

LESSON 1

The Big Picture

In the days before the Christian Church was “born,” people were either Jewish or Gentile, and all the Gentiles were pagan. The center of worship was the temple at Jerusalem. And since the first converts to Christianity were Jewish, it was only natural that when the Church was “born,” the Holy City of the Jews would remain “headquarters” for the leadership of the Christian Church as well. The development of the earliest churches was overseen from Jerusalem.

But as the Church began to grow in numbers, new congregations were planted farther and farther away from Jerusalem. In addition, attempts by Jewish leadership to halt the expansion of the Church resulted in the ever-increasing persecution of the Christians. When Stephen was stoned to death on account of his Christian beliefs, the believers scattered to areas outside the geographical boundaries of Israel, to places like Cyrene and Antioch of Syria. A new headquarters for Christian leadership soon developed.

It was in Antioch of Syria that believers were first called “Christians.” And it was in Antioch that Barnabas fetched Saul (Paul) from Tarsus so they could teach the mixed congregation of Jewish and Gentile believers. It was also from Antioch that the first missionaries went out into the rest of the world to share the gospel of Christ with the Gentiles.

It all happened unexpectedly one day, during a worship service in Antioch. The believers were visited by the Holy Spirit who instructed: “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” As soon as the worship was concluded, the believers gathered around and laid hands on Barnabas and Saul, prayed for them and sent them on their way to take the gospel to the far ends of the earth.

This was the beginning of the first of Paul’s three missionary journeys that would rock the world off its foundations and set the faith of the world on fire!

I. HISTORICAL SETTING

1. When we begin any new book study, the first thing we do is pray. Take a few minutes now and ask God to illumine you in the truths He wants you to learn from this study. Thank Him for giving us the Holy Spirit by which He leads us into all knowledge and wisdom. Turn the entire study over to Him to mold and shape as He sees fit.

2. In future lessons you will learn more about what happens to Paul during his stay in Thessalonica. But for now, all we need to know is that from Thessalonica, Paul traveled to Athens and then from Athens on to Corinth. It was while Paul was in Corinth that he wrote this first letter to the church in Thessalonica—after hearing news about them from Timothy whom he'd sent back to check out how they were doing.

II. THE BIG PICTURE

1. In order to interpret any passage accurately, we must first have a good handle on what the book is about in general. We call this THE BIG PICTURE. This big picture sets the context of the book so that we don't go off "half-cocked" in our interpretation.

Begin by reading through the book of 1 Thessalonians in its entirety. In order to glean an accurate view of THE BIG PICTURE, it is important that you allow sufficient time to read through the whole book in one sitting. When you have finished, use the space below to record your initial impressions. There are no right or wrong answers; at this point, we are interested only in what you *think* about the book.

2. From what you've seen so far, what would you say is Paul's attitude towards the people of the church in Thessalonica?
3. Read the book slowly and meditatively one more time, marking the following key words with their own distinctive icon, color or highlight. [Mark synonyms and related pronouns in the same manner as the key word they represent.]
 - God
 - Jesus
 - Holy Spirit
 - faith
 - love
 - hope
 - suffer/mistreated/afflictions
 - the gospel and synonyms
 - thank(s)
 - wrath

4. There are several interpretive challenges we encounter in the book of 1 Thessalonians. Read through the book again and this time use three (3) question marks to mark any areas you find particularly difficult to understand. When you finish, list those issues (with its reference) below:

These are areas of confusion we will want to clear up before our study of the book of 1 Thessalonians is finished.

III. TYPE OF LITERATURE

1. The Bible is a collection of many different types of literature. A book can be historical (Genesis), biographical (Luke), poetic (Psalms), proverbial (Proverbs), prophetic (Revelation), an epistle (2 Timothy), or a combination of several types. Daniel is a good example of a combination of historical and prophetic types of literature. Type of literature will have an impact on how you understand and apply the information you read in it.

What type of literature is 1 Thessalonians? Record the rationale for your answer.

2. If this book is a letter, what do you already know about it? [HINT: Think about a letter that you write. Or what are the elements that might we *always* expect to see in that letter?]

3. Which of the above elements do you find in the book of 1 Thessalonians?

IV. AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK

1. Read through the text one more time. This time as you read, make every reference to the author of the book with its own unique color, highlight or icon. Be sure to make every pronoun or synonym that refers to the author. [NOTE: When marking pronouns, include “we/us/our” as well as “I”.
2. According to the text, who is the author of this book? List the references that substantiate this.
3. Using the Chart **“What We Learn About the Author,”** go through the book and using the verses in which you marked references to the author, list everything you learn about him/them. Be sure to give chapter and verse.
4. Now that you are becoming more familiar with the text, how do you see the author’s relationship with the recipients of his letter?
5. Enter the name of the author in the area provided for it on the Chart **“The Big Picture.”**

V. THE RECIPIENTS

1. Every letter has an intended recipient. Read through the entire book of 1 Thessalonians and mark every reference to the recipient(s) of this letter. Use a separate and distinct icon, color, or highlight for every reference. Be sure to mark the pronouns and synonyms that refer to the recipient as well.
2. Sometimes the author will use the pronoun “we/us/our” to include the recipient as well as the senders. This is the case in Chapter 5, verses 5 through 11. Mark these references with the same icon, color or highlight you used for recipient. [NOTE: The pronouns in this section may have markings for both author and recipient.]
3. When you have finished marking all references to the recipients, use the Chart **“What We Learn about the Recipients”** and record everything you learn about them. Be sure to give chapter and verse.
4. Based on what you have recorded about the recipients, what is your opinion about what kind of church—faith-wise—the church at Thessalonica was?

5. What seems to be their relationship with the author?
6. Enter the name of the recipient(s) of the letter in the area provided in the Chart **“The Big Picture.”**

VI. THEME AND PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

1. Now we’re ready to examine what the book is about. We call this the “Theme” of the book. Theme and purpose are closely related. In other words, if the author is writing about the Oklahoma scissor-tail swallow (theme), one would assume he’s writing because he wants us to know about the scissor-tail swallow (purpose).

Whether you begin with determining the “theme” and then move from it to “the purpose” or you determine “the purpose” first and then move to the “theme” depends on the book you are studying and, sometimes, even personal preference.

2. In the study of 1 Thessalonians, we can consider either “theme” or “purpose” first. Or we can look at them together. Let’s start by writing down some of the reasons you can see in the text for the author’s writing this letter. List as many as you can find and be sure to record chapter and verse. [NOTE: if this doesn’t work for you, start with #3 below and come back to #2.]
3. Then record some of the main things the author writes about in this letter. Again, list as many topics as you can find and record the chapter and verse where you found each one.
4. Condense your “purpose” statements from #2 above and enter it in the area for Purpose on the Chart **“The Big Picture.”**
5. Look back at the key words you marked in **II(3) The Big Picture** and consider what you have learned about why the author is writing this letter. With these in mind, condense your “theme” statements from #3 above and enter

the resulting statement in the area for Theme on the Chart **“The Big Picture.”**

VII. BOOK TITLE

1. Not only is the “theme” of the book closely related to the author’s “purpose in writing,” it is also closely related to the Book Title. If your theme is expressed as succinctly as possible, you may decide that it doubles nicely as the title for the book. If it is bulky or cumbersome, however, whittle out the unnecessary words or thoughts until you have a phrase somewhere around eight words. [Do not be rigid about this number. If it takes more in order to be a meaningful title, that’s okay. The important thing is that it tells *you* what is in the book.]
2. Test your title against the “theme” and “purpose” of the book. Are they consistent? Do they accurately reflect what the book is trying to tell us?
3. Record your Book Title at the top of the Chart **“The Big Picture.”**

VIII. CHAPTER TITLES

1. One last assignment and we are through for the week. Just as we determined a title for the book as a whole, we now want to develop titles for each of the individual chapters.
2. Read through the book chapter by chapter. As you read a chapter, pay attention to the key words that you have marked in that chapter, as well as the Book Title you have given the book. Chapter titles should relate to these.
3. When you have finished, check all your chapter titles and make sure they “flow” from one title to the next. In other words, they need to be somewhat parallel or have some other relationship with each other.
4. Record your chapter titles at the top of the WordSheet for each chapter, as well as on the Chart **“The Big Picture.”**

WRAPPING IT UP

The Overview of a book of the Bible is the first step in the inductive process. When we use inductive reasoning (moving from the particular to the general) to interpret scripture, we must first establish the over-all framework of the book. This insures that we do not carry the conclusions we draw from the details further than God intended them to go. We’re able to establish such boundaries by stepping back and looking at the book as a whole. Our objective is to determine the over-all theme of the book and why it was written.

