THE
DISCIPLESHIP
PLACE

+

Thessalonians

CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

CLT Bible Study

THESSALONIANS

Dr. Daryll Stanton, editor
Nataliia Skyba, contributing editor

First printing 2024

Continuing Lay Training
17001 Prairie Star Parkway
Lenexa, Kansas 66220 USA

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

Welcome to the Continuing Lay Ministries series of Bible studies. You are engaged in a study venture that will be both helpful and enjoyable. Here are a few suggestions that will make this Bible study the most beneficial to you.

1. Since this is a Bible study, have your Bible near you at all times. This study outline is only designed to help you read the Bible.
2. The Bible version used for this study is the New International Version (NIV). The editor primarily used the language of the NIV to prepare the lessons. You may use other versions of the Bible if you choose. While the language may be different, the meaning will be the same.
3. Before you begin each section, read the entire Scripture passage. This is very important. The study outline will help you understand the particular Bible verses, but it does not tell what they say.
4. IMPORTANT: Note that some of the scriptures from the particular book being studied may not have the book's name. For example, if the Bible reference is (1:6-8) in the 1 Thessalonians sections, you will find these verses (6-8) in the first chapter of 1 Thessalonians. Other books of the Bible will include the name in the reference, for example, Isaiah 53:1 and John 17:1.
5. Go through the study outline carefully. Take time to look up all the Scripture verses in the outline.
6. You may want to mark your study Bible as you go. Marking your Bible will help the words become more and more your own.
7. Finally, read the Bible passage again to better understand its meaning. Perhaps you may benefit of listening to the reading of 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians.
8. The editor has also included how to pronounce some of the more difficult proper names and words. The first time the word is introduced, the pronunciation will follow the word. At the end of each chapter, you will find a list of the words in the order in which they were introduced. Additionally, at the end of the document, all of the words and pronunciations will be listed alphabetically. For pronunciation of additional terms and their definitions please refer to *A Dictionary of the Bible & Christian Doctrine in Everyday English* (Eby, et al, 2004).

If a family or a few friends decide to take this study together, here are two suggestions.

1. Have one person read the Bible passage and another person read the Continuing Lay Ministries outline.
2. Then discuss the Scripture and outline. Ask questions of each other to help clarify the meaning of the Scripture.

OUTLINE

Chapter 1. Background to 1 and 2 Thessalonians

- A. The City of Thessalonica
- B. The Church at Thessalonica
- C. The Correspondence with Thessalonica

Chapter 2. The First Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians

Section 2.1 Personal (1-3)

- A. Salutation (1:1-3)
  - 1. Greeting (1:1)
  - 2. Thanksgiving (1: 2-3)
- B. An Exemplary Membership (1: 4-10)
  - 1. Followers of the Lord (1: 4-6)
  - 2. Examples to All (1: 7)
  - 3. Promoters of the Gospel (1: 8)
  - 4. Converts from Paganism (1: 9-10)
- C. An Exemplary Ministry (2-3)
  - 1. The Ministry of Paul (2:1-20)
    - a. A Consistent Ministry (2:1-6)
      - i. Effective (2:1-2)
      - ii. Ethical (2: 3-6)
    - b. A Compassionate Ministry (2: 7-12)
      - i. Gentle (2:7-8)
      - ii. Generous (2: 9)
      - iii. Genuine (2:10-12)
    - c. A Concerned Ministry (2:13-20)
      - i. Suffering Saints (2:13-14)
      - ii. Persecuted Preachers (2:15-16)
      - iii. Passionate Parent (2:17-18)
      - iv. Grateful Glorying (2:19-20)
  - 2. The Ministry of Timothy (3:1-8)
    - a. Sent from Athens (3:1-2)
    - b. Seeing Their Affliction (3: 3-5)
    - c. Securing Their Assurance (3:6-8)
  - 3. The Ministry of Prayer (3: 9-13)
    - a. Perfection in Faith (3: 9-11)
    - b. Perfection in Love (3:12-13)

OUTLINE

Section 2.2 Practical (4-5)

A. Ethics (4:1-12)
    1. The Ethic of Holiness (4:1-8)
        a. Exhortation (4:1-2)
        b. Evaluation (4: 3-6)
        c. Enunciation (4: 7-8)
    2. The Ethic of Love (4: 9-12)
        a. Excelling in Love (4: 9-10)
        b. Exercising Honesty (4:11-12)

B. Eschatology (4:13-5:11)
    1. The Parousia (4:13-18)
        a. Sleeping Christians (4:13-15)
        b. Second Coming (4:16-18)
    2. The Preparation (5: 1-11)
        a. Warning (5:1-3)
        b. Wakefulness (5: 4-7)
        c. Watchfulness (5: 8-11)

C. Exhortation (5:12-22)
    1. Private Attitude (5:12-17)
        a. Peace (5:12-13)
        b. Patience (5:14-15)
        c. Praise (5:16)
        d. Prayer (5:17)
    2. Public Action (5:18-22)
        a. Freedom of Thanksgiving (5:18)
        b. Freedom in the Spirit (5:19)
        c. Freedom of Worship (5:20)
        d. Fast Hold of the Good (5: 21)
        e. Forsaking of Evil (5: 22)

D. Entire Sanctification (5: 23-24)
    1. The Prayer (5:23)
    2. The Promise (5: 24)

E. Ending (5: 25-28)
    1. Bidding Good-by (5: 25-27)
        a. Pray for Us (5: 25)
        b. Greet the Brethren (5: 26)
        c. Read the Epistle (5: 27)

OUTLINE

2. Benediction (5:28)

Chapter 3. The Second Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians

Section 3.1 Encouragement (1: 1-12)

A. Salutation (1:1-4)
   1. Greeting (1:1-2)
   2. Thanksgiving (1: 3-4)

B. Suffering (1:5-12)
   1. Worthy of the Kingdom (1:5-10)
      a. Recompense (1:5-6)
      b. Revelation (1:7)
      c. Revenge (1:8-10)
   2. Worthy of This Calling (1:11-12)
      a. Goodness (1:11)
      b. Glory (1:12)

Section 3.2 Eschatology (2:1-12)

A. Agitation (2:1-2)
B. Apostasy (2: 3-4)
C. Activity (2: 5-7)
D. Antichrist (2: 8-10)
E. Abandonment (2: 11-12)

Section 3.3 Exhortation (2:13-3: 18)

A. Salvation (2:13-14)
B. Stabilization (2:15-3:5)
   1. Stand Fast (2:15)
   2. Establish You (2:16-17)
   3. Save Us (3:1-3)
   4. Steady You (3: 4-5)
C. Separation (3: 6-15)
   1. Withdrawal (3:6)
   2. Work (3:7-15)
      a. Paul's Example (3:7-9)
      b. Paul's Exhortation (3:10-15)
         i. The Principle (3:10)

OUTLINE

ii. The Appeal (3:11-12)
iii. The Prohibition (3:13-15)

D. Salutation (3:16-18)
1. Peace from God (3:16)
2. Paul's Signature (3:17)
3. Paul's Benediction (3:18)

Study Questions
Methods of Study
Pronunciation Guide

CHAPTER 1
Background to 1 and 2 Thessalonians

NOTES

A. THE CITY OF THESSALONICA

The name of the city in ancient times was Therma [thur-MAH], so called because of the hot springs nearby. Cassander [kaas-AEND-er], king of Macedon [MA-suh-daan], rebuilt the town in 315 B.C. and named it after his wife. In Paul's day, it lay on the great Egnatian [egg-NAY-shun] Way, a Roman road that led across Asia Minor and Macedonia [MAS-uh-DOH-nee-uh] to Dyrrhachium [dir-rae-kee-uhm] on the Adriatic [au-dree-A-tik]. It was the main highway from the East to Rome.

The city is now known as Salonika [sal-o-NEE-kuh], although the Greek name is Thessaloniki [theh-suh-low-NEE-kee], much as it was in New Testament times. It is located at the head of the Gulf of Salonika, in the northern part of Greece. Thessalonica has had a hectic history. In the Middle Ages, it was a part of the Byzantine [BI-zuhn-teen] Empire. The Saracens [SHE-ruh-snz] took it in A.D. 904 and sold 22,000 of its inhabitants into slavery. For five hundred years (1413-1912), it was ruled by the Turks (Ottoman Empire). In 1912 the Greeks took it during the first Balkan [BAAL-kn] War. It suffered considerable damage in both World Wars but is now a thriving industrial metropolitan area of over a million people.

B. THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA

Paul founded the church there on his second missionary journey. After passing through the provinces of Galatia [guh-LAY-shuh] and Asia (in Asia Minor), he crossed over to Philippi [FIL-uh-pie] in Europe. He established a church there and suffered imprisonment. Then he traveled (probably walking) one hundred miles (over 160 km) on the Egnatian Way to Thessalonica.

Paul's ministry there is described in Acts 17:1-9.

The account of the founding of the church is brief but vivid. As was the apostle's custom, he began by teaching in the Jewish synagogue. Here, for three Sabbaths, he "reasoned with them out of the scriptures" (17:2) - our Old Testament. His main argument was that the Messiah must suffer (see Isaiah 53) and rise again from the dead, and that "this Jesus" whom he preached was the Messiah promised in their Scriptures (17:3).

The result was what almost always happens: "some of them believed" (17:4). But interestingly, "a great multitude" of gentile proselytes [PRAA-suh-lites] to

NOTES

Judaism ("devout Greek converts") accepted the gospel message (17:4). This would suggest that the early church at Thessalonica was far more gentile than Jewish. And, that impression is definitely corroborated by a study of the two Epistles to the Thessalonians.

Jealous of the fact that many Gentiles were turning to Christianity, the Jews stirred up mob action and "set all the city on an uproar" (17:5). Dragging some of the Christians to the Roman magistrates, they made the challenging (to us) charge: "These men who caused trouble all over the world have now come here" (17:6). Then they brought a very serious accusation in the eyes of the Romans: "They are defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus" (17:7). The result was that the missionaries, Paul and Silas, had to flee from the city under cover of darkness (17:10). So, the church found itself plunged into persecution almost at its very beginning.

