

**NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY**

**LESSON SERIES**

**UNIT IV - THE CHURCH EPISTLES**

**THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS  
THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS  
THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS**

for

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**UNIT IV - NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY  
THE CHURCH EPISTLES****THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS****WRITER: The Apostle Paul (1:1)****DATE A.D. 62****INTRODUCTION****CHURCH AT COLOSSE**

Paul had never been to Colosse when he wrote this epistle (2:1). He was in Ephesus for about 2 years where he had his most fruitful ministry (see Acts 19:8-19). Colosse was 75 to 100 miles east of Ephesus, and visitors from Colosse had heard Paul and had come to know Christ. Apparently Philemon was one of these. A church came into existence in Colosse (Philemon 2). Paul intended to visit there when he was released from prison (Philemon 22). Paul wrote to this church as though it were his own.

Epaphras was the minister of the Colossian church (1:4-8; 4:12-13).

**PROBLEM AT COLOSSE**

Colosse, located in southwest Phrygia in Asia Minor, near Laodicea was beset with oriental mysticism. Gnosticism had evidently intruded with its Greek pantheistic philosophy of the demiurge.

**GNOSTICISM**

- They had an exclusive spirit (were aristocratic in wisdom).  
PAUL'S ANSWER - 1:28
- They held speculative tenets on creation - that God did not create the universe directly, but created a creature who in turn created another creature, until one finally created the physical universe. Christ was considered a creature in this long series of creations.  
PAUL'S ANSWER - 1:15-19; 2:18
- Their ethical practice was asceticism (influenced by Greek Stoicism) and unrestrained licentiousness (from Greek Epicureanism).  
PAUL'S ANSWER - 2:16,23; 3:5-9

**MESSAGE OF COLOSSIANS:**

Colossians is the chart and compass which enables the believer to sail between the ever present Scylla and Charybdis. "Pure Christianity lives between two dangers ever present: the danger that it will evaporate into a philosophy - philosophies of the atonement . . . and the danger that it will freeze into a form" (Dr. Scofield). Jesus said that He is the water of

life; He did not say that He was the ice of life; He did not say that He was the steam of life. We are not told to add something to Christ nor subtract from Him.

The message of this epistle can best be seen by comparing it with other Prison Epistles.

**Subject:**

- Ephesians - the body of Christ, called the church, of which Christ is the Head.
- Colossians - the Head of the body who is Christ; the body is only secondary (1:18).

**Theme:**

- Philippians - Christian living is the theme and Christ is the center.
- Colossians - Christ is the theme and Christian living is the center.
- Philippians emphasizes the *kenosis* - Christ became a Servant
- Colossians emphasizes the *pleroma* Christ is the fullness of God

**CONDENSED OUTLINE**

**I. DOCTRINAL, Chapters 1,2** - *Christ, the fulness (pleroma) of God; in Christ we are made full.*

1. Introduction, 1:1-8
2. Paul's Prayer, 1:9-14
3. Person of Christ, 1:15-19
4. Objective Work of Christ for Sinners, 1:20-23
5. Subjective Work of Christ for Saints, 1:24-29
6. Christ, the Answer to Philosophy; 2:1-15 (*For the HEAD*)
7. Christ, the Answer to Ritual, 2:18-23 (*For the HEART*)

**II. PRACTICAL, Chapters 3,4** - *Christ the fulness of God poured out in life through believers.*

1. Thoughts and Affections of Believers are Heavenly; 3:1-4  
(*The believer's heart should be in heaven where his Head is*)
2. Living of Believers is Holy, 3:5-4:6  
(*In all relationships - personal, social, marital, parental, capital and labor - the believer should manifest Christ*)
3. Fellowship of Believers is Hearty, 4:7-18  
(*Roster of faithful workers similar to Rom 16 & Heb 11.*)

**EXPANDED OUTLINE**

**I. DOCTRINAL, Chapters 1,2**

**1. Introduction, 1:1-8**

1. v.1 Paul's standard opening associates his name with that of Timothy; who may have visited Colosse
2. v.2 He does not mean to differentiate between the saints and faithful. They are the same people.
3. V. 3 Paul gives thanks directly to "God the Father." This is His redemptive provision (John 3:16). Gnosticism did not believe one could go directly to God, but rather through the emanations at God.
4. vv. 4,5 Paul links the trinity of graces for believers:
  1. faith - past
  2. love - present
  3. hope - future
5. v 6 "World is *kosmos*, meaning the Roman world. Vincent considers this hyperbole. Gospel preaching had already far-reaching results. It reveals the universal character of the Gospel. "Fruit is produced in those who believe."
6. v.7 Epaphras may have been the founder of the church as some suppose.
7. v.8 "Love" is the fruit of the Spirit."

**2. Paul's Prayer, 1:9-14**

1. v.9 Paul put the Colossians on his prayer list.
2. "Knowledge" is *epignosin*, super knowledge. The Gnostics boasted that they had a super knowledge. Here Paul confines it to the will of God, which is expressed in the Word of God. It gives "spiritual wisdom and understanding." "Wisdom" occurs 40 times in this epistle.
3. v.10 "Pleasing to God" means that they would not be obsequious to man.
4. "Increasing by the knowledge of God" - a Christian should not be static but alive and growing in the Word of God."
5. v.11 Strength and power come from God and are produced by the Holy Spirit in patience, longsuffering, and joyfulness.
6. v.12 God, by His grace, has given us an inheritance with the saints in light.

7. v.13 We have been delivered from the kingdom of Satan (Eph. 2:2) into the kingdom of "the Son of His love" This is the present aspect of the kingdom of God.
8. v.14 Forgiveness is always associated with the blood of Christ. God does not arbitrarily or sentimentally forgive sin. "Redemption" is *apolutrosin*, meaning to set free an enslaved people.

