

Suffering, Instruction and The Rapture

I Thessalonians

We are going to study 1 and 2 Thessalonians in a way we have never studied a book of the Bible.

And the reason for this is in the Question:

WHY are we going to study these two books?

We have studied Daniel and

> *Daniel's 70th week.*

We studied 2 Samuel 7 in reference to

> *God's promise to David of the Davidic Kingdom.*

Then we studied Matthew 24-25 concerning

> *The Tribulation and Second Advent of Jesus Christ.*

And now we are going to study 'us'

> *in the Church today and its relationship with The Rapture of the Church.*

What is remarkable is that in all five chapters of 1 Thessalonians. Paul, refers to The Rapture. No other books speak of The Rapture more than 1 and 2 Thessalonians. And what is remarkable is all the theology Paul taught and writes to these believers.

As we saw in our last lesson, he (Paul) was in Thessalonica for some 3 weeks to less than two months. *I have had two pastors beckon me not to get too involved in the coming of The Rapture.* But people, here is Paul in the first century of the church and over and over he refers to the **“immanency of The Rapture.”**

The first thing we want to see is some of the theological doctrines Paul was able to teach this group. And as we go through these remember he has had less than three months with this assembly of believers of Jews and Gentiles. Also, remember that this group also had Jewish legalists; and Gentile Idolatry was prominent in this city.

Let us first look at Theology Proper or the study of God. Here we will learn some importance on what our thoughts should be on.

Many Christians make JESUS CHRIST the primary teaching, but please remember Christ came to reveal God the Father and to bring us to the Father.

| | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | To the church in God | 1:1; 2:14 |
| 2 | Thanks to God | 1:2; 2:13; 3:9 |
| 3 | In the presence of our God and Father | 1:3 |
| 4 | Beloved by God | 1:4 |
| 5 | You are God’s choice | 1:4 |
| 6 | Your faith toward God | 1:8 |
| 7 | You turned to God from idols | 1:9 |
| 8 | To serve a living and true God | 1:9 |
| 9 | You wait for His Son | 1:10 |
| 10 | God raised His Son from the dead | 1:10 |

So in the first 10 verses we learn 10 doctrines about God.

| | | |
|----|----------------------------|---------------|
| 11 | We had boldness in our God | 2:2 |
| 12 | The Gospel of God | 2:2; 2:8; 2:9 |
| 13 | Approved by God | 2:4 |
| 14 | Pleasing God not man | 2:4; 4:1 |
| 15 | God examines our hearts | 2:4 |
| 16 | God is our witness | 2:5; 2:10 |
| 17 | Walk worthy of God | 2:12 |
| 18 | God calls you | 2:12 |
| 19 | God's kingdom | 2:12 |
| 20 | God's glory | 2:12 |
| 21 | The Word of God | 2:12 |
| 22 | Not pleasing to God | 2:15 |

And in chapter 2 Paul added some 12 more doctrines about God

| | | |
|----|---|------|
| 23 | God's fellow worker | 3:2 |
| 24 | We rejoice before our God | 3:9 |
| 25 | May God even Father Himself direct our way to you | 3:11 |
| 26 | Holiness before our God even Father | 3:13 |

And in chapter 3 Paul adds yet 4 more doctrines about God

| | | |
|----|--|-----------|
| 27 | Will of God (Do you know the Will of God?) | 4:3; 5:18 |
| 28 | Do not know God | 4:5 |
| 29 | For God has not called us for this purpose | 4:7 |
| 30 | God called us in sanctification | 4:7 |
| 31 | Not rejecting man but rejecting God | 4:8 |
| 32 | God who gives His Holy Spirit to you | 4:8 |
| 33 | Taught by God | 4:9 |
| 34 | God will bring those who have fallen asleep in Jesus | 4:14 |
| 35 | Trumpet of God | 4:16 |

So in chapter 4 Paul added yet 9 more doctrines about God

| | | |
|----|---|------|
| 36 | God has not destined us for wrath | 5:9 |
| 37 | God has destined us to obtain salvation | 5:9 |
| 38 | God of peace | 5:23 |
| 39 | God sanctify you | 5:23 |

So Paul taught this assembly some 39 plus things about God.

Do you know all these?

Well you will by the time we finish 1 Thessalonians.

Another category of Theology
is the Second member of the Godhead or
God the Son or JESUS CHRIST.