C. THE CORRESPONDENCE WITH THESSALONICA

When Paul was forced out of Thessalonica, he went to Berea [br-EE-uh] (17:10). Here he had a very successful ministry, with many of the Jews accepting Christ (17:12). But, the Jews of Thessalonica, not content with having driven him out of their town, followed him the fifty miles (80 km) to Berea and stirred up so much opposition that Paul had to flee to Athens [ATH-unz], some 400 miles (625 km) to the south. After a twofold ministry there to Jews and Greeks, he went on to Corinth [KOHR-unth], where he stayed for a year and a half. It was during his eighteen months at this place that Paul wrote the two Epistles to the Thessalonians.

Fortunately, we know the approximate date for this. An inscription has been discovered showing that Gallio [GAL-lee-oh] was proconsul of Achaia [uh-CHAI-uh (Greece) beginning in the summer of A.D. 51. That suggests that Paul was in Corinth from the spring of A.D. 50 to the fall of 51. So, these letters were written about A.D. 50.

The reason for the apostle's writing of 1 Thessalonians was his concern for the new converts there, especially as they were undergoing persecution. While at Athens he had sent back Timothy to check on how they were getting along. He had brought back a good report of their faithfulness in the midst of affliction (1 Thessalonians 3:1-8).

Another reason was that Paul wanted these converts established in holiness (3:12-13). He knew they needed the experience of entire sanctification (5:23-24) to stand up under persecution, as well as to withstand the evils of their very immoral surroundings (4:1-7).

NOTES

A third reason was the misunderstanding that some of them had with regard to the second coming of Christ. They had apparently expected Christ's return to take place at any time. But, some of the believers were already dying, and the others feared that they might lose their part in the Second Advent. Paul wrote to reassure them (4:13-18). It has been suggested that the first part of this Epistle (see 1-3) is largely personal and explanatory, while the second part (see 4-5) is ethical and doctrinal.

2 Thessalonians was written to correct another misconception about the Second Coming. If Christ is coming back soon, why work and prepare for the future? Paul said that the "day of the Lord" would not take place until there had been an apostasy [uh-PAA-stuh-see] and the "man of lawlessness" had been revealed (2:1-4). So, the Christians were to be busy, not busybodies (3:6-12).

This Second Epistle may be divided into three parts. The first (c. 1) is introductory. The second (c. 2) is eschatological [eh-skuh-tuh-LAA-juh-kl]; that is, it deals with "last things." The third (c. 3) is practical.

The two Epistles to the Thessalonians are generally considered to be the earliest books of the New Testament to have been written - with the possible exception of the Epistle to the Galatians. They were written by a missionary to a church which he had founded on the "foreign field" - in this case, Europe!

He deals primarily with practical matters relating to the life of new converts surrounded by pagan morals and pagan religion. It is of interest to note that the New Testament began with missionary letters and that the two main emphases were holiness and the Second Coming.

NOTES

Thessalonians [theh-suh-LOW-nynz]
Thessalonica [theh-suh-lo-NAI-kuh]
Therma [thur-MAH]
Cassander [kaas-AEND-er]
Macedon [MA-suh-daan]
Egnatian [egg-NAY-shun]
Dyrrhachium [dir-rae-kee-uhm]
Adriatic [au-dree-A-tik]
Salonika [sal-o-NEE-kuh]
Thessaloniki [theh-suh-low-NEE-kee]
Salonika [suh-LAA-nuh-kuh]
Byzantine [BI-zuhn-teen]
Saracens [SHE-ruh-snz]
Balkan [BAAL-kn]
Galatia [guh-LAY-shuh]
Philippi [FIL-uh-pie]
proselytes [PRAA-suh-lites]
Berea [br-EE-uh]
Athens [ATH-unz]
Corinth [KOHR-unth]
Gallio [GAL-lee-oh]
apostasy [uh-PAA-stuh-see]
eschatological [eh-skuh-tuh-LAA-juh-kl]

CHAPTER 2
The First Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians

NOTES

SECTION 2.1 PERSONAL (1-3)

A. SALUTATION (1:1-3)

1. Greeting (1:1)

   Thousands of letters have been dug up belonging to this general period. All of them are written on papyrus and begin with the name of the author. This is certainly a lot more sensible than our present custom of having to look at the end of the letter to find out who wrote it!

   Paul associates with himself in the writing of this Epistle the names of Silas [SIE-luhs] (Silvanus) and Timothy (Timotheus). The former had been his companion from the beginning of this second journey (Acts 15:40). The latter he had picked up at Lystra [LIHS-truh] (Acts 16:1-3) as a younger apprentice in the work. The great apostle was not at all obliged to include these two, but his doing so reveals the measure of his generosity.

   The second item in every papyrus letter - and the New Testament Epistles were doubtless written on papyrus - was the indication of the recipient (or recipients). In this case, it was "the church of the Thessalonians"; that is, the congregation composed of Thessalonian believers. They were "in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." This is what makes a person a Christian.

   All of Paul's Epistles carry the twofold greeting, "grace" and "peace." The former is the typical Greek greeting. Most papyrus letters have "chairein" (joy). The word Paul uses "charis" which is a richer term, filled with Christian content. Grace is defined as "love in action." It is God's love manifested to us. "Peace" is love at rest. This was the constant Hebrew greeting, shalom, still heard throughout the Middle East ("salaam"). Paul, a Jew writing to Greeks, combines these two. Actually, the combination underscores the fact that Christianity is for both Jews and Gentiles, who are now one in Christ (Ephesians 2:11-18).

   Grace and peace do not come from any human source. They come only "from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

2. Thanksgiving (1:2-3)

   Paul almost always follows his greeting with a thanksgiving. The outstanding exception is Galatians. The apostle gave thanks to these faithful converts

NOTES

at Thessalonica. He remembered them constantly in his prayers. What a tremendous prayer list Paul must have had! He recalled their "work produced by faith," their "labor prompted by love," and their "endurance inspired by hope."

B. AN EXEMPLARY MEMBERSHIP (1:4-10)

1. Followers of the Lord (1:4-6)

   Paul's preaching was not simply words; it was power (1:5). The Thessalonian believers followed the apostle and thus his Lord. They had received the Word "with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction" (1:6). Only the presence and power of the Holy Spirit could make them rejoice in the midst of persecution.

2. Examples to All (1:7)

   The Thessalonian Christians were living exemplary Christian lives. Paul could hold them up as an example to all believers in Macedonia [MAS-uh-DOH-nee-uh] and Greece.

3. Promoters of the Gospel (1:8)

   These converts were not just good enough to be good for nothing. They were actively spreading the faith that had saved them from sin. People everywhere had heard of their zeal for the Lord.

4. Converts from Paganism [PAY-guh-ni-zm] (1:9-10)

   They had "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God". This corroborates the account in Acts that the Thessalonian Christians were mainly Gentiles, for the Jews were not idolaters. These two verses form a striking parallelism to the third verse. Their "work produced by faith" was turning to God from idols. Their "labor prompted by love" was serving the living and true God. Their "endurance inspired by hope" was waiting for his Son from heaven. These are the three tenses of the Christian life. The past tense is conversion. The present tense is serving the Lord. The future tense is the hope of the Second Coming.

C. AN EXEMPLARY MINISTRY (2-3)

1. The Ministry of Paul (2:1-20)

NOTES

a. A Consistent Ministry (2:1-6)

   i. Effective (2:1-2). Paul's preaching in Thessalonica "was not a failure". In spite of his recent imprisonment at Philippi, he had been bold to proclaim the gospel "in spite of strong opposition." This had forced him to leave Thessalonica.

   ii. Ethical (2:3-6). Many speakers of that day dealt in "error" or "impure motives" and "trying to trick," as we know from the literature of the period. But, not so the Apostle Paul. He did not seek to please men - a disastrous policy in either politics or religion - but rather to please God, who searches the heart. Nor did he use flattering words, which are a sure sign of insincerity. Neither did he make his ministry "a mask to cover up greed". He was preaching for people, not for money. Nor did he seek glory from his hearers, or assert his authority as an apostle of Christ. Phillips translates the third verse: "Our message to you is true, our motives are pure, our conduct is absolutely aboveboard." That sums up the ethical aspects of Paul's effective, consistent ministry.

b. A Compassionate Ministry (2:7-12)

   i. Gentle (2:7-8). Nowhere else do we find more vividly portrayed the father-heart of the great apostle, his compassionate concern for his converts, and his tender love for his spiritual children. Note the language he uses: "as a mother caring for her little children," - "loved you so much," - and "were delighted to share with you." This is the vocabulary of love. Paul declares that he would willingly have given them not only the gospel but also his own soul.

   Christian workers cannot help people unless they love them. That is true not only of the pastor or evangelist but also of the Sunday school teacher or youth worker. People are very sensitive to love or the lack of it. A cold, detached, impersonal ministry, no matter how brilliant, will end in failure. An effective ministry must be fervent with love.

   New converts are like little children: they need tender care. This the great apostle sought to give. His was not a scholarly greatness. He did not place himself on a pedestal. Rather he put on a caregiver's uniform, as it were, to take care of his many spiritual children.

   ii. Generous (2:9). He also put on work clothes - literally. At both Thessalonica, to which he was writing, and Corinth, from which he was writing, he had done manual labor to earn his living. He

NOTES

describes it here as "toil and hardship" and working "night and day". As we learn from the description of Paul's ministry at Ephesus (Acts 19:9), he was accustomed to carrying the full load of two careers. He was busy every day preaching and teaching. At the same time, he worked at his trade of tentmaking (Acts 18:3). Paul's consecration is perhaps unparalleled in the history of the Christian Church.

The apostle's example of doing manual labor should not be taken, however, as a norm for the minister today. It was Paul himself who wrote that those who preach the gospel should "receive their living from the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:14); that is, earn their living by means of their preaching. Paul took the course he did to offset any criticism that might hinder the work of the Kingdom. In those days, there were many idle, speculative thinkers who were traveling about "freeloading" off the people. The apostle did not wish to be classified with them. So, he "leaned over backward" to protect the Christian ministry from reproach. But, in these days of a regular salaried ministry, preachers should be paid for their services.

iii. Genuine (2:10-12). Paul could appeal to both his readers and God as witnesses that he had behaved himself "holy, righteous and blameless" at Thessalonica. His ministry had been genuine and consistent. Also, it had been comforting and encouraging. Paul had sought to play the part of a loving parent caring for his children. That aspect of his ministry is emphasized several times in this chapter.