This is an extremely important step in the process of arriving at an accurate interpretation. While we may be tempted to rush through this step or ignore it altogether, taking the time to examine the big picture conscientiously will reap great benefits in the long haul.

LESSON 2

Chapter 1 (Part 1)

After Paul and Barnabas complete their first missionary journey through the regions of Pamphylia, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe, they return to home-base in Antioch of Syria. Not too much later, Paul determines he should return to those same towns so as to strengthen the churches in their walk with Jesus and to deliver to them the decision from the Council at Jerusalem. On this second missionary journey, Paul takes Silas with him and leaves Barnabas to travel in another direction with Mark. When Paul and Silas finally arrive in Lystra, Timothy joins the team there.

From Lystra Paul and his traveling companions head west and make plans to enter Bithynia (up north near the Black Sea). They are kept from doing so by the Holy Spirit and pass by and move on to Troas (near the northern-most coast of the Aegean Sea). During the night Paul experiences a vision in which a man of Macedonia stands on the opposite shore of the Sea and begs of him: “Come over to Macedonia and help us.”

Who can resist the call of God? Certainly not Paul and his companions; and so the team (Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke) cross over to preach the gospel in the region of Macedonia. They stop first in Philippi and from there move on to Thessalonica. From Thessalonica, they go to Berea where they encounter opposition from the Thessalonian Jews who had followed to disrupt the teachings. Leaving Silas and Timothy behind, Paul moves on to Athens and then Corinth. It is from Corinth that Paul sends this first letter to the church at Thessalonica. At the time of writing this letter, he most probably had been separated from them for only a short period of time.

As we read Paul’s letter to the church, we become keenly aware of the deep longing he has to see his fellow believers once again. Until Timothy returns from Thessalonica with good news about the believers, Paul is concerned about their walk as well as their well-being.

With that background, we are ready to look at 1 Thessalonians Chapter 1.

I. OBSERVING THE TEXT

1. Before you begin your study today, ask God to be your teacher and to teach you everything He wants you to learn from this lesson.
2. Once we complete the overview of a book, we are ready to examine the chapters line by line, verses by verse and word by word. Using the WordSheets located in the Appendix, read through Chapter 1 again and mark any list(s) you find by numbering each item in the list with the same color. Use a different colored ink for each additional list.

NOTE: If you discover any key words that you did not mark in Lesson 1, mark them now with their own distinct icon, underline or highlight color.

3. Read the chapter a second time and mark all contrasts and comparisons. Often, a contrast is denoted by the use of the words *but*, *however*, or *nevertheless*. A comparison may be signified by the use of the words *as* and *like*. Underline each side of the contrast or comparison and circle the word of contrast/comparison. Then connect the two sides of the contrast/comparison with an arrow drawn between the two.
4. Now that you have read Chapter 1 several times, re-examine the chapter title you created during the overview last week. Revise this title as needed in light of your new insight into the chapter.
5. If you did not do so in Lesson 1, consider now each individual paragraph within Chapter 1. Determine what each is about and record this as a paragraph title (or theme) in the left margin opposite the first word of the paragraph. You may determine the paragraph breaks yourself or use those I have suggested for you below:
 - paragraph 1—v.1
 - paragraph 2—vv.2-10

NOTE: Even though paragraph 2 covers virtually all of Chapter 1, be sure that your paragraph title is not the same as the chapter title. In other words, you want to give as much information as possible by having the two say something a little different.

When you are satisfied with your paragraph title/themes, transfer them to the chart **“The Big Picture.”**

Your objective in creating titles is to have paragraph titles/themes that flow smoothly into chapter titles and chapter titles that flow smoothly into the book title. The end result is an outline that aids understanding of the book *before* you even begin to interpret.

II. DIGGING DEEPER

1. At this point in our study, you have completed an overview of the entire book (Lesson 1) and now an overview of Chapter 1. From here, we’ll dig deeper into the meaning of this first chapter.
2. Pull out the lists you made in Lesson 1: **“What We Learn About Paul”** and **“What We Learn About the Recipients.”** Read through both lists and, using a colored highlighter, mark every reference that gives a clue about Paul’s relationship with the recipients. When you finish, look back at just the highlighted references (on both lists) and write a description of that relationship in the area provided at the top of the next page.

- And what is he teaching them?

 - After Paul has been in Thessalonica a while and people begin to talk about his teachings, what happens?

 - What happens to Paul?

 - Were the Jews of Thessalonica satisfied at that point with what they had tried to accomplish? And what did they do next?

 - What is the bottom line as far as Paul is concerned?
7. Compare what you have observed about the character and spirituality of the Thessalonians in Question #6 with what you wrote about them in Questions 2, 3, 4, and 5 above. How do you account for this “apparent” contradiction?
8. Re-read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5. When you finish, go back and meditate on v.5 and answer the question: How did the gospel come to the believers in Thessalonica? [NOTE: The question here is “how,” not “from whom”?]
- a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.

9. In your own words, explain what each of the phrases you recorded in Question #8 means as it relates to our delivering the gospel to others?

10. This may seem redundant to you, but please record below what the Thessalonians did with the gospel once they received it from Paul and company.

WRAPPING IT UP

Even as Paul begins this first letter to the church in Thessalonica, he makes us aware of the emotional bond he developed with the recipients during his short stay among them, in which he shared the gospel of Jesus with them. By his actions, Paul also demonstrates a principle that we can apply in our own lives today: ***As individually we each grow closer to the Lord, we grow closer to one another.***

Imagine an equilateral triangle, with God at the apex on top. On the base of this triangle, put yourself at the left apex and your spouse, friend or relative at the other. The principle works this way: As you study the Word of God, pray, worship Him, and serve Him by serving others, you move up the leg of the triangle and closer to God at the top. Then as your spouse, friend, or relative does the same, he or she also moves up their leg of the triangle and draws nearer to God at the top. Notice what happens to the distance between the two of you as you both approach God!

This is a principle that can be used to strengthen our marriages, our friendships, and the integrity of the support community we surround ourselves with. When we talk with others about God and His precepts, when we worship together, study the Bible together, serve Him by serving others—together—we grow individually as Christians, each moving closer to God, and as a result we become more intimate in our relationships with each other.

LESSON 3

Chapter 1 (Part 2)

In the opening verses of 1 Thessalonians Chapter 1, Paul gives thanks to God for the believers at the church in Thessalonica. By doing this, he is acknowledging to himself and to the recipients of his letter that God was the initiator: in other words, God chose them, and not they who chose God. God empowered his (Paul's) words so they produced fruit. And God convicted the listeners of their desperate need for a Savior. Paul and those who responded at Thessalonica were merely the vessels through which God chose to work!

On his part, however, Paul was careful to live the exemplary life that would role-model for them the life-style God desires of every true believer. The author merely touches on the subject here in Chapter 1, but as we continue through the book, we will see that Paul returns to this thought again and again. As we study additional chapters, we want to be sure to pick up on all Paul did to witness the Christian life-style to those around him.

There is a lesson in this for believers today. You may have heard it said that the only scripture some people will ever read is "YOU." This is very true. However, it is equally true that each of us as believers will have an impact on those around us no matter what—it will be either a godly influence we demonstrate to them, or an ungodly one. In this letter to the Thessalonians, Paul shows us how to live our lives so that we are assured of having a godly impact on those around us.

I. WORK OF FAITH

1. Begin the session with a time of prayer and meditation. Then read through Chapter 1. This Chapter is only ten verses long so you should have no trouble finding time to read it in its entirety in one sitting. In fact, it might be a good idea to read it several times!
2. According to v.3, what three things does Paul say that he "constantly bears in mind" about the believers in Thessalonica? [Write down the entire phrase (word-by-word) that Paul uses for each one.]

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3. We'll begin with the phrase "**work of faith.**" What does this phrase *sound* like it means?