### 3. **Person of Christ, 1:15-19**

This section on the person of Christ is the answer to all heresy concerning His person. One of the first heresies was Arianism. Arius of Alexandria said that the Lord Jesus Christ was a creature The Council of Nicaea, 325 A.D., answered this heresy: "The Son is very man of very man, and very God of very God". Later Socinus propagated this heresy that Jesus was not God. This is the basis of Unitarianism and some of the cults, including Jehovah's Witnesses. There are 9 marks of identification of Christ which make Him different and superior:

1. v. 15, "Image" (*eikon*) (Hebrews 1:3, R.V.; John 1:18). He could not be the image of God unless He was God.
2. v. 15, "The first born of all creation" (A.S.V) (*protokos*) - John 1:14,18; 3:16. God is the everlasting Father; the Son is the everlasting Son. His position in the Trinity is that of Son. "First born" indicates His priority before all creation. His headship of all creation does not necessarily mean He was born first(see Hebrews 1:6; Revelation; Romans 8:29). In incarnation He is the Son of God in a new sense. The angel's announcement to Mary was. "... That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). Christ is the same in substance, equal in power and glory with the Father
3. v.16, "By him were all things created" clears up any question about Christ's being the Creator or a creature in verse 15 (cp. John 1:3 Hebrews 1:2). There are 2 kinds of creation - "visible and invisible." There are different gradations of rank in spiritual intelligences: "thrones, dominions, principalities, powers."
4. v. 16, He not only created all things; they were created for Him,
5. v. 17, "He is before all things" -in .the pre-incarnate Christ all fulness dwells. In the incarnate Christ all fulness dwells.
6. v. 17, He holds all things together. He maintains creation. He directs it. "Consist" (*sunesteken*) is to held together. (Cp. Heb. 1:3).

7. v. 18, "He is the head at the church" (Ephesians 1:22). He is the first born from the dead He is the only One who has been raised in a glorified body  
(cp. Psalms 2:7; Acts 13:38; Hebrews 1:5, 5:5; Revelation. 1:5).
8. v. 18, "That in all things be might have the pre-eminence" - The will of Christ must prevail throughout all of God's creation.
9. v. 19, The fulness (*pleroma*) was at home, the full-fulness. Jesus was 100% God-not 99.99%.  
Relationship to the Father, v.15  
Relationship to creation, vv. 16,17  
Relationship to the church, vv. 16,19  
Relationship to the cross, v.20

#### **4. Objective Work of Christ for Sinners, 1:20-23**

1. v.20 Christ "made peace through the blood of his cross" (Romans 5:1). God is not a big policeman waiting around the corner ready to pounce on the sinner God has His arms outstretched and is saying to the sinner, "Come, and I will give you redemption rest."  
Reconciliation is toward man. God is reconciled by the cross of Christ. He is asking man to be reconciled to Him (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).
2. "All things" is limited to all things - appointed for reconciliation (in just such a way as "the loss of all things" is limited to what things Paul had to lose [Philippians 3:8]).
3. "Things in heaven" indicate that not only must we be made ready for heaven, but heaven must be made ready to receive us. The Lord Jesus said. "I go to prepare a place for you." By the incarnation God came down to man; by the blood of Jesus man is brought up to God. Notice that it does not add, "things under the earth" (cp Philippians 2:10).
4. v.21 "Enemies in your mind" reminds us that there is mental alienation from God as well as moral alienation. This explains the fierce antagonism to God on the part of some so-called intellectuals.
5. v.22 "Body of all flesh" is an explicit declaration, as Docetic Gnosticism stated that Christ suffered in appearance but not in a real body.  
"Unblamable" means without blemish, This was the requirement for a sacrificial animal.  
"Unreprovable" means unaccusable; unchargeable. "It is God that justifies."

6. v.23 This is not conditional, based on the future. It is not something that shall be if something else is. Rather this is the "if" of argument, often used by Paul. It could be translated, "Since ye continue in the faith..."

#### **5. Subjective Work of Christ for Saints, 1:24-29**

1. v.24 A free translation could be, "Now I, Paul rejoice in the midst of my sufferings for you, and I am filling up in my flesh that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ for His body's sake, which is the church" It was necessary to fill up that which was lacking of the sufferings of Christ.

1. There are sufferings of Christ which we cannot share:

1. Human Suffering;
2. Suffering as the Son of God;
3. Suffering as the sacrifice for the sins of the world;

2. There are sufferings of Christ which we can share:  
(unfinished sufferings of Christ).

1. Suffering for righteousness sake;
2. Suffering in the measure we identify" ourselves with Christ for the proclamation of the Gospel.

2. v.25 "Dispensation" is economy; stewardship.
3. vv. 26,27 "Mystery" is a sacred secret. This looks forward to the day when we shall be like Jim. (1 John 3:2). We are in Christ down here at present.
4. vv. 28,29 "Perfect in Christ Jesus" means complete. This was the goal of Paul.

#### **6. Christ, the Answer to Philosophy, 2:1-15 (For the Head)**

1. There were 5 errors that endangered the Colossian church;

1. Enticing words, vv. 4-7
2. Philosophy, vv. 8-13
3. Legality, vv. 14,17
4. Mysticism, vv. 18,19
5. Asceticism. vv. 20-23

