

# LISTENING TO THE LORD

in

Paul's **SECOND** Epistle to the

## THESSALONIANS

*THANKSGIVING FOR, and TEACHING ABOUT WHAT GOD IS DOING*

*as an ENCOURAGEMENT*

*to LIVE TO THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE FACE OF PERSECUTION.*

**These study notes** are arranged in verse order, under key words and phrases. They are intended as a study aid to use as you work through the Epistle, verse by verse. We need to deal directly with the Lord in His Word, using any helps as tools to his end.

**Commentaries** by Best, Bruce, Hiebert, Hogg & Vine, McDonald, Marshall, Milligan, Morris, Smith, (Ritchie NT Commentaries), Stott, & Wanamaker, have been explored, material absorbed, adjusted, and simplified for this study aid. They could repay reading by those who have the time. Their versions and some 15 others, along with the Translator's Handbook, Concordances, and Vine's Expository Dictionary, have helped make the text clear to me.

E. Read

Explanation of Signs:

"BRETHREN/brothers," is KJV/Niv. Cass is Cassirer's translation.

LXX is Septuagint Greek OT. [RT]= Received Text. [Nes]= Nestle Text.

# marks an important word defined for future use. #1:4 means that in Ch. 1 vs. 4 this word has been defined.

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### **BACKGROUND TO THE THESSALONIAN EPISTLES.**

**THE MESSENGERS** - As Acts 17 records, Paul and Silas, with wounds from the beating at Philippi only partly healed, with Timothy, had walked the 160 Km to Thessalonika.

**THE READERS** - Thessalonika, where the Egnatian Way reached the Aegean Sea, had been developed by the Romans into the best and biggest port for the trade of Macedonia and southern Illyria / Jugoslavia. Population about 200,000 of many nationalities, but largely local Greeks As it had supported Antony and Octavius in the Roman Civil War it was granted "Free City" status, and the local Elite remained in control.

Traditional heathen religion was dying, and the new culture manipulated all religions to serve the ends of the Elite, and the Roman Empire. This, and the growth of cosmopolitan towns, had broken the family, religious and moral bonds of the old communities. Many felt a need for a new internalised morality, a new sense of community that could cope with people of varied race, class, etc. And people conscious of the emptiness of their lives, and of their sins, felt a need for forgiveness and to be made right with God to live to be what He made them for. This gained a hearing for the Gospel, along with Eastern Cults, Greek Philosophies, and Jewish Messianic expectations.

**DEVOUT GREEKS/God-fearing Gentiles** attended Jewish Synagogues attracted by monotheism and the high moral standards proclaimed. But, repelled by Jewish racism and petty legal rigidity, few became Jews. They were valued by Jews as prospective proselytes, for providing political protection, and financial contributions. (The excavated Synagogue at Dura Europas, Turkey, has a longer list of them on the charitable giving roll than the Jew list.)

Reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, Acts 17:1-2. God's Word was the basis of his teaching. He Opened their minds to the Scripture, Lk 24:32, 45 Alleging / Explaining to them, setting his teaching alongside the Scriptures. That the promises regarding Messiah= Christ, God's anointed Servant, included the fact that He must suffer, die, and rise from the dead And, that JESUS was the Messiah - the One fulfilling the OT promises. And that all, Jew or Gentile, were to put their trust in Him.

After expulsion from Synagogue he seems to have stayed on for some weeks, workshop and homes providing places for informal discussion and teaching while demonstrating normal Christian living and working. This seems likely, as they stayed long enough for two gifts to come from Philippi Phil 4:16. And, the Epistles are addressed to a church whose members generally turned to God from idols. This suggests they had been raw heathen, not even attending the Synagogue when Paul met them, so contacted later. Acts 17 goes straight from the jealousy of the Christ-rejecting Jews to the riot, but Jewish malice may have fermented as time passed and they saw no prospect of the return to them of Jews and God-fearers, and it might have taken some time to stir up non-Jews.

POSITIVE RESPONSE - Some Jews were persuaded, and joined Paul in putting their trust in Christ, along with numbers of God-fearing Greeks, including the wives of some leading citizens. Those repelled by circumcision and detailed rules could welcome the Christian alternative, re-interpret what they already knew into a relationship with Christ and form a functioning church at short notice. Untaught heathen would have more to learn, and greater problems adjusting.

NEGATIVE - JEALOUS JEWS - Militant Jewish nationalism was a threat to the peace of the Roman Empire. Paul had preached about Messiah dying, rising again, and of His return to reign as King of the world. As Jews interpreted the Messiah as a military deliverer, they easily twisted whatever Paul had said in this direction. By denouncing the Christians for proclaiming as a rival to the Roman Emperor the One crucified by the Romans as "King of the Jews," they gained favour as being loyal citizens. That they were the source of the riot, and persecution, is obvious in 1 Th 2:14-16. They were the Christ-rejectors, responsible for trying to prevent the Gentiles being evangelised.

RIOTING GENTILE MOB - Made up of the sort of people eager to enjoy beating others up, and the chance to loot etc on the side. The Heathen resented those who criticised sin and moral laxity. To proclaim a crucified man as triumphant Lord was "turning the world upside down." But the transforming effect of the Gospel on the Believers' lives showed that they were now like bowls turned right side up - Open to the sunshine of God's love and truth, and filled with His gifts and grace held as a stewardship for all. Jason's house was identified as Paul's / the church base.

THE CITY OFFICIALS / Politarchs - Polis= A City, Archos= To Rule. Correct titles varied from place to place in the Empire, but inscriptions show that Luke as usual has the right title, confirming the factuality of what was written. Philippi had been handed over to discharged Roman Soldiers as a Roman Colony so there the authorities were Strategos, and the charge against Paul was teaching contrary to Roman customary law.

Law and order was vital to the Empire and threats dealt with harshly. They may have known of the riots among Jews in Rome about "Chrestus" and the expulsion of Jews by Claudius, Acts 18:2. When faced with the accusation that Paul was upsetting the

their Free City status by appearing to countenance disloyalty to the Roman Emperor. But their response was mild. Jason had to put up "Bail" that he would forfeit if there were further disturbances. Apparently some Believers thought Paul should remain or return if he cared enough and others strongly warning him not to rock the boat by coming.

THE LETTERS THEMSELVES - Apparently written from Corinth. The mood of 1:3 fits with Paul's being under pressure there, after the harsh treatment he'd received in three towns, and the ridicule and indifference at Athens, and before his reassuring vision, Acts 18:9-10.

WHEN- Sometime between AD 50 and 53 Gallio, before whom Paul was called, was Proconsul in AD 52. These were probably the first books of NT. Although James and Galatians were also early, in Galatia Jews seem to have given up direct persecution by the time the letter was written, and were luring Christians back to Judaism by pressure to conform to Law.

CHARACTERISTICS- There are differences between Paul's letters. Partly because they were written during 12 years of learning and teaching / writing the truth of God. More particularly Paul didn't parrot off stereotyped doctrinal and religious slogans. He wrote real letters, to real people, with heart and mind straining to give them the greatest possible help in their very real current needs. As a profound, original and creative thinker responding to specific situations under the Spirit of God, he varied his vocabulary and style as appropriate to the readers, and the subjects handled. We do well to ignore the foolish wisdom that's determined not to accept God's Word as it stands and be blessed by it, and shows great ingenuity in dissecting its imagined origins. And the almost as foolish wisdom that with equal ingenuity masses counter arguments.

Commentators who concentrate their attention on the similarities, and differences between the Thessalonian epistles seem to have hardly heard what Paul and God have to say in them. But after all they were written to the same people at about the same time and related to their needs, and some things said in the First are good reasons for adding something rather different in the Second. The simplest, most logical and useful view is to take the letters as they stand, as every attack on them is balanced by an equally valid counter-attack, and our time is short.

In the few weeks Paul had spent with them they had been converted and formed into a Church. He had been driven out and parted from them for a few more weeks. They had grasped the basic doctrines, and shown love and energy in serving God joyfully, in spite of having suffered severe persecution. Paul writes reminding them of God's Grace and Gospel that he'd taught, and his attitude/example in teaching, to consolidate it in their minds and behaviour. He then gives additional teaching of a practical nature to continue his shepherding work on their behalf. Paul freely expresses his feelings and concern to them as "Brothers," from whom he has recently been torn away. That he was delighted to hear of their progress was obvious. It's frank, friendly writing, impossible to fake.

The whole spirit of the letters fits the reality of his recent experience as recorded in Acts. He needed to reassure them about the state and prospects of Believers who had already died, and to help them realise the dignity and importance of manual labour. Restlessness about the Lord's Coming must be countered. This didn't require a

Epistle to the Romans. But the casual, incidental reference to them is an excellent indication that these doctrines were already so well established that this was all that was needed. Paul's statements are made with confident certainty that the readers already had heard them when he was with them, quite recently. They are the essential basis of what is referred to in this informal expression of written pastoral care. As a result this earliest of Epistles is a clear witness to the nature of the doctrines of the early Church, less than 20Yrs from Pentecost.

There's no suggestion of rival groups in the Church. The church seems to be basically a Gentile one, but the eschatology (Belief about Christ's Coming and the climax of the current world scene) and doctrine in these Epistles was that common to the Christian churches in general, not specifically Paul's. He uses it as the basis for a confident God-oriented, moral, obedient lifestyle, and an alert awareness of the spiritual significance of all they did as living in fellowship with God.

BROTHERS is a key word - Teachers / taught, young / old, Jew / Gentile, master / slaves, stand as brothers / sisters in the glorious reality of fellow-membership in a "Called out company in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." As such they are equipped and challenged to walk worthily together in a fellowship of mutual encouragement. Although leaders are mentioned in 1 Th 5:12-13 the letters are as usual addressed to the Assembly as a whole. As usual Paul speaks to the "True Church." In Hebrews, James, Peter, Jude, the visible, professing church is addressed, and those whose association is merely outward are warned and urged to get right with God, and stay with the Christians until they reach reality.

As the Jews were hostile there was no need to set out the Law-Works- Righteousness / Gospel-Faith-Righteousness contrast here where a young church was going forward in faith and love. More specific statements were needed in later Epistles to more advanced / divided churches. Paul's great concern is to give encouragement and warnings that will help them under the intense persecution, rather than deepening their understanding on the fine details of doctrinal matters. Clearly they already knew that The Son of God was actively associated with the Father in our Salvation, and the essential equality of the Son with the Father is taken for granted.

## INTRODUCTION TO SECOND THESSALONIANS

There are many points at which 2Th repeats and reinforces the message of 1 Th, so the reader will need to refer back to the notes on it rather often. Apparently Paul's First letter with its candid comment on his actions, feelings, and motives had countered any feared misunderstanding of his reasons for staying away from them. Their acceptance of his authority as an Apostle, the reality of his personal concern for them and their well-being, and their continuing growth in truth, and loving fellowship are taken for granted in 2Th. 1 Th rests heavily on his recent time spent with them, 2 Th mentions a letter / written ministry.

