Brethren..."Stand firm; be steadfast."

Traditions

- 1) Of the elders (Mk 7:3-9; Mt 15:2-6) rabbinical ("oral") traditions; (harmful developments).
- 2) Traditions of men (Col 2:8); spurious; of human origin.
- 3) Scriptural; God-given: What is new is not true; what is true is not new.

"Our epistle" again, whose?

Chapter 3

- 1] Prayerfulness
Preservation
Protection
Patience

Three requests: Free course; "that the Word of the Lord may run..." that it may be glorified; that it accomplishes its purpose for which it is sent.

- 2] Delivered from (unreasonable) men. Cf. Fanatical Jewish opponents at Corinth. Thessalonians had personal experience with such antagonists (Acts 17:5-9).

Paul had further experience with such bitter opponents at Berea (Acts 17:13-15). Even as he was writing this letter, the same threatening attitude was at Corinth (the attack of Acts 18:12-17 followed...).

"(The) faith" *All* men have faith of some sort. Biblical faith is an unconditional surrender to Jesus Christ.

- 3] "Establish" = Inner stability (vs. reaction to "Day of Lord" view). Cf. Luke 22:31,32 when Jesus prays for Peter.

"Keep (guard)" from the evil *one*; conveys military image, implying conflict and armed protection from violent attack.

(Ambiguous gender: neuter, general, masculine, personal, context dependent as in Lord's Prayer; Mt 6:13.)

Behind all forces there are *living wills*.

- 4] Man is unworthy of trust (Jn 2:24,25; Ps 118:8).
- 5] "Direct" aorist tense: summarily states the prayed-for action without indicating the process involved.

"Patience" - *hypomone*, remaining-under (a burden).

6-15] Disciplining the Disorderly

- 6] Command: not a "suggestion."

"In the name of the Lord" full confessional title, which in OT was used of YHWH (Ex 5:23; Lev 19:12; Deut 18:22; Jer 11:21, etc.).

Transferred directly to Christ: 1 Cor 6:11; Eph 5:20; Col 3:17.

"Withdraw," more stern than 1 Thess 5:14. Over behavior, not doctrine! "...every brother...." Do not deny he is a brother, but his fault must be censured.

Addicted to deliberate loafing; very active as busybodies (vv 11); interfering in the work of others.

- 7-9] Apostolic example (*not* principle!). Paul was not a sponge. He anxious to not be misunderstood. Has the right: 1 Cor 9:3-14; 1 Tim 5:18...voluntarily waived.

- 10] Deliberate loafers must not be supported out of a false sense of charity. An abuse of Acts 2:44-46; 4:32-35.

The dignity of human labor. Work is a privilege as well as a responsibility.

The theft of socialism: Its *spiritual* goal is to destroy Biblical traditions, family, and private property. Nazis were socialists. And occultic.

New Age is pantheistic (initially); then gnostic; then occultic; in preparation for dictatorial leadership.

11] Verbatim repetition of 1 Thessalonians 2:9.

Kept informed through thriving commercial contacts between Corinth and Thessalonica.

Keen-edged wordplay in the original: Working at nothing, yet too busily working...busybodies who do no business. Not busy men, but busybodies! Busybodies instead of being busy (*keine arbeit treiben, aber sich herumtreiben*).

The view that the Lord would come at any moment stimulated their native tendency to give themselves over to excited discussion in preference to dull manual labor. "Rapture-itis"?

15] The aim is not exclusion but reformation.

16-18] "With you all."

17] Takes the pen from the amanuensis and adds the closing words in his own hand (Rom 16:22; 1 Cor 16:21; Col 4:18).

The use of scribes was common. Roman business men were great letter-writers. They had invented three systems of shorthand as aides (James C. Muir, *How Firm a Foundation*).

Response to forgery? Signing may not have been his earlier practice; now "cured." Very large letters mentioned in Galatians. (Imperfect eyesight?)

[Note: "Written from Athens," appearing on some manuscripts, is an erroneous scribal addition from a misunderstanding of 1 Thessalonians 3:1. This letter, as was also the first, was written from Corinth.]

What have YOU learned from these epistles?

- 1) The Blessed Hope?
- 2) Ecclesiology over Eschatology?
- 3) The imminence of His Return for His Own

* * *

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About The Cover Design

(on the tape cassette albums)

The “Front” cover:

The Greek border: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty (Revelation 1:8).” The center design element symbolizes the Word of God Incarnate, illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

The “Back” cover: (the “front” to the Jewish reader)

The Hebrew border: “Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might (from the Sh’ma, Deut 6:4-5).”

The center design represents the Burning Bush, made up of Hebrew letters which proclaim “the Eternal One cannot lie.”

The Spine:

The spine includes a Menorah from the Old Testament, a Maranatha Dove suggesting the New Testament, and the Koinonia House logo at the base.



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