To live "lives worthy of God" is a constant challenge to every Christian. Do we act like children of our Heavenly Father? Is our conduct worthy of his holy character? Do we bring glory or reproach to his name by our daily conduct? Those are questions that each one of us ought to face fairly and squarely. Then we ought to make the necessary adjustments in the light of that examination.

c. A Concerned Ministry (2:13-20)

i. Suffering Saints (2:13-14). Paul rejoiced that his hearers at Thessalonica had accepted his preaching, not as man's word, but as God's word to them. It is important that the person in the pulpit should preach the Word of God and then that the people in the seats should receive it as such. Only then can it work "effectually." Good listening is important, as well as good preaching.

The Thessalonians were following in the royal succession of suffering saints. It began in Judea, where the Jews persecuted the infant

NOTES

Church. It spread to Asia Minor, where Paul was pursued from city to city by jealous Jews. Then it occurred in Macedonia, and especially in the capital, Thessalonica. Saints have always suffered, in one way or another. The persecution today in many lands is usually more refined, but nevertheless real.

ii. Persecuted Preachers (2:15-16). Paul charges the Jews with killing Jesus and their own God-sent prophets, and now of persecuting the preachers of the gospel. He accuses them of being "hostile to all men". That is a serious accusation. But, it was made by one who was himself a Jew and a former persecutor of the Christians. So, he spoke what he knew from firsthand experience.

One of the saddest aspects of this persecution was that, too often, it was based on sheer jealousy. The Jews were forbidding the salvation of the Gentiles, heaping "up their sins to the limit". There is no greater crime than the prevention of another man's salvation. It is bad enough to reject the offer for oneself. But, to block the way so that someone else is hindered from being saved is utter perversion. This will justifiably bring eternal wrath upon the perpetrator of the crime.

iii. Passionate Parent (2:17-18). Once more, the apostle expresses his parental love for his children at Thessalonica. He had been taken away from them for a brief time "in person, not in thought" and now was anxious with "intense longing" to see their faces again. He had the passionate love that only a true parent can have for a child.

More than once, since being forced out of Thessalonica, he had planned to return and visit his converts there. But every time, "Satan stopped us." We do not know exactly what circumstances these words may refer to. But, Paul blamed the adversary for keeping him away from his converts.

iv. Grateful Glorying (2:19-20). The greatest reward that ministers receive is the consciousness that they have led people to Christ. Paul declared that the Thessalonian Christians were his "glory and joy". He also said that at the coming of the Lord, the "crown in which we will glory" would be his converts, whom he could present to Christ.

This is, at the same time, the greatest proof of one's ministry and the richest reward one can receive. This is true of the faithful Sunday school teacher and personal worker as well as the pastor. All Christians should seek to make sure that they have precious sheaves

NOTES

of saved souls to lay at the Master's feet.

2. The Ministry of Timothy (3:1-8)

   a. Sent from Athens (3:1-2)

   Paul and Silas had been forced to flee by night from Thessalonica (Acts 17:10). The jealous Jews of the city had followed the missionaries to Berea so Paul had to leave that place also. But, this time, Silas and Timothy remained behind to carry on the work quietly (Acts 17:14). It is obvious that Paul was the main storm center wherever he went. He usually had a revival, then a riot, and the next thing was leaving town in a hurry. Paul was no neutralist!

   By the time the apostle got to Athens, he was lonely for his companions. So, he sent word back to Berea for Silas and Timothy to join him just as soon as possible (Acts 17:15). Now we learn something that is not recorded in Acts. While at Athens, Paul felt so concerned about his new converts at Thessalonica that he sent Timothy back there to see how they were getting along. Much as he naturally disliked it, he was willing to stay alone in order to take care of his children.

   Timothy is called "our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ". When writing to Timothy, Paul greets him as "my true son in the faith" (1 Timothy 1:2). That is, the apostle had led him to the Lord, and so was his spiritual father. Here, Paul shows a beautiful, courteous thoughtfulness in describing Timothy as he does. In relation to the Thessalonian Christians, the younger man is the apostle's brother and fellow worker, a true minister of God. Paul was always gracious and generous in his treatment of his young associates. This is one of the marks of a big character.

   The purpose of Timothy's mission is definitely stated. He is to "strengthen and encourage" the Thessalonian Christians in their faith. Paul believed in a follow-up program, something too often neglected today in church life. The conservation of converts is one of the most needed emphases in evangelism. We take them in the front door and then carelessly, thoughtlessly let them slip out the back door because of our lack of concern for them. If the church worked half as hard to hold its converts as it does to gain them, its membership would be far larger today. Our work is not done when people are saved and join the church. That is when our most important assignment with them begins: encouraging and establishing them in Christian living

NOTES

b. Seeing Their Affliction (3:3-5)

The Thessalonian believers were still undergoing "afflictions"; that is, persecution for their faith. But, Paul reminds them that "we were destined for them" (3:3). God permits a certain amount of persecution of his children, knowing that it is for their good in the development of rugged character. When the apostle was with them, he had warned them that they would "be persecuted" (3:4), so they should not be surprised at experiencing it now.

Knowing the trials that his children in the faith were undergoing, Paul could not wait any longer. He sent Timothy to check on them and to make sure that their temptations were not proving to be too much for them. The apostle wanted fruit that would remain, lest his labor "might have been useless" (3:5).

c. Securing Their Assurance (3:6-8)

Timothy brought back a good report. The Thessalonian Christians were strong in both "faith and love". This is the combination that spells victorious living. Even though they were recently converted, these faithful ones had learned the secret.

An added item must have touched the lonely prophet's heart with rich comfort. The Thessalonians had their spiritual father constantly in remembrance and were longing to see him, just as he was to see them. Paul was experiencing "distress and persecution" at Corinth (3:7). But, his unselfish concern for his converts paid off. He had sent Timothy to comfort them. Now their faith was comforting him. We get what we give!

Paul was a strong, steadfast apostle of Christ. In our thinking, we are apt to put him on a pedestal, far separated from common creatures like ourselves. But, this consecrated saint was very human. At a later time, he became so concerned over the attitude of his Corinthian converts that he wrote them that he "despaired even of life" (2 Corinthians 1:8). Here, with a heart full of fatherly affection, he writes: "For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord" (3:8).

Here Paul voices a basic policy of his life: his own spiritual welfare is in direct proportion to that of his converts. If they prospered, he prospered. If they died spiritually, then to that extent, he died too. These are sobering words; Christians can well afford to consider them prayerfully.

NOTES

3. The Ministry of Prayer (3:9-13)

   a. Perfection in Faith (3:9-11)

   Not only did both Paul and Timothy minister to the Thessalonians in person. The apostle also carried on a continuous prayer ministry on their behalf. But, he begins, as usual, with thanksgiving. He expresses his gratitude to God for the privilege of having such wonderful children in the Lord. Gratefulness is one of the most rewarding things in life. The more thankful we are, the more we have for which to be thankful. Instead of living in a vicious circle of ingratitude and increasing misfortunes, we can live in a glorious circle of thanksgiving and richer blessings. In fact, a spirit of praise generates its own blessing.

   Paul's prayer ministry went on "night and day" (3:10). He prayed "earnestly". He was especially eager to see them again in person. Why? That he might "supply what is lacking in your faith". The question has often been raised as to what the apostle had in mind when he used this phrase. It has been suggested that their lack was the experience of entire sanctification. Doubtless, this was included. But, it would seem wiser to take the expression in a more general way as covering whatever was lacking in their faith. However, the strong emphasis on holiness in this Epistle lends considerable weight to the view that their sanctification was Paul's primary concern. It would be better to translate the first part of verse 11 as follows: "Now God himself, even our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ". Paul prayed that God might guide him in visiting again his children in Thessalonica. He was anxious to see them once more.

   b. Perfection in Love (3:12-13)

   Paul's Epistles are studded with his prayers, as with precious jewels. These two verses contain one of his most important petitions. They should be read again and again, carefully.

   The apostle's concern was that the Thessalonian Christians might "increase and overflow" in love. We all recognize that we need more of God. But, "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16). Therefore, we need more love. But, Paul is not thinking of love as a subjective experience, something that we can enjoy for ourselves. It is love reaching out toward another and "for everyone else." He had already set an example in his love for them.

   What was the purpose of this? To the end that God may "strengthen your hearts so that you may be blameless and holy". Do we wish to know how we can be established in the experience of entire sanctification? Here is

NOTES

the answer: Keep on increasing and abounding in love toward our fellow Christians and toward all people everywhere.

This principle is both logically and psychologically sound. Love grows by giving. It cannot stay alive unless it is expressing itself. Love is not something static or stagnant. It is not love at all unless it is love in action. Actually, it cannot exist as an abstraction. It is something alive and active, vibrant and vibrating. It is both a heartbeat and a hand reach.

The only way to keep filled with perfect love is to keep that love flowing out to others. Love will either flow out or leak out. We cannot save love unless we share it. And, the more we give, the more we get. The higher it reaches in blessing others, the deeper it goes in blessing our own hearts.

Selfish love is a self-contradictory phrase. Love is not true love unless it is unselfish. When we "love" others mainly to make ourselves feel the enjoyment of it, we are indulging in "puppy love," not the real thing. But, the more freely and fully we express genuine love, the happier our lives will be.

SECTION 2.2 PRACTICAL (4-5)

A. ETHICS (4:1-12)

1. The Ethic of Holiness (4:1-8)

    a. Exhortation (4:1-2)

    Paul exhorts his readers to walk in the light of his preaching and teaching. He had shown them the way that was pleasing to God. Now he urges them to engage "more and more" in Christlike living. The phrase "more and more" is a favorite one with Paul (translated as "increase" in 3:12). He did not believe in barely getting by, in hardly holding his head above water. He rejoiced in an abundant life of joy and victory. Every Christian who is willing to pay the price of complete consecration that Paul did can enjoy this same experience.

    b. Evaluation (4:3-6)

    Just what is God's will for us? Paul's answer is definite and distinct: "It is God's will that you should be sanctified" (4:3). People often ask why we teach entire sanctification as a second work of grace, subsequent to conversion. This episode throws some light on that question. In the first chapter, Paul describes his readers as genuinely converted, "you turned

NOTES

to God from idols" (1:9) - living exemplary Christian lives, "you became a model to all the believers" (1:7) - and propagating the faith that had saved them, "from you sounded out the word of the Lord" (1:8). Yet to such the apostle writes: "It is God's will that you should be sanctified". It is clear that sanctification is for saints, not sinners.