2. v.1 "Conflict" is agony - called prayer agony

3. Laodicea was located on the river Lycos, next to Colosse. It was much more prominent than Colosse. Before 250 A.D. it was called Diospolis. Here, in 364 A.D., the council to determine the canon of Scripture met. (See Rev. 3:14.22).
4. "As many as have not seen my face in the flesh" makes it obvious that Paul had not been to Colossa.
5. v.2 "Heart" indicates the entire man, the whole propulsive nature of man "Knit together" is compacted (with the thought of instruction).
6. "Fun assurance" is under full sail.
7. "Mystery of God" is Christ in His incarnation "He was very God of very God and very man of very man."
8. v.3 We may go to Christ for wisdom and knowledge. "Next to knowledge is knowing where to find out."
9. v.4 "Beguile you" means to victimize you. "Enticing words" are oratory or sweet talk.
10. v.5 "Order" is a military term, meaning to stand shoulder to shoulder.
11. "Steadfastness" is a solid front; immovable Paul is Commending them for their faithfulness in the face of overwhelming odds against them.
12. v.6 "Received" a person, Jesus Christ.
13. v.7 "Rooted" as a tree, a living thing "Built up" as a house. "In the faith" is by your faith.
14. v.8 "Beware" is look out!
  1. "Lest any man" - notice that Paul mentions no names.
  2. "Spoil" is booty in a Roman victory parade.
  3. "Philosophy" - a true philosopher is a seeker after the truth. Christ is the answer. False philosophy is like a blindman looking in a dark room for a black cat that isn't there.
  4. "Tradition of men" - Christ condemned religious rulers for this.
  5. "Rudiments" (*stoicheion*), the A B C s.
15. v.9 "Fullness" is *pleroma*. This is a clear-cut statement of the deity of Christ.

16. v.10 "Complete in Him" may be translated, Ye are ready for the voyage of life in Him, picturing a sailing ship out on a voyage.
17. v.11 The real circumcision for today is the new birth (cp. Galatians 6:15; John 3:3).
18. v.12 Identification with Christ is the meaning of being "buried with him in baptism" (Romans 6:1-5).  
"Risen with him" - Lord Lyndhurst, lord chancellor of Great Britain and one of the sharpest legal minds of all time, said: "I know pretty well what evidence is; and I tell you, such evidence as that for the resurrection has never broken down yet."
19. v.13 It is not the improvement of the old nature, but the impartation of a new nature.
20. v.14 Since the law was given to discipline the old nature, and the believer is given a new nature, the law was removed as a way of life *per se* by the cross of Christ
21. v.15 The spiritual victory that Christ won for the believer is of inestimable value.

**7. Christ, the Answer to Ritual, 2:16-23 (for the HEART)**

1. v.16 A believer is not to observe ordinances that are only ritual and liturgical, as they have no present value (1 Cor. 8:8-13).
2. v.17 "Shadow" is picture; a photograph. All of the rituals of the law were pictures of Christ. Now that Christ has come, we have the reality, the person of Christ, and we no longer need pictures.
3. v.18 Paul is here condemning the Gnostics who made a pretense of wisdom.  
"Intruding into those things which he hath not seen" is a pretense. The Revised Version translates it, "Dwelling in the things which he hath seen."
4. v.19 "Not holding the Head" indicates a loose relationship to Christ. Therefore they do not grow spiritually.
5. v.20 "If ye be dead" might better be translated, "Since ye have died (when Christ died), do not return to pre-cross living." "Ordinances" are fads.
6. v.21 This is separation according to many. Actually this is monkey business - the 3 little monkeys see no evil, bear no evil, speak no evil.
7. v.22 These are part of the passing fashions of the world.

8. v.23 This is "the pride that apes humility"; "Not in any honor" means it is not of any value.

## **II. PRACTICAL, Chapters 3-4 - Christ. the fulness of God Poured Out in Life through Believers**

### **1. Thoughts and Affections of Believers are Heavenly, 3:1-4**

1. v.1 "Be risen" is were raised - when Christ was raised, we were raised (Romans 6:4,5).
2. v.2 "Affection" is mind - think about things above.
3. v.3 "For ye are dead" is for ye have died - when Christ died, we died.
4. v.4 This is the guarantee for the future. We have died with Him; we have been raised with Him. We are in Christ. When He appears, we appear.

### **2. Living of Believers Is Holy 3:5-4:6**

1. v.5 "Mortify" is put to death; put in the place of death. "Members" refers to the carnal activities and appetites/cravings of the body which must be put to death (Romans 6:13; Romans 8:6-8). Paul deals with specific sins:
  1. "Fornication" refers to physical and spiritual fornication.
  2. "Uncleanness" includes thoughts, words, looks, gestures.
  3. "Inordinate affection" is passion; lust.
  4. "Evil concupiscence" is evil desire.
  5. "Covetousness" is must-have-more-ness.
2. v.6 God judges sinners for these sins and God must judge believers for committing them.
3. v.7 This is the condition of believers before they were saved.
4. v.8 "Put off as a garment."
  1. "Malice" is congealed anger.
  2. "Filthy" communication is foul communication - both abusive and filthy.
5. v.9 "Put off the old man" - the old man is dead and buried with Christ (Romans 6:6) now we are to put off the habits/ways of the old man, the sin dwelling us (Romans 7:17,20). Garments in

Scripture are habits. We use the same expression today when we speak of riding or walking habits. These ways/habits of the old man is to be taken off as a garment.

6. v.10 "Put on the new" garment or habit. Nature abhors a vacuum. Putting off is not enough; we must put on the habits/ways of the new person/man which we became when we were born again.
7. v.11 Christ is all in all. He is a catalyst that brings together individuals and groups who are separate and makes them one in Christ. A catalyst is a substance that is placed with elements that are opposed and brings them together in anew compound.
8. v.12 As he labeled the habits of the old man that were to be put off, here he labels the specifics that go with the wardrobe of the new man. "Bowels of mercies" may be translated " a heart of compassion." These all are the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23).
9. v.13 This is the basis on which the believer is to forgive, rather than the legal basis given in the Lord's Prayer (cp. Ephesians 4:32).
10. vv.14,15 "Love and peace"are both fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22).
11. v.16 "The word of Christ" - "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3).  
"Dwell" is, be at home - be given the run of the house. Many praise the Bible but do not study it. It has been said, "Virtue is praised and left to starve."
12. v.17 This is the Christian life, the *summum bonum* of life.
13. vv. 18-22. Here is given Godly relationship according to the different stations in the family and on the job.
14. v.23 Christian service is that which is done to please Christ rather than man.
15. v.24 For this he will receive a reward.
16. v.25 If the believer attempts to please men, there is no reward.
17. Chapter 4, v.1 Both masters and servants must give an account to the Master in heaven (Eph. 6:9). "Just and equal" is not to level down, but to level up.
18. v.2-6 Here are 3 more areas of Christian conduct which are important.