4. One of the most effective ways to learn what God is saying in a given passage is to look at other references to the same subject elsewhere in scripture. Read the following cross-references on "**work of faith**" and record any insights you glean concerning faith as a "work."

Ephesians 2:8-10—

- What is the work that faith accomplishes according to this passage?

- How is the use of the word *work* as we've used it above (and as God uses it in 1 Thessalonians 1:3) different from the use of the word *work* in the Ephesians 2:8-10 scripture itself?

James 2:14-26—

- At first glance, what does this passage *appear* to be saying?

- Keeping in mind that all scripture is God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16) and therefore scripture cannot contradict scripture, what must the James passage be telling us in light of the truth of Ephesians 2:8-10?

- According to v.26, what is the relationship of faith and works?

Hebrews 11 [Optional]

Scan the chapter and note what it tells us about the results of faith. List just a few of these in the space provided below.

5. Based on what your observations in Question #4 above, complete the following:

“Work of faith” refers to the _____ produced as a result of _____.
We are saved **by** _____; we are saved **for** _____.

II. LABOR OF LOVE

1. Now we want to look at the second phrase Paul uses to describe the believers at Thessalonica according to v.3. What does the phrase “labor of love” *sound* as if it means?
2. Look up the following references and record what you learn about **“labor of love.”**

1 John 5:1-3—

- According to this passage, what does loving the children of God require on our part? (HINT: What must we do?)

- Although the passage clearly states that God’s commandments are not burdensome, is obedience automatic for the Christian or is it something we must work at?

1 Corinthians 13:4-8—

- List all the elements of love according to Paul’s definition here:

- What connection do you see between *love* and *work* from reading this passage?
3. In light of everything you observed in the two passages, what does the phrase “labor of love” mean?

III. STEADFASTNESS OF HOPE

1. Now, we want to look at the last of the three phrases: **“steadfastness of hope.”** In your opinion, what does this phrase *sound* like it means?

2. **[Optional for those with Word Study Tools]** Look up the word in 1 Thessalonians 1:3 that’s translated *steadfastness* (*patience*, KJV) and record your insights.

3. As we have done with the other two, let’s look at other scripture that will help us understand God’s meaning of the phrase.

Hebrews 6:9-12—

- What is the hope according to this passage?

- What must we do in order for that hope to become a reality in our lives?

- What, then, is the connection between *patience* and *hope*?

Romans 8:18-25—Explain the “hope” that Paul is referring to in this passage.

- What are we supposed to do until that hope becomes a reality in our lives?

1 Corinthians 15:58—

- What is Paul’s instruction to the believers in this verse?

- What is the hope?

4. Putting together all that you have gleaned from the above passages, write a brief description of the phrase “**steadfastness of hope.**”

IV. GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY IN ELECTION

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:4 and record what Paul says he knows about them (i.e., the recipients of his letter). Use the exact words you read in the NASB.
2. If God chose the believers at Thessalonica, what does that imply about man’s choice in the matter of salvation?
3. Read also the following scripture and record who the *initiator* of salvation is.

John 15:16—

John 15:19—

John 6:44—

Ephesians 2:8-9—

4. What does this tell you about whose responsibility salvation is?

5. On the other side of the coin, we know certain truths about man's responsibility in the salvation process as well. Read the following references and record what each tells you about what man has to do in order to be saved.

John 3:16—

Romans 10:8-10—

Romans 10:13—

6. What do these verses tell you about the role man plays in the salvation process?

7. How do you reconcile the differences between your conclusions in #4 above and those in #6?

7. In what ways are you an imitator of Christ?

8. In what ways are you an example for others of the Christian life-style?

VI. THE WRATH OF GOD

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10. What had the Thessalonians done?
2. What were they waiting for?
3. According to Paul at this point, what does Jesus do?
4. Are believers being saved from “the wrath to come” during these present days or at any time in the past? What does that tell you? [Refer also to 1 Thessalonians 5:9]
5. **[Optional]** Using a concordance, look up the term “wrath of God” and record the scriptural references on a separate sheet of paper. Then look each reference up and jot down what you think the term means in that specific reference.

WRAPPING IT UP

Although this first chapter of 1 Thessalonians serves mainly as an introduction to the book (in it Paul is thanking God for the church at Thessalonica), it also offers the reader an in-depth look into the character of the believers who make up the congregation. Already we see the great joy Paul is

experiencing because of the fruit he is seeing in *their* lives. And already, Paul seems much like a proud father who is pleased with the growth of character his children are demonstrating.

The greatest “fruit” of Paul’s labors seems to be the “fruit” that his “fruit” has subsequently produced! We can imagine his excitement in watching the re-birth of the Thessalonians when he was with them (that would be Paul’s fruit) and then later learning about how they in turn have gone out and brought others to Christ (the fruit that his fruit produced!)

This is the natural progression of the Gospel. When we “go, baptize, and teach” as God calls us to do in Matthew 28:19-20, that is only the beginning. Those who come to Christ as a result of our sharing and teaching will in turn “go, baptize, and teach” others, who in turn will “go, baptize and teach” others, who in turn will...

LESSON 4

Chapter 2 (Part 1)

As we move into Chapter 2, right off the bat we read Paul's very bold statement about his visit with the church at Thessalonica. "Our coming to you was not in vain," he says. He knows it and they know it. And this is quite remarkable considering the circumstances that surrounded his departure *from* Thessalonica (and you'll soon be reminded of those circumstances as you do your lesson for the week!)

What seems to please Paul most about his short stay in Thessalonica is the fact that his teaching persuaded some Jews to the reality that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah. Not only do they join Silas and him, but according to scripture a "great multitude of God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women" do as well. The opposition Paul encounters and specifically the persecution from the Jews is insignificant to him when compared to the joy he experiences watching others come to know Christ! Clearly, their salvation is the jewel in his crown—it's the work to which he has dedicated his life.

In this second chapter, Paul continues to give thanks to God for the Thessalonians' acceptance of the message God gave him to give to them. He reminds them of the things that happened when they were together. His descriptions give readers today a glimpse into what a minister of the gospel should look like. This is important because, even if we are not called to the *office* of pastor, each of us *is* commanded to be of that same mindset; i.e., clergy and lay persons alike are all called to have the mind of Christ.

So, as we listen to what Paul's writes the believers in Thessalonica, we find he is writing to us today as well.

I. OBSERVING THE TEXT

1. All the Bible study in the world is useless without the benefit of God's teaching! Therefore, before you begin your study today, take a few minutes and ask God to be your teacher and to lead you to everything He wants you to learn from this lesson.
2. Last week we completed our study of 1 Thessalonians 1. Now we're ready to move on and observe the **Big Picture** of 1 Thessalonians 2. Using the WordSheets that are located in the Appendix, read through Chapter 2 and mark any list(s) you find by numbering each item in the list with the same color. Use a different colored ink for each additional list.

NOTE: If you discover any key words that you did not mark in Lesson 1, mark them now with their own distinct icon, underline or highlight color.

3. Read the chapter a second time and this time mark all contrasts and comparisons. If you need help with how to mark contrasts and comparisons, see Lesson 2, page 10, #3.
4. Now examine the chapter title you created during the overview in Lesson 1. At this point, you are more familiar with the content of Chapter 2 and in a better position to know what the chapter is about. Revise your original title if you feel you can improve on it.
5. If you did not do so in Lesson 1, consider each individual paragraph within Chapter 2. Determine what each is about and record this as a paragraph title (or theme) in the left margin opposite the first word of the paragraph. You may determine the paragraph breaks yourself or use those I have suggested for you below:
 - paragraph 1—vv.1-12
 - paragraph 2—vv.13-16
 - paragraph 3—vv.17-20

Once you are satisfied with your paragraph title/themes, transfer them to the appropriate box on the chart **“The Big Picture.”** Remember to check your paragraph titles/themes to be sure they flow into the chapter title/theme.

II. DIGGING DEEPER

1. What is Paul’s bold claim in v.1? Record his exact words below.
2. In Chapter 1, what evidence does Paul recall that proves his visit was not in vain (See 1:2-5a)?
3. In Chapter 2, Paul gives a long list of descriptions about *the way* in which he and his associates delivered the gospel. Record the complete list from vv.2-12 on the Chart **“How Paul Presented the Gospel”** in the Appendix.

11. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:8. What does Paul say he imparts to the Thessalonian believers *in addition* to the gospel?

- What actions does he take that shows him doing *this* (refer to your answer in #10 above.)

- What is Paul's "SO THAT" here? In other words, what is his purpose in demonstrating this kind of behavior before them?

WRAPPING IT UP

So much of Chapters 1 and 2 concerns Paul's *feelings* about the believers in Thessalonica. He is proud of this church, he is grateful for this church, he is concerned about them, he considers them like family. And he only spent a short time in their city—some scholars believe as little as two or three weeks! But even if the visit lasted longer than that, it was still a relatively short period of time.

So what happens to a people to enable them to bond so quickly? Obviously, they have a common love, a common faith, a common belief. But in addition, Paul and the believers at Thessalonica also shared a common persecution. It's an indisputable fact that people who undergo persecution together form a special brotherhood that makes their relationship tighter and stronger than it might have been otherwise.

Persecution is something we know very little about in our country. We are very fortunate in that sense. But it is also our weakness. Because our Christianity is so easy for us, we have a tendency to grow fat and lazy spiritually speaking. The question is, will we be strong enough to resist when Satan attacks?

LESSON 5

Chapter 2 (Part 2)

Paul is writing to a church that he is very fond of—a church that he planted only a short time before writing this letter, and one residing in a city from which he had to escape during the middle of the night. In fact, the Jews in that town were so disturbed by Paul’s teaching and the fact that people were joining up with Paul and his new “cult” that they followed Paul from Thessalonica to Berea and caused trouble for him there as well. From Berea, Paul moves on to Athens and from Athens to Corinth. It’s in Corinth then that Paul writes this first letter to the believers back in Thessalonica.

Even before reaching Corinth, Paul is worried about the believers that he left back in Thessalonica when he fled during the night. He knows all too well that the new little church may be attacked in the same way that he is. And he knows how difficult it is for new believers to withstand such attacks. Paul’s concern for them is such that, while he is still in Athens, he decides to send Timothy back to check on them. After Timothy returns and is reunited with Paul in Corinth, Paul sits down to write the letter.

Already in the first two chapters of the letter to the church in Thessalonica, we are keenly aware of Paul’s profound joy over the good news Timothy brings with him when he comes. His love and relief virtually flood the pages of this letter. As we continue our in-depth study of Chapter 2, we will learn even more about Paul’s gratitude for the believers at Thessalonica and their well-grounded faith in the message Paul brought to them directly from God.

I. IN A MANNER WORTHY

1. Before beginning your study this week, take a few minutes to go to the Lord in prayer. The Bible was written for us to understand, but it was never intended that we would understand it through *our* strength alone. God sent the Holy Spirit to teach us all things and without His presence our understanding is limited or even seriously misconstrued. With His help, however, we are able to hear the words of God in the very manner God intends for us to hear them.
2. Read 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 several times so as to refresh your memory of the Big Picture before answering any of the questions in this week’s assignment.
3. In v.12 Paul gives the purpose of his efforts in Thessalonica as one of encouraging them to “walk in a manner worthy” of the God who called them.

II. THE WORD OF GOD'S MESSAGE

1. In Lesson 4, you made a list from 1 Thessalonians 2:2-12 of how Paul delivered the gospel to the Thessalonians. Take out the Chart **“How Paul Presented the Gospel”** and review what Paul tells us about how to share the gospel with others.
2. In 2 Timothy 3:15 through 4:4 Paul instructs Timothy about preaching the gospel. These are good truths that would apply to us as well today. Using the print-out of this passage (in the Appendix), read through it several times and then mark the following:
 - On the WordSheet of 2 Timothy 3:15-4:4, put a 1), 2), 3), etc. by each of the charges that Paul gives to Timothy.
 - Highlight in its own distinctive color **what** Paul instructs him (and us today) to preach.
 - Use a “clock icon” or any other notation to mark **when** a person should be taught the gospel.
 - With a different color highlighter, indicate **how** we are to preach.
 - Using a third color highlighter, mark everything that tells you **why** we are to preach the gospel.
3. The *gospel* or the *word of God's message* is referred to five times in 1 Thessalonians 2. [NOTE: The *word of God* that's used in v.13c is not a specific reference to the *gospel* itself but rather to the fact that it is something spoken of God rather than man.]

Look up the following references and record what you learn about the *gospel* that we are to preach.

- 1 Corinthians 15:1-8—

3. What is the common thread between these two verses?

4. Compare this with 2 Timothy 3:12. What does this tell you about the church in Thessalonica?

5. Read Revelation 2:10 and record your insights.

WRAPPING IT UP

All too often when believers share the gospel with non-believers, they tend to stress all the “perks” of being a Christian. This is logical (because why would anyone want to join something that promises to be painful or difficult?) but it is not real. Yes, there are many blessings involved in letting Jesus take control of your life. And yes, these blessings definitely out-weigh the negatives. But reality is, if you choose to live a godly life you *will* be persecuted.

We talked about this some last week—persecution is something we know very little about in this country. But that day may not remain among us forever. Since all scripture is Truth, we know the day is coming when there will be persecution of Christians, even in this country. The time to prepare for it is now. And there is no better preparation than a solid foundation of the Word of God.

LESSON 6

Chapter 3 (Part 1)

Throughout the first three chapters of Paul's first letter to the church in Thessalonica, the author makes repeated reference—either directly or indirectly—to the persecution and suffering of believers. He reminds the church of the suffering he has endured as well as that which they also have endured. He calls it their destiny (his and theirs) and makes no excuse for having to endure it. However, he is quite concerned about the fortitude of the new believers to withstand such attacks so early in their walk with Christ.

For this reason, Paul decides to send Timothy back to Thessalonica to strengthen and encourage the believers *and* to bring back word to him about the status of their faith. In no other book do we see quite as much emotion and concern by the teacher for his students. They are to Paul what he calls his “crown of exultation,” his joy, his glory. Not knowing about how they are faring is a large part of the suffering he is enduring and he desperately desires to see them again. In his words, Paul claims he is prevented from doing so by the tempter.

Once he receives the good news brought back to him by Timothy, Paul is able to rest in the comfort of knowing his efforts in Thessalonica were not in vain. Despite the persecution the new believers are encountering, this new family of Paul's is preserving in the faith!

I. OBSERVING THE TEXT

1. In order to lean not on your own understanding but on the personal directives of the Holy Spirit, begin this session with prayer. Confess to God your ignorance and inability to discover Truth on your own. Acknowledge His perfect wisdom and ask Him to impart such wisdom to you in this study. Pray for ears that are willing to hear.
2. You have now completed an in-depth study of 1 Thessalonians 1-2 and are ready to move on to observe the **Big Picture** of 1 Thessalonians 3. Using the WordSheets located in the Appendix, read through Chapter 3 several times before answering any of the questions in this assignment.
3. As you read, mark any list(s) you find by numbering each item in the list with the same color. Use a different colored ink for each additional list.

NOTE: If you discover any key words that you did not mark in Lesson 1, mark them now with their own distinct icon, underline or highlight color (as marked in previous chapters.)

4. Read the chapter again and this time mark all contrasts and comparisons. If you need help with how to mark contrasts and comparisons, see Lesson 2, page 10, #3.
5. Now examine the chapter title you created during the overview in Lesson 1. Revise your original title if you feel you can improve on it now that you are more familiar with the text.
6. If you did not do so in Lesson 1, consider each individual paragraph within Chapter 3. Determine what each is about and record this as a paragraph title (or theme) in the left margin opposite the first word of the paragraph. You may determine the paragraph breaks yourself or use those I have suggested for you below:
 - paragraph 1—vv.1-5
 - paragraph 2—vv.6-10
 - paragraph 3—vv.11-13

Once you are satisfied with your paragraph title/themes, transfer them to the appropriate box on the chart **“The Big Picture.”** Remember to check your paragraph titles/themes to be sure they flow into the chapter title/theme.

II. DIGGING DEEPER

1. What is Paul’s emotional state according to v.1? [See also the repeated phrase in v.5]

2. What does Paul say he fears may have happened? [HINT: *Who* does he say is suffering the afflictions?]

3. Why does Paul send Timothy to them?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
 - 4)

- lacking (v.10)—

5. The same Greek word that is translated “destine” above is used in Luke 2:34 and Philippians 1:17. Read these references and record any additional insight you receive into the meaning of the word.