It is also obvious that one of the main elements of sanctification is purity. This is further stressed in verse 7. It may seem surprising that Paul should urge his readers to be sanctified in order that they might "avoid sexual immorality" (1:3). What we too often forget is that this first-century missionary was writing to those who had recently been saved and that his readers were still surrounded closely by pagan morals and pagan religion. A glimpse of conditions at that time may be seen in the claim that there were in Corinth a thousand priestesses who were sacred prostitutes. The same number is given for Antioch. It is hard for us to realize today that immorality was actually a part of the prescribed worship of a heathen goddess.

The Thessalonian Christians needed to be purified within to withstand the pressure of all the impurities. Only in light of the extremely low moral conditions of the first century can we understand the strange combination of this verse. We are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1) and then treat them as his sacred property. That is an important aspect of sanctification.

There is some dispute as to whether "body" in 4:4 refers to one's body or one's spouse. The reason for the latter suggestion is that the word translated "control" literally means "get or gain possession of". One does that with a spouse, but not one's body. In spite of the tense in Greek, many still prefer to take the word as referring to "body" (see Phillips). Either interpretation fits well with the context. The pagan gentiles of that period were notorious for "passionate lust" or sensual sin. But, Christians must realize that whoever commits immorality "takes advantage of" the other party. It is a serious sin against humanity, and God will avenge the wrong (3:6).

c. Enunciation (4:7-8)

Paul here articulates clearly the nature of "holiness"; it is the opposite of "impure." Our common sense and natural instinct tell us that if holiness means anything at all, it means purity. That is its very essence. A Christian cannot trifle with the easygoing moral attitudes of our day, which are becoming alarmingly like those of the first century. In other words, so-called Christian countries are fast adopting the loose

NOTES

moral customs of pagan lands. It poses a serious threat to the future of civilization. It was moral rottenness which was the main cause for the fall of the Roman Empire. This should serve as a warning to our nations now.

Paul goes on to say that whoever "rejects this instruction does not reject man, but God". God has given us his Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit will not dwell in an unholy body. Elsewhere, the apostle reminds us that the body is "a temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19). Therefore, it must be treated as something sacred and kept clean.

2. The Ethic of Love (4:9-12)

   a. Excelling in Love (4:9-10)

      It is to be noted that love and purity are closely associated here. True love is always pure. After urging the Thessalonian Christians to "increase and overflow" in love (3:12-13), Paul discusses the supreme importance of moral purity (4:1-8). Now he returns to the subject of love. Its significance cannot be overemphasized.

      He makes the point first that God teaches his children to love. Since God is love, He imparts this nature to his own, as well as setting them the example. Paul commends the Thessalonians for the love they have shown all their brethren in Macedonia. This would include Philippi and especially Berea. But, he urges them to "do so more and more" (4:10). This reminds us of his similar words in 3:12.

   b. Exercising Honesty (4:11-12)

      The Macedonians were notorious for their curiosity about other people's business. Paul urges them "to lead a quiet life" and to mind their "own business" and to work with their "own hands". Christians should live such lives that people will be compelled to admire them and to want to know the Christ that makes them that way.

      Then Paul sounded an all-important note: "so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders"; that is, those outside the Church. There is no substitute for honesty. This is the absolute minimum requirement for a Christian, as far as the world is concerned. Other things can be forgiven, but not the lack of honesty.

      The phrase "so that you will not be dependent on anybody" may mean "that there may be no lack of confidence in you on the part of anyone". This is the standard by which we should govern our conduct. We must

NOTES

live in such a way that, in spite of our mistakes and shortcomings, no one can point a finger at anything in our lives that is the least bit crooked.

B. ESCHATOLOGY (4:13-5:11)

1. The Parousia (4:13-18)

   a. Sleeping Christians (4:13-15)

   One of the most vivid descriptions of the Second Coming (Parousia in Greek) to be found in the New Testament is this one in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Specifically, it portrays the rapture of the saints, when Christ comes for his own.

   Apparently, Paul had preached at Thessalonica on the Second Coming. He had told the people that the Lord was soon to return - a belief that seems to have been universal in the beginnings of the Church. The Christians would be caught up with Christ in heaven. But, some of the believers were dying. Did this mean that they would miss out and not meet Jesus when He came? Understandably their surviving loved ones were troubled about this problem. But, the apostle tells them not to grieve, as did others "who have no hope" (4:13). He assures them that just as truly as "Jesus died and rose again," so surely will those who "have fallen asleep in him" be brought "with Jesus."

   Then he becomes more specific. The ones who "are still alive" at "the coming of the Lord" will not "precede those who have fallen asleep"; that is, who have died as Christians. The English word cemetery comes from the Greek for "be asleep". It reflects the Christian belief that those who die in the Lord are actually only asleep in Jesus, waiting for the resurrection.

   b. Second Coming (4:16-18)

   The description is graphic: "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump call of God" (4:16). This does not sound like the secret, silent rapture which many insist upon. It suggests a grand, glorious announcement that all will hear. Not a whisper, but a "loud command"; not a gentle whistle, but "the voice of the archangel"; not a muted note on a flute, but "the trump call of God". It must be recognized that much current teaching on the Second Coming is based on the speculations of men rather than the clear Word of God. What we need is to get back to the simple, direct statements of the Scriptures.

NOTES

At the time of the rapture, "the dead in Christ shall rise first". This makes more positive and specific the apostle's negative declaration that the ones alive at the time of the Second Coming will not precede those who are "asleep" in Jesus (4:14-15). This phrase obviously equals "dead in Christ". When the Lord comes, the sleeping saints will be given priority.

Then will come the turn of those who are alive and remain (4:17). Paul's use of "we" in 4:15 and 17 suggests that he expected to be in this number, and so indicates his belief that Jesus would return very soon. The possibility that Paul was mistaken and thought Christ would come back in his day is no proof that he was wrong in preaching the blessed hope of the Second Coming. That our Lord will return for his own is clearly taught throughout the New Testament. When He will come is not disclosed, and Jesus warned against speculation at this point (Matthew 24:36).

The Christians who are then living will be caught up with the resurrected saints "to meet the Lord in the air." Then comes the comforting message: "And so we will be with the Lord forever." That is what heaven will be: living in unveiled fellowship forever with the One who loved us and won our love for him. Hate makes hell - here and hereafter. Love makes heaven - here and hereafter.

No wonder Paul ends this superb passage on the Second Coming by saying: "Therefore encourage each other with these words" (4:18)! The Greek term for "encourage" also means "beseech" or "exhort," and is so rendered in other places in the New Testament. But, it would seem that the King James translators were wise in choosing "comfort" here. There is no more comforting thought imaginable than the assurance that someday we shall live in the presence of the Lord, whom we love and serve, and that this will last forever. What a glorious prospect is ours! It will be worth all the tests and trials of this life, all the disappointments and discouragements, all the headaches and heartaches - just to be with him forever.

2. The Preparation (5:1-11)

    a. Warning (5:1-3)

    "Times" is the Greek word chronos, from which comes "chronology." It is a simple word for the passage of time. But "dates" means "appointed times." Paul asserts that his readers are aware of the significance of the signs of Christ's return. These are elaborated in Matthew 24; 2 Timothy 3:1-13; and 2 Peter 3:1-14. Here the apostle makes just a general

NOTES

reference. “The day of the Lord” is a phrase borrowed from the Old Testament. It is especially prominent in the Minor Prophets, where it means a day of darkness, desolation, and destruction; in other words, a day of judgment. That is what the Second Coming will mean for sinners.

The statement that the Lord will come “as a thief in the night” (5:2) is sometimes used as support for the idea of a secret coming. But, probably, the phrase denotes suddenness rather than silence. It primarily emphasizes the fact that Christ will come unexpectedly: “The Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him” (Matthew 24:44).

Then comes a very helpful warning: When people say, “Peace and safety”, then “destruction will come on them suddenly” (5:3). The pertinence of this for our day hardly needs to be defended. Before the First World War, peace movements lulled the uneasy minds of people into a false sense of security which was suddenly shattered. The slogan “Peace and safety” was responsible for the holocaust at Pearl Harbor, the worst military disaster in the history of the United States. Facts disclosed in recent years have shown that there was an abundance of warnings given both in Washington and at Pearl Harbor. But, no attention was paid to them, and no preparation was made. The result was “sudden destruction.” And, so it will be at the end of this age.

b. Wakefulness (5:4-7)

The admonition to be awake is central in preparation for the Second Coming. Jesus said: “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know what day your Lord will come” (Matthew 24:42). “Watch” is literally “Be awake.” The way to be on guard against the unexpected coming of the thief is to keep awake.

Paul reminds his readers that they are not “in darkness” (5:4), but are children “of the light” and children “of the day” (5:5). So “let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled” (5:6). For those that sleep “sleep at night” and those who get drunk do so “at night” (5:7). We who belong to the day must keep awake and sober.

c. Watchfulness (5:8-11)

Paul suggests that the Christian needs not only to be awake and sober but also to be armed in the face of danger. He specifies two parts of the armor - the breastplate of “faith and love” and “the hope of salvation as a helmet” (5:8). In Ephesians 6:13-17 he names six pieces of the Christian’s armor. We find there, as here, the helmet of salvation, but there, the breastplate is identified as righteousness. There, he also adds: “Be alert

NOTES

and always keep on praying" (Ephesians 6:18). The only way to be safe in a world of wickedness is to watch and pray. Jesus said to the disciples in the garden: "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation" (Matthew 26:41). Our greatest peril lies in a lack of prayer. It is the seventh piece, as it were, that buckles the armor together.

Here the breastplate suggests that our most important protection is "faith and love" in our hearts. The function of the breastplate was to protect the heart against flying arrows or the thrust of a sword or spear.

God's appointment for us is not "wrath" but "salvation," which comes only through "our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:9). He died for us that, whether we are alive or dead at his coming, we may live forever with him (5:10).