1. "Prayer" - persevere in prayer. Like breathing, inhale (prayer), exhale (thanksgiving).
  2. "Walk in wisdom". The public walk is another important factor.
  3. "Speech" is the third important factor in a Christian's life.
3. **Fellowship of Believers Is Hearty, 4:7-18**  
This section is similar to Romans 16. It is a roster of believers who lived, moved, and had their being in the pagan culture of the Roman Empire. They lived for God in a heathen society.
1. vv. 7,8 Tychicus was evidently the pastor of the church in Ephesus (Ephesians 6:21; Acts 20:4; 2 Timothy 4:11).
  2. v.9 Onesirrus was a slave of Philemon in Colosse. He had run away to Rome. Paul had led him to Christ and had returned him to Philemon as a brother (see Epistle to Philemon).
  3. v.10 Aristarchus (Acts 19:29) was a friend of Paul.
  4. vv. 12,13 Epaphras was the minister at Colosse, but at this time was in prison. He had now a ministry of prayer.
  5. v.14 Luke was the beloved physician.
  6. vv. 15-18 Personal greetings and injunctions.
  7. v.18 "Remember my bonds" was evidently the motto of many believers who began to witness after Paul was imprisoned.

## **THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS**

**WRITER: The Apostle Paul**

**DATE A.D. 52-53**

**PLACE:**

Thessalonica was a Roman colony and very important in the life of the Roman Empire. It was located 100 miles west of Philippi and north of Athens about twice that distance. It was the chief city of Macedonia Cicero said, "Thessalonica is in the bosom of the Empire."

It was first named Therma because of hot springs in that area. In 316 B.C. Cassander (who succeeded Alexander the Great) named it in memory of his wife, Thessalonica, a

half sister of Alexander the Great Thessalonica is still in existence, and the present day name is Salonika.

The church in Thessalonica was a model church. Paul cited it to the Corinthians as an example (see I Thessalonians. 1:7; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5).

**OCCASION:**

This was the earliest epistle written by Paul. It was written from Athens or, more likely, Corinth on his second missionary journey. Paul had to leave Thessalonica "posthaste" due to the great opposition to the Gospel. The enemy pursued him to Berea and again Paul was forced to leave. He left Silas and Timothy at Berea, but he went on to Athens. It was evidently there that Timothy brought him word from the church in Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians. 8:6), together with some questions that they had raised. Paul wrote his first epistle in response to their overture.

**THEME:**

Although Paul was in Thessalonica less than a month (Acts 17:2), he touched on many of the great doctrines of the church. Among them was the second coming of Christ. This theme was not above the heads of the new converts, according to the great apostle. The particular phase in the second coming of Christ which he emphasized was Christ's Coming for believers. The second Coming of Christ in relationship to believers is a comfort (1 Thessalonians 4:18). This aspect is quite different from His catastrophic and cataclysmic coming in glory to establish His kingdom by putting down all unrighteousness (Revelations 19: 11-16).

**PURPOSE**

1. To *confirm* young converts in the elementary truth of the Gospel.
2. To *condition* them to go on unto holy living.
8. To *comfort* them regarding the return of Christ.

A heathen inscription in Thessalonica read:

"After death no reviving. After the grave no meeting again"

**OUTLINE:****I. Coming of Christ is an INSPIRING HOPE, Chapter 1****1. Introduction, vv. 1-4**

1. v.1 Silas and Timothy had recently returned from Thessalonica with a good report and some questions for Paul to answer. The greeting is Paul's usual friendly greeting to a church that is spiritually sound.

"Grace and peace" "Grace" (*charis*) is the Greek form of greeting.  
"Peace" (*shalom*) is the Hebrew greeting. We must know the grace

of God before we can experience the peace of God. Grace is love in action.

2. v.2 This is the same expression he uses to the Philippians (1:8), couched in different verbiage.
3. v.3 Paul always associates these 3 Christian graces together faith, love, hope (See 1 Corinthians 13).
  1. Faith seems to be in opposition to work; Faith produces works.
  2. Love seems to be in opposition to labor; Love produces labor.
  3. Hope seems to be in opposition to patience; Hope produces patience.
4. v.4 "Election" - no one who was not running was ever elected God has no writ-in candidates. Election is God's side of salvation. Our side is still "who so ever will may come," God gives a legitimate and sincere offer of salvation. "Ho, every one that thirsteth . . ." (Isaiah 55:1).

## **2. Gospel Received in Much Assurance & Much Affliction, vv. 5-7**

1. v.5 Paid makes it clear that the Gospel was give" not only in word but in power and the Holy Spirit. Our Lord confirmed this method in John 16.7-11. Without the Holy Spirit the Gospel is mere words.
2. v.6 Paul could cite Silas, Timothy and himself as examples. Paul puts together 2 experiences that the world cannot link together - *affliction* and *joy*.
3. v.7 Thessalonians were examples also to all in Macedonia. And Paul cited them to the Corinthians.

## **3. Gospel Results, vv. 8-10**

1. v.8 The example of the Thessalonians spread south to Greece.
2. v.9 (1) "How ye turned to God from idols" is the "work of faith" Paul did not preach against idolatry he presented Christ. When the Thessalonians turned to Christ, they automatically turned from idols. Their turning from idols was repentance. You cannot turn to Christ without turning from something.  
(2) "To serve the living and true God" is the "labor of love" The relationship between the Heavenly Father and the believer who is a son of God is a love relationship. "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 Jn. 4:19).

3. v.10 (3) "To wait for his Son from heaven" is the patience of hope. All of this rests upon the resurrection of Jesus and it delivers us from "wrath to come" -which is the last 3 ½ years Great Tribulation (Revelation 6:17). The patience of hope is to wait, not for wrath, but for Christ.