- Luke 2:34—

- Philippians 1:17 (Read in the **KJV only**.)—

6. What two terms does Paul use to describe Timothy in this passage and what does each of these mean to you?

1)

2)

7. Read the following words of Paul concerning Timothy and record what each is telling you about Paul's regard for Timothy.

- 1 Corinthians 4:17—

- Philippians 2:19-22—

- 1 Timothy 1:2—

- 1 Timothy 1:3-4—

- 2 Timothy 1:2; 2:1—

- 2 Timothy 1:5

8. What is God's definition for *faith* according to Hebrews 11:1?

9. How can a Christian help fortify the faith of another as Timothy was charged with doing in 1 Thessalonians 3:2?

WRAPPING IT UP

As believers, we are subject to the same disappointments, fears, and pressures from without as non-believers are. There is one major difference. The believer has certain God-given tools with which to battle against these enemies and to stand in the face of an attack of any kind. We are armed with the Word of God, we have His promises, we have the assurance of our salvation, we have the strength of other fellow believers around us, we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that the devil was defeated at the cross.

And as if that weren't enough, in the same way that Paul sent Timothy to strengthen and encourage the believers at Thessalonica, God sent us the Holy Spirit to indwell us and bring us comfort and strength in our times of need. We are never alone. We are never without strong defense against the evils of this world. We have been equipped to walk in "a manner worthy!"

LESSON 7

Chapter 3 (Part 2)

The word “but” holds a great deal of power in the English language. No matter how expertly we construct an argument to defend something, the moment the word “but” is introduced everything that’s been said before is overridden. It’s a word of extreme contrast. After “but,” mood takes an about-face. It’s as if we were trying to say, “on the contrary,” “on the other hand,” “notwithstanding what’s just been said” *this* is what is actually true.

Paul uses the word “but” twenty-two times in 1 Thessalonians—only once in Chapter 3. This one time, however, is very significant. Up to now, we’ve been hearing and feeling Paul’s worry, his concern, his anxiety at being separated from the young church he fears may buckle under the threat of persecution. Halfway through Chapter 3, Paul brings in the good news of Timothy’s report concerning their faith and love, and we see Paul’s mood change abruptly. Twice in the first half of the chapter, Paul states that he can no longer endure the separation and the not knowing; in the second half, he rejoices and gives the Lord thanks on their account.

In your lesson this week, watch for the way in which Paul responds to the good news he receives through Timothy. Is he content with just knowing that the believers in Thessalonica are standing firm in their faith or does he now expect even more of them because of their strong faith? Be alert, as well, to the application this might have in your life and in the lives of all believers today as we the encounter the same problems the Thessalonian believers did in Paul’s day.

I. ARE PAIN, SUFFERING, ETC GOD’S WILL?

1. As always, begin your study with a time of prayer, thanking God for this wonderful Book that he has given us and asking Him to be your teacher. Allow Him however much time He needs to talk to you.
2. Read all of 1 Thessalonians 3 several times before answering any of the questions in this week’s assignment.
3. In the **Big Picture** of 1 Thessalonians (Lesson 1), you marked all the words that referred to suffering or mistreatment of any sort (and its related pronouns.) There were several you should have marked here in Chapter 3. Review each of these to refresh what you learned about suffering in this chapter and then compare that with 2 Timothy 3:12. Record your findings below.

4. If you were to look only at 2 Timothy 3:12, you would likely conclude that suffering and persecution of any kind is a part of God's will in the life of a believer. However, one of the basic rules of interpretation is that no belief should be based solely on an isolated passage, so let's look at what the rest of the Bible has to say about pain/suffering/persecution and the like. **Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (See appendix).**

- Mark the phrase "thorn in the flesh" with its own distinctive color highlight, underline or icon. Be sure to mark related pronouns and any other words or phrases that are used as a synonym for the phrase.
- **What** was Paul given?
- **Why** was it given to him?
- To **whom** did Paul entreat (plead with) three times to have "this" depart from him?
- **What** is the antecedent of the "this" in v.8? In other words, **what** is Paul asking God to remove?
- **What** was God's response to Paul's entreaty?
- Do you see a connection between Paul's request and the "weakness" God is referring to that allows for His strength to be made perfect? If so, describe that connection below.

5. Using a concordance, look up the Strong's reference number for the following words:

- weakness (v.9)—
- weaknesses/infirmities (v.9)—
- weaknesses (v.10)—
- weak (v.10)—

6. What do all the words listed in #5 above have in common?

7. **[Optional—For those with Word Study tools.]** Look up the definition for each of the Greek words translated *weakness* or *weak* in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

8. We learn a lot about the meaning of a word by its use in other contexts. Look up the following references and note how this same Greek word is used in each one.
 - Luke 5:15—

 - Luke 13:11-12—

 - John 5:5—

 - John 11:4—

 - Galatians 4:13—

 - Romans 6:19—

- Romans 8:26—

 - Hebrews 7:28—
9. These are by no means all the references in the Bible that contain the Greek word *astheneia*. Feel free to use a Greek concordance and look up all the references containing the word if you want additional information. From what you observe, list the different ways the word can be used.
10. Refresh your memory as to why Paul says in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 that he was given this *astheneia*. Then consider the following cross-references and answer the question for yourself: Is pain, illness, suffering sometimes according to the will of God?
- 2 Timothy 3:12
 - Romans 8:28
 - 1 Peter 4:15, 19
 - Isaiah 45:7
11. If your answer was “Yes” above, for what purpose would God allow such things to happen? [Back up your position with scripture references if you can.]

II. “COMPLETE WHAT IS LACKING IN YOUR FAITH”

1. In v.10, what does Paul say he prays for night and day concerning the believers in Thessalonica?
 - 1)

 - 2)

2. What is Paul on the record as saying about their faith according to 1:3?

3. Review the word study you did in Lesson 6 on the words *complete* and *lacking*. Using what you learn from the definitions, what do you think Paul is saying here in 1 Thessalonians 3:10?

4. Read 2 Timothy 3:16 and discuss what Paul will probably do if he gets to visit with the believers in Thessalonica again.

5. What does Paul pray the Lord will do for the love the believers have for others? How does this compare with Paul's desires for their faith in the previous verse?

III. THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

1. What is the "so that" of Paul's petition to God on behalf of the Thessalonian believers?

2. To what event is Paul specifically referring?

3. This sounds very much like a judgment. And if it *is* a judgment, it cannot be the judgment that determines whether or not one goes to heaven. Why not?

4. That brings up the question then: What kind of judgment is Paul talking about in 1 Thessalonians 3? Read 2 Corinthians 5:10 and answer the following questions:

- **Who** must appear before the judgment seat of Christ?
- **Why** does a person stand before the judgment seat of Christ?
- **For what** is a person held accountable at the judgment seat of Christ?
- If you are held accountable for both the good and the bad that you do, what is implied?

5. Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.

- **What** is the foundation that Paul says he laid?
- **Who** builds upon that foundation?
- **What** are the different “works” with which men build upon this foundation? [List all six in the space provided.]
- **How** are the works tested?
- **What** is the result if his works survive?
- **What** is the result if his works do not survive?
- **Which** one is saved?
- **What** is the difference between the two then?

6. Based on what you have learned about the Judgment Seat of Christ, what conclusions can you draw about rewards in heaven?

WRAPPING IT UP

Early in Paul's letter to the church at Thessalonica, he gives thanks to God for their work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope. Obviously, he is pleased with where he finds them to be spiritually (once he receives the news back from Timothy, that is). Yet, here in Chapter 3 we read about how he wants to go to them in order to *perfect* what is "lacking" in their faith. And he also prays that God will cause their love to become "overflowing." In other words, Paul is expecting them to move on from where they are right now to a state of perfection.

This is how our heavenly Father looks at each and every one of us. When He considers the relatively short period of time we have been true believers, He is pleased with our progress. But He knows our true potential and He pushes us forward until one day we stand before Him in heaven—perfect and whole and complete in every way. Without flaw. Without blemish.