However two topics needed further attention. They had been reassured that Christ would come and take all believers to Heaven, including those who had died. And, reminded of their privileged position as not being in the dark as to the Lord's Coming Judgment intervention. But continued persecution and a rumour that the "Day of the Lord" had already come, was unsettling them. If true, the Lord must come within a few years at most. Persecution would make it difficult for some to find paid work, so the temptation to live on capital, or the charity of others with property or paid work had increased. The

Christian love expressed in providing for those in need could do more harm than good

1 Thessalonians is occupied with the joyous detail of conversion and transformation, 2 Thessalonians is more occupied with the need for growth. As ever, Paul uses the circumstances and problems as a chance to encourage and strengthen the Believers. And, under God, he seeks to get their hearts in tune before tackling any error. He clarifies their understanding of the "Times and Seasons," of 1 Th 5:1. That Coming would be "as a Thief" yet there would be "Signs" of its approach as taught in Mt 24:3-42, etc. They live in an increasingly hostile environment where their reputation as valued citizens and faithful workers is important. Paul stresses the need for practical energetic living, not idleness, as a preparation for the Coming.

Some suggest that 2 Th is less warm than 1 Th, but the affectionate "Brothers" is used just as often. Both express Paul's concern for his readers, in Christ, but in writing the second, Paul is off the emotional "high" of distressed concern about what might be happening to them, and the tremendous relief when the good news comes. He settles down to write more as a teacher, than a worried, and then delighted parent.

<< For convenience and simplicity PAUL/HE is used in referring to Paul and his helpers. US used for all readers of this Epistle.>>

## CHAPTER ONE.

1:1. PAUL - together with Silas and Timothy in a supportive role.

CHURCH - #Ekklesia - A called out-company. Ek= out of. Kaleo= to call. Used of the rioting mob CALLED OUT against the Christians, Acts 19:41. Commonly used of us Believers / Christians, called out from the world at large, to the Lord Jesus Christ to be His own people, His functioning body on earth under His headship. Used of a local church fellowship, OR of the Church as a whole.

OF THE THESSALONIANS IN GOD OUR FATHER - They, and all true Christians, are God's Children, born into His family when they received Christ as their Saviour, Jn 1:12-13. As individuals and congregations we have access direct to Him, and look to Him alone for guidance and protection, Mt 23:9. We stand with our brothers / sisters, praying OUR Father. IN stresses our mutual intimate experience of His Fatherhood, and of the Lordship of Christ.

LORD - #Kurios - To the Gentile it was the title of the Roman Emperor. To the Jew it meant Jehovah as the LXX and NT used Kurios to translate Jehovah / Yaweh, Lk 3:4, 4:18, etc. In the Gospels it was used of Human "Lords" etc. but after Thomas used it in saying "My LORD and my God" Jn 20:28 it's used only of Jesus Christ as in Acts 2:36 Phil 2:10-11, etc, or an angel, Acts 10:4, and an Elder in Heaven, Rev 7:14.

JESUS - #Iesous - A Transliteration of Joshua= Jehovah is Salvation / Jehovah the Saviour, Mt 1:21. The personal name of the Son of God when He lived on earth as a human being - "the Word made flesh," Jn 1:14. The name JESUS sums up all He is as the Son of man, perfect man, representative man. James, Peter, John, and Jude, who had known Him as Jesus, never

does so 13x only,

CHRIST- #Christos- Anointed, used in LXX for the High Priest, Ex 29:5-7; the Kings of Israel, 1 Sam 2:10, etc, Cyrus, Isa 45:1, and of the Prophets, Ps 105:15. But Ho Christos= THE Anointed is used in LXX, and NT only of the Messiah / Christ. The Lord Jesus as the Christ is the Anointed Servant of God to fulfil all God's purposes / OT promises, types, shadows, hints- the job he was Anointed to do Everything they speak of He perfectly IS.

\*NOTE\* The Father and Son are closely linked by the use of one preposition, IN. When quoting the OT. as in 1:7-8 what is said there of Jehovah is said here of the Lord Jesus. This shows that from the earliest days of the Church, Christians identified Jesus with Jehovah, and that He as the Son was equally with the Father, GOD. That the LORDship of Christ was a vital doctrine is shown by the fact that LORD appears 19x in this Epistle.

1:2. GRACE - #Charis- The unmerited, generous, wise response of God to our need. Originally it was used of anything which brings pleasure, delight, Lk 2:40 4:22 2 Cor 8:6. OR shows gracious loving kindness / goodwill on the part of the giver, Acts 7:10. It's also used of the receiver's appreciation / thankfulness, Rom 6:17, 1 Tim 1:12. Paul uses the word over 100x, mostly for the Grace of God that receives us freely in loving kindness, and provides all we need in that same spirit, and the response that our hearts should make to Him. Grace GIVES freely, and what it gives is claimed and used by Faith. Law DEMANDS, and exacts full penalty for failure to meet those demands. Grace comes from God the Father, and from Christ, Rom 5:15; 2 Cor 1:12; Gal 1:6.

PEACE - #Eirene- A harmonious relationship, order, rest, freedom from molestation, quietness in state or life, and the sense of rest and contentment that goes with these. The blessed result of GRACE granted and received, and lived in, is PEACE enjoyed. Peace with God. Peace within ourselves. Peace lived out in relationships with others. The calmness resulting from experiencing the grace of God and knowing Him as the God of grace, enabling one to face uncertain and threatening futures undisturbed, confident that we are in God's hand as His loved children. In the LXX Eirene translates Shalom, which is used of salvation as wholeness, completeness, a full and abundant life enjoyed by God's people because of their relationship with Him and each other. How privileged we are!

FROM GOD OUR /the FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST- Again a single preposition, FROM, is used, implying the identity and equality of Father and Son. In a sense the Father may be viewed as the source of the Grace, and the Son the mediating channel. Greeks greeted each other with "Charis" and Jews with "Shalom" but there is a specific Christian content for us. Grace provides the enablement for everything within the will of God. As a greeting it points both to the "Good life" God has provided and the need to avoid dissension so that we can all enjoy it to the full together.

# 1:3-12 THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF CHRIST'S COMING & ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BELIEVERS

(Paul sets out their present situation as the Persecuted and their Persecutors, in relation to what will happen when Christ comes in Judgment. And that all that is happening, and will happen, is within the righteous purposes of God. Knowing this, and knowing what will happen THEN, helps Believers to live rightly NOW.)

## 1:3-4. THANKSGIVING

(For the way they have stood loyal to Christ through severe persecution. It makes Paul confident that they are on God's side and have nothing to fear from the coming Judgment.)

1:3. WE ARE BOUND /ought- #Opheilo- A debt /obligation requiring one to do something. Present tense = a continuing obligation. As Paul saw the lives they were living in the face of persecution he sees it as something to thank God for as it shows the effectiveness of God's work in them. He is indirectly praising and encouraging them - their lives are something to thank God for, and rejoice in.

\*\*NOTE\*\* Hogg & Vine list other obligations: In the natural life. Acts 17:29; 1 Cor 11:7, 10; Eph 5:28 etc. In the Spiritual life, Lk 17:10; Jn 13:14; Rom 8:12; 15:1; Heb 5:12; 1 Jn 2:6; 3:16; 4:11; 3 Jn 8

TO THANK GOD- #Eucharisteo- To be thankful, express gratitude, give thanks. From Charis- Grace, #1:2. We who have received what Grace gives, should rejoice / express our joy to God in thanksgiving. As usual Paul starts with thanksgiving, and it is a helpful lead in to what he has to teach them. They faced two concerns 1. Continued persecution that seemed to bring no punishment of the persecutors. 2. Uncertainty about the timing and nature of the different aspects of the Lord's Coming. By giving thanks Paul kept his, and their eyes on the reality of God's working, rather than on how things seemed. Besides, failing to give thanks to God for blessings risks our losing them, Deu 28:47-48

ALWAYS FOR YOU- Concerning you / because of what you are, and are doing. Which is equally what God is doing in /with / through you.

BRETHREN/Brothers- #Adelphos- One born into the same family. Those from the same Delphus= womb. This makes it appropriate for all members of God's family, as we're the products of the same "Born Again" birth process. (In the Gospels, it may mean "Brother Jew," or simply Fellow Man.) Includes male and female "Brothers," usually, and is a reminder of shared responsibilities and privileges towards God, and each other. Paul uses it to express his affectionate regard for the readers as he starts each section of the letter.

MEE T/rightly so- Axios- Desirable, suitable, appropriate, worthy. They may have thought Paul had spoken too highly of them in 1 Th, but he insists



Grace.

BECAUSE YOUR FAITH- #Pistis- Firm persuasion, a conviction based on hearing, Rom 10:17. Related to Peitho= to persuade. As such it doesn't describe unthinking credulity, but of listening to what is said, being persuaded it's true, and acting on it. It's used in NT always of Faith in God, Christ, etc. The distinctive feature of Christian Faith is the object of our trust - CHRIST HIMSELF, as revealed in the Word of God, and by God the Holy Spirit. He is the One we respond to in FAITH / Obedience. Our trust that we live by is not only in the promises of God, but personally in the person of the Christ of those promises, 2 Cor 1:20

Faith is the proper response of heart and mind to God's revelation of Himself and His will - "THE Faith," Jude 3 This produces Faithfulness in the Believer. It is the foundation, on our side, of all fellowship with God, Heb 11:6. Faith alone enables us to know God who is invisible, accept His truth, give ourselves to Him, and live to His Glory, and the blessing of ourselves and others. Faith puts us in touch with God who is Love, and Loving action is the inevitable outcome. Faith is always completed by action "By Faith Noah.."

GROWTH/is growing EXCEEDINGLY/more and more- An organic exuberant growth that is continuing, as it's in the Present tense. It's wrong to think or speak of Faith as a static thing which is given some people and not others. Or as something we can "Lose" as we may lose a possession. Faith is the whole response to God, the inner aspect of the Christian life. As we trust /obey more and more, we move into fuller fellowship with God in Christ, and the Life we share with Him grows naturally and vigorously. As Faith grows inward /upward, Love spreads more widely outward.

CHARITY/love- #Agape- Love, affection and benevolence. "God is Love," 1 Jn 4:8, so Love is His constant attitude to all, whatever their response. This is the heart of the Gospel / Christian faith, and practice. Christ manifested that Love, not only in sermons, but at meals, in walking, talking and working. The Father who loves the Son, Jn 5:20 has drawn us into that Fellowship so that Agape is to be the distinctive mark of the Believer, Jn 13:34-35 Our abiding obligation, Rom 13:8; which, if lacking, leaves all possible good we might be or do valueless, 1 Cor 13:1-13. It involves outgoing affection and tenderness for others whether returned or not. It seeks another's highest good on the basis of a decision of the will / inclination of the heart, Rom 5:8. Our love for God is in response to His love for us, and is shown in obedience, Jn 14:15, 21, 23 15:10 1 Jn 2:5, 5:2-3.

Love seeks the welfare of all, Rom 15:2. It is the lifeblood and characteristic of the Believer's lifestyle, summing up his fellowship with God, his fellow believers, and the unsaved around him. God's infinite Love is available to the limit of our willingness to fellowship with Him in His loving those around us, as the Love of God is poured into our hearts, Rom 5:5. In fellowship with God we must encourage it to flow out to them all. This is the outflow of the Christian Life, 1 Th 4:1, 9-10; 3:12. Love welling up within our hearts pours out to irrigate the surrounding land.

was involved in some ways in the interchange between them all. None were beyond Paul's concern and appreciation, though some needed warnings.