## **II. Coming of Christ is a WORKING HOPE, Chapter 2**

### **1. Motive & Method of a true Witness for Christ. vv. 1-6**

1. v.1 "In vain" means *empty* - without results.
2. v.2 The commentary on this verse is found in Acts 17:5-10. "Gospel of God" - note Paul's use of the word Gospel (vv. 4,8,9). "Contention" (Greek *agoni*) is conflict
3. v.3 (1) "Deceit" means *error* - the content of the exhortation was not adulterated.  
(2) "Uncleanness" is sensuality; the intent was not motivated by greed.  
(3) "Guile" - his method was not wrong.  
Paul did not lower his standards to accommodate the prejudices and passions of the old nature.
4. v.4 "Allowed" is *approved* - he had been tested, he was no novice. Paul was not a man-pleaser, he never sought popularity.
5. v.5 He never flattered a prominent person, he did not play up to the rich, he did not butter up anyone.  
"Cloak of covetousness" is a cloak of many colors. It could be money; but more likely honor, fame, or position,
6. v.6 Paul never sought position or honors. Preachers can be bought by the dozen with honorary degrees.

### **2. The Mother Side of the Apostle's Ministry (*Comfort*), vv. 7-9**

1. v.7 "Nurse" is *nursing mother*, the word used for a mother bird.
2. v.8 "Dear" is *beloved* - Paul had a genuine love for believers. Paul was willing to die for the Thessalonian believers.
3. v.9 "Laboring night and day" - he was not a paid nurse who worked by the hour; he did not belong to the union.

### **3. The Father Side of the Apostle's Ministry (*Charge*) vv. 10-13**

1. v.10 (1) "Holy" - careful discharge of duty to God  
(2) "Justly" - carefully discharge of duty to man.  
(3) "Unblameably" - no charge can be maintained against the apostle and his companions. A holy life does count.

2. v.11 (1) "Exhorted" (Greek *parakaleo*): came to the side of; helped, entreated, convicted (the same word is used for the Holy Spirit).  
(2) "Comforted" is *persuaded*.
3. (3) "Charged" has a note of severity, discipline; it is a virile, robust, firm, masculine word.  
"Father" indicates that this is the father side of his ministry.
4. v.12 "Walk worthy" (see Ephesians 4:1)  
"Kingdom" refers to the millennial kingdom.  
"Glory" refers to the eternal kingdom.
5. v.13 Note the supernatural character of the Word of God in 2 aspects:  
(1) How it is preached - minister;  
(2) How it is received - hearers.

#### **4. The Brother Side of the Apostle's Ministry (*Challenge*), vv, 14-16**

1. v 14 Churches in Judea had likewise suffered. Suffering is the glue that holds believers together. Today the church is coming unglued. Many are praying for revival, and it may take some great time of testing before revival can come.
2. v.15 Paul holds his own people responsible for the death of Jesus. He himself may have participated in the events that led to the crucifixion. The tables were turned when he became a believer.
3. v.16 God permits sin to run its full course The cup of iniquity must be filled up to the brim.

#### **5. Reward of a True Witness for Christ. vv. 17-20**

1. v.17 Paul had a great desire to see the Thessalonians again.
2. v.18 Paul had spiritual discernment to see that it was Satan's strategy that kept him from going to Thessalonica. "Satan" means adversary.
3. v.19 "Crown of rejoicing is a victor's crown given to those who witness for Christ and win others. At the coming of Christ the very presence of those who have been won by a witness will be in itself the crown of rejoicing.
4. v.20 Paul's joy here (and hereafter) is the Thessalonian believers he had won.

### **III. Coming of Christ Is a PURIFYING HOPE, 3:1-4:12**

#### **1. Timothy Brings a Good Report of the Thessalonians, vv. 1-8**

1. vv.1,2 Paul had to leave Thessalonica so quickly that there were many unfinished teachings that he had not been able to develop. He not only longs to return but wonders about the future of the believers. Paul longs to comfort them. He demonstrates "a labor of love." Love is not affection; love seeks the welfare of another.
2. v.3 Paul wants the Thessalonians to stand for the Lord in the midst of afflictions, A believer will not escape trouble. He is actually appointed to suffer (John 16:32; 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Pet. 4:12-19).
3. V. 4 "Tribulations" are *afflictions*.  
Since this epistle is eschatological in content, it might be well to note that this is an example of fulfilled prophecy Paul predicts that the Thessalonians would *endure* afflictions. They had. The purpose of afflictions is to promote sanctification in the life of the believer.
4. v 5 Afflictions also test the genuineness of the coin of belief. Paul recognizes that all professions of faith are not genuine. Afflictions reveal the genuine believer, and this is the occasion of his rejoicing.
5. v.6 Timothy brings a good report from the Thessalonians and that they were enduring afflictions.
6. v.7 Paul likewise is enduring afflictions, and the good report causes him to be comforted.
7. v.8 "We live" means that, as believers, we *enjoy life* "If" is since. It could be translated, "while ye are standing fast in the Lord we are happy"

## 2. Paul Urges Continuing Growth, vv. 9-13

1. v.9 "Joy" occurs twice in this verse. "Affliction" occurs 3 times in this chapter. Affliction increases the capacity of the heart for joy.
2. v.10 "Lacking" - Paul's labor in Thessalonica had been suddenly and ruddy interrupted. Paul longs to finish his work among them. "Faith" is *doctrine*.
3. v.11 Paul is praying for a return visit to Thessalonica.
4. v 12 "Abound" is *exceed*. "love" is the Greek *agape*. Love is seen only in action in this epistle - "labor of love." Love is not affection. Love seeks the *welfare* of another.
5. v. 18 "To the end"-love is not an end in it self. Holiness is the end result in the life of a believer, which will not be fully attained until the return of Christ - "at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."

"Unblameable" (see 2:10) means that no charge can be made. On a bulletin board outside a church was this question: "If you were tried in court as a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" A believer must one day appear before the judgment (Greek *bema*) seat of Christ, who will judge his works to see if there is to be a reward. Also He judges character to see if there something that must be corrected (1 John 2.28).