Let us see what Paul teaches them about JESUS CHRIST.

| | | |
|---|--|-----------|
| 1 | The church in the Lord JESUS CHRIST —Paul starts right off with God the Father and with JESUS CHRIST | 1:1 |
| 2 | Hope in our Lord JESUS CHRIST | 1:3 |
| 3 | Imitators of the Lord | 1:6 |
| 4 | Word of the Lord we had the Word of God, now Word of the Lord | 1:8; 4:15 |
| 5 | Wait for His Son from Heaven ---this is why we are studying 1 Thessalonians | 1:10 |

So in chapter one Paul has introduced The Rapture
and has taught 5 doctrines related to JESUS CHRIST.

| | | |
|---|---|------------|
| 6 | Apostles of CHRIST | 2:6 |
| 7 | Churches of God in CHRIST JESUS | 2:14 |
| 8 | Who killed the Lord Jesus | 2:15 |
| 9 | In the presence of our LORD JESUS at His coming, referring to The Rapture. | 2:19; 4:15 |

In chapter 2 Paul added 4 more doctrines of JESUS CHRIST
including The Rapture.

| | | |
|----|--|------------|
| 10 | Gospel of Christ (same as the Gospel of God) | 3:2 |
| 11 | If you stand firm in the Lord | 3:9 |
| 12 | Jesus our Lord direct our way | 3:11 |
| 13 | May the Lord cause you to abound in Spiritual Love for One Another | 3:12 |
| 14 | The coming of our LORD JESUS The Rapture | 3:13; 5:23 |

In chapter 3 Paul taught them 5 more doctrines of JESUS CHRIST

| | | |
|----|--|-------|
| 15 | We exhort you in the authority of LORD JESUS | 4:1-2 |
| 16 | The LORD is the avenger | 4:6 |
| 17 | That JESUS died and rose again | 4:14 |
| 18 | God will bring back with Him (JESUS CHRIST) | 4:14 |
| 19 | The LORD will descend The Rapture | 4:16 |
| 20 | The dead in CHRIST will rise first The Rapture | 4:16 |
| 21 | Meet the LORD in the air The Rapture | 4:17 |
| 22 | We shall always be with the LORD | 4:17 |

Notice in chapter 4 Paul
taught them 8 more doctrines about JESUS CHRIST.

| | | |
|----|---|------|
| 23 | Day of the LORD | 5:2 |
| 24 | Obtaining salvation through our LORD JESUS CHRIST | 5:9 |
| 25 | He died for us | 5:10 |
| 26 | We will live together with Him (we shall always be with the LORD and now we will live together with Him) | 5:10 |
| 27 | Those who have charge over you in the LORD | 5:12 |
| 28 | God's will for you in CHRIST JESUS | 5:18 |
| 29 | I adjure you by the LORD | 5:27 |
| 30 | The grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST be with you | 5:28 |

**So Paul taught 30 plus doctrines on JESUS CHRIST.
Do you know them?**

Another category of Theology is Pneumatology or the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

| | | |
|---|---|------|
| 1 | Gospel came to you in power even of the Holy Spirit | 1:5 |
| 2 | Joy of the Holy Spirit | 1:6 |
| 3 | The Sanctification by the Spirit | 2:13 |
| 4 | The God who gives His Holy Spirit to you | 4:8 |
| 5 | Do not quench the Spirit. Do you know how we quench the Holy Spirit? | 5:19 |

Let us see what Paul teaches them about JESUS CHRIST.

Let us look at some of the doctrines that pertain to the status of every believer in JESUS CHRIST.

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1 | Doctrine of Election | 1:4; 4:7 |
| 2 | Salvation; The Hope of Salvation Obtaining Salvation | 5:8 5:9 |
| 3 | Eternal Security | 4:17; 5:10 |
| 4 | Faith, Hope and Love---all through | 1:3; 1:8; 2:19; 3:2; 3:5-7; 3:10; 3:12; 4:9; 4:13; 5:8; 5:13 |
| 6 | Prayer: —pray without ceasing; —pray for us | 1:2; 2:13; 3:9-10; 5:17 5:18 5:25 |
| 7 | Christian Walk | 2:12; 4:1 |
| 8 | Three natures of the redeemed: Spirit, Soul and Body | 5:23 |
| 9 | Suffering: all through both 1 and 2 Thessalonians | 1:6; 2:2; 2:14-15; 3:3-4; 3:7 |
| 10 | Encourage and comfort OA | 1:10; 2:7; 2:11; 3:2; 4:18; 5:11; 5:14 |
| 11 | The Rapture And along with his teaching on The Rapture, he beckons them carefully listen to prophetic teaching | 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13 4:17; 5:9; 5:23 5:20-21 |

Now if we understand the circumstances at the church in Thessalonica, we will get some clue as to why Paul was able to teach so much about The Rapture to these people.