LESSON 8

Chapter 4 (Part 1)

In the first three chapters of 1 Thessalonians, Paul expresses gratitude, love and concern for the believers in Thessalonica. He recalls things that happened during their brief time together and talks about how much he longs to see them again. He talks about how he sent Timothy back to reassure and encourage them and how relieved he was to finally receive Timothy's good report concerning how they were standing strong in the faith. Beginning then in Chapter 4, Paul abruptly changes his approach and begins the instruction phase of his letter, which he continues all the way through to the end of Chapter 5.

In the last two chapters of the book, then, we will read the instructions and exhortations the teacher wants to give his students. Naturally, considering the very favorable impression Paul has for the church in Thessalonica, we do not expect to see an especially long list of instructions. These people already are doing things according to the way Paul had taught them, so there is very little in which Paul needs to give them remedial teaching.

Our challenge as we read through the final two chapters will be to understand Paul's instructions and exhortations in a way that makes them applicable to our life-styles today.

I. OBSERVING THE TEXT

1. Each time we sit down to study the Word of God, we want to be sure that God has been invited into our presence to be our Teacher. As you have in the past, begin this session with prayer asking God to let His Holy Spirit fall upon you and teach you all things just as He has promised He will do. Ask for wisdom in understanding and applying His Word and you will surely receive it.
2. In this assignment, we want to observe the **Big Picture** of Chapter 4. Using the WordSheets located in the Appendix, read through Chapter 4 several times before answering any of the questions in this assignment.
3. As you read, mark any list(s) you find by numbering each item in the list with the same color. Use a different colored ink for each additional list in the chapter.

If you discover any key words that you did not mark in the overview of the entire book (Lesson 1), mark these now—each with its own distinct icon, underline or highlight color.

3)

WRAPPING IT UP

Jesus tells us in many different ways that those who love Him will be obedient to His teachings. In other words, the true believer will live a life that is defined by the standards set forth in the Word of God and he or she will stand out from the rest of the crowd. How they earn a living, what they do for entertainment, how they respond to difficult situations, sometimes even how they dress will not blend in with the pack.

Paul takes Jesus' teaching and goes a step further. He is relieved to learn how well the Thessalonian church is walking in a way that pleases God, but that is not enough. He instructs them to excel even more—go that additional mile, continue to grow, become more and more Christ-like with each passing day. Remaining where they are is not an option; they must do even better.

There is an application in this for you and me today as well. We must continually be growing in our faith and *day by day* we must walk just a little closer to our Lord. Of course, there will be days or even seasons when we slip, but over the long haul we can look back to a day in the past and clearly see that we have grown so much more like Jesus in the intervening period.

LESSON 9

Chapter 4 (Part 2)

We live in a culture in which sexual obsession and perversion are rampant. We observe it in the broken lives around us, in the entertainment so-called “decent” people choose for themselves, in the media, in our conversations—it’s hard to find anything in society that isn’t somehow affected by our fixation on sex. Unfortunately, our generation is neither alone nor unique when it comes to this obsession with sex.

The moral climate during the days of the Roman Empire was extremely unhealthy. Immorality was a way of life back then as well as it is today. And because of the availability of slave labor to the ruling classes, new and innovative pleasures were constantly being sought to help fill the hours of leisure people found themselves facing. Obviously, against a backdrop like that, Christian morality would be a hard pill to swallow and new converts might be in danger of giving in to the temptation to retreat to familiar behavior.

Paul begins the instructional phase of this letter with the exhortation to “walk and please God”, and then shortly defines one aspect of that walk as “abstaining from sexual immorality.” He knows that the church in Thessalonica is doing a good job in this area, but he’s fully aware of the temptations that await them in the world in which they live.

In our assignment for this week, we will look at all of Paul’s exhortations and instructions in Chapter 4. In our last lesson, we organized the information from Chapter 4 and now we will take an up-close and personal look at what we found.

I. ABSTAIN FROM SEXUAL IMPURITY

1. Take a few minutes before you begin your study to thank God for the gift of His Word and ask Him to be your teacher through the presence of the Holy Spirit.
2. So that you are able to keep the individual topics we will be looking at in context, re-read Chapter 4 in its entirety at least twice before beginning. When you have finished, reexamine your chapter title one more time to see how well it describes the material Paul covers in this chapter.
3. As a point of review, record the following information we developed in Lesson 8, Roman numeral II, Questions 2, 8 & 9.

- What exhortation does Paul give the believers?
 - What three details does Paul give concerning this exhortation?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
 - What is the definition of the Greek word translated “fornication” in 1 Thessalonians 4:3b (sexual impurity in the NASB)?
4. Let’s be sure we know what we are all on the same page and define our terms before we start. Use a regular English dictionary and record the definitions for the following:
- adultery—
 - fornication—
 - prostitution—
 - harlotry—

- homosexuality—
- sodomy—
- incest—
- immorality—

NOTE: To understand immorality, you need to understand the English word “Chaste.”

- chaste—
5. Look up the following references and jot down what God has to say in general about the sexual behavior of mankind:
- 1 Corinthians 6:18—
 - 1 Corinthians 7:2-3—
 - Genesis 2:24—
 - Hebrews 13:4—

6. Now let's look specifically at **adultery**. Look up the following references and record what God says about adultery. [Before you start, refresh your memory concerning the definition of the English word "adultery."]

- Exodus 20:14—

- Matthew 5:27-30—

- Proverbs 5:20-23—

- Galatians 5:19—

7. Write a statement summarizing God's teaching on **adultery**.

8. Next, we'll take a look at what scripture tells us about **fornication**. Before starting, refresh your memory as to the English definition of the word "fornication," as well as the definition of the Greek word **porneia** in Question #3 above. Then record your insights from each of the following references: [NOTE: *porneia* is translated "immorality" sometimes in the NASB.]

- Acts 15:20, 28-29—

- 2 Corinthians 12:21—

- Galatians 5:19—

- Jude 1:7—

9. Write a statement summarizing God's teaching on **fornication**.
10. From the different references you read, do you get the impressions that the Greek **porneia** that's translated fornication in the KJV may have a larger definition than our English word "fornication"?
11. Read the references and then write a short summarization of God's teaching on **incest**—Leviticus 18:6-17; 20:11-12, 17, 19-21; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 9-13:
12. Read the references listed here and write a short summarization of God's teaching on **homosexuality**—Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Genesis 19:4-11; 18:20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Romans 1:26-27:
13. Read the references that follow and write a short summarization of God's teaching on **bestiality**—Leviticus 18:23; 20:15-16:
14. What is the reason Paul gives in 1 Thessalonians 4:6_b for their abstaining from all these things?

II. LOVE ONE ANOTHER

1. What is the second exhortation Paul gives in Chapter 4?

2. What does Paul have to say about the “love” the believers in Thessalonica are exhibiting at that time?

3. Look back at Lesson 8 and refresh your memory as to the meaning of the Greek word translated “excel” in vv.1 and 10.

4. Using the meaning of that word, what is Paul instructing them to do as far as loving others is concerned?

5. Read Luke 10:25-37. How does Jesus expand on the teaching of who to love in this passage?

III. LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE-STYLE

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 again. As a point of review, write down the general exhortation that is implied in these verses. [HINT: See Lesson 8, Roman numeral I, Question 6 and the paragraph theme you recorded there.]

2. Using the exact words from the text, write down the three specific instructions Paul gives here. After each one, record what the phrase means to you.
 - 1)

 - 2)

 - 3)

3. Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 and answer the following questions:
- In 1 Thessalonians 4:11, Paul says that he had commanded them. When did he do this?
 - Specifically, what are the “rules” Paul gives them concerning working with their hands in 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13?
 - What does Paul mention in the 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 passage about *his* working? Compare this with 1 Thessalonians 2:9 and 5:12 as well 4:11.
 - What is the implication about what some of the people were doing if Paul finds it necessary to instruct them to work?
 - According to the 2 Thessalonians 3 passage, why does Paul want them working?
4. What is the ultimate goal of our living the Christian life-style according to 1 Thessalonians 4:12?

WRAPPING IT UP

And thus ends the exhortations and instructions of Chapter 4. Paul will give additional instruction in Chapter 5, but in the meantime we have an

important topic to cover. Beginning in 1 Thessalonians 4:13 and running through Chapter 5, verse 11, Paul takes a break and turns to answering a couple of questions concerning the end times teaching he had apparently given while he was still with them.

