

1 Thessalonians Chapter 2 Continued

1 Thessalonians 2:10 "Ye [are] witnesses, and God [also], how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:"

“Ye are witnesses”:

Under Old Testament law it took two or more witnesses to verify truth (Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6; 19:15; 2 Cor. 13:1).

Here Paul called on both the Thessalonians and God as witnesses to affirm his holy conduct in the ministry (2 Cor. 1:12).

Paul is saying in this that he and those who travelled with him, were a living example of what they preached.

He is also telling them that they were eye witnesses of this.

He is saying, as God is my witness, we behaved properly to you.

Paul, and those ministering with him, were a testimony of the goodness of God.

They were, in fact, a walking sermon.

I had rather see a sermon, than hear one any day.

Paul was a representative of God to these people.

1 Thessalonians 2:11 "As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father [doth] his children,"

“Exhorted”:

(Greek parakaleo, “exhort, comfort, encourage”).

The noun form of this word for Christ (1 John 2:1, “advocate”).

“Charged”:

(Greek martureo, “witness,” “testify”) is the term from which the English term martyr derives.

The three key words in this are exhorted, comforted, and charged.

Paul used these 3 words to describe his fatherly relationship with the Thessalonians since they were his children in the faith.

They emphasized the personal touch of a loving father (1 Cor. 4: 14-15).

Exhort in the verse above is a calling into the brotherhood of Christianity, done by the preaching of Paul.

They were then comforted and empowered to minister by the Holy Spirit (Comforter), and the next step would be charged (given the great commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel).

These are the steps that Paul had brought them through as a loving parent would do.

The parent prepares the child and then the child goes out to continue this in his children.

In this case, it is speaking of spiritual children.

1 Thessalonians 2:12 "That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory."

“Walk”:

This refers to the Christian life and conduct.

“His kingdom and glory”:

This speaks of the sphere of eternal salvation (Col. 1:13-14), culminating in all of the splendor which is in heaven.

This is one statement that is being overlooked today among Christians.

The preachers are not emphasizing enough that after you receive your salvation (free gift), you must walk in that salvation.

If we are truly sons of God, we should behave as our Father would have us to.

Pick up your cross daily, is what Jesus said, and then He said, follow me.

The only way that we can walk worthy of God is for us to step in the footprints Jesus laid for us to walk in.

God called you, you must answer.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received [it] not [as] the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

“The word of God which ye heard of us”:

Both Paul and the Thessalonians recognized that the Word he preached to them was the Word of God (“a word spoken by God).

In this context, Paul is boldly asserting the divine inspiration of his gospel (2 Tim. 3:16).

“Worketh also in you”:

The work of God’s Word includes:

Saving (Rom. 10:17; 1 Pet. 1:23).

Teaching and training (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Guiding (Psalm 119:105).

Counseling (Psalm 119:24).

Reviving (Psalm 119:154).

Restoring (Psalm 19:7).

Warning and rewarding (Psalm 19:11).

Nourishing (1 Pet. 2:2).

Judging (Heb. 4:12).

Sanctifying (John 17:17).

Freeing (John 8:31-32).

Enriching (Col. 3:16).

Protecting (Psalm 119:11).

Strengthening (Psalm 119:28).

Making wise (Psalm 119:97-100).

Rejoicing the heart (Psalm 19:8).

And prospering (Joshua 1:8-9).

Paul is like a proud father who is bragging on his children.

Paul was proud that God had called them to His kingdom, but he was even more proud that they realized that his message was not his own, but was the message God had sent him with.

The Word of God is the One we call Jesus.

It is also the Bible.

For thousands of years, men have tried to prove that the Bible was just like any other book.

They cannot do it.

The Bible stands alone in the fact that it is alive.

It is just as current today as it was two thousand years ago.

It is our instruction for living victorious lives.

It was the instruction for our great grandparents living victorious lives as well.

It is ageless.

The Bible is inspired (God breathed).

When I look into the Bible, I see the face of Jesus.

All other books, besides the Bible, are of men.

The Bible is of God.

1 Thessalonians 2:14 "For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they [have] of the Jews:"

“Followers”:

Meaning imitators:

As the Thessalonians imitated the apostles in their commitment to the Lord (1:6), they also imitated the Judean churches, since they also suffered at the hands of their own people.