First these people in Thessalonica were suffering.

- 1 These people in Thessalonica were suffering.
- 2 The generation at the time of The Rapture will endure suffering.
- 3 Therefore they could relate to and learn about The Rapture.
- 4 So Paul is encouraging them and The Rapture generation with or by his teaching.

As we read through 1 Thessalonians we will emphasize the relationship between what these believers are going through and The Rapture generation. And please remember that to Paul, The Rapture could have occurred in his own life time.

Many preachers and teachers today throughout America, besides not teaching the truth of the gospel, do not teach prophecy.

There are several reasons for the position that we should not teach prophecy or even on The Rapture.

- 1 They do not want to spend the time studying prophecy. There is a tremendous amount of study that must be pursued so as not to **confuse The Rapture with Second Advent** and not confuse **judgments at Second Advent with judgments at the Great White Throne Judgment.**

There is necessary study on the **'Day of the Lord'**, a reference to which we have in 1 Thessalonians 5:2. These believers themselves have questions about what happens at The Rapture and whether believers who are alive at the time of The Rapture will be with those believers who have died before The Rapture. (4:13-18)

2 **Prophecy causes divisions.** No doctrine causes more division than the doctrine of **Salvation, how we are saved.** So, because some doctrine causes division is no reason for not teaching the truth about that doctrine.

3 They think it is **not relevant** to believers today. Well, the HOLY SPIRIT inspiring Paul to write 1 and 2 Thessalonians does not agree. Paul had such a brief time with these believers yet he taught them a great deal on prophecy and especially The Rapture.

4 **Abuse of the Doctrine of The Rapture.** Those who oppose teaching on The Rapture to the church today is that it may cause some believers to become 'complaisant'. They will not work and do some weird things like spend all their money, etc. Yes, there might be a few who would take that approach. But if it is taught correctly in the leading of the HOLY SPIRIT, many will be more fervent in their witnessing, sharing with others this great historical event and in their study of the Bible, knowing that the Lord could call all His saints home today!

It is my prayer that in this way, this study will stimulate you.

I think one thing that bothers many is when someone attempts to set a date for The Rapture. Don't let this disturb you. The person who attempts to set a date has not studied the Scriptures enough to know that no one knows when The Rapture will take place. Just ignore just foolishness.

In our study of First Thessalonians, Paul will give some detail instructions on the Christian walk. And he clearly teaches the immanency of The Rapture and as we will see, it is in that context that Paul will instruct in regard to guarding against sin (2:12; 4:1-8; 5:19) and living in a manner that is pleasing to God and to be laboring for your own welfare on the day the Lord calls His church home. (4:11-12)

As we now read through 1 Thessalonians we will note each section in refer to the imminence of The Rapture.

As I said we have never studied a book as we are going to study 1 and 2 Thessalonians. But the content and the ever presence of The Rapture dictates how we are going to study this book.

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

(as we read through please note the placement of the various doctrines that we have noted)

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.** (Grace is the only way we can receive anything from God, and peace is a result of grace. We have peace with God by the work of JESUS CHRIST and we have peace of God by the work of the HOLY SPIRIT.)

2. **We give thanks to God** (importance of prayer and of thanksgiving in prayer and that prayer is addressed to God) **always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers;** (pray for One Another. As we will see, prayer is a vital part of our waiting for The Rapture.)
3. **constantly bearing in mind your work of faith** (anything we do by Faith in HOLY SPIRIT) **and labor of love** (this is by the HOLY SPIRIT and nothing will make greater demands on your life than loving as JESUS CHRIST loves) **and steadfastness of hope** (confidence while we live our lives on earth) **in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and—even Father,**
4. **knowing,** (prayers should be guided by knowledge of the Scriptures) **brethren** (believers) **beloved by God, His choice of you;** (sound understanding of Doctrine of Election, Everyone who believes in JESUS CHRIST is Elected by God because they are in JESUS CHRIST who is The Elected One.)
5. **for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and—even in the Holy Spirit** (study of the Trinity) **and with full conviction;** (always be confident in giving the gospel, it is the power of God to Salvation.) **just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.** (Yes, we are responsible for One Another)
6. **You also became imitators** (followers) **of us and of the Lord, having received the word** (This includes all his teaching, starting with the Gospel and inclusive of The Rapture) **in much tribulation** (just as there will in The Rapture generation) **with the joy of the Holy Spirit,** (fruit of Holy Spirit—inner-peace, inner-joy even in the midst of Tribulation. John 16:33)