Then comes again the exhortation: "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up" (5:11) (originally, "build a house"). We are to build each other up, not tear each other down. What a warning that is to all of us!

The importance of preparation for the coming of Christ cannot be overstressed. In a day of material advancement, we need to give fresh attention to the matter. Too often, the much-publicized "modern living" means living with gadgets but no God. We must constantly be on our guard lest we succumb to the spirit of the age and so lose the Spirit of God.

C. EXHORTATION (5:12-22)

1. Private Attitude (5:12-17)

    a. Peace (5:12-13)

    Often quoted is the admonition here to give attention to those who are "over you in the Lord" - evidently, pastors are meant - "Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work." All sincere, consecrated ministers in our churches - and that takes in the vast majority - should be accorded the honor that is due them.

    The apostle adds the plea: "Live in peace with each other." Quarrelsomeness was a besetting sin of the Macedonians, and unfortunately it has not by any means disappeared from religious circles.

    b. Patience (5:14-15)

    It is the duty of the church to maintain order in its midst. It must warn

NOTES

some. The word translated as "timid" is literally "small-souled." What congregation is not afflicted with a few of such? The church must also seek to support the "weak," keeping them on their feet when they falter. Some never do grow up spiritually and learn to walk alone. They are always leaning on someone else. No wonder Paul concluded: "Be patient with everyone."

Christians are not to retaliate (5:15). Instead of returning evil for evil, they should give good for evil, not only to fellow church members but also "to all people." This is in keeping with Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:38-48).

c. Praise (5:16)

The command is brief but important. One of the significant secrets of victorious living is maintaining a constant spirit of praise. It causes Satan to flee faster than anything else, even prayer. It encourages one's own heart and inspires others. To be continually rejoicing is to be happy inside and to gladden those about us. The joyous person is always good company wanted and appreciated.

d. Prayer (5:17)

To many people, the exhortation "Pray continually" seems nothing short of a mocking impossibility. But, all great saints have learned the secret. It does not mean, of course, that one is always engaged consciously in prayer. Busy people must keep their intellects employed with their proper responsibilities. But, it does mean that when our minds are free from demanding duties, they naturally and quickly revert to communion with our Lord. It means that we pray over the decisions of life and ask God to guide us. It means that much of life becomes a sacrament of prayer. To "pray continually" is to begin and end each day with God and to keep ourselves tuned in to heaven all so that we can make quick contact whenever we need to.

2. Public Action (5:18-22)

The distinction between private attitude and public action is not sharply defined here. But in these verses, there seems to be a greater relation to public worship.

a. Freedom of Thanksgiving (5:18)

The grace of gratitude is one of the most important in the catalog of Christian graces. In fact, in Greek, "grace," "joy," and "thanks" are all from

NOTES

the same root. The proper kind of grace will cause us to give thanks, and that, in turn, will bring joy to our hearts. This is a victorious, not a vicious, circle.

It is God's will that we give thanks. Perhaps we would enjoy more of God's blessings in our prayer meetings and even our other services if we devoted more time to thanking God for his goodness to us.

b. Freedom in the Spirit (5:19)

The phrase "put out" is the same word in Greek which is translated as "going out" when the foolish virgins said, "Our lamps are going out" - literally, "being quenched" (Matthew 25:8). So, to quench the Spirit does not mean necessarily to refrain from some activity in a public service nor to forbid "demonstration" in the Spirit. It may simply mean that we permit the oil of the Spirit in our hearts to be used up, as it were, without periodic fresh anointings, so that our lamps begin to flicker out for lack of oil.

c. Freedom of Worship (5:20)

In the New Testament, "prophesying" means "preaching." A study of 1 Corinthians will indicate that there was a great deal of freedom in the Early Church services. There was more "audience participation" than now. Prophecy was considered an important gift of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:1). Prophets (preachers) ranked second only to apostles (1 Corinthians 12:28).

While Paul enjoined freedom in worship, he also realized the inherent dangers of such freedom. The main thrust of 1 Corinthians 12-14 is a warning against the uncontrolled exercise of the gifts of the Spirit. Specifically, Paul deals at length with the fact that the employment of the gift of prophecy must not interfere with the orderly conduct of public worship (1 Corinthians 14:29-33).

d. Fast Hold of the Good (5:21)

The Greek word for "test" has three stages of meaning: (1) test; (2) prove by testing; (3) approve as the result of testing. We are to test what is presented to us and "hold on to" what proves good, rejecting the rest. A naive attitude of accepting everything is the sign of folly, not faith.

e. Forsaking of Evil (5:22)

The translation "every kind of evil" can be misleading, since the significance of the Greek term here, is "form". The correct rendering is:

NOTES

"Abstain from every form of evil." This is a sweeping command. It takes in every aspect of life - economic, social, domestic, public, private, religious, secular. Anything that can properly be called "evil" must be carefully and constantly avoided.

D. ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION (5:23-24)

1. The Prayer (5:23)

   Holiness people are sometimes asked: "Where do you get this term entire sanctification? I don't find it in the New Testament." It is true that the exact expression does not occur there. But this verse gives adequate support for it. The phrase for "through and through" is holoteleis (found only here in the New Testament). It is a compound of halos ("wholly") and telos ("end"). It means "wholly to the end." The only way that it can be represented adequately in English is by some such hyphenated expression as "wholly-completely" or "completelyentirely." The NIV translation is "through and through" - like Martin Luther's translation of it "durch und durch". That is exactly what it means. It signifies a thorough cleansing and hallowing of our whole beings by the infilling of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 15:8-9). That is entire sanctification. And the use of the Greek aorist tense here for "sanctify" suggests that it is a crisis experience, not a long, drawn-out process. Of course, in its largest connotation, sanctification is both an instantaneous crisis and a gradual process before and after, as John Wesley wisely stated it in his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. But, "entire sanctification" is a crisis experience, subsequent to conversion.

   Paul prayed that their whole "spirit, soul, and body" might be preserved blameless unto the coming of Christ. This comes through living the sanctified life day by day, every day.

2. The Promise (5:24)

   We cannot sanctify ourselves, in the sense of the cleansing of the heart from all sin. That is done by the blood of Jesus Christ (1 John 1:7) and the infilling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:8-9). He is the sanctifying Spirit. But, God is faithful and will perform the work if we let him.

E. ENDING (5:25-28)

1. Bidding Good-by (5:25-27)

   a. Pray for Us (5:25)

NOTES

Two things are noticeable in Paul's Epistles: Frequently, he mentions praying for his readers and also requesting their prayers for him. The apostle lived in an atmosphere of prayer. He genuinely felt the need for prayer and did not hesitate to express that need.

b. Greet the Brethren (5:26)

The greeting that is prescribed here - men kissing men has always been common in the Orient, as well as some Western lands. The equivalent for many would be: "Shake hands with all the people at church."

c. Read the Epistle (5:27)

This letter was addressed to "the church of the Thessalonians" (1:1), and it was to be read to the entire congregation. This marked the beginning of the reading of the New Testament in church services. Up to this time, only the Old Testament was available as Holy Scripture.

2. Benediction (5:28)

All of Paul's Epistles close with a benediction, or blessing. This is one of the briefest. And yet, it is rich in suggestion. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." That is all we need.

Silas [SIE-luhs]
Lystra [LIHS-truh]
Macedonia [MAS-uh-DOH-nee-uh]
Paganism [PAY-guh-ni-zm]

CHAPTER 3
The Second Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians

NOTES

SECTION 3.1 ENCOURAGEMENT (1:1-12)

A. SALUTATION (1:1-4)

1. Greeting (1:1-2)

   The greeting here is almost exactly in precise agreement with that at the beginning of 1 Thessalonians. One notes a curious difference, however. Whereas in the earlier letter, it is all in one verse; here, it is divided into two.

   This would be a good place to observe that the chapter and verse divisions in the Bible were made in medieval times and, in many instances, were very poorly chosen. If one wishes to carry on intelligent Bible study, one must largely ignore the chapter and verse divisions and concentrate on paragraphs composed of thought units, as in the new translations. It must be remembered that when Paul wrote this letter to the Thessalonians, it was no more divided into chapters and verses than would be a longer letter one might write to a friend now.

2. Thanksgiving (1:3-4)

   This is somewhat different from that found in the First Epistle, though some of the same elements are emphasized. Here again, he commends the Thessalonians for their "faith" and "love." Their faith is increasing and their love abounding, as he had prayed they would in his First Epistle (3:11). The fact that their faith "is growing more and more" would seem to indicate that his prayer was answered. He also commended them for their "perseverance" and "faith" (or faithfulness) in the many "persecutions and trials" they were enduring. It is obvious that one of the main purposes for which Paul wrote was to comfort and encourage a persecuted church.

B. SUFFERING (1:5-12)

1. Worthy of the Kingdom (1:5-10)

   a. Recompense (1:5-6)

      Paul liked long sentences. In our English Bibles, the present one begins with the third verse and ends with the tenth. Perhaps it would be better, however, to begin a new sentence here with the fifth verse. The Greek

NOTES

well translated "This is" in the NIV. God was permitting persecution to come to them for their own good. Only through suffering could they be "counted worthy of the kingdom of God" (1:5). But, divine justice would also require him to "pay back" to those who were troubling the Thessalonian converts. These were evidently the Jews, as already noted.

b. Revelation (1:7)

For these persecuted believers, there will be "relief" when "the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven" with the powerful angels. This refers to his second coming in glory. Then wrongs will be righted, and this topsy-turvy world will be turned right side up.

c. Revenge (1:8-10)

The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians is marked even more by apocalyptic language than is the First Epistle. "In blazing fire" taking vengeance is a good example. Apocalyptic [uh-paa-kuh-LIP-tuhk] language is highly symbolical, portraying realities in figurative speech. The idea here is that of severe judgment on those who reject the gospel of Christ.

Paul says that they will be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (1:9). This is what hell will be: eternal banishment from God's presence. This is the worst fate that could overtake any human being. Mental anguish will add immeasurably to the physical pain of hell.

All this is clearly related to the coming of Christ in glory. During this age, it often seems that wrong is on the throne, and truth is on the cross. But, the return of Christ as Conqueror will change all this. Then right will hold sway everywhere.