### 3. How Believers are to Walk, 4:1-12

1. vv. 1,2 The 10 Commandments have no part in a sinner's salvation. The 10 Commandments are not the standard for Christian conduct. A believer is on a higher standard. There are commandments for believers (see 22 Commandments in chapter 5). If man could not keep the 10 Commandments (Acts 15:10), how can he keep higher commandments? This can be attained Only by an outside power (the Holy Spirit, v.8). See also Rom. 8:3,4; Galatians 5:22,23.

"Walk" the walk of the believer is all important: he mentions it again in v.12. The walk is a parenthesis around this section. A believer cannot do as he pleases; he does as Christ pleases.

2. v.3 Chastity is the subject in vv. 3-8 Immorality is condemned. A child of God cannot live an immoral life.
3. vv. 4-6 A child of God cannot be sanctified when his relationship is immoral with the opposite sex - or dishonest with the same sex.
4. v.7 A child of God cannot continue in Sin (the prodigal son may get into the pig pen, but he cannot *live* in the pig pen).
5. v.8 A child of God is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5; 8:9; Gal. 5:5; Eph. 2:22).
6. v.9 Charity is the subject in vv. 9,10. A believer must have love for the brethren - it comes supernaturally (Gal. 5:22).
7. v.10 This is the area of growth and development.
8. v.11 Calmness is the subject here. "Study to be quiet" only the Spirit of God conducts this type of school (Man teaches how to speak.) *Be ambitious to keep still* is one translation. "Tend to your own business" is also a Christian virtue.

"Work with your own hands" is a commandment for believers.

9. v.12 "Walk honestly" is to gain the respect and confidence of mankind, as in v. 1 where the walk is to please God.

### IV. Coming of Christ is a COMFORTING HOPE, 4:13-18

**(What Death Means to a Christian - What the Rapture Means to the Church)**

This section has been labeled one of the most important prophetic passages in the Scriptures - and it surely is that. Actually, the primary consideration is not the Rapture, though this passage clearly teaches it. The question that Paul is answering is about believers who die before the Rapture. Paul had taught the young church in Thessalonica the truth of the imminent coming of Christ for His own'. After Paul left Thessalonica there was evidently a time of lapse for several months, as he had gone to Berea, Athens, and then to Corinth. During this interval some of the believers had died. Had they missed the Rapture? Paul had not dealt with this aspect of the subject while he was with them. He now answers specific question.

1. v.13 "I would not have you ignorant" is Paul's diplomatic method of dealing with the ignorance of believers. He meant they were ignorant but he does not speak that bluntly.

"Which are asleep" is *who are sleeping*. "Sleeping" (Greek *koimaomai*) means lying sleep. This word is used for natural sleep also (see Luke 22:45; Acts 12:6). The same word is used for the death of the body never the SOUL The very nature of the word prevents use of the term "soul sleep,"

The death of a believer's body is called sleep because:

(1) A sleeping body and a dead body are similar". The sleeper does not cease to exist - the inference is that a dead person does not cease to exist. Sleep is temporary - death is also. Sleep has its waking; death has its resurrection.

(2) The word comes from the Greek *keimat*, which means to lie down. Only a body can lie down - certainly not a soul. By the same token, only the body is spoken of in resurrection. The word for "resurrection" is the Greek *anastasis* which means to *stand up*. A soul can neither lie down nor stand up!

(3) God created man (his body) out of the dust of the earth and breathed into him the breath (gala or spirit) of life; and man became a living soul (see Gen 2:7). When man sinned, God pronounced this judgment: In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return (Gen. 3:19).

The body returns to the dust, but the spirit returns to God who gave it.

**"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it"(Eccl. 12:7).**

For a Christian death means to be absent from the body and to be present

or at home with the Lord. The body is merely a frail tent that is laid aside temporarily (see 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 2 Cor. 5:1-9; Phil. 1:23; 1 Thes. 5:23).

(4) Early Christians called the burying place for bodies a cemetery, derived from the Greek *koimeterion*, which means rest *house for strangers; sleeping* place. We call such a place a hotel or motel. We do not weep when a loved one spends a vacation in a Hilton Hotel or a Holiday Inn!

"Even as others which have no hope" is *even as the rest who have no hope*. The pagan philosophy concerning death was dark and hopeless. Theocritus, a Greek poet of the 3rd century B.C., writes: "Hopes are among the living, the dead are without hope," Moschus, his contemporary; speaking of the plants that perish in the garden: "Alas! alas! ... these live and spring again in another year; but we ... when we die, deaf to all sound in the hollow earth, sleep a long, long endless deep that knows no waking."

2. v.14 "Jesus died" - not is *sleeping*. Jesus died a substitutionary, redemptive death in which He bore the penalty of sin. He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Death means separation.

In the Scriptures the word "death" is used in 3 ways:

(1) **Physical death**, which is separation of the physical from the spiritual. Adam died physically 930 years after the fall.

(2) **Spiritual death** - Adam died spiritually the day he rebelled against God. He was then separated from God - without hope and without God in the world.

**Verily, verily; I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life [John 5:24].**

**Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live [John 11:25].**

**For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritual minded is life and peace [Rom. 8:6].**

**And you hath he made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins [Eph. 2:1].**

(3) **Eternal death** - Separation from God. This is the second death (Rev. 20:14).

"Sleep in Jesus" is *fallen asleep in Jesus* (physical death).

3. v.15 "By the word of the Lord" indicates that it is a direct revelation from the Lord.  
"Prevent" means *to go before*.
4. v. 16 "Shout" is a word of command.  
"Voice" - the voice of the shout is like that of an archangel, referring to the quality of the voice of the Son of God, It speaks of majesty and authority.

"Trump of God" has no reference to the ridiculous thought that Gabriel blows a trumpet. Rather, the voice of the Lord Jesus is like a trumpet:

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

This is not a trio but the solo voice of the Son of God. This was His method when He raised the dead - He spoke directly to them. He did not need an archangel or a trumpet to assist Him in raising the dead.

v.17 Those who are living will not precede the dead, but the dead in Christ will go first.