Not only were the Thessalonians imitators of Paul and the Lord, but also of the churches in Judea, in the sense that they both were persecuted for Christ’s sake (Acts 4:1-4; 5:26; 8:1).

They drank Christ’s cup of suffering (Matt. 26:39) and walked in the way of the Old Testament prophets (Matt. 21:33-46; Luke 13:34).

To proclaim you were a Christian brought great persecution.

In Judea, the persecution of the Christians came from the Jews.

Here in Thessalonica it came from all those who did not believe.

The church at Thessalonica was a Gentile church.

We had mentioned earlier that their persecution had not come from Judaizers in the church, but from the unbelievers from without.

Verses 15-16

“Contrary to all men”:

Just as it is God’s will that all men be saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9), so it was the will of the Jews that no one find salvation in Christ (verse 16).

Paul at one time had embraced this blasphemy of trying to prevent gospel preaching (see 1 Timothy 1:12-17).

1 Thessalonians 2:15 "Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:"

“Killed the Lord Jesus”:

There is no question that the Jews were responsible for the death of their Messiah, though the Romans carried out the execution.

It was the Jews who brought the case against Him and demanded His death (Luke 23:1-24, 34-38), just as they had killed the prophets (Matt. 22:37; Mark 5:1-8; Acts 7:51-52).

If the Lord was not exempt from persecution, His followers could hardly expect to escape it.

“They please not God”:

Throughout this passage Paul shows that while his Jewish enemies think they are serving God, they really are not.

Paul is placing the blame for the crucifixion of Jesus on the Jews here.

Look, in Jesus' own words, He says the Jews killed the prophets.

Matthew 23:31 "Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets."

It was the Jews who cried out for Jesus to be crucified.

It was the Romans who carried it out.

Really, though, you and I nailed Him to the cross.

Paul speaks as one who knows.

He had been a Jew.

The Jew thought himself to be better than all other people.

It outraged them that salvation was offered to the Gentile.

1 Thessalonians 2:16 "Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."

"Fill up their sins":

This expression parallels (Genesis 15:16).

Often God allows His people to suffer the indignation of others simply because He is longsuffering toward the sinner, "not willing that any should perish."

Consequently, some will repent and others will fully justify their condemnation.

"The wrath is come upon them":

God's wrath (1:10; 5:9), on the Jews who "fill up the measure of their sins" (Matthew 23:32, Romans 2:5).

Thus, filling up the cup of wrath can be understood;

- (1) Historically of the Babylonian exile (Ezek. 8-11);
- (2) Prophetically of Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70;
- (3) Eschatologically of Christ's second coming in judgment (Rev. 19); or
- (4) Soteriologically in the sense that God's promised eternal wrath for unbelievers is so certain that it is spoken of as having come already as does the Apostle John (John 3:18, 36).

This context relates to the fourth option.

The big problem with the Jews, who had accepted Jesus as their Savior, was that they wanted to remain a Jew, as well as being a Christian.

They wanted all Gentiles who came to Christ to first fulfill the custom of Jewish circumcision.

Paul, Peter, James, and many of the other disciples had gotten together and agreed that this was not part of being a Christian.

God had turned to the Gentiles because the Jews as a whole, had rejected Christ as their Messiah, the Savior of the world.

When Paul speaks of we in the verse above, he is speaking of him being a Pharisee.

He had been taught from his youth that Gentiles were unclean.

Jesus opened his eyes and let him see the truth.

To reject the Son of God is a serious thing.

Ephesians 5:6 "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

1 Thessalonians 2:17 "But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored the more abundantly to see your face with great desire."

“Being taken from you”:

The Greek term (aporphanizo) is intensely passionate.

It is related to our word “orphan,” and could be translated “since we have been torn apart.”

Paul had been forcedly separated from his spiritual children (Acts 17:5-9).

His motherly (verse 7), and fatherly instincts (verse 11), had been dealt a severe blow.

Literally the Thessalonians had been orphaned by Paul’s forced departure.

We remember that Paul was in Corinth when he wrote this letter to the Thessalonians.

He loved these people and desired to be with him.

They were his friends, but Paul thought of them as his children in the Lord Jesus Christ.