2. Worthy of This Calling (1:11-12)

a. Goodness (1:11)

Paul was still praying "constantly". This time it was that God would count his converts worthy of their calling to be Christians. He desires that "every good purpose" shall be fulfilled in them. God's plan and purpose, originating in the great goodness of his love, is the best blessing that could come to the apostle's readers. This would be manifested in "the work of faith with power"; that is, in divine power operating in them in proportion to their faith.

NOTES

b. Glory (1:12)

God's glory should be the goal of every Christian. We should seek to live each day in such a way that "the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" is "glorified" in them. This is a constant challenge to every believer.

SECTION 3.2 ESCHATOLOGY (2:1-12)

A. AGITATION (2:1-2)

Paul had evidently learned that his converts in Thessalonica were being "unsettled" and "alarmed." This was some supposedly prophetic utterance probably delivered in the church at Thessalonica; "by report" - perhaps an oral communication reported as being from the apostle; or "by letter"- which suggests a forged epistle purportedly from Paul. No wonder the founder of this church hastened to straighten the record and protect his people. This agitation had to do with the statement that "the day of the Lord has already come". Probably "is here" is a better translation. Some were teaching that the time for the Second Coming had actually arrived. This attitude is taken by some today. But, it is clear that Paul repudiated such speculation.

B. APOSTASY (2:3-4)

Paul insisted that before the Second Coming, certain signs would take place. The first was a "rebellion" (Greek, apostasis) occurs. This means more than backsliding. It signifies a departure in doctrine, a repudiation of the very principles of Christianity. The humanistic liberalism of the last century certainly answers to this description. In denying the deity of Jesus Christ, it tore out the foundation from under the Christian faith. There is no real Christianity without a divine Christ. Other religions claim only human founders – Gautama [ga-uh-taa-MUH], Confucius [Kuhn-FYOO-shuhs], Laotze [la-oh-TSUH], Mohammed [mo-HAAM-id]. The greatest glory of Christianity is that it alone of all the religions of the world has, or even claims to have, a Divine Being as its Founder. To reject the deity of Jesus is to undermine our religion completely.

In the second place, there would be a revelation of the "man doomed to destruction." The best Greek text has "man of lawlessness." He is also called the "son of perdition"; that is, "of perishing." He is the one who will himself perish eternally and who brings the same fate on those who follow him. This is the one who is commonly referred to in prophetic circles as the Antichrist [AN-tee-kryst].

Has the man of lawlessness been revealed yet? Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin - these

NOTES

have been identified as the Antichrist. The obvious falsity of these mistaken claims should warn everyone against indulging in such useless speculations.

This enemy of God and mankind is further described as making himself the supreme object of worship. He goes so far as to proclaim himself "to be God" (2:4). This is the utter climax of blasphemy.

The reference to his sitting himself up "in God's temple " if indeed the language is to be taken literally - suggests a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem. For the present that seems a very remote possibility. In the first place, the Old City of Jerusalem, which includes the Temple area, is occupied by a mosque. For centuries, the Temple area has been a sacred Muslim enclosure. In the second place, rebuilding the Temple would seem to involve the restoration of animal sacrifices. It is difficult to imagine even the Orthodox Jews turning back the clock of centuries and engaging again in this ancient practice. Frankly, this phrase is difficult to interpret clearly.

C. ACTIVITY (2:5-7)

Paul had preached comprehensively on the subject of the Second Coming while at Thessalonica. Now he reminds his readers of that fact (2:5). Apparently, they had forgotten some things he had told them. "What is holding" him back (2:6) is better rendered "that which restrains" him. Something is restraining the power of evil so that the man of lawlessness will not be revealed until the proper time.

A restraint is needed, for "the secret power of lawlessness is already at work" (2:7), and "hinders" is what the Greek word for "holds it back" means. The One who hinders is the Holy Spirit, who will continue to restrain "until he is taken out of the way" in the rapture of the Church.

When one considers the alarming growth of crime and immorality today, one wonders what conditions will be like when the Church and the Holy Spirit are removed as restraining influences. Sin will have a field day.

D. ANTICHRIST (2:8-10)

This carnival of crime will not last long. When the Lord comes, He will destroy the Antichrist ("the lawless one") with the breath ("spirit") of his mouth and "the splendor of his coming" (2:8). Holiness and sin cannot coexist. The very glory and power of Christ will "destroy" the wicked Antichrist as a blowtorch swallows up dust in its flame. It is a graphic picture. One is reminded of an acetylene torch

NOTES

with its light too bright for human eyes and its heat that melts metals. Such will be the coming of Christ.

The Antichrist is further described as one whose coming "will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders" (2:9). This counterfeit Christ will try to match the miracles of Jesus. His main characteristic will be deception.

This is further enlarged by the phrase "every sort of evil that deceives" (2:10). People will perish because they have been deceived by Satan or by his emissary, the Antichrist. This is due to their rejecting "to love the truth," by which they would have been saved. Unbelief is usually more of a moral than a mental matter. People are lost not because they cannot believe but because they will not believe. The New Testament portrays unbelief as a willful refusal to accept light and walk in it.

E. ABANDONMENT (2:11-12)

Because people deliberately choose to be deceived, rejecting the light offered them, God will abandon them to have their own way. He will send them "a powerful delusion" (2:11) since deception is their choice.

This truth is vividly presented in the first chapter of Romans. There we read three times that God "gave them up" or over (Romans 1:24, 26, 28) - to uncleanness, to vile affections, and to a reprobate mind. Nothing sadder can happen to any person than to have God abandon them. But, if one deliberately turns one's back on the Light of the World and chooses to walk in the darkness of disobedience, there is no other alternative.

The result is eternal judgment for all who will not believe the truth but have pleasure in "wickedness." This is the cue to the true nature of unbelief. Why do people disbelieve the gospel? Because they want to enjoy the "pleasures of sin" (Hebrews 11:25). It is a moral decision. The result is moral abandonment. While this description is especially applied to the end of this age, the principle is already in force. When people deliberately, willfully choose to reject the light, when they turn their backs on Christ's way to follow their own way, there is only one consequence. God abandons them to their own desires. Too late, they discover that the worst thing that can happen to people is to be allowed to have their own way because they refuse God's way.

The evangelistic significance of this passage is abundantly evident. Every time the gospel is preached, people are confronted with the demand that they make a moral decision. There are only two choices ultimately: Christ or self. Those who

NOTES

choose the latter pay the price of sorrow and tragedy here and in hell forever. Those who choose the former find happiness here and heaven hereafter.

SECTION 3.3 EXHORTATION (2:13-3:18)

A. SALVATION (2:13-14)

Paul thanks God for his choice of the Thessalonians to receive salvation. On the surface, this might sound like a particular election and absolute predestination. But, we must compare scripture with scripture. In many places, it says that Christ died for all and that "whosoever will" may come. In the plan of God, there is a fine balance between divine sovereignty and human freedom. In the final analysis, it reduces to this: God has chosen to save all who will accept Jesus Christ as Savior. He wills the salvation of everyone. But, it takes our wills cooperating with his will to bring this about. The Bible clearly states that God was "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). John 3:16 definitely declares that "whoever believes in him" will be saved. In the last chapter of the Book of Revelation, we read: "Whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life" (Revelation 22:17). To say that God has eternally predestined certain individuals to be saved and the rest of mankind to be lost is to make a hollow mockery of these passages.

Our salvation is accomplished "through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth"; that is, a sanctification dependent upon our belief in the truth. In other words, when we believe God's Word, the Spirit is able through this means to bring about our "sanctification". Probably, this term includes both entire sanctification and also the whole process of being set apart from God and having our lives transformed by his presence. In its largest connotation, the word takes in the complete sweep of Christian life. It begins in conversion, which is initial sanctification, and continues on through entire sanctification to the very end of our stay on earth. Sanctification is salvation on its subjective side, as justification is the objective aspect. In other words, sanctification is what salvation does to us inwardly.

The Thessalonians were called to this salvation by Paul's preaching of the gospel. The Father planned the way of salvation. The Son provided it through his death on the Cross. People called of God must preach it, in order that the Holy Spirit may apply it. The human relay is essential if salvation is to reach the lost.

NOTES

B. STABILIZATION (2:15-3:5)

1. "Stand Fast" (2:15)

   The Thessalonian converts were being shaken (2:2). So, Paul writes to them: "Stand fast." Specifically, he urges them to hold on to the traditions they had been taught, whether by his preaching to them or by the Epistle he had written (1 Thessalonians).

   In a world of turbulence and turmoil, the Christian needs to hold steady and stand fast. Stability is one of the most essential characteristics of successful living.

2. "Establish You" (2:16-17)

   Here is the combination that wins: "Stand fast," and God will "strengthen you." If we do our part, He will do his part. It takes our wills co-operating with his will to live a Christian life.

   Paul prayed that his readers might be established "in every good deed and word". Our words, as well as our deeds, are of utmost importance. Often Christians are more careful of their conduct than of their conversation. But, the latter can have tremendous influence both on ourselves and on those who hear us. By speaking kind, Christlike words, we can elevate our own feelings and inspire the people around us.

3. Save Us (3:1-3)

   Paul is like many preachers today: when he says "finally," it does not necessarily mean he is through! In his letter to the Philippians, we find this word right in the middle (Philippians 3:1). It took him longer to finish what he had to say than he probably realized.

   Again, the apostle requested prayer for himself and for the preaching of the gospel (3:1). He wanted "the message of the Lord" to "spread rapidly," or, as the Greek says, to "run." Too often, it seems that the work of the Kingdom slows to a walk or even to a crawl. With his consecrated, vigorous personality, Paul wanted it to run. He was a "fan" (short for "fanatic") for Jesus.

   Everywhere the apostle went, he was plagued by persecution from "unreasonable and wicked men" (3:2). They dogged his footsteps across Asia Minor and Macedonia, and finally, they followed him to Jerusalem and succeeded in getting him imprisoned for four years. Paul asks the Thessalonians to pray that he may be delivered from such.

NOTES

Then, to encourage his own heart and theirs, he says: "But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one" (3:3). Note the "strengthen you" twice (see 2:17).

4. Steady You (3:4-5)

Paul had great confidence in the Thessalonian Christians, and he very wisely expressed this to them. That is the best way to help people to feel they want to do better. Scolding and condemning often have the opposite effect. Parents, pastors, and Sunday school teachers do well to learn this simple secret of encouraging rather than discouraging those under their care.