It's exciting to realize that even though Paul was with the believers for a relatively short period of time, he nonetheless felt it appropriate to teach on end times. What a refreshing contrast to our rather staid position today that claims prophecy and end times are only appropriate for the mature Christian. Apparently, Paul felt otherwise! Perhaps we might be wise to think likewise!

LESSON 10

Chapter 4 (Part 3) and Chapter 5 (Part 1)

Even though Paul's visit to Thessalonica was brief, there is enough evidence from both letters to prove that he taught about the return of Jesus to the new believers, and also about the days leading up to that return. Because of his teaching on the subject, the believers were living in expectation of seeing their Lord return in the immediate future. There was even confusion among them regarding that teaching—just as there is among believers today. So, right in the middle of Paul's instructions to the church, he stops to handle two questions that either were expressed while he was with them or that Timothy brought back with him when he returned from his follow-up visit.

Believers today sometimes have the same questions as the early believers did. What Paul taught the Thessalonians is useful today, then, in helping us put the entire picture together. In this week's assignment, you will examine what Paul has to say about end times in Chapters 4 and 5, as well as previewing what he says in 2 Thessalonians 2. A word of warning, however: this is not a comprehensive study at this point. We will save that for the course on 2 Thessalonians, **"Waiting for the Second Coming—Part 2"**.

And now... let's begin by observing the **Big Picture** of 1 Thessalonians 5, after which you will drop back and pick up Chapter 4, verses 13-18.

I. OBSERVING THE TEXT

1. Begin the session with prayer. Turn your heart and your mind over to the Lord and ask Him to let His Spirit teach you all things just as Jesus promised He will do. If you ask for wisdom to accurately interpret and apply His Word, the Word tells us it will be given to you.
2. In this assignment, we want to observe the **Big Picture** of Chapter 5. Using the WordSheets located in the Appendix, read through Chapter 5 several times before answering any of the questions in this assignment.
3. As you read, mark any list(s) you find by numbering each item in the list with the same color. Use a different color of ink for each new list.

If, as you read, you discover key words that you did not mark in the overview of the entire book (Lesson 1), mark these now—each with its own distinct icon, underline or highlight color.

4. Read the chapter again and this time mark all contrasts and comparisons. If you need help with how to mark contrasts and comparisons, see Lesson 2, page 10, #3.

5. Now examine the chapter title you created during the overview in Lesson 1. Feel free to revise your original title if you can improve on it now that you have more information.
6. If you did not do so in Lesson 1, consider each individual paragraph within Chapter 5. Determine what each is about and record this as a paragraph title (or theme) in the left margin opposite the first word of the paragraph. You may determine the paragraph breaks yourself or use those I have suggested below:
 - paragraph 1—vv.1-11
 - paragraph 2—vv.12-22
 - paragraph 3—vv.23-24
 - paragraph 4—vv.25-28

Once you are satisfied with your paragraph title/themes, transfer them to the appropriate box on the chart **“The Big Picture.”** Remember to check your paragraph titles/themes to be sure they flow into the chapter title/theme and adjust as appropriate. Your object is to have a helpful outline of the book when you have done this for all five chapters.

II. QUESTION: WHAT ABOUT THE DEAD IN CHRIST?

1. Re-read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. In your own words, write out what you believe the topic to be in this passage. Keep your answer as simple as you can.

2. Okay, let’s step back and analyze what we can reasonably surmise here. Paul seems to be answering a question—what would that question be?: [HINT: In v.13, what does Paul say he does not want them to be misinformed about? What does he not want them to feel?]

3. Can we say for sure whether the author is talking about Jesus’ coming again to set up His kingdom here on earth or about what some people believe to be a “rapture” of the church that occurs before the actual second

coming? Explain your position as best as you are able. Incorporate other scripture references if you like.

4. What does the author mean by the use of the term “those who are asleep”?
[See John 11:1-14 and see how Jesus answers this question before you attempt to answer it.]

5. What evidence do you find in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 that would agree with your finding in Question #4 above?

6. What does Paul give as the sequence of events in this passage? (Indicate the sequence by numbering the events according to the order in which they happen.)

___ Thus, we shall always be with the Lord.

___ The dead in Christ shall rise first.

___ The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout... a voice of the archangel... the trumpet of God.

___ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

7. When the Lord descends, what happens to the dead in Christ *as well as* those who are still alive?
8. According to this passage, **where** will “the dead in Christ” and “those who are alive” be with the Lord forever?
9. In Paul’s own words, does he intend for the answer he gives here to be disturbing or to be a comfort to the new believers in the church at Thessalonica? What does that tell you?
10. Read the Matthew 24:30-31 account of the coming of Jesus. Using the Chart from the Appendix, “**Are They the Same Event?**” compare your findings from the Matthew passage with what is described in the 1 Thessalonians 4 passage. Review the information you record on the Chart and answer the question: Are they the same event?

II. QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE TIMES AND EPOCHS?

1. Now that Paul has reassured the believers in regards to their concerns about the dead, he moves on to a new subject, yet one that is still related. Again, we have to infer the question by first studying the answer that Paul gives us here. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2 and answer the questions that follow. Be sure to *use the exact words that are found in scripture*.
 - **What** word does Paul use to let us know that he is changing the topic?
 - So **what** is he not talking about here?
 - Concerning **what** do they “have no need of anything to be written” to them?

- **Why** do they have no need for anything to be written on this topic?
2. **[Optional—if you have Word Study tools.]** Look up the meaning of the Greek word translated “times” and “epochs” in v. 1.
3. Read the following references and record what you learn from them concerning the Greek word *kairos* that’s translated “time(s).”
- Acts 17:22-28—

 - Ephesians 1:7-10—

 - 2 Thessalonians 2:6—

 - 1 Timothy 2:1-6—

 - 1 Timothy 4:1-5—

 - Titus 1:1-4—
4. What does Paul say will come like a “thief in the night” and what does he mean by that?

5. What will the other people be saying when it comes?

6. List the reasons why Paul says this will not happen to them?

- 7, What is the great promise God makes in v.9 and what does that say to you?

III. QUESTION: DID WE MISS THE RAPTURE?

1. Before we conclude Lesson 10, let's take a brief look forward to 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. [NOTE: we are not *studying* the passage in this course; just getting a taste for what Paul is dealing with after his departure from the Thessalonians.]

2. After Paul sends his first letter to the church in Thessalonica, he apparently receives additional correspondence from them, perhaps even by "return courier" when he returned from delivering the first letter. From the report he receives, Paul feels it necessary to write to clear up some matters.

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 and then answer the following questions:

- What appears to be the question (or confusion) that Paul is addressing in this passage?

- To reassure the readers, Paul lays out a sequence of events for them. Write that sequence below.

3. Do not be concerned if you aren't comfortable with your answers in this last section. We will discuss it in class; and of course, cover it in detail in **“Waiting for the Second Coming—Part 2.”**

WRAPPING IT UP

What we see happening to the new believers in Thessalonica is unfortunately not uncommon in Christianity today. Wherever believers are taught the truth, false teachers converge to plant seeds of doubt. This is Satan's ploy—to undo the good teaching of sound doctrine wherever he can and throw believers into a state of confusion. Without Truth to stand on, they can fall prey to his wiles!

But—no matter how clever Satan's tactics might be—God is always in control! He gave us the written Word that we might become knowledgeable; He continually gives us wisdom that we might accurately apply that knowledge to our daily lives. And finally He gifts teachers that we might receive the teaching of the Word directly from His lips rather than man's.

Every believer has one huge responsibility. And that is to make him or herself available for God to fill with knowledge and wisdom. We must make the effort to read and study His Word. He will do the rest.

LESSON 11

Chapter 5 (Part 2)

As we tackle the last half of the last chapter (the Grand Finale) of Paul's first letter to the Thessalonian believers, we see that Paul gives his strongest exhortations yet. While in Chapter 4 Paul says he is "exhorting" his readers, his language is such we have to work a little to pull out the exact wording of the exhortation. Here in Chapter 5, however, Paul speaks more directly. As he brings his letter to a conclusion, he wants to be sure his readers understand what is expected of them as believers, and so there is no mistaking the instructions that he leaves with them.