"Caught up" (Greek *harpazo*) means *grasped hastily; snatched up; raptured; lifted and transported*.

To argue that the Scriptures do not teach the Rapture is merely to indulge in the subtle game of semantics, The Bible teaches the Rapture.

5. v.18 This is a comfort to believers, The Tribulation is a terror to the world and would be for believers if we had to go through it.

## **V. Coming of Christ is a ROUSING HOPE, Chapter 5**

Leads to Action (*Dead believers are asleep in Jesus ,living believers are awake for Jesus.*)

### **1. Call to be Awake & Alert in View of Christ's Coming, vv. 1-10.**

1. v 1 "Times and seasons" am not the property of the church. The church is looking for a person, not times and seasons.
2. v. 2 "Day of the Lord" is a period of time that begins with the Great Tribulation and continues through the Millennium. It relates to the nation Israel (Isa. 2:11,12; Joel 2:1,2).
3. v.3 The world will think it is entering the Millennium, but in reality it will be entering the Great Tribulation. This is the false peace of Antichrist.
4. v.4 The Lord does not come to the church as a thief in the night.

5. v.5 The church is made up of children of light (Phil. 2:15).
6. vv.6,7 This is for the children of light. It is a wake up call.
7. v.8 A call to soldier duty.
8. v.9 "Wrath", evidently refers to the Great Tribulation, the "great day of His wrath" (Rev. 8:17). Believers are promised deliverance from it by the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **2. Commandments for Christians - (There are 22), 5:11-28**

1. v.11 Encourage one another,
  - (1) "Comfort [encourage] yourselves."
  - (2) "Edify [build UP] one another."
2. v.12
  - (3) Understand those who teach the Word - duty to pastor. If you can't support the pastor; leave the church.
3. v.13
  - (4) "Esteem" (respect) the teacher
  - (5) "Be at peace" - there should be peace among believers.
4. v.14
  - (6) "Warn the unruly" (those out of step).
  - (7) "Comfort the feebleminded [fainthearted]" - help them to get in step.
  - (8) "Support the weak" - they cannot get in step.
  - (9) "Be patient toward all men" - don't lose your temper.
5. v.15
6. (10) Don't fight one another:
7. (11) Follow Captain Good
8. v.16
  - (12) "Rejoice always" (*happy* is not a New Testament word.)
9. v.17
  - (13) "Pray constantly" - this is more than an attitude.
10. v. 18
  - (14) Give thanks in all circumstances - not once a year on Thanksgiving Day.
11. v.19
  - (15) The Holy Spirit is likened to a fire. To quench the Spirit means to refuse to do the will of God, refuse to let the Holy Spirit have His way.

12. v.20  
(16) Do not look down upon Bible study as something beneath you. Do not be indifferent to the Word of God.
13. v.21  
(17) Do not be credulous, taken in by flattery (2 Jn 7,10,11).  
(18) Hold to that which is true and genuine
14. v.22  
(19) This is the answer for the questionable pastime.
15. v. 23 Man is a triune being - Body, soul and spirit.
16. v.24 You can depend on God
17. v.25  
(20) Pray for those who labor in the Gospel.
18. v.26  
(21) A handshake will do.
19. v.27  
(22) This epistle is to be read in the church.
20. v.28 Paul is brief and to the point.

This section is practical. We need to watch our steps as we look up for the coming of Christ.

## **THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS**

**WRITER: The Apostle Paul**

**DATE A.D.** 52-53 (The 2nd epistle followed shortly after the 1st).

**OCCASION:**

The first letter to the Thessalonians had given rise to further questions, and Paul is attempting to answer them. There was circulating in the Thessalonian church a letter or report, purported to have come from Paul. which was inclined to disturb the Christians. This false report claimed that Christ had already come and had already gathered out the church to Himself and that the world was then living in the judgments of the "day of the Lord." Their present persecutions confirmed this false report. Paul attempts to allay their fears by stating definitely that "our gathering together unto him" is yet future (2:1) and that "the day of the Lord" has certain forerunners which must first come, The apostasy and the "man of sin" must come first: the removal of the remnant of believers at "our gathering together unto him" makes the apostasy in the professing church 100% (Luke 18:8).

Every era of persecution or trouble has given rise to the false impression that the church is going through the time of judgment which Christ identified as the "great tribulation" (Matt. 24:21) This period has been so clearly identified by Christ that there is no reason for getting panicky or being stampeded into an unwarranted position. Christ said that there is coming a small interval which will be blocked off by "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor shall ever be." Nothing like it has taken place before, and nothing like it will ever take place afterward. Has there ever been such a period of unparalleled trouble? The answer is obvious.

### **THEME**

The first epistle to the Thessalonians deals with the Rapture. Christ's coming for believers. The second epistle relates the return of Christ to that phase where He returns to the earth in judgment and where one of the accomplishments is in connection with the "man of sin," whom He "shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" These two aspects are clearly delineated. The interval between these two phases is the Great Tribulation, which can be further identified with the 70th week of Daniel 9 as a period of seven years.

### **THE DAY OF THE LORD:**

This is the phrase which occurs in 2:2 (incorrectly translated "the day of Christ" in the Authorized Version). It is an Old Testament phrase with definite connotations. It occurs in the writings of the Old Testament prophets where it relates to the future kingdom promised in the Old Testament. The day of Christ is a New Testament expression (1 Cor. 1:8); it relates here to the future of the church. The day of the Lord is connected with the coming of Christ as it relates to the setting up of the kingdom. The day of Christ is connected with the coming of Christ for the church. Whatever else is implied in these two statements certainly this is basic.

The teaching in 1 Thessalonians is that the saints who have died will have part in Christ's coming for His living saints; in 2 Thessalonians it is that the saints who are alive will not have part in the Great Tribulation. The return of Christ has a peculiar and precious meaning for His saints.