Again, the apostle prays for his readers - this time that the Lord would "direct your hearts into God's love, and Christ's perseverance" (3:5). The Greek word for "perseverance" means "steadfast". It is not a negative giving into fate, but a positive going on in faith. They needed to be steadied in order to be readied for the coming of Christ.

C. SEPARATION (3:6-15)

1. Withdrawal (3:6)

To keep the church pure and strong, the apostle enjoined separation from stubborn individuals who insisted on being disorderly and disregarding the tradition, the "teaching", which Paul had given them. This is a difficult matter to discuss. What should be our attitude toward those who refuse to walk in the light and who cause contention and strife in the church?

Naturally, Christians want to do all they can to help and hold on to such individuals. But, observation across the years leads to the conviction that in too many cases, these stubborn rebels have not been helped by this policy, but instead, they have seriously disrupted conditions in the church or school with which they were connected and have damaged the lives of others. Looking back, it would appear that often it would have been wiser to demand the withdrawal of such uncorrected people - for the sake of the highest good of the largest number. Paul always put first the interests of the Kingdom, and that is still the safest and wisest policy.

Of course, whatever is done must be done in a spirit of love. But, it seems evident that in Corinth, where Paul was writing this Epistle, his stated policy was put into effect with excellent results. The apostle urged the Corinthians to "expel the wicked" person (1 Corinthians 5:13). Later, he wrote again, asking them to forgive the offender and to confirm their love toward him (2 Corinthians 2:7-8). It would appear that when this brazenly immoral person

NOTES

(1 Corinthians 5:1) was excluded from the fellowship, it jolted him into a realization of the seriousness of his sin, which, up to that time, the church had condoned. It was a matter of discipline leading to salvation something that might still work today.

2. Work (3:7-15)

   a. Paul's Example (3:7-9)

      Laziness is an ancient sin of humanity. Unwillingness to work has always been a cause of endless trouble. This condition existed even in the Early Church.

      First, Paul cites his own example. He was not ashamed of his orderly conduct at Thessalonica (3:7). But, he had gone further than this; he had worked for his own living instead of living off others (3:8). With his busy schedule of preaching and teaching, this involved "laboring and toiling" night and day. The apostle was determined not to be a burden to anyone.

      He clearly indicates, however, that he had the authority to accept compensation for his services. He had avoided doing so for one purpose; to be an example to others. As we know from other sources, there were some traveling preachers in those days who went around living off the churches. Paul endeavored to set a proper example of consecrated service.

   b. Paul's Exhortation (3:10-15)

      i. The Principle (3:10). The apostle repeats a principle that he had already enunciated at Thessalonica: if anyone "will not work," neither should that person "eat" (3:10). It is not fair for those who will work to feed those who won't work. Every man should be profitably employed; otherwise, he is a parasite on society.

         Actually, work is one of the finest things in life. It is important not only as a means of making a living but also for making a life. Work is one of the most essential factors in character building. There is nothing much more demoralizing than idleness and laziness. One is tempted to wonder at times whether a really lazy person can ever make it through to heaven. It is very doubtful.

         Work is good for one – everyone - physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually. One of the best ways to maintain emotional stability is to be working happily all the time. The devil always has work for idle hands to do, and we cheat him out of his opportunity when we

NOTES

keep busy. The crucial problems of many people could be solved by finding some work that gives joy and satisfaction. This is particularly true of work in the church.

ii. The Appeal (3:11-12). Paul had heard that at Thessalonica, there were some who, instead of being busy, were "busybodies." That is, they were busy meddling in other people's business instead of taking care of their own. This was evidently a besetting sin of the Thessalonians, for he sounded this same note in his First Epistle (1 Thessalonians 4:11).

The simple truth is that if we take care of our own work properly, we shall not have any time to be bothering other people in their business. Consecrated Christians will not be busybodies.

Paul's instructions were direct and plain: Busybodies were to work with quietness and eat the bread which they themselves earned (3:12). It might be summed up in this way: "Stop fussing" ("settle down"); "Stop idling" (work); "Stop sponging" ("earn the bread").

iii. The Prohibition (3: 13-15). Paul throws in a positive note at this point: "Never tire of doing what is right" (3:13). It may well be that some were working hard. Seeing the lazy busybodies taking advantage of their support, they may have been tempted to be discouraged. But, the apostle urges them to keep up the good work.

Paul ends this paragraph (3:6-15) where he began it: by commanding separation from the professing Christian who refused to obey the teachings of this Epistle (3:14). The purpose was that he might become ashamed and change his ways.

Yet the offending person was not to be treated as an enemy, but admonished as a brother (3:15). Regardless of circumstances, the Christian is always to show the spirit of Christ. This rule has no exceptions. By showing love to the offender, one might hope to win him back to the right way.

D. SALUTATION (3:16-18)

1. Peace from God (3:16)

This Epistle almost seems to carry a double benediction at the close. The apostle prays that "the Lord of peace" may give the Thessalonian believers "peace at all times in every way". Peace is one of the most precious

NOTES

possessions that any human being can have. Peace is the sense of his presence.

2. Paul's Signature (3:17)

   The apostle took the pen from the hand of his secretary scribe - and signed the Epistle in his own handwriting. He specified that this was the guarantee of its genuineness; he always signed his letters himself.

   It is interesting to note that it is in the same Epistle where he apparently makes reference to a forged letter as "from us" (2:2) that he warns his readers to check for his signature at the close. If it is not there in his own handwriting, the letter is not to be accepted as genuine. For this is the "distinguishing mark" - sign or seal or symbol - "in all my letters".

   Why people would want to forge letters in Paul's name and send them to the churches he had founded; we cannot tell. Perhaps they just wanted to get before the Church their own opinions, and sought to give to them the authority of the apostle. Probably some did it out of pure spite, to hinder the work of the man they envied. At any rate, forgeries were evidently circulating very early in the Church.

3. Paul's Benediction (3:18)

   This is exactly the same as the benediction at the close of the First Epistle, except with the addition of "all". The apostle's large heart prayed that the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" might be upon even the offenders. He wished that everyone might experience God's grace and find his blessings.

Apocalyptic [uh-paa-kuh-LIP-tuhk]
Gautama [ga-uh-taa-MUH]
Confucius [Kuhn-FYOO-shuhs]
Laotze [la-oh-TSUH]
Mohammed [mo-HAAM-id]
Antichrist [AN-tee-kryst]

STUDY QUESTIONS

NOTES

CHAPTER 1. BACKGROUND TO 1 AND 2 THESSALONIANS

1. The name of the city of Thessalonica in ancient times was Therma, so called because of the hot springs nearby.
   A. True
   B. False

2. In Paul's day, Thessalonica lay on the great Egnatian Lake, a Roman lake in Asia Minor and Macedonia.
   A. True
   B. False

3. Paul founded the church in Thessalonica on his first missionary journey.
   A. True
   B. False

4. The city of Thessalonica is now known as Salonika, although the Greek name is Thessaloniki.
   A. True
   B. False

5. Which of these is not true about Paul's founding of the church in Thessalonica?
   A. Paul's ministry in Thessalonica is described in Acts 17:1-9.
   B. Paul began by teaching in the Jewish synagogue.
   C. Paul reasoned with the Thessalonians out of the New Testament scriptures.
   D. Paul preached that Jesus was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament Scriptures.

6. Which of these is true about Paul's founding of the church in Thessalonica?
   A. Paul's main argument was that the Messiah must suffer and rise again from the dead.
   B. A great multitude of gentile converts to Judaism and devout Greeks accepted the gospel message.
   C. The early church at Thessalonica was far more gentile than Jewish.
   D. All of these

NOTES

7. When Paul was forced out of Thessalonica he went to Berea.
   A. True
   B. False

8. The Jews of Thessalonica were so happy with Paul that they followed Paul to Berea to support his ministry.
   A. True
   B. False

9. These two letters to the Thessalonians were written about A.D. 100.
   A. True
   B. False

10. Paul wrote these two letters to the Thessalonians from Corinth.
    A. True
    B. False

11. Which is not a reason for Paul's first writing to the Thessalonians?
    A. Paul was concerned for the new converts there.
    B. The church in Thessalonica was undergoing persecution.
    C. Most of the members had fled to Rome.
    D. Paul wanted the converts to be established in holiness.

12. Which is a reason for Paul's first writing to the Thessalonians?
    A. Some members thought Paul had fled to Rome.
    B. They knew they would not die before the second coming of Christ.
    C. Some of them misunderstood details regarding the second coming of Christ.
    D. They had already forgotten about Paul's ministry.

13. Which is a reason for Paul's second writing to the Thessalonians?
    A. Some had not read Paul's first letter.
    B. Some refused to work.
    C. Most of the members had fled to Rome.
    D. They had already forgotten about Paul's ministry.

14. Which of these is true about Paul's two Epistles to the Thessalonians?
    A. They are generally considered the earliest books of the New Testament.
    B. They were written by a missionary to a church which he had founded on the foreign field.
    C. Paul deals primarily with practical matters relating to the life of new

NOTES

converts surrounded by pagan morals and pagan religion.

D. All of these

CHAPTER 2. THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS

15. Which of these is true about Paul's first writing to the Thessalonians?
    A. Thousands of letters have been dug up belonging to this general period.
    B. All of the letters from this period were written on papyrus and begin with the name of the author.
    C. Paul associates himself in this letter with Silas and Timothy.
    D. All of these

16. Grace and peace are common to Paul's letters.
    A. True
    B. False

17. Grace and peace primarily come from human sources.
    A. True
    B. False

18. Paul almost always follows his greeting with a thanksgiving.
    A. True
    B. False

19. In this letter Paul does not give thanks for the church at Thessalonica.
    A. True
    B. False

20. Which of these affirms that Paul's preaching at Thessalonica was not simply words?
    A. It was power.
    B. The Thessalonian believers followed the apostle and thus his Lord.
    C. The Thessalonian believers had received the Word with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.
    D. All of these

21. The Thessalonian Christians were living exemplary Christian lives.
    A. True
    B. False

NOTES

22. The Thessalonian converts were good for nothing.
    A. True
    B. False

23. The Thessalonian converts had NOT yet turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.
    A. True
    B. False

24. People in many places had heard of the Thessalonian converts' zeal for the Lord (1:8).
    A. True
    B. False

25. Which of these describes the Thessalonians' conversion?
    A. Their "work produced by faith" was turning to God from idols.
    B. Their "labor prompted by love" was serving the living and true God.
    C. Their "endurance inspired by hope" was waiting for his Son from heaven.
    D. All of these

26. Which of these is not true of Paul preaching?
    A. It was effective.
    B. Paul boldly proclaimed the gospel.
    C. Paul's preaching in Thessalonica was a failure.
    D. Paul was forced to leave Thessalonica.