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** Faith, and Love are followed by Hope in 1 Th. 1:3, but Hope isn't mentioned here. Perhaps they were losing their upward and forward looking glow of expectation, as those who expect to go through the Tribulation do. Or, a brief mention wasn't appropriate as their expectations re the Lord's Coming needed sorting out.

**ABOUNDETH/is increasing-** In modern terms their sense of community was growing as their inner commitment / Faith grew. Both are mentioned with a view to encouraging still more growth in them.

**1:4. WE OURSELVES GLORY/boast-** Others spoke well of them, 1 Th 1:8. and so does Paul. In 1 Th 2:19 he looked forward to boasting in the future when in the Lord's presence. Here he's delighted and proud to be associated with them, always glad to talk / be asked about them as he travels. Paul turns from giving thanks to God as a debt and rightful, to praising them before men - which is also their due. Thanking God, and giving credit to men for the same situation may seem incompatible to us. But they're two sides of the same coin of rejoicing in the Lord at the triumph of Grace in human lives. Paul is quick to detect and praise every glimmer of response made to God and the Gospel. (We should seek God's grace / make it our constant endeavour to be the kind of Christians that people can thank God for, and be pleased to be asked about.)

**FOR/about YOUR PATIENCE/endurance-** #Hupomone- Hupo= under, Meno= To abide. To stick with it, or "Hang in there," in modern terms. It's used PASSIVELY of enduring opposition and persecution, 2 Cor 6:4; 2 Tim 3:10, etc. ACTIVELY of perseverance in doing what is good and right, Rom 2:7; fruit-bearing, Lk 8:15, and in running with our eyes on the Lord, Heb 12:1. Instead of giving way to cowardice or despondency, such God-given, God-sustained Patience / Endurance grows under trials, Jas 1:3. As we continue to grow in Faith / increasingly trust God, we prove His faithfulness to us in one trial after another.

**AND FAITH-** #1:3. cp 1 Th 1:3. Faith is a word that takes its specific meaning from the context in which it's used. While it sums up the Believer's response to God, being linked with endurance (they share one article) it means faithfulness here. But any specific meaning of Faith is always part of the whole trust in our Faithful God which is the only enabling for faithfulness. The man who continues to trust God is enabled to be steadfast, and so continues to be faithful, and continues to take God's Word at its true value.

**IN ALL YOUR/the PERSECUTIONS-** Diogmos- Persecution. From Dioko= To put to flight, drive away, to pursue. It has the thought of men continuing to hound the believers.

**TRIBULATIONS/trials-** #Thlipsis- Severe pressure, physically, mentally, or emotionally. Pressures and conflicts arise in us, and we are under

combine to pressure us to conform to the pattern of godless life in this world. God the Holy Spirit through the Bible, Christian fellowship, and Conscience, applies pressure to transform us, Rom 12:2. Our responsibility is to place ourselves in the Lord's hands in everything, so that the pressures combine to mould us into His likeness, Rom 8:28-29.

## 1:5-10. GOD'S RIGHTEOUS INTERVENTION IN THE FINAL JUDGMENT.

(The whole Epistle links their present situation, and the future Judgmental intervention of God. Their steadfastness under persecution identifies them as those on whose behalf God will intervene. Those who persecute them identify themselves as God's enemies who will be punished. What has been happening to them, and the way they have reacted to it, has a direct relation to the final triumphant revealing of Christ. As often, Paul repeats the same ideas in increasing detail, so as to emphasize them and produce a vivid climax.)

1:5. A MANIFEST TOKEN/evidence- Endeigma- A plain open evidence of truth - as Apple blossom is evidence of a harvest of apples to come. Not proof, as it's not obvious to all, but those who know God, have adequate reason to believe that what is happening, and will happen, is in keeping with His Righteousness. Persecution of God's people and tribulations will be intense immediately before the Lord comes in Judgment. But already, what these believers are suffering is a sure sign that God, being righteous, must, and will, intervene in Judgment - Persecuting the persecutors, afflicting the afflicters and granting rest and glory to those who suffer because they are loyal to God. This future Judgment is still invisible, but the present persecution involves visible Good and Evil that make it inevitable that as God is righteous, He must Judge and repay that good and evil. While God isn't yet intervening, His being patient with the persecutors and sustaining the persecuted is evidence of His righteousness. When people of such faith as theirs have to endure such fierce and unjust persecution it's dear God must intervene.

RIGHTEOUS/right- #Dikaios- First used of those who followed Dike= the right rules, with regard to religious and civil obligations. So that which is Righteous, just, right, without partiality / prejudice. God is Righteous in judging / treating all without partiality or favour. While it doesn't LOOK Fair, the persecution is in line with God's righteous intervention. Justice requires that while He intervenes in Grace, the results in those who receive it or reject it polarises that small initial parting of the ways and starts a process that involves what is happening and that will righteously qualify both parties for their vastly different eternal states.

JUDGMENT- Krisis- The process of investigating, distinguishing, separating, to be followed by an appropriate sentence- Krima. The Righteous Judge having infinite knowledge, wisdom, and irresistible power, will act in perfect righteousness both in the timing of His intervention, and in His actions then. He justifies, and saves the upright who accept Him and His gracious provision by Faith. In that same righteousness He condemns and punishes the unrighteous who reject Christ and Salvation and remain in

the Good from the Evil as a preliminary to His future righteous verdict and its implementation. God's sifting process now, and the consequences of His coming in Judgment are equally expressions of His Righteousness.

THAT YE MAY/as a result you will - The Greek means equally purpose and result. Where God is involved the two are practically identical - what God purposes will also be the certain result.

BE COUNTED WORTHY- Kataxioo- To be considered to be entirely deserving of. Passive voice, so God's action, not a matter of earning a place in the kingdom. As the Apostles rejoiced to be "Counted worthy" of suffering for Christ, Acts 5:41, so the loyalty to the Lord of the Believers made it appropriate for His enemies to persecute them and when they reign with Christ in His Kingdom that will also be seen to be appropriate. What the Judge will give is what those judged are fitted for / have fitted themselves for while being allowed freedom to choose. They were to accept their power to endure as an indication that God was acknowledging them as His own, not that they were qualifying for the Kingdom by their own personal choice and actions. Grace alone grants the privilege and sustains in it. Phil 1:29 Col 1:12, 3:24 Suffering in union with Christ is the essential preliminary to reigning in union with Him, because it is a reigning that rests on His triumphant suffering. So, suffering in fellowship with the Lord is a positive thing, Jas 1:2. "All this is dear evidence of how just God's judgments are, for they signify that you are being held worthy of a share in God's Kingdom, on behalf of which you are undergoing these sufferings," Cass.

Not simply to COUNT or MAKE worthy, but a judicial term to be reckoned worthy, which is the basis on which they are made worthy. They at the Judgment must be seen to be worthy, for God to be seen to be righteous. Those God Justifies, He makes righteous. Those he counts worthy, he makes worthy, and they are involved in the process. No man ever could be worthy in himself, or by his own efforts. God alone can make us worthy, and He does so not by unrighteously counting / pretending that we are worthy while we remain unworthy. He Righteously says of those who put their trust in Christ Crucified "Be worthy" placing them in the position of being worthy, with the enabling to claim, grow into, and display that worthiness / Christ-likeness. Our exercise of faith isn't the instrument of Salvation. God's own Grace and Power accomplish it.

OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD- The sphere of His rule. In another sense the sphere in which His rule is acknowledged. Worthy of God's New world, worthy citizens of His Kingdom, The kind of people who display by their lives the reality of their relationship with God, as those living under His Kingship. In the sufferings of his present life God gives men the privilege of committing their hearts, minds, and wills to achieving this to the fullest possible extent.

FOR WHICH YE ALSO SUFFER/are suffering- The Kingdom is built on the sufferings of Christ, being the Glory that follows them 1 Pet 1:11; 5:1. They are suffering because of their willing identification with Christ the rejected King, and for their faithfulness to Him.

lives the reality of God's Salvation is made obvious by the persecution. A teaching example to all Believers, as in 1 Th 2:12-14. God's children suffering for living as He wishes, and persecutors getting away with bullying them seems to be a contradiction of God's love for them, and of His Justice. (As it would if a human parent ignored the persistent bullying of his children and made no attempt to rectify the situation.) But the future granting of Reward / Punishment requires suffering / persecuting now in order to justify it. And by it the life of the Christian is tested, and in a sense fashioned in the furnace, 1 Th 3:3-4; 1 Pet 1:6-7. Suffering in loyalty to a King in exile, means that being granted a position of privilege and power in his triumph cannot be challenged as unfair. Their steadfastness under persecution now, demonstrated that they were His and is the right preliminary to the blessing enjoyed then, but not earning it. Their Present suffering wasn't pointless. It was an essential part of a grand purpose of God, and the outcome would be future rest and glory.

1:6. IT IS A RIGHTEOUS THING WITH GOD is just- #1:5. TO RECOMPENSE / He will pay back- Antapodidomi- Anti= In return. Apo= back. Didomi= To give. A strong, emphatic word - To pay back a specific and appropriate response to a deliberate action. God is The Repayer. It's His role. This is an example of that fact. Paul is dealing with the inevitable results. Vengeance is Mine. I will repay, Rom 12:17-21. Heb 10:30 is an assurance that our rights / needs are in His competent hands. God has the wisdom, righteousness, and power to do the right thing in the right time and the right way. God is just, and His actions express justice, so punishment for persecutors and relief for persecuted for their loyalty to God MUST come.

TRIBULATION / trouble- #1:4. TO THEM / those THAT TROUBLE YOU- Thlibo- To put pressure on, distress, etc. Trouble to the Troublers. God will mete out strict, even-handed justice to all, believer or rebel, 1 Pet 1:17. Those who persecute God's ambassadors, 2 Cor 5:20 make themselves God's enemies. God Himself is out of their reach, but they can lay hands on His people to show their hatred of God, and they do, Jn 15:18:25, 1 Th 2:14-16. Their persecution of God's people, and God's punishment of them are both to be expected. God's Judging will be seen to be in line with "Natural Justice," Isa 66:4. It is rejection of the Gospel, and its grace that distinguishes Damned sinners from the Saved sinners that accept it, not the type or quantity of their sins, 1:8; 2:10-12.

1:7. YOU WHO ARE TROUBLED, REST / relief- Anesis- A letting loose, relaxation, easing of suffering, etc as in Acts 24:23, 2 Cor 2:13, 7:5; 8:13. Anesis is the opposite of Thlipsis, #1:4, Used of the slackening of a bowstring. Not rest from toil, inactivity, but the absence of tension, trial that stretches us beyond comfortable limits- as a bowstring has to be when in use. This rest is the negative minimal blessing that seems all-important when we're under pressure, 2 Cor 1:8-10. In a measure we already experience the inner rest of soul in Christ, but then, every trying circumstance will have vanished. To serve God for rewards isn't our goal. but the God we serve is Righteous, eager to bless us, with infinitely rich

Him in fellowship and service, and our receiving them honours Him. The rest and the rewards begin to be experienced here. The present fellowship with our Lord will blaze into glory then. Paul doesn't give details, but points to the present trial accomplishing its part in God's purposes.