### **OUTLINE:**

#### **I. PERSECUTION of Believers Now - Judgment of Unbelievers Hereafter (at Coming of Christ), 1:1-12**

##### **1. Introduction, 1:1,2**

The greeting is Paul's usual friendly greeting to a church that is spiritually sound.

##### **2. Persecution of Believers and Fruits of It, 1:3-7**

v.3 In the midst of severe persecution which the church in Thessalonica was enduring, they were growing and abounding, increasing in faith and love. Paul will encourage them in the hope of believers.

v.4 The Thessalonian believers were an example to other churches in patience and faith. Persecution produced these fruits. "Tribulation [trouble] worketh patience" (Romans 5:3), See also Romans 12:12.

v.5 (See Romans 8:17; 2 Corinthians 4:8; 7:5.)

v.6 God is righteous in sending the Great Tribulation. It is a judgment of Sinners.

v.7 "Vengeance is mine; I will repay; saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

### 3. **Judgment of Wicked at Coming of Christ, 1:8-12**

v.8 Very little is said in the Scriptures about the condition of the lost - nothing to satisfy a morbid curiosity or to incite revenge. Christ said more about hell than did anyone else. There is a restrained reticence in Scripture.

The lost are those who:

(1) "Know not God." Jesus said,

**And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3).**

(2) "Obey not the gospel"

**Jesus answered, and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom he hath sent (John 6:29).**

v.9 Countless numbers of folk are plunging into an awful eternity; Soft music, colorful flowers, and eulogistic words cannot destroy the rough reality of hell.

v.10 The coming of Christ to the earth in judgment will justify the believers and glorify the Savior.

v.11 God had a purpose and plan in the lives of the Thessalonian believers.

v.12 The coming of Christ to the earth will bring glory both to Christ and the church.

## **II. PROGRAM for World in Connection with Coming of Christ, 2:1-12**

### 1. **Rapture Occurs First, 2:1**

v 1 "The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" and "our gathering together unto him" is the Rapture.

**2. Day of Lord Follows;**

Introduced by Total Apostasy & Appearance of Man of Sin, 2:2-5

v.2 "Day of Christ" is an unfortunate translation - it should be "day of the Lord" The "day of Christ" is this present age of grace, the church age (see 1 Cor.1:8; Phil. 1:6,10; 2:16).

"The day of the Lord" is a technical phrase that speaks of the period beginning with the Great Tribulation and continuing through the Millennium (see Acts 2:20; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 6:17).

*The day of the Lord begins when the day of Christ ends. The day of the Lord begins after the Rapture.*

The Thessalonians had a false report (which supposedly had originated with Paul) that the day of the Lord had already come, which would have meant, of course, that they had missed the Rapture.

v.3 Paul puts down 2 signs of the day of the Lord:

- (1) "A falling away" which is apostasy (Heb. 3:12)
- (2) The revelation of the "man of sin" (the lawless one v.8).

v.4 The lawless one is the final representative of man in his open opposition and rebellion against God. He actually assumes the place of God Himself (Isa. 14:12-15; Rev. 13:5,6,15-18). This is the "little horn" of Daniel 7.

v.5 Paul had taught the Thessalonian believers these eschatological truths in the brief interval covering 3 sabbaths that he was with them.

**3. Mystery of Lawlessness Working Today; Restrained by Holy Spirit 2:6-8**

v.6 The one who "withholdeth" is the Holy Spirit

v.7 "Let" means *hinder* The Holy Spirit alone can hinder the development of evil since it is satanic and supernatural.

v.8 "Wicked" is more accurately lawless. The lawless one will be revealed in the Great Tribulation. Christ will destroy him when He comes to the earth (Rev.9:20).

**4. Lawless One to Appear in Great Tribulation Period, 2:9-12**

v.9 The lawless one will be a miracle worker.

"Power" is *dunamis* - physical power whose source is supernatural.

"Signs" - tokens, the purpose of which is to appeal to the understanding  
"Lying wonders" produce an effect upon observers.

vv. 10,11 God sends strong delusion to believe a lie only to those who heard but would not have the truth.

v.12 These will be judged because they rejected the truth.

### **III. PRACTICALITY of Coming of Christ, 2:13-3:18**

In light of the knowledge of future events, the believer should live a life that demonstrates that he believes in the coming of Christ.

#### **1. Believers should Be Established in Word, 2:13-17**

vv. 13,14 The total spectrum of salvation is in these 2 verses:

- (1) "Chosen to salvation,"
- (2) "Sanctification of the Spirit"
- (3) "Belief of the truth" - growth is through the study of the Word,
- (4) "Glory" (Col. 1:27) - this refers to the Rapture (1 John 8:2).

V?. 15-17 The Word enables a believer to stand and be stable. The Word brings consolation and comfort. The Word and work are interrelated. The study of the Word leads to the work of the Lord.

#### **2. Believers Should Be Established in Walk, 3:1-7**

vv 1-4 The Word enables the believer to walk before the wicked The Word establishes a believer in his walk.

v.5 The believer is to walk in the love of God and in a patient waiting for the coming of Christ,

v.6 The believer is not to walk with the disorderly.

v.7 The believer is to walk as a follower of the apostles.

#### **3. Believers Should Be Established in Work, 3:8-18**

v.8 Christian workers earned their own bread and paid their own way.

v. 9 They did this as an example to the believers Thessalonica.

v.10 A believer who is looking for the Lord to come is not a dreamer, but a worker "No work - no food" is the rule laid down by the apostle.

v-11 Some are working in the wrong way - they are busybodies.

v.12 They are commanded to work for their own bread.

v.13 A believer who holds the blessed hope should not grow weary in working for the Lord.

v.14 A believer who holds the blessed hope is obedient to the Word if he is not, he is to be avoided.

v.15 An attempt should be made to win the wayward brother.

vv. 16-18 Paul's benediction. The study of prophecy brings peace to the heart. It does not lead to fanaticism or laziness.

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**END of Lesson**

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