27. Which of these is not true of Paul compassionate ministry?
    A. It was gentle.
    B. It vividly portrayed Paul's father-heart.
    C. Christian workers today should not follow Paul's example.
    D. Paul put on a caregiver's uniform, as it were, to take care of his many spiritual children

28. Paul's example of doing manual labor should not be taken as a norm for the minister today.
    A. True
    B. False

29. Paul was not accustomed to carrying the full load of two careers.
    A. True
    B. False

NOTES

30. Paul had behaved himself holy, righteous, and blameless at Thessalonica.
    A. True
    B. False

31. Paul complained the Thessalonians were not following in the royal succession of suffering saints.
    A. True
    B. False

32. Which of these is not true of the persecution in Thessalonica?
    A. Some were persecuting the preachers of the gospel.
    B. Some were persecuting due to jealousy.
    C. There is no greater crime than the prevention of another man's salvation.
    D. To block the way so that someone else is hindered from being saved is most acceptable.

33. Which of these is not true of Paul's passion as a parent?
    A. He was taken from the Thessalonians for a brief time in person, but not in thought.
    B. He was anxious with intense longing to see their faces again.
    C. He did not understand the passionate love that only a true parent can have for a child.
    D. Paul blamed the adversary for keeping him away from his converts.

34. The greatest reward that ministers receive is the consciousness that they have led people to Christ.
    A. True
    B. False

35. Paul and Silas had also been forced to flee from Thessalonica.
    A. True.
    B. False

36. Timothy is called our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ.
    A. True
    B. False

37. The purpose of Timothy's mission was to strengthen and encourage the Thessalonian Christians in their faith.
    A. True
    B. False

NOTES

38. Which of these is not true of Paul's recognition of the Thessalonians' afflictions?
    A. Paul reminds them that they were destined for them.
    B. God permits a certain amount of persecution of his children.
    C. When Paul was with them he had warned them that they would be persecuted.
    D. Everyone should be surprised that they were experiencing afflictions.

39. Which of these describes the report Timothy brought back from his visit to Thessalonica?
    A. It was a good report.
    B. The Thessalonian Christians were strong in both faith and love.
    C. These faithful Thessalonian Christians had learned the secret of victorious living.
    D. All of these

40. Which of these describes Paul's basic policy of life?
    A. His own spiritual welfare is in direct proportion to that of his converts.
    B. If his converts prospered, then he also prospered.
    C. If his converts died spiritually, then to that extent, he died, too.
    D. All of these

41. Which of these is not true of Paul's ministry of prayer?
    A. He carried on a continuous prayer ministry on behalf of his converts.
    B. He expresses his gratitude to God for the privilege of having such wonderful children in the Lord.
    C. His prayers were not earnest.
    D. His prayer ministry went on night and day.

42. It is not possible to know one is established in the experience of entire sanctification.
    A. True
    B. False

43. Christians must keep on increasing and abounding in love toward our fellow Christians and toward all people everywhere.
    A. True
    B. False

44. Selfish love is a self-contradictory phrase.
    A. True
    B. False

NOTES

45. The phrase “more and more” is not used by Paul.
    A. True
    B. False

46. How does 1 Thessalonians teach entire sanctification as a second work of grace?
    A. In the first chapter, Paul describes his readers as genuinely converted.
    B. Paul writes to his converts: “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified.”
    C. It is clear that sanctification is for saints, not sinners.
    D. All of these

47. One of the main elements of sanctification is purity.
    A. True
    B. False

48. A Christian should not trifle with the easygoing moral attitudes of our day.
    A. True
    B. False

49. The Holy Spirit will not dwell in an unholy body.
    A. True
    B. False

50. The Christian’s body is “a temple of the Holy Spirit.”
    A. True
    B. False

51. Christians should live such lives that people will be compelled to admire them and to want to know the Christ that makes them that way.
    A. True
    B. False

52. What does the Greek word “Parousia” refer to?
    A. past history
    B. current events
    C. the Second Coming of Christ
    D. none of these

NOTES

53. What does Paul mean when he says: "the dead in Christ shall rise first"?
    A. We must die in order to see Christ.
    B. We must die before we can see Christ.
    C. The ones alive at the time of the Second Coming will not precede those who are "asleep" in Jesus.
    D. none of these

54. What does Paul mean when he refers to "The day of the Lord"?
    A. He borrowed this phrase from the Old Testament.
    B. This phrase means a day of darkness, desolation, and destruction.
    C. It will be a day of judgment for sinners.
    D. all of these

55. The admonition to be awake is central in preparation for the Second Coming.
    A. True
    B. False

56. Paul suggests that the Christian needs to be armed with faith, love, and hope in the face of danger.
    A. True
    B. False

57. God's appointment for us is not "wrath" but "salvation," which comes only through "our Lord Jesus Christ."
    A. True
    B. False

58. Which is part of the "private attitude" expressed in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-17?
    A. peace
    B. patience
    C. praise
    D. all of these

59. Which is part of the "public action" expressed in 1 Thessalonians 5:18-22?
    A. Freedom of Thanksgiving
    B. Freedom in the Spirit
    C. Freedom of Worship
    D. all of these

NOTES

CHAPTER 3. THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS

60. The greeting in the Second Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians is not similar to that at the beginning of 1 Thessalonians.
    A. True
    B. False

61. The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians has less apocalyptic language than the First Epistle to the Thessalonians.
    A. True
    B. False

62. What is true about the agitation the Thessalonians were experiencing?
    A. They were being "unsettled" and "alarmed."
    B. The agitation had to do with a statement that "The day of the Lord has already come."
    C. Perhaps they had received a forged oral communication reported as being from Paul.
    D. all of these

63. What is true about the "apostasy" Paul talks about in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4?
    A. This means more than backsliding.
    B. It signifies a departure in doctrine.
    C. It signifies a repudiation of the very principles of Christianity.
    D. all of these

64. What is not true about the "man" of the apostacy that Paul talks about in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4?
    A. He is the "man doomed to destruction."
    B. He is also referred to as the "man of lawlessness."
    C. He is also called the "son of perdition."
    D. In prophetic circles, he is seen as the true Christ.

65. Paul had preached comprehensively on the subject of the Second Coming while at Thessalonica.
    A. True
    B. False

NOTES

66. Every time the gospel is preached, people are confronted with the demand that they make a moral decision
    A. True
    B. False

67. Our salvation is accomplished "through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth."
    A. True
    B. False

68. The Thessalonian converts were being shaken (2:2). So, Paul writes to them: "to find a place to hide."
    A. True
    B. False

69. It takes our wills co-operating with God's will to live a Christian life.
    A. True
    B. False

70. What did Paul pray that his readers might be established in?
    A. good deeds
    B. good words
    C. every good deed and word
    D. all of these

71. How was Paul plagued by persecution?
    A. everywhere he went
    B. from "unreasonable and wicked men"
    C. getting him imprisoned
    D. all of these

72. Paul endeavored to set a proper example of consecrated service.
    A. True
    B. False

NOTES

73. Why is work one of the finest things in life?
    A. It is important not only as a means of making a living but also for making a life.
    B. Work is one of the most essential factors in character building.
    C. One of the best ways to maintain emotional stability is to be working happily all the time.
    D. all of these

74. Consecrated Christians are busybodies.
    A. True
    B. False

75. As the guarantee of his letters' genuineness, Paul always had witnesses also sign his letters.
    A. True
    B. False

METHODS OF STUDY

Have you enjoyed this study of these Epistles to the Thessalonians? Do you wish to study further? If so, here are a few more suggestions.

1. Mark all the uses of the "Second Coming" you can find in these Epistles to the Thessalonians.
2. Compare Paul's purpose in his First letter to the Thessalonians to his purpose in his Second letter to the Thessalonians.
3. Compare statements in the book of Acts about Paul's involvement in Thessalonica to his letters to the church in Thessalonica.
4. Compare and contrast Paul's understanding of "the Day of the Lord" to its use by the minor prophets.
5. Look at the content of Paul's letters to the Thessalonians to try to determine its ratio of Jewish and gentile members.
6. Examine Paul's doctrine on sanctification in his letters to the Thessalonians.

May Jesus, the Head of the Church, become even more of a power in your life as you study these Epistles to the Thessalonians!

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

NOTES

Adriatic [au-dree-A-tik]
Antichrist [AN-tee-kryst]
Apocalyptic [uh-paa-kuh-LIP-tuhk]
apostasy [uh-PAA-stuh-see]
Athens [ATH-unz]
Balkan [BAAL-kn]
Berea [br-EE-uh]
Byzantine [BI-zuhn-teen]
Cassander [kaas-AEND-er]
Confucius [Kuhn-FYOO-shuhs]
Corinth [KOHR-unth]
Dyrrhachium [dir-rae-kee-uhm]
Egnatian [egg-NAY-shun]
eschatological [eh-skuh-tuh-LAA-juh-kl]
Galatia [guh-LAY-shuh]
Gallio [GAL-lee-oh]
Gautama [ga-uh-taa-MUH]
Laotze [la-oh-TSUH]
Lystra [LIHS-truh]
Macedon [MA-suh-daan]
Macedonia [MAS-uh-DOH-nee-uh]
Mohammed [mo-HAAM-id]
Paganism [PAY-guh-ni-zm]
Philippi [FIL-uh-pie]
proselytes [PRAA-suh-lites]
Salonika [sal-o-NEE-kuh]
Saracens [SHE-ruh-snz]
Silas [SIE-luhs]
Therma [thur-MAH]
Thessalonians [theh-suh-LOW-nynz]
Thessalonica [theh-suh-lo-NAI-kuh]
Thessaloniki [theh-suh-low-NEE-kee]