7. **so that** (as a result) **you became an example** (a pattern to be imitated) **to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.** (Are you an example to other believers on how to live the Christ glorifying life and what Spiritual Love looks like?)
8. **For the word of the Lord** (teaching of JC, refers to the gospel; goes with *the word* in verse 6) **has sounded forth from you,** (We are responsible for spreading the Word, biblical teaching) **not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place** (what a testimony for these believers) **your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.** (Their message came forth as a trumpet sound, loud and clear.)
9. **For they** (converts) **themselves report** (note three parts of their report)

1 **about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and**

2 **how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,** (with each mentioning of God, Paul builds on our understanding of Theology Proper or of God Himself.)

Question: What is your view of God?

How you live reveals your view of God.

How you deal with One Another reveals your view of God.

Is your view of God Biblical?

and verse 10 is the third part of the report:

3 And this brings us to the first refer to The Rapture of the Church **...to serve a living and true God... and to wait for His Son** Present Active Infinitive of the

Greek verb *anameno* means to wait alright, but it means to **wait with eager expectation!** This is the only occurrence of this word in the entire New Testament.

This one little word is vital
to the proper understanding of this entire letter from Paul.

**This little word is what this entire book is about!
It is an instruction book on how we are to live
while waiting with anticipation for
The Rapture.**

**Paul has already enforced this word 'to wait' in the verse
'perseverance of hope in our LORD JESUS CHRIST''**

Every pastor who cares about his flock should be teaching on The Rapture, on how every believer should be living in eager expectation of The Rapture, of being taken up in the air to meet the Lord in the air. This could happen today! And what this book, 1 Thessalonians is about is **instruction while we wait.**

We do not sit and do nothing.

There is a specific walk, manner of life that should characterize believers waiting to be taken home to the Lord. (2:12 and 4:1) Not waiting to die...

I am afraid that **because** there is not much teaching on The Rapture most believers live to die.

Don't live to die!

Live in anticipation of the coming of your Lord to call you home.

And from this book we will learn how we are to live while anticipating being delivered from the wrath to come.

And this word **to eagerly wait with expectation** is in the **present tense. This** means these instructions should characterize your life every day, all day long. (24/7)

You want to know what you should be doing?
Read 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

And believers who live daily in anticipation of The Rapture are motivated to tell others about JESUS CHRIST and about escaping the wrath to come and about meeting the Lord in the Air.

We recently studied Joseph of Arimathea who gathered the courage to ask Pilate for the body of our Savior. And in that study we learned seven things about this man and one of those was that he lived in eager expectation of the Kingdom of God.

Well, people we are to live in eager expectation of The Rapture ... of meeting the Lord in the Air.

Titus 2:11

11 **For the grace of God has appeared,** (incarnation of JESUS CHRIST) **bringing salvation to all men,** (death and resurrection)

12 **instructing us** (that is God, instructing us through and by His Word) **to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly,** (sensibly as to who we are in Christ) **righteously** (we have been imputed with His perfect Righteousness, and we live righteously by the Holy Spirit) **and godly** (God the Holy Spirit) **in the present age,** (Church Age.)

Now we come to our word:

13 **looking for** (no, but living in expectation of) **the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,** (This is The Rapture)

- 14 **who gave Himself for us** (on the cross) **to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession,** (He did this the moment we believed in JESUS CHRIST by the 34 things; and we, therefore, should live in that state) **zealous for good deeds.** (Living in the Holy Spirit)
- 15 **These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you** (We should teach The Rapture regularly.)

The 'Fighter of the Faith'
 Leon Morris in his work
 "the First and Second Epistles to Thessalonians"
 quotes Findlay who translates this as "sustained expectation".
 That is, this expectation should sustain us in times of tribulation.
 (John 16:33)

We are to live in expectation of seeing our Savior JESUS CHRIST.

**This expectation drives us in Walk in the Holy Spirit.
 It drives us to learn more and more about our Savior.**

'Growing in the Knowledge of JESUS CHRIST.'