This is an important message to us today. The act of salvation is not the end, but the beginning of a new life in Christ. And this new life demands a new standard of behavior. Those who experience an act of conversion but continue to live the life they lived before have not actually experienced salvation. Jesus uses the phrase "born again" to describe what has happened to them. There is no old life—it's gone, and a new life has taken its place.

As we conclude our study of the book of 1st Thessalonians, we want to glean as much information as possible to help us live the new life Jesus calls us to.

I. A QUICK OVERVIEW OF LAST SECTION

1. Before beginning this last assignment, take some time to thank God for bringing you this far and ask Him to help you finish the course. Seek His wisdom rather than man's and open your heart to receive.
2. Read through 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28 a couple of times in order to get the **Big Picture** of what Paul is saying to the believers here. The third time you read the passage, mark in some distinctive manner every exhortation/instruction that you find. List these on the handout from Lesson 9, the chart "**Exhortations and Instructions.**"
3. What do you think about Paul's list of instructions? And how do these relate to the teaching in the first half of the chapter?

II. FIRST THREE EXHORTATIONS

1. Re-read vv.12-13. There are several exhortations here that are closely related to one another. Clearly, Paul is addressing the congregation and instructing regarding their behavior to another entity. Who/what is that other entity?

2. How does he define that entity?

3. What should be the congregation's attitude towards that entity?

4. In the last part of v.13, Paul says they are to "Live in peace with one another." To whom is he referring in that phrase—i.e., *who* is to live in peace with *whom*?

III. INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL THE CHURCH

1. In vv.14-15, Paul switches to instruction to the church in general, whether laity or clergy, and he addresses three kinds of people within the church. What are those three kinds of people?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)

2. Using either an English dictionary or Greek (or both), look up the meaning of the words translated "admonish" and "unruly." Then explain how you understand the exhortation "Admonish the unruly" to mean.

3. What characteristic of God's has He given us that enables us to "be patient with all men?" List all scripture references you can think of that help you to know this.

4. Read the following passages and explain how these relate to the exhortation "See that no one repays another with evil for evil."
 - Romans 12:19—

 - Hebrews 10:30—

 - Matthew 5:38-42—

 - Romans 12:20-21—

5. Explain the connection you see between Matthew 5:43-48 and 1 Thessalonians 5:15b—"...always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men."

IV. INSTRUCTIONS RE INNER ATTITUDES

- 1 Re-read vv.16-18. In these verses, Paul is telling the believer what mental/emotional posture he or she should have towards everything that happens around them. List the three instructions Paul gives.
 - 1)

 - 2)

 - 3)

2. From personal experience, how would you say you are able to do what Paul is instructing in this passage?

V. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Re-read vv.19-20 and list below the five exhortations Paul gives here.
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
 - 4)
 - 5)
2. Using either an English or Greek dictionary, look up the meaning of the word “quench” in v.19.
3. In what ways do believers find themselves “quenching” the Holy Spirit?
4. Using either an English or Greek dictionary, look up the meaning of the words “despise” and “prophetic” in v.20.

5. Read the following references and record any enlightenment you receive on the phrase “prophetic utterances.”

- Acts 13:27—

- 2 Peter 1:19-21—

6. What is included in the phrase Paul uses in v.22, “every form of evil”?

VI. BRINGING IT TO A CONCLUSION

1. Paul’s most basic purpose for writing this letter is stated in v.23. Re-read this statement and then write a short paragraph on how well you think Paul fulfilled his purpose in writing this letter.

2. How does the thought that Paul expresses in Philippians 1:6 relate to what he says in his benediction found here in 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28?

WRAPPING IT UP

The depth of Paul's love for this church is apparent on every page of his letter. He misses them, he longs to see them, he worries about their state of mind. In every sense of the word, Paul comes across as a father caring for his children. And a father not only loves his children more than himself, but in that love, he will correct and warn and instruct.

Overall, Paul is quite pleased with the behavior and the manifestation of faith the new believers have shown. But he continues to urge them to "excel still more." God does not want half-hearted involvement in His work. He wants it all—total, complete commitment to obeying and carrying out His work here on earth.

God's expectations of us are high. And some might feel them impossible to attain. Paul leaves us with good news, however: "He who called us is faithful, and He will bring it to pass!"

APPENDIX

Chapter 1

Chapter Theme: _____

Key Verse(s): _____

¹ Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

² We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; ³ constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, ⁴ knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you; ⁵ for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶ You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸ For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything. ⁹ For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, ¹⁰ and

to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is
Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Chapter 2

Chapter Theme: _____

Key Verse(s): _____

¹ For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain,
² but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. ³ For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; ⁴ but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who examines our hearts. ⁵ For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed-- God is witness-- ⁶ nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority. ⁷ But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. ⁸ Having thus a fond affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us. ⁹ For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰ You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and

blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; ¹¹ just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, ¹² so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

¹³ And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. ¹⁴ For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews, ¹⁵ who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men, ¹⁶ hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved; with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost.

¹⁷ But we, brethren, having been bereft of you for a short while-- in person, not in spirit-- were all the more eager with great desire to see your face. ¹⁸ For we wanted to come to you-- I, Paul, more than once-- and yet Satan thwarted us. ¹⁹ For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it

not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? ²⁰ For you
are our glory and joy.

Chapter 3

Chapter Theme: _____

Key Verse(s): _____

¹ Therefore when we could endure it no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone;² and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith,³ so that no man may be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this.⁴ For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know.⁵ For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor should be in vain.

⁶ But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you,⁷ for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith;⁸ for now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord.⁹ For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account,¹⁰ as we night and day keep praying

most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith?

¹¹ Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; ¹² and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all men, just as we also do for you; ¹³ so that He may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

Chapter 4

Chapter Theme: _____

Key Verse(s): _____

¹ Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more.² For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality;⁴ that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,⁵ not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;⁶ and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you.⁷ For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.⁸ Consequently, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

⁹ Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;¹⁰ for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more,

¹¹ and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you; ¹² so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Chapter 5

Chapter Theme: _____

Key Verse(s): _____

¹ Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. ² For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. ³ While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. ⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; ⁵ for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; ⁶ so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

¹² But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, ¹³ and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. ¹⁴ And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men. ¹⁵ See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men. ¹⁶ Rejoice always; ¹⁷ pray without ceasing; ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit; ²⁰ do not despise prophetic utterances. ²¹ But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; ²² abstain from every form of evil.

²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

²⁵ Brethren, pray for us.

²⁶ Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. ²⁷ I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren.

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

What We Learn about the Recipients

What We Learn About Paul

What We Learn About God/Jesus/Holy Spirit

How Paul Presented the Gospel

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.

In a Manner Worthy...

Scripture	What's to Be Done?	How to Do It	Worthy of What?
Romans 16:2		in a manner worthy	
Ephesians 4:1		in a manner worthy	
Philippians 1:27		in a manner worthy	
Colossians 1:10		in a manner worthy	
1 Thessalonians 2:12		in a manner worthy	
3 John 1:6		In a manner worthy	

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, [2] by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. [3] For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, [4] and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, [5] and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. [6] After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; [7] then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; [8] and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

2 Timothy 3:15-4:4

and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. [16] All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; [17] that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. [4:1] I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: [2] preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. [3] For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; [4] and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me-- to keep me from exalting myself! [8] Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. [9] And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. [10] Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Exhortations and Instructions

Chapter 4:

**Walk and please God—just as you currently are doing—
except “excel still more.” (v.1)**

1. Abstain from sexual immorality (v.3)
 - Know how to possess your own vessel in sanctification and honor (v.4)
 - Refrain from lustful passion (v.5)
 - Don't defraud your brother (in reference to illegitimate sexual activity) (v.6)
2. Love your brother—just as you currently are doing—except “excel still more.” (v.10)
3. Live a Christian Life-style
 - Live a quiet life (v.11)
 - Attend to your own business (v.11)
 - work with your hands (v.11)

Chapter 5:

ARE THEY THE SAME EVENT?

Matthew 24:30-31

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

What Do You Think?

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

¹Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, ² that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. ⁵Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? ⁶And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. ⁷For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. ⁸And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; ⁹that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, ¹⁰and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. ¹¹And for this reason God will send

upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, ¹²in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

¹³But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. ¹⁴And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.

¹⁶Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, ¹⁷comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.