WITH US- He and other believers shared a strengthening fellowship under pressure. Testing is common to all, 1 Cor 10:13, as is a shared joy in prospect. It's all part of God's gift of Freewill so that all men have the elbow-room / freedom to choose what they will be, and to continue to grow in that choice. Paul enjoys and expresses constantly the common lot of Christians.

WHEN- En= When, at, in, by means of, through. The Judgment will take place AT the Revelation, but also the Revelation will involve Judgment as an integral part of it.

LORD JESUS SHALL BE / is REVEALED- Apokalupsis- Used of the revealing of an aspect of God's Nature, or activity. The word was used in the LXX, and among Jews for events in the "Last Days." As He is unseen, the wilful ignorance of His enemies frees them to act as they do, unaware of the inevitable consequences of their actions. But the existing order in which the persecutors and persecuted were living is ended in a moment when the rejected, crucified Jesus comes visibly shown forth in Glory as LORD to put all things right, Acts 3:21. The Persecuted Believers are being reassured as to the consequence of their actions by being reminded not of their being caught up to Christ in the air, 1 Th 4:13-18, but of His Unveiling in Power and Glory, Dan 234-35; Zech 14; Mt 24:27; 26:64; Mk 13:26; Lk 21:27; Rev 19:11-16 etc when they will accompany Him, and share His Glory, 1:12. Note the way in which OT statements about Jehovah are automatically applied to Jesus.

FROM HEAVEN- A reminder of His origin and authority. WITH HIS MIGHTY / powerful- #Dunamis- Ability power, force. ANGELS- A created order of Beings, whose natural sphere is heaven and the service of God. The two words are linked together, and may mean: His powerful, mighty angels. The angels which show His power, or execute His powerful action. The angelic Host appropriate to his power. Angels are associated with the Apocalypse in Mt 13:39, 41, 24:31; 25:31. Mk 8:38 13:27; Lk 12:8-9; 1 Th 4:16. Their presence emphasizes the majesty and might of God.

1:8. IN FLAMING / blazing FIRE- Lit h a fire of fame. This suggests not so much the destructive effect of fire, as a display of the awesome Glory natural to God, as in Ex 3:2; Deu 5:4; Isa 6; Dan 7:9. But the Glory of God is in itself intolerable to sinners, and the assurance of Judgment and destruction to all that opposes His Holiness, Ps 79:6; Isa 29:6; 30:30 66:15; Jer 10:25; Mal 4:1. We're solemnly warned to live in the knowledge that "Our God is a consuming Fire," Heb 12:29. Fire implies Judgment, but this fire manifests God's Glory first. His enemies will see instantly that He is GOD, must Judge them, and do so with irresistible power. The last time the world saw Him was as the humble and rejected Nazarene, but as He

TAKING VENGEANCE/He will punish- Ekdikesis- Vengeance, the execution of justice, punishment, vindication, retribution. Punishment which exactly fits / corresponds to the crime. We must beware of equating God's Wrath and Vengeance with Human anger and retaliation. Because this world belongs to God, and He is Righteous, He carries ultimate responsibility to see that Justice is done. A measure of responsibility was first given to the relatives of anyone murdered, Gen 9:5-6; Deu 19:11-12. Later responsibility was given to Moses, Ex 18:16, other servants of God, 1 Sam 7:16, and Governments in general, Rom 13:1-4; 1 Pet 2:14. It's forbidden to individual Christians, Rom 12:19. The fiery vengeance of a Holy God against Evil is patiently delayed while there is any hope of repentance, Rom 2:4-5; 2 Pet 3:9. In the OT the LORD (Jehovah) claims the responsibility and right to execute Justice / Vengeance, Deu 32:35-36, 41-43 Ps 94:1, etc.

Here, and 1 Th 4:6, it is the LORD Jesus, who will take Vengeance, and Judge, Jn 5:22

THAT do not KNOW NOT GOD- #Eido- Aorist tense of Horao- To see, know, be aware of, understand, pay attention to and take notice of. "Anyone who has SEEN me (discerned, not merely watched, Jesus of Nazareth) has SEEN the Father," Jn 14:9. This doesn't say that God punishes those that don't know Him because they haven't heard the Gospel. KNOW NOT has the sense of refusing to enter into a relationship with a person. See Mk 14:71; Jn 7:28 2 Cor 5:16 (Know no man after the flesh= No longer relate to people on a selfish, natural level); Titus 1:16. So, Paul is describing those in Thessalonica who are persecuting the Christians because they hate what they know of the Gospel, and refuse to acknowledge God and His claim on them. Or the Jerusalem rulers who persecuted the Apostles, trying to stamp out all mention of Christ as part of their refusal to know God as revealed in Him. It's also relevant to everyone who has refused to respond to the light they have because they will not accept the witness of the Gospel, Jn 3:18-21, or Creation, Rom 1:18-32

OBEY - Hupakouo- Literally to hear under - as a subordinate. So to listen attentively, with a view to obeying, be obedient to. The whole NT bases eternal fate on Believing / obeying OR disbelieving / disobeying Christ as presented in the Gospel. Submission of the will to God is essential for the Gospel to be Believed, 2 Cor 10:5. To Believe and to obey are linked Jn 3:36 Acts 6:7; Rom 1:5; 16:26 The Gospel isn't merely facts - it reveals a Person to be obeyed.

As KNOW, and OBEY have a separate article (the) for each some suggest two classes are being described - Ignorant Gentiles, as in Rom 1:28 Gal 4:8; Eph 2:12; 1 Th 4:5; and Disobedient Jews, as in Rom 10:16, 21. But both Jews and Gentiles are guilty of wilful ignorance and disobedience Jer 9:6; Rom 2:4; 11:30-32 It may simply be describing people from two different angles - Two witnesses adequate to condemn them, Mat 18:16; 2 Cor 13:1. "Know" is a general description of their character and state. "Obey" the Gospel is the specific expression of that.

to respond to the Gospel. The persecution of God's inoffensive witnesses revealed a wilful ignorance of God, and disobedience, Mt 23:34-38 Jn 8:54-55

THE GOSPEL OF (From, and about) OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST- The good news of Salvation in Christ offered in Grace for all to believe / receive. The basic facts of the Gospel message, and the preaching, explanation, and application of them. It is the Gospel that proclaims Him as Saviour and Lord.

1:9. SHALL / They will BE PUNISHED WITH- Dike Tino. Dike- What is right, or a judicial hearing and the execution of a sentence. Tino- To pay a penalty imposed by court of law. What happens to them is the effect of Justice, Right, being applied to them and their case. Paul turns from describing the characteristics of those who will be punished, to describing the nature of the Punishment. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, Ezek 18:23, and Paul simply lists the consequences to the persecutors, of their attitude towards God and His people. God made Man in His likeness, including Freewill. Anyone having shut God / the Lord Jesus out of His life in this world, will find that God has accepted and endorsed his decision, finally, and permanently, Mt 23:37-38 This is an exact reward, and right Judgment consequence, 2 Th 1:6.

Paul is not stating what happens to all non-Christians, but stating what happens to the Thessalonians, and their persecutors, contrasting the NOW / This age situation, and the THEN Age situation. But there are implications for everyone else. To speculate on the fate of those who have never heard the Gospel is not our business. Our responsibility, is to get the Gospel out to all, as attractively as possible, as Paul did, whether their response saves or condemns them, 2 Cor 2:16.

EVE RLASTING - Aionios- Age- Long, is used 3x of indefinite duration "Before the world began" Rom 16:25 2 Tim 1:9, Titus 1:2, and 6x of indefinite, unending duration, in contrast to Proskairos- for a season, 2 Cor 4:18. God's Salvation is Eternal, Heb 5:9, and so is His Rule 2 Pet 1:11. While not specifically of infinite duration, as it is the Age to Come, the Age when God intervenes to deal finally with sin and rebellion, and there is never any hint of any age to follow, the state of the blessed, and the damned is seen as permanent. God's intervention in Judgment and blessing is final for Believers, and Unbelievers. Eternal Life, and Eternal Destruction are equally "Age-Long" in duration as well as Life / Death in quality. An essential attribute of the Gospel is its finality.

DESTRUC TION- Olethros- Ruin, loss of everything that makes life worthwhile, a continuing dreary, wretched state of existences. In 1 Th 5:3 Destruction is sudden, here it is permanent. In 1 Cor 5:5 the Olethros of the flesh is its frustration, loss, not the sinner being reduced to a disembodied state in which he gains spiritual benefit. Eternal life is the quality of life of the age to come, the eternal age, begun to be enjoyed already. This destruction is the opposite of that - All that makes life worth living is destroyed forever.



Emphasizing eye contact, he face to face presence of the Lord. Paul rejoices in this as being the blessedness ahead of the Believer - to be rejoicing in the presence of God in the Likeness of the Lord Jesus. So, he emphasises the negative aspect of the Judgment punishment - permanent separation from God's presence, as in Mt 25:41 Lk 13:27. Joy in being with the Lord is the bliss of Heaven, 1 Th 4:16. Being disowned and shut out is Hell, Mt 7:23 The Lord, His Nature and Work they accepted / rejected when they had the choice, is equally the reward / punishment that is theirs eternally.

Christ-rejectors are abandoned to themselves and their own resources, an emptiness some see as worse than fire, Mt 23:37-38 Paul doesn't describe the positive sufferings of the Lost - the Lack of Jesus is sufficient tragedy to him. (Fire, thirst, fruit of tree of Life, Water.. are earthly things used to hint at the unimaginable reality of the eternal state.) The impossibility of the wicked standing in the presence of the LORD (Jehovah), Isa 2:10, 19, 21 is applied to the Lord Jesus here, as usual in NT.

FROM THE GLORY/majesty- Doxa- Visible glory, from Dokeo= to seem. Honour / good opinion / reputation that comes from what the person is, and has done. Used of the Nature of God and His actions which display it. Eg Jn 1:14, 2:11, 11:4, 4Q etc. God's glory is the appreciated manifestation of His worthiness. The visible expression of His inherent essential Glory, 1 Tim 6:16. This means that they will be separated from the Lord Himself, and the glory that comes from / is related to / appropriate to His Power. Never experience His great wonderfulness. His Glory inevitably drives from His presence in terror those who are not His, those who loved darkness, and opted for it, Mt 25:30 Jn 3:19.

OF HIS POWER- Ischus- Ability, strength, might, the visible expression of power, power used effectively. From Ischo / Echo= to have, to hold. His Power is helpless to help them, because they long ago refused His help, exercising their God-given, God-like power to choose by rejecting His Saving hand stretched out to rescue them.

1:10. WHEN/on the day that- The Greek points to a single event at some time in the indefinite future. HE SHALL COME/comes TO BE GLORIFIED- Literally In-glorified in His Saints. Used in NT only in 1:10, 12, but used in LXX Ex 14:4, 17, etc. of God receiving Glory from the deliverance of His people, and the punishment of their oppressors. In NT Greek His being glorified is both the Purpose of His Coming, and the inevitable Result. To be Glorified is an idea we find difficult to appreciate, but it simply means that the wonder of His Glorious Being and the work that He has done is seen to be what it is, and appreciated.