He was their founding father, and he thought of them as his spiritual children.

1 Thessalonians 2:18 "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us."

“Satan hindered us”:

Satan, which means adversary, continually attempted to tear down the church that Christ promised to build (Matt. 16:18).

He was said to be present at the churches of Jerusalem (Acts 5:1-10), Smyrna (Rev. 2:9-10), Pergamum (Rev. 2:13), Thyatira (Rev. 2:24), Philadelphia (Rev. 3:9), Ephesus (1 Titus 3:6-7), and Corinth (2 Cor. 2:1-11).

He thwarted Paul in the sense that a military force would hinder the advance of his enemy.

This could very possible refer to the pledge that Jason made (Acts. 17:9), if that pledge was a promise that Paul would not return to Thessalonica.

Paul wanted to come back to minister to them and to visit with them.

It would have been like going home, because they had so eagerly accepted Paul along with his teaching here.

Satan is the author of all lies and the source of all hindrance to the gospel.

Paul's own personal desire was to go to see them, but sometimes our desire is not the desire of the Lord.

Satan could not have prevented Paul from going back there any time he wanted to unless God gave Satan permission to do this.

Unknowing to Satan, he sometimes plays right into the hands of God.

God uses for good what Satan intended for evil.

God perhaps had plans for Paul to go to another church at this time.

If you are a Christian, Satan has to get God's permission to attack you.

Our problems come to make us strong and to show us how badly we need God.

1 Thessalonians 2:19 "For what [is] our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? [Are] not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"

“Crown of rejoicing”:

The bible speaks of eternal life like a wreath awarded for an athletic victory.

It is spoken of in terms of:

- (1) the imperishable wreath that celebrates salvation's victory over corruption (1 Cor. 9:25);
- (2) The righteous wreath that celebrates salvation's victory over unrighteousness (2 Tim. 4:8);
- (3) Expected coming (2 Cor. 7:6).

Regarding Christ and the future, it can refer to:

- (1) Christ's coming at the Rapture (4:15), or
- (2) Christ's second coming prior to His 1,000 year millennial reign (Mat. 24:37; Rev. 19:11 – 20:6).

Paul referred directly to Christ's coming 4 times (in 1 Thess.). and once indirectly (1:10).

Context indicates Paul most likely refers here to Christ's coming for the rapture of the church.

“At his coming”: (Greek parousia):

This was a common term in the Hellenistic world for formal visits by royalty.

It became a technical term in the New Testament for the second coming of Christ.

As such, it is used 18 times (seven in the Thessalonians epistles).

This is the first time Paul uses it in his writings.

Paul's greatest reward would not be on this earth, but in heaven.

He would feel a special joy when those whom he ministered to are able to stand before the Lord and be counted among the believers.

Paul would have many stars in his crown for all those he led to the Lord down through the ages.

Paul's hope, the same as ours was hope of the resurrection.

His joy would be very great because of all those he would be responsible for making the resurrection.

1 Thessalonians 2:20 "For ye are our glory and joy."

A spiritual parent is very much like a physical parent, in the fact that they have more joy over their children doing well than they do when they do well themselves.

Paul could depend on these Thessalonians staying firm in their belief until the end.

They truly would be his glory and his joy.

1 Thessalonians Chapter 2 Continued Questions

1. How had Paul behaved himself in front of these Thessalonians?
2. What was Paul saying in this description of his behavior?
3. Who was the witness that Paul had lived this way among them?
4. What are the three key words in verse 11?
5. What do they show?
6. What is exhort speaking of in verse 11?
7. Tell of the steps Paul had brought them through.
8. What does "walk worthy of God" mean?
9. Pick up your cross _____.
10. What did Paul thank God for without ceasing about these Thessalonians?
11. What is the Word?
12. What sets the Bible aside from other writings?
13. What does inspired mean?
14. Who had the Christians in Judaea suffered by?
15. Who is verse 15 speaking of that killed the Lord Jesus?
16. Who were the Jews forbidden to speak to?
17. What was generally wrong with the Jews who had accepted Christ?
18. Why did Paul desire to see them again?
19. Who did Paul say had hindered him?
20. Who is the author of all lies?
21. Why do Christians have problems?