1 Thessalonians 1:10 **and to eagerly wait for His Son** (Jesus the Christ) **from heaven,** (after His crucifixion and burial for three days and three nights, He ascended into heaven {Acts 1} where He sits at the right hand of God on the Throne of God.) And at some point He will stand up from that throne and come toward earth, though not touching earth, and call the entire Church home.

from heaven - OUT FROM (this is an effective preposition, it is used three times in this one verse, setting up effective parallelism:)

OUT FROM the heavens;

raised OUT FROM the dead and

delivering us OUT FROM the wrath to come.

whom He (God the Father) **raised OUT FROM the dead**, (doctrine of the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST which is the *hope—confidence* we have of our own resurrection) **that is Jesus, who rescues us** (to Himself) **OUT FROM the wrath to come.**

This is the first word we have describing The Rapture of the church. We are **rescued OUT FROM the wrath to come** this is Present Passive Participle of the Greek word: *rhuomai*.

This word is rich in all that is involved in it.

This word is translated: **who rescues us;** or **who delivers us.**

The Greek lexicon says: to draw, or snatch from danger, to rescue or to deliver. To get a full picture of what The Rapture is all about, the lexicon goes on to say: ***this is more with the meaning of drawing to oneself than merely rescuing from someone or something.***

I want you to appreciate your loving Savior here. A fireman will rush in and rescue a child from a burning building, but a mother will rush in and pull that child to her breast in rescuing him from the burning fire. JESUS CHRIST actually draws us to Himself, out of the world, and out of the wrath to come.

The Passive voice emphasizes that we receive being pulled to Him and rescued out from the wrath to come. This Passive voice emphasizes the **grace and love** of our Savior. He saved everyone who believes in Him from the Penalty of sin, from the torments of eternal damnation. But here He pulls us to Himself and delivers us from the wrath to come.

So the first thing we want to learn about The Rapture is that Jesus comes and pulls us out of the wrath to come by pulling us close to Himself.

The Rapture of the Church is an Act of Love.
JESUS CHRIST's love for every member of the Church.

Who (Jesus the Christ) **rescues us to Himself** (**us**=every member of the Body of Christ, every member of the Church during the Church Age.)
Out From the wrath to come the Greek word for wrath is **orge** wrath or anger.

Paul refers to **wrath** two more times in 1 Thessalonians 2:16 and 5:9 where in neither of these does it refer to the wrath of The Tribulation, but to the wrath of eternal judgment.

The wrath to come (to come when?)

This is not speaking of the wrath of Divine Judgment against all unbelievers at end of the Millennium.

This is a technical term referring to the wrath of The Tribulation.
Wrath is used of The Tribulation in several passages: 'day of wrath' in Zephaniah 1:15 'a day of wrath'; it is used in Revelation 6:16-17 the wrath of the Lamb and their wrath has come;
Revelation 11:18 your wrath came;
Revelation 14:10 and 19 the wrath of God;
Revelation 15:1 and 7 the wrath of God;
Revelation 16:1 wrath of God; and
1 Thessalonians 5:9

And it will come shortly after this taking out, this snatching, this rescuing of the Church off the earth at The Rapture.

What Paul is emphasizing here is **The Rapture** in reference to the Church. Another emphasis of **The Rapture** is in reference to the Church and Israel.

The Tribulation refers to the last seven years promised by God to Israel, after the Babylonian captivity. Here God promised Israel 490 years. At the point of 483 years Israel, rejected and crucified their Savior.

(1 Thessalonians 2:15)

This marked the stopping of the Age of Israel and the beginning of the Church Age. But Israel still has seven years promised to them by God. And that is what the seven years of Tribulation is about.

Don't ever listen to anyone who tries to tell you the Church *replaced* Israel.

(Replacement Theology)

This is a direct attack against the Faithfulness of God.

The Rapture

Who will be 'RAPTURED'?

All who are IN CHRIST.

Members of the Church Age.

So this book is a book of instructions to believers
on living each day in eager expectation of
meeting the Lord in the air.

**And thank God each day
that our Savior will rescue us to Himself
out from this wrath to come.**

1 Thessalonians Chapters 1-4

1 Thessalonians Chapter 1 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

Thanksgiving for These Believers

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 rescues us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians Chapter 2 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

Paul's Ministry

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 so fond an 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 would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

¹³ For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, 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 so that they may 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 taken away from 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 hindered 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.

1 Thessalonians Chapter 3 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

Encouragement of Timothy's Visit

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 one would 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 would 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 people, just as we also *do* for you;

¹³ so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

1 Thessalonians Chapter 4 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

Sanctification and Love

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 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 So, 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 will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.

Those Who Died in Christ

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will 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, will 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 will rise first.

¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians Chapter 5 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

The Day of the Lord

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 labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.

⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would 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, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.

¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

Christian Conduct

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 We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

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 people.

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.