The Lord's Coming isn't primarily concerned with the destruction of those who persist in remaining under God's wrath, or even in the blessedness of those who receive His mercy, Rom 9:22-23 It's centred in the Lord Himself who displays the glory of His Being and Work in providing the

being centred in His being glorified in His saints. Cp Ps 89:7.

IN HIS SAINTS/holy people- Hagios- Holy, separated ones. In Greek usage, separated / dedicated to a God- from Hazo to venerate. So used of Angels, and of those who God has set apart for Himself from self, sin, and the world's ways. And, their response as in 1 Th 1:9-10 "Turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to live in anticipation of the coming of his Son from Heaven." Being Saints isn't a state of attainment but a state to which God, in Sovereign Grace, has placed all Believers, the standard He calls us to live up to, requiring us to keep from defilement, and enjoy fellowship with Himself in His Holiness, 2 Cor 6:14-7:1.

IN may include the meaning AMONG - He will be the centre of His adoring, worshipping Saints, who accompany Him. But the main emphasis is IN= By means of His "Saved-Sinner-Saints," associated with Him in glorified bodies, who by their having become in their measure Christ-like, 2 Cor 3:18; 1 Jn 3:1-3, display the triumph of His Grace in their lives and labours, Rev 19:8. In a sense they are the mirror in which His Glory shines, or better, the Lord is glorified by them in what they have become, in Him.

The Glory that destroys the wicked is joyfully appreciated and reflected by /seen in the Saved. See Jn 15:8; 17:10; Rom 8:17, 30 Gal 1:24; Eph 1:6; Phil 3:21; 1 Jn 3:2; 1 Pet 1:7, and in the OT Isa 49:3; 61:3. The Greek makes it clear that the Saints are the sphere / element in which His glorification takes place - not the agents of it.

TO BE ADMIRER/marvelled at- Thaumazo- To catch attention as the Lord's miracles did, creating in observers astonishment, fear, reverence, wonder. Thaumazo is used in LXX Isa 52:15, where His appearing will be a shock like having a bucket of cold water emptied over them! Psalms 67; 68 89, and 118 etc speak of God being Glorified / Admired because of His Glorious actions.

IN/among ALL THEM/those THAT/who have BELIEVED- In Ps 89:7, etc Angels are referred to as His Saints. Here it's those who have believed in Him, and as a result have been saved, Acts 16:31, and united with Him in Sonship-suffering now, and glory then, Rom 8:14-18. SAINTS is what God's action made them. BELIEVED is their response. Both terms describe all God's Redeemed, from two different points of view. Paul is too concerned with the Lord, and His Glory to identify those who wonder and admire. The Angels who were interested in His work 1 Pet 1:12 will Glorify His Name in wonder, as will rebel principalities and powers, Eph 3:10.

Those people who refused to believe the Gospel, Acts 13:41, despised Him as being in no way attractive, Isa 53:1-3, and held His people in contempt / persecuted them, will gaze with amazement at the One they despised. And at the state of blessedness which they refused, but now see in what He has done with such unpromising Human material. They will see them as part of the Glory of the Lord, the Glory which excludes them and to which their rebellion has to bow, Phil 2:10.

the personal experience of the Martur= Witness. Our testimony - Paul had made the Gospel his own, acted on it, been submissive to it, and proclaimed the facts / demonstrated its power, and so passed it on to them. Their believing what he preached relates what he has been saying of the Lord's Coming directly to them and himself. "We belong in this scene. Our place there is assured, let's live the preparation to the full in spite of persecution."

IN THAT DAY- The OT "Day of Lord," as Isa 2 etc, 1 Th 5:2. THAT is Emphasized in the Greek construction. By returning to the main theme Paul makes sure that he keeps the Lord, His Coming, His Glory central by not leaving their part in it as final point. Am I in it? What will I be there? IS important. But must not be allowed to distract attention from the all important fact and nature of that Day.

#### 1:11-12. PRAYER THAT GOD WILL COMPLETE HIS WORK .

(In 1:3 Paul thanked God for their present state. He's been showing what the future holds. He now leads them to commit into God's hands the completion of His work in them, by doing so in this prayer. The Call to which they responded when they heard the Gospel, and the glorifying of the Lord in them, is something for the present as well as for the future.)

1:11. WHEREFORE/with this in mind ALSO WE PRAY ALWAYS/ constantly FOR YOU- His talking about praying is itself a prayer. Confidence that God is at work in them, and in their praiseworthy response, 1 Th 1:8; 2:13; 2 Th 1:10; and that they will be among those who Glorify the Lord at His Coming, moves Paul to both give thanks, and pray to God for this, 1 Th 1:2; 2:13; 3:9-10; 5:23-24; 2 Th 1:3; 2:13. He urges participating as fully as possible NOW to assure that they will in the future be what God purposes for them, 1 Th 4:1, etc. We should always pray that God will fulfil His purposes, and that men will play their part in it.

OUR GOD MAY COUNT YOU WORTHY- Axioo- Used in Lk 7:7; Acts 15:38; 1 Tim 5:17; Heb 3:3; 10:29. These make it clear that it's not a matter of earning worthiness, God doesn't COUNT men righteous, or worthy by some "Legal Fiction" without making them so - that would be immoral. Nor does He MAKE them so without their participation. They are decreed to be righteous, and Sons, by His creative Word, with their initial consent. He transforms them from within, working in them, both to be willing to, and to enable them to do His will, Rom 8:2-4, as they try to respond in obedient trust, Phil 2:12-13. As they co-operate with God on the basis of His Counting / decreeing them to be worthy, they become visibly / manifestly so, 1 Th 2:12.

Gospel of His Grace, and the natural preparation for the future Glory shared with our Lord, 2 Pet 1:1-11; Jude 20-25. Our present life will then be the appropriate preparation for the Glory ahead, as we go all-out to grasp what God's grace had in mind when it grasped us, Phil 3:8-14. We'll be worthy of the origin of the Calling - God, and His purpose in Calling us. Being made worthy amidst persecution is better than persecution ceasing.

CALLING- Klesis- In NT always God's Gospel invitation to men to accept Salvation with all its benefits. Paul brought his Gospel call to them, 1 Th 1:5, and they responded at a time when they weren't worthy, and couldn't make themselves so. We were all like that, Eph 2:1-10; Titus 3:3-7. God's Gospel call is to the worthiness of Christ-likeness, and In Christ He has made full provision for that, Rom 8:1-3, 28-30; 1 Cor 1:30; Col 1:9-23; Heb 2:10-11, 17-18, etc. Paul in his preaching, writing, and prayers constantly challenges us to not be content to spend life on the concerns of this world, which will all be burned up - and so enter Heaven "saved so as by fire." But, to build in fellowship with the Lord, on the basis of His work and will, that which will glorify Him, 1 Cor 3:11-15. Partial failure is inevitable but Paul concentrates on avoiding shipwreck in his own life, 1 Cor 9:27, and so should we maximise obedient fellowship with the Lord now, and triumphal entry then, 2 Pet 1:1-11.

Our responding to the initial Gospel Call, Rom 8:30; Eph 4:1, requires us to live in ways worthy of it. Only God can complete the work begun in us, Phil 1:6. His part is guaranteed, 1 Th 5:23-24. As Saving grace fits us for the future, we should reach out towards it! The heirs should value their heritage, and claim it as fully as possible now, secure but without pride, Rom 6:14, knowing that Grace reigns - at best we don't earn our keep, Lk 17:10. Our attempts may be mistaken, as was David's 2 Sam 7, yet he did what he could with what he had, 1 Chron 22; Mt 25:15-16; Mk 14:8; 2 Cor 8:12, and that was valued. From the Glory to be revealed at the Coming, Paul looks back to God's Call which gave them a place in it, and uses both as a lever to urge them to walk worthy of the origin and god of that call / their Salvation.

AND He may FULFIL- Pleroo- To make full, complete, fulfil the potential of what He has already begun in their lives.

ALL THE/Every- Every possible aspect and detail of their lives. All the diversity and complexity of them, following the initial response of 1 Th 1:3. Endurance of persecution, though a noble response to the Gospel, is not in itself sufficient fruit. The call, and the Glory aimed at require all round Christ-like behaviour - goodness is the goal.

GOOD PLEASURE/purpose- Eudokia- Good pleasure, be well-pleasing to, used of God's good pleasure, Mt 11:26; Lk 2:14; 10:21; Eph 1:5, 9; Phil 2:13, so that may be meant here. But, as it's in parallel with their work of Faith it may mean the desire to do good generated in the Believer in response to God's Grace, as Eudokia is used of Paul's desire in Rom 10:1, and probably in Phil 1:15.

Agathos= Good in character, and beneficial in effect, shown by kindly activity on behalf of others. It's used of human goodness in Rom 15:14, and as a fruit of the Spirit in the lives of Believers in Gal 5:22 Eph 5:9. "His" is not in the Greek. It's impossible to distinguish between the part played by God and man in a Godly life. All Goodness in our lives has God and His good pleasure as its source and enabling. Yet it's as we make His will our own will that the Goodness natural to God alone, Mt 19:17, is made effective in us by His Spirit, and applied to our every decision and action in dealing with others, Phil 2:12-15. God is being asked to work out His good pleasure, but it is in their lives, decisions, and actions. This could be stated as "May God turn all your good intentions into actions. Make it possible for you to do all the good you want to do"

WORK /every act OF /prompted by FAITH- #1:3. As in 1 Th 1:3, the work begotten by / arising from, Faith. As in Faith they turn to God's Word (The Faith) with the desire to know and do His will they attempt to put into practice what they read there. This describes the reality of a Godly, God-honouring life from our human perspective. But it isn't simply OUR activity.

WITH/by His POWER- #1:7. His all-sufficient power works in us triumphantly as we in conscious weakness place ourselves in His hands, 2 Cor 12:9-10, and attempt to live worthily. Paul prays for this. They have needs, and Paul can help to meet these, 1 Th 3:10, but apart from God's Power exercised through His indwelling Spirit all our good resolutions and efforts are fruitless, Lk 24:49, Jn 15:5; Acts 1:8; Col 1:29. God's power will enable them to respond to every impulse to do good and to complete every task undertaken in obedient Faith.

1:12. THAT THE NAME - We may think of a person's name merely as being what identifies him and there would be no point to a name unknown to others. But such a name indicating recognition of one's status and character is a great reward in Rev 2:17. In Bible times "Name" implied the authority, character, rank, role, majesty, power, excellence etc of the individual the name represented. See Ex 34:5-7; Ps 9:10; Phil 2:10-11; Heb 1:4; 2:12; Rev 15:4.

OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST MAY BE GLORIFIED IN YOU- This means that they would give an adequate representation of Him to the World, and so bring glory to Him. Read the Lord's prayer in Jn 17, where God is to be glorified in relation to His "Name" Father. Here it is the Lordship of Jesus that is to be displayed - His name / character as Lord - in their present choices and actions / responses to the call and grace of God, 1 Cor 6:20. And that determines the future Glory, which without the present grace and life has no existence. Only as we glorify God NOW, can we Glorify God THEN, "They Glorified God in me." Gal 1:24. The Lord Jesus will be honoured through what He works in us, as in 1:10. We glorify His Name "Lord" as we obey Him, "Saviour" as we let Him transform our lives, Gal 1:4-5, etc. And by what others appreciate and say of us who are known by His Name, Mt 5:16. Without this the praise of Him we proclaim with our lips

works had in mind the display of the Lord's Name as glorious.

YE / YOU IN HIM- The true unity of the Lord and His Body / Bride can be consummated / displayed only at His Revelation. But already we are honoured by His indwelling, Col 1:27, publicly associated with His Name, Jas 2:7, and live to Him, Rom 14:7-8; Phil 1:20. So, our daily desires and conduct either cause His Name to be cursed, Isa 52:5; Rom 2:23-24. Or praised, Mt 5:16, 2 Cor 9:13; 1 Pet 2:9-12. The measure of His mutual glorifying is the measure in which His people allow themselves to be transformed into His likeness, 2 Cor 3:18, and display goodness and working Faith, 2 Pet 1:3-4. He is the source of all the good and it's on the basis of His work, so it's His Glory that's displayed. But, by His Grace we're given a part in displaying it, Jn 17:10; Rom 8:18, 30; Phil 3:21; 2 Th 2:14. This will be made visible when He is revealed in Glory to the world that rejected Him. The shining forth of His Saviourhood, and Lordship, will be in us, and us in Him.

ACCORDING TO THE GRACE - #1:2. Grace is the joyous free favour of God. His unmerited kindness towards us. All the glory displayed on that Day, and enjoyed mutually forever, is produced by God's Grace which teaches us how to live, Titus 2:11-14, and enables us to respond, Rom 5:15-21; 6:14; Eph 2:5-7; Heb 4:16.

OF OUR GOD AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST- Read literally the Greek says that the Lord Jesus Christ is our God. This seems too blunt a statement for some, but even if it was intended only to express the Oneness of the Son and Father it is part of the whole pattern of Scripture which both asserts His Deity, as in Rom 9:5; Titus 2:13; 2 Pet 1:11, and equally speaks of Him as the Lord, representing and functioning visibly on behalf of the Father, 1 Cor 3:23 in something of a subordinate relationship: "The head of Christ is God," 1 Cor 11:3. Paul often attributes the same activities to both. Here he is stating that in that day the Grace of God that is revealed, and God who will be glorified, is GOD - Father Son, and Holy Spirit. Active and manifested in the Son, proclaimed in the Gospel, and to whom the Son, His work triumphantly finished, will deliver up the Kingdom, 1 Cor 15:22-25.

\*\*NOTE\*\* That we instinctively respond to such statements with an attempt to read into them some thought of equality / superiority / inferiority is a mark of our impudent sinfulness that assumes that like ourselves God is concerned with such matters. God is beyond our analysis or exposition. Our attention as readers is not directed to any imagined statement of the relative importance of the Members of the Godhead, but to God as the Source, Centre, and Goal of that Glory of the Grace of God. Away from ourself and our present and future blessedness, to the ONE to whom we owe it all, and without whom there is no existence or blessedness. May the Lord have mercy on us that we gladly give ourselves to Him in this.

## CHAPTER TWO.

2:1-12 THE WICKED / LAWLESS REBEL, and THE DAY OF THE LORD'S JUDGMENT INTERVENTION.

ideas. Such assaults come from Satan in his "Angel of Light" role, 2 Cor 11:1-15, 2 Pet 2:1-3, etc and may be more dangerous than his "Roaring Lion" persecution approach, 1 Pet 5:8-9. Paul's answer is the distinctive feature of the letter.)

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** Many commentators complain of uncertainty as to the writer's beliefs at the time of writing, difficult content, loose construction, cryptic statements designed to conceal the meaning from the civil authorities, etc. Their problem is that it doesn't line up neatly with their ideas of what Paul OUGHT to have been saying at what they imagine to have been "a primitive stage of the evolution of Christian belief." And they ignore the nature and purpose of God's Word.

Prophecy, Parables, etc aren't written in plain statements because many Spiritual truths can't be stated in such a way. What is written frustrates the proud efforts of self-seeking wisdom, but rewards the child-like trust of those who read it desiring to know God better, and to fellowship with Him in doing His will, Mt 11:25-26; 1 Cor 1:18-2:16. Writers of Scripture didn't necessarily understand all of what they wrote, 1 Pet 1:10-12. But their writing was over-ruled by God the Holy Spirit, 2 Pet 1:20-21, to speak to the needs of Believers in their varying circumstances, down through the years until "Faith gives place to sight." He ensures this, Jn 16:13; 1 Jn 2:20 with a view to effective, God-honouring lives and witness, 2 Tim 3:15-17.

It would have been no help for Paul to have said "Stop fidgeting, God won't intervene for 2000 years. What he wrote to steady them was written in a form able to steady Believers faced with the "End of the World / Claim the Kingdom Now" "Prophets" of Montanism in the 2nd century; the Anabaptists at the Reformation, etc. It's the answer to the JW's on our doorstep who dismiss the Gospel as irrelevant, claiming that Christ returned in 1914 and we're to join them in the Kingdom, and their "Kingdom Halls." And to Charismatic Christian friends, who ignoring Rom 8:23-25 may urge us to stop waiting for the redemption of the body, and claim the constant health, long life and prosperity of the Kingdom NOW, and to go out to make the nation obey "King Jesus." Equally it has steadied Believers under persecution with the assurance that God would intervene at the right time, with appropriate reward for what they were experiencing.

Once we accept that the vague comprehensiveness of what we read in this portion is God-designed, to speak to believers in all ages, we're set free to let it do just that. Every change in the world situation or our circumstances that points to the Second Coming will say to us "The Lord, MY Lord, may come at any moment, closing the door on all my problems and opportunities. I must lift up my head, hold the things of this world lightly and use them well, drawing ever closer to Him and my fellow Christians so as to increase the mutual joy of meeting Him." And, be proofed against the sensationalist "The Lord must come on / or by "X" date, or before "X" event." "Brother Branham is Elijah the Prophet, Jesus must return in his lifetime." "Bring back the King by Faith, Prayer, Frantic Evangelism" etc and the burn-out /disillusionment that results.

## 2:1-5 WARNING AGAINST FALSE TEACHING /APPEAL FOR STABILITY.

(Paul has set out the relationship between present suffering and future Glory. He reminds them that what they're experiencing can't be the start of the "Day of the Lord - God's

events; so with the Second Coming, each event in its proper order: His Coming and gathering us, 1 Th 4:13-18. The Restraint removed. Apostasy coming to a head in the "Man of Sin." And only THEN, the Day of the Lord - His manifestation in Judgment Glory.)

2:1. WE BESEECH/ask YOU BRETHREN/Brothers- #1:3. Paul's usual expression of warm affection and fellowship as he leads the reader on a step further.

BY/concerning- About, not an adjuration as in KJV. THE COMING- #Parousia- Para= With. Ousia= Being. Used of the Lord's Coming, and being present with us forever, as in 1 Th 4:13-18. Parousia was used of an Official Ceremonial Visit by an important Ruler, beneficial in its effect. The Lord's Parousia will be that for us. Parousia isn't used of the Incarnation as there was no ceremonial pomp then. What Paul teaches grows out of the general Jewish understanding of the OT, but as directed by the Holy Spirit. The expectation of Christ's return SOON is always associated with an interest in His return. The two are inseparable, and wax and wane together. The NT shows the Coming as the consummation of the present life not its cessation, and an incentive to living worthily,

OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST AND BY OUR GATHERING/ being gathered TOGETHER UNTO HIM- Episunagoge- A complete gathering together with Him permanently, 1 Th 4:17. Found elsewhere in the NT only in Heb 10:25, where it's used of our assembling to the Lord here and now, in worship. This experience now is a picture and foretaste of that great gathering together, and the Lord is central to both, Mt 18:20. As Christ hadn't come and gathered them out of the world, 1 Th 4:13-18, the Day of the Lord couldn't have begun (Episunagoge is used of the regathering of Israel into their land after the exile, LXX Isa 52:12.)

2:2. NOT SOON/not easily- We must not be eager to accept and spread suggestions about the Lord's Coming, or Judgment intervention. The Lord, His Coming, and being displayed in Glory are exciting, and important. But for that very reason require cautious thought and action lest it be trivialised by silly false claims. These are the Devil's tricks to disrupt our lives, and God's work, and make the idea of the Lord's Coming seem ridiculous.

SHAKEN/unsettled- Shaken as by a hurricane, made insecure, carried away from their rational, Bible-based beliefs and hopes by uncontrolled emotions, and wild hopes as a ship may be driven from its safe mooring by a storm. Or, they were in a state like a house shifted from its foundation and left insecure after a hurricane. In 1 Th 5:8 Paul urged the Helmet and Breastplate to protect thoughts and emotions. The rumour was robbing them of the strengthening comfort of 1 Th 4:13-18. They were being shaken out of their wits! Paul wants to calm the destructive excitement, and get them back to living to please the Lord and confident that in everything He is working out His purposes of Mercy and Judgment.

IN MIND- #Nous- That by which we are aware, take in ideas, and respond to them with thoughts / feelings, and so decide what we will believe, say, and



God-Honouring, Phil 4:4-9, especially in the spiritual / religious sphere. Paul warns against the exciting, shallow, silly-pseudo-pious froth Satan as "Angel of Light" offers as an alternative to what he suggests is the "Dull" realities of Bible Study, Prayer, and service that concentrates on Gospel witness, and practical Christian living. God does work wonders, wonderfully, but sensational stories, and bright new ideas are the enemy of stable rational Faith, living and working. If the Devil can't lull us into self-righteous contentment with deadness, he's just as pleased to distract us with Second Coming, Signs-and-Wonders excitement of credulous enthusiasm. With the Saving First Coming so recent, the Second Coming seeming near, how easy it must have been under severe persecution, to lose control of their imagination.

OR BE TROUBLED/alarmed- Threoo- To cry out in a panic of emotional distress, Mt 24:6. Being unsettled by adjusting to their new life, and acute persecution made it easy to jump to the conclusion that normal life was inappropriate, etc. They might not have been able to avoid the initial shock of nervous excitement, but must not give way to it, and lapse into a continued state of excitement /become addicted to it.

EITHER BY SPIRIT /prophecy- The first possible source of error /unsettling ideas was a Lying spirit inspiring a prophecy, OR a false claim that the Holy Spirit had given someone such a message. They'd been told to take Inspired messages seriously, and test them against the authentic Word of God already received, 1 Th 5:19-22 Cp 1 Cor 11:2-4; Gal 1:6-8; 1 Jn 4:1-2.

WORD /report- #Logos- Something said, a message spoken / expressed in words, a reasoned teaching statement, 1 Cor 12:8; 14:36 In Rom 3:8 Paul disowns as slander things people claimed that he had said. Even honest mental processes can introduce error, when they centre on oneverse, and ignore the balancing verses.

LETTER- A forged Letter, or false report that a letter existed that said this. It can't refer to a misinterpretation of 1 Th 2:14-18 - Jews under Judgment etc, or Paul would have said THE letter, and explained what he had meant as he does in 1 Cor 5:9-13. Cp Jn 21:21-23 He denies any connection with the idea.

AS/supposed to have come FROM US- Paul doesn't give the source of the unsettling rumours, but sets out the three possible sources of all such rumours. Spirit, the initial source of a spiritual revelation. That message expressed in Word Form, or it written down in final permanent form in a Letter, such as this Epistle.

THAT THE DAY OF CHRIST [RT]/the Lord [Nes]- While Jesus is both Lord and Christ His interventions in those roles are different both as to time, dealings, and those dealt with. NIV follows the evidence of the Greek MSS. They had been misled - not that Christ had Come and taken Believers home, 1 Th 4:13-18, but that the Judgment Day of the Lord, 1 Th 5:2-3 had already begun. (Joel 2:1-32, partly fulfilled on the day of Pentecost gives some of the elements of that day.)

events still to come, as in Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 3:22. See also its other uses in 1 Cor 7:26; Gal 1:4; 2 Tim 3:1; Heb 9:9, where it refers to something PRESENT, whether in the past, present, or a future time. (The KJV translators confused by the [RT] and judging that no-one could have imagined 1 Th 4:16 had happened opted for the unlikely "at hand." Paul makes clear what he is referring to as he continues to speak of that Day being prevented from coming, and the form it takes when at last it does come.

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** There was no reason why Paul should protest against a suggestion that the coming of the Lord to take the Saints Home was potentially near - He said it was himself, 1 Th 1:10; 4:13-18; Phil 3:20-21. But that it hasn't occurred yet is the first proof that the Day of the Lord in Judgment hasn't yet begun. Of course Scripture can be twisted and made destructive, 2 Pet 3:16. If Paul had already said something such as he wrote in Rom 6:4; 2 Cor 5:17; Phil 3:12-15, some might have been misled by Satan to assume that the Lord's Coming and our resurrection were simply a spiritual, present experience, not the final triumphant fulfilment of that which we can at present claim in a measure. Cp the popular watering down of 1 Th 4:13-18 to refer simply to what happens at the death of Christians. In 1 Cor 4:8 Paul says that some were acting as if they were already reigning as Kings - presumably claiming Kingdom rights and privileges. Mk 13:6 warns against being misled by people saying Christ has returned / been incarnated in such and such a figure. The only sense in which we're already in the "End Times" is that we are in Christ, and Christ has won the final victory triumphantly, and this victory could be enforced any day, But it hasn't been yet, we mustn't start thinking it MUST happen this year.. decade.. century, and so cease to live balanced lives.

2:3. LET NO MAN/Don't let anyone DECEIVE YOU- Exapatao- To deceive thoroughly. Used of Eve being deceived, 2 Cor 11:3. Paul is talking about their being deceived, not their misunderstanding what he'd said or written. Deceit is associated with Anti-Christ in 2 Jn 7. The idea that God's Judgment intervention had already begun, and that they were certain to be liberated into the Kingdom of Glory and power very soon would be so attractive in their suffering state - and so destructive of the good they sought. Any rash promises that the Lord must come within a limited time (Or must heal, etc) are a deception that sets people up for disillusionment. They become indifferent, or risk welcoming an impostor as Messiah, Mk 13:4-7.

BY ANY MEANS/in any way- Don't let anyone fool you in the least. FOR- Hoti- Probably causal= For you may be sure that. Unfinished as often when Paul's views are strong and he's emotionally involved. as with Gal 1:20 We must supply the missing words from what Paul has already said in the previous verse.

EXCEPT THERE COME A FALLING AWAY FIRST/rebellion occurs- Apostasia- The word was used of political and military rebellions, but here it is rebellion against God. Used in LXX Josh 22:22, Jer 2:19, etc of Israel's rebellious denial of God, and transgression of His Laws. From the

to make Jews forsake their God and His Law, 1 Mac 2:15. Jews used it in accusing Paul of teaching Jews to ABANDON the Law of Moses, Acts 21:21.

The word suggests that those disowning God, and His right to direct their lives had previously professed to, or in some way seemed to belong to Him. A measure of Apostasy always exists - The Jews disowning their Messiah, those at Thessalonica who heard and rejected the claims of the Gospel, and those around us in Christendom, having drifted away from God's Word, now actively disowning / denying / defying Christ, 2 Pet 2:1. With people paid as "Christian Ministers" preaching that Christ hasn't risen, the morality needed to please Him, and the future Heaven and Hell he taught are said to be make-believe, Judgment becomes inevitable unless delayed by repentance. Rom 1:18-32 describes the Apostasy of all mankind from the Creator who they disown by denying His claims on their lives.

All such apostasy points to THE Apostasia- A world-wide political rebellion / religious apostasy that claims to replace God, and His Law. THE apostasy that embodies, heads up, climaxes apostasy - as THE Anti-Christ does all antichrists, 1 Jn 2:18. Naming it THE Apostasy, shows they already knew about it, and there was enough evidence already for Believers to be able to understand the final apostasy, and the final Anti-Christ.

Both are being defined while still in the embryonic state, so as to be recorded in Scripture. A wide-spread deliberate defiance of God becomes the awful, final rebellion that experiences the awful final Tribulation and Judgment. It's the culmination of MAN's Day, when his decision to follow Satan and try to be his own "God" reaches its final defiant folly that makes it appropriate for God to step in and act in the Day of the Lord.

THAT MAN- Anthropos- A human being. OF SIN- Hamartia- [RT] The most comprehensive term for sin in the NT. It's used of the governing principle or power of evil in the life of the natural man, the root and source of all acts of sin. The MAN of sin will be a human being, Satan's tool, 2:9, not a system, influence, etc. He will be totally identified with, and totally tuned in to SIN / LAWLESS REBELLION, and most effectively expressing it in his words and actions. The embodiment of all that's unholy, false and evil - as Christ is the embodiment of all that's holy, good, and true. Satan's ideal man, in contrast to God's ideal man. A man over whom sin holds absolute sway, who is against all revelations of God's will. In fact he claims he IS God, so his will is the only LAW.

Or,

Of Lawlessness- #Anomia- [Nes] Wicked Lawlessness. A= Negative, Nomos= Law. In 1 Cor 9:21 it means mere ignorance of the Law. But the usual meaning is the deliberate, arrogant, wilful setting of self above God's Law. This Man will make his own will the Law for everyone. It's helpful to Follow the meaning of Anomia in Mt 7:22, 13:41; 23:28 Rom 4:7, as the opposite of Righteousness, 2 Cor 6:14; Heb 1:9; and in 1 Jn 3:4 Sin /

Anomos, Mk 15:28 He was crucified with Anomos hands, Acts 2:23 For Belial LXX uses Anomia in 2 Sam 22:5; Ps 18:4, and Apostasia in 1 Ki 21:13.

Anomia is probably the original word as it's best supported in the older MSS, and used in 27, and Anomos 2:8. In any case he is the man defined by SIN /LAWLESS REBELLION. A great world figure, the embodiment of sin and rebellion against God and the Gospel. Leadership in the Apostasy /Rebellion is named /characterised elsewhere as being Anti-Christ, 1 Jn 2:18; the little horn, Dan 7:8, 24b-26; The King of fierce features, Dan 8:23-25 of the North, Dan 11:6, of South, Dan 11:40; wilful King, Dan 11:36; Gog, Ezek 38-39:11; Worthless Shepherd, Zech 11:17; One coming in own Name, Jn 5:43; Beast out of the Sea, Rev 13:1 /earth, Rev 13:11; Scarlet beast, 7 heads, 10 horns, Rev 17:3, 8-14. As so many names are used, and at least two characters are involved - Beast and False Prophet stand together in Rev 19:20 our business is to avoid following that kind of person / that kind of attitude, not analysing in detail.

BE /is REVEALED- #Apokalupto- To uncover, unveil, so as to present the whole truth / situation to the eyes of the spectators. Evil will come to a head, and be revealed in its masterpiece-man BEFORE the Lord is revealed as God's answer to evil. Paul is interested in teaching that he will be revealed, not in detailing the events that lead to it. The hour makes / reveals the Man. The wicked One's claim is a deceptive parody of the Coming of the Lord.

THE SON OF PERDITION/man doomed to destruction- Apoleia- Destruction, as Loss of well-being, not loss of being. It's used of The waste or ruin of something- ointment Mt 26:8, Christians wasting their lives, Phil 3:19, Destructive heresies, 2 Pet 2:1. Apoleia /Destruction is the opposite of Soteria /Salvation 1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 2:15; Phil 1:28 "Son of" in Hebrew defines Character, and the group to which a person belongs, Isa 57:4, etc. In this case he belongs in Hell, because his character is that of those whose only possible future is Hell. Judas is called this, Jn 17:12. A man so much under the power of /devoted to the service of, Perdition that it is his identifying characteristic.

2:4. OPPOSETH/opposes- Sets himself against. It's used of those who opposed the Lord Jesus in Lk 13:17; His people, 21:15; 1 Cor 16:9; Phil 1:17; 1 Tim 5:14; His doctrine 1 Tim 1:10. Satan is the Opposer, Zech 3:1, and the attitude and actions of his man conform to Satan's character.

EXALTEH/exalts HIMSELF ABOVE /over- The attitude that he and his will are all-important. We see this at times in strong-willed toddlers, and dictators like Hitler. Here this arrogant folly adopted by mankind in the garden of Eden, that's natural to Satan, will reach perfection in a man whose word is Law for the whole world. One article covers opposes / exalts and together they sum up the character of his Anti-God person. Present participle - the opposing and exalting are a continuous attitude.

words of the Lord that became Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14.

ALL/everything CALLED GOD OR . WORSHIPPED- Not content to be treated as one of the gods as Roman Emperors were, he demands that ALL devotion and loyalty be directed to himself. He will claim to be, act, and speak as if he was superior to every person / thing said by anyone, anywhere to be God, or worshipped / honoured / served in any way. "I come FIRST. No rival Gods, heroes, ideologies, traditions permitted." Cp Prayers to Darius only, Dan 6 Or the recent attempt in Communist countries to stamp out all Religion. God made clear from Gen 3 onward that there is a Personal Evil Power, Satan. Something of his character and working was recognised in the Kings of Babylon, Isa 14:12-14; Tyre, Ezek 28:12-17, and in Dan 11:31-36 This will be his Man.

HE AS GOD SITTETH IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD/even sets himself up in the Temple of God- Naos- The Holy of Holies, associated with the presence of God. Literally He sits himself into / actively takes his seat - Aorist, a definite action with ongoing effect. To do so suggests he is perfectly at home there, and that any rival or opposition has already been dealt with. Taking the Place of God publicly marks him as Anti-Christ, and his blasphemous action fits the middle of the Tribulation period, Dan 9:27; Mt 24:15. To SIT marks a minimum of respect, a maximum of insult.

SHOWING/proclaiming HIMSELF - Apodeiknumi- used of a proclamation of Sovereignty /accession to the throne.

THAT HE IS/to be GOD- Brushing aside all "Gods," as irrelevant myths, and he himself represents the answer to all humanity's needs, the One who would bring personal fulfilment, peace, and prosperity, the answer to the prayers of mankind. OR, in the Jewish setting accepted as their Messiah. Cp The Golden Calf, Ex 32:4. Describes a settled state, following installation as King, etc as of right. The Defilement of God's Temple was foretold of the "End Times," Dan 7:8, 25; 8:13-14; 9:26-27; 11:30-32; 12:11; Mk 13:14, God's destruction of His enemies in it, Isa 66:6, and its cleansing, Mal 3:1-3. This is an on-going subject, with various partial fulfilments.

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** Antiochus Epiphanes, who claimed to be a manifestation (Epiphaneia, #2:8) of Zeus, entered the Holy of Holies and plundered the Temple, 160BC. He placed a statue of Zeus there which remained for 3 years, and offered a Sow on the altar, 1 Mac 1:54->, etc. He was seen as fulfilling Dan 11:36 Pompey also entered the temple in 63BC. A further application was made by the Lord Jesus when he spoke of a future "Abomination of Desolation," Mk 13:14; Mt 24:15-16. There, "Let the reader understand" may mean "Read and Re-apply / understand that this applies to this event."

The horror of this revived in AD 40-41 when Caligula attempted to place a statue of himself in the Temple, and it was seen as applying to him. But he was murdered. When Paul was writing, Claudius had adopted the title LORD Caesar, but Paul points forward to it being relevant to a person /event still in the future. It was seen as relevant to the Jewish War situation, AD 66-70, and the destruction

claimed worship as "Lord and God." Later again John saw it as relevant to a Future Anti-Christ beyond the Anti-Christ's rising around him, as Paul saw the mystery of iniquity operating.

Beyond NT authorised applications people continued to look for fulfilments. Often, as in 22, being too quick to apply it to their current experience. This prophecy they thought was about to be fulfilled by various persecuting Roman Emperors, up to the Edict of Diocletian, AD 303 Constantine's "Conversion" changed that, and later the Orthodox Church nominated Mahomet, the Roman Church various Barbarian invaders as they came and went. All of these caused real suffering to Christians, but increasingly personal antagonism influenced those who accused each other. In 600 Pope Gregory associated Orthodox Patriarch John with Anti-Christ because he called himself the "Universal Bishop." Then the next pope took the title himself. In 13th Century, Frederick II and Pope Gregory IX called each other Anti-Christ.

At the Council of Rheims, 901, Amulf Bishop of Orleans said "If the Roman Pontiff was destitute of Charity, and puffed up with knowledge he would be Anti-Christ." Franciscan John Oliva said "Some affirm that Anti-Christ would be a False Pope." Wycliffe in 1384 gave 12 reasons for identifying the Pope - any pope as such - with Anti-Christ. This became the settled conviction of the Reformers - See preface to the KJV Bible. There was good reason for this. Will Durant, "The Age of Faith" P. 784 wrote "Compared with the persecution of heresy in Europe from 1227 to 1492 the persecution of Christians by the Roman Emperors was a mild and humane procedure." The more recent tendency has been to look to dictators like Napoleon, Mussolini, or Hitler as the "Man of Sin."

The Prophecy, even if mis-understood and mis-applied, has kept alive the promise, and challenged each generation to live for God. It does have multiple fulfilment - and the successive embodiments of Godlessness, Lawlessness, and Wickedness all point forward to one ultimate man who will embody fully what they embodied in part. Many have displayed some of His characteristics, but each has faded into oblivion. Evil is yet to come to its full head, and be destroyed by the Brightness of the Lord's Coming. At the same time what is written encourages us to hold fast to the Lord and His truth, whatever lesser evil we may face in our generation.

WHAT TEMPLE? That the secular State of Israel might permit the rebuilding of a Temple, with the needed Moslem approval, is not easily imagined. And would it be "The Temple of GOD?" Ezekiel describes a Temple built in restored Israel, but that is AFTER the Lord returns and sets up his Kingdom.

"Paul may be speaking of Anti-Christ infiltrating and capturing Christendom," John Stott. Paul called the Church "God's temple," Eph 2:21. The Lord is its head, Eph 5:23 Col 1:18. Believers on earth gather with Him in the midst, as an invisible spiritual "House of God." No man could take God's place in the reality of that, but Popes, and others, have often usurped God's prerogatives in the visible "Church." For years Popes mis-ruled Europe in His Name. When the Lord removes His Church, 1 Th 4:13-18, the organised Church structures will remain intact, and with no Bible-based, Holy Spirit-moved members with their scruples to

the "Rome," of Rev 17 and 18 The momentum for union, and the show of the pretend-miraculous is already building up The stage is set for a super-pope of a super-church to claim to be God on earth.

Note contrasting parallels between the Wicked one / Christ: Apocalypse- 2:4 / 1:7. Gospel of Lies 2:11 / Truth 2:10, 12. Claim exclusive authority 2:4 / Phil 2:10-11. Claim supported by Signs 2:9 / Heb 2:3-4. One a parody of the other step by step, yet totally opposite.

2:5. REMEMBER- Cp "Remember Christ Jesus raised from the dead," 2 Tim 2:8= Live your life in the constant awareness of the risen Christ. So here it's essential that we keep in mind, value, remain loyal to God-given Apostolic teaching, and use it to guide our thinking and action. God has chosen to give us this in such general terms that it discourages divisive dogmatism as to the exact meaning. The understanding needed isn't that of experts. They were young in the Christian Faith, as were the "Little Children" who knew about "Anti-Christ" that John wrote to, 1 Jn 2:18-27.

WHEN I WAS YET WITH YOU I TOLD/used to tell YOU- Imperfect tense= repeated instruction. They needn't have been fooled and unsettled if only they'd taken full notice of Paul's teaching.

2:6-7 SATAN'S HIDDEN WORKING OF WICKED LAWLESSNESS IN THE WORLD, and THE RESTRAINER.

2:6. NOW YE/you KNOW- #1:8. Already as a result of Paul's Gospel preaching they could see beneath the surface of world events and realise that they involved both Satanic rebellion, and restraint on it, and the purpose of the Restraint. Paul would now extend their understanding of what was involved.

WHAT WITHHOLDETH/is holding him back- #Katecho- Kata= down/intensive. Echo= to have or hold. Used positively of holding on to a message, Lk 8:15 etc. But also negatively of Law holding us prisoner Rom 7:6, etc. Restraining THING- Neuter, here, a restraining PERSON-Masculine, 2:7. Both prefixed by THE, so it refers to something / someone specific they were expected to know, not something obscure and surprising.

THAT HE MIGHT/may- The purpose that is involved in the present process, and also the result. While Satan has throughout the years acted through all sorts of political dictators and religious frauds, God has over-ruled to limit their power and success. Satan's all-powerful dictator will one day BE REVEALED- #2:3

IN HIS/at the proper TIME - Kairos- A set or proper time, season, with its own characteristic, Eg harvest time. So, the right, proper, appropriate time will

God-defying, humanity-debasing power. It will be Man's hour of triumph - a world united in independence of God with a mastery over his environment won by scientific progress. It will be Satan's hour of opportunity taken and used to powerfully enslave the whole world. Beyond all that it is the appropriate season for God to allow rebellion to come to its full fruit and destroy it utterly, and finally, at the time when it is obvious that no other Righteous, Loving, and Wise action is possible. God over-rules the WHEN of Satan's human dupes being released from restraint and allowed to triumph as they have always wished to. As with Christ's First Coming, Mk 13:32 Acts 1:7; 1 Tim 6:15, there is a proper time for this.

2:7. MYSTERY/secret power- Musterial- Something known only to the Musterial= the initiated. God has revealed in Scripture the fact that Satan is at work, and the consequences - Wheat and Tares, Mt 13:25-30 There's a secret evil person, power and purpose hidden behind all the evil, sin, shame and misery in this world, 1 Jn 2:18; 4:3. Sin isn't just the impulsive folly of ignorant humanity. Behind its lawless rebelliousness is a deliberate, cunning, organised opposition to God, Eph 6:11-12, working within society. God has revealed this to us, and we should take it into account always, 1 Th 5:1-9. It, and its consequences, inevitably remains hidden to the Godless involved in Satan's work, because they refuse the light of truth, life, and salvation offered in Christ, Rom 16:25; 2 Cor 4:3-6. When it's suddenly revealed in its fullness, apparently successfully defying God, it will be seen to have been the logical climax of a long-term hidden process. Cp the sudden appearance of Field Mushrooms when the year-long invisible growth in the soil reaches maturity, and their eruption is triggered by appropriate weather.

INIQUITY/lawlessness- #2:3. The Power of Evil that will be headed up in the Man of Sin / Lawlessness for the final show-down is already at work beneath the surface of society and religion. See Leaven, Mt 13:33 the rise of error, Acts 20:28-30 Satan, 2 Cor 11:1-4, 13-15; 2 Pet 2:1-3, etc. It will come to a head in an outward show of Religion, 2 Tim 3:5, which the Lord disowns at His Coming, "Depart.. that work Anomia / Lawless iniquity," Mt 7:23

ALREADY at WORK - Energeia- To work actively, effectively. Used of the working of God / His Word, Phil 2:13; 1 Th 2:13, and of Sin / Death / Satan, Rom 7:5; 2 Cor 4:12; Eph 2:2. A tremendous rebelliousness against God was stirring beneath the surface, concealed behind plausible movements, including every deceiving rumour 2:1-2, and persecution, 1 Th 2:14. Any and every evil can be seen to make the rise of the Wicked One / the Lord's Coming imminent, for those who expect it. Presumptuous folly claims to know too much, but there is in fact an underlying purpose of Satan - and a limiting and over-ruling purpose of God, Ps 76:10, 2 Th 1:4-5. Sin was working in society, God, working in them, 1 Th 2:13.

ONLY HE/but the one WHO NOW LETTETH/holds it back- #2:6. There is something / Someone that at present holds back the work of iniquity, and prevents Evil coming to a full head.



Ginomial- To become. Mesos- Midst. Lit "Until out of the midst it comes."  
Not, taken out of the way by another power.

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** WHAT/WHO is restraining? A great deal of learned folly has been written on this subject. Some even suggesting Satan, as if he would restrain his agents, Lk 11:17-18. Others suggest the Jewish state. Or, the Roman State restraining a wicked Roman Emperor. Paul did value the ordered Government of the Roman Empire, and his Roman citizenship, but it would soon be persecuting the Christians. Rome features in prophecy as against God, and God's servants rejoice at its fall, Rev 17, and 18. In no sense could it be restraining now. IF Paul had meant Rome, he could have said so plainly. That Christians valued the Empire as the bulwark against Evil and feared its passing would have been a most patriotic view.

Government is a better suggestion, as it does restrain lawlessness, Rom 13:1-4, but it can't restrain Satan, and has often been his tool. And it's Government, that's ordained of God, (Nero ruled when Paul wrote. Caligula had come and gone.) not GOOD Government. There will be no lack of Government power being exercised under the Man of Sin, so Government isn't taken out of the way.

The power that restrains evil must be good and have greater supernatural power than Satan. It was God who restrained Satan in Job 1:12; 2:6. The Holy Spirit is spoken of as having a restraining role, Gen 6:3; 1 Sam 16:14; Jn 16:7-11; 1 Jn 4:4. As the Greek word Pneuma / Spirit is neuter, the neuter is rightly used of the Holy Spirit in Rom 8:16, as here in 26. As He is a Person the masculine is rightly used, in Jn 14:26; 15:26; 16:8, 13, 14, as here in 27. It is God's will that Judgment should not fall on this world until the Gospel is proclaimed world-wide, Mt 24:14; Mk 13:10, and He delays Judgment with a view to the conversion of sinners, 2 Pet 3:9.

God is Omnipresent, and there's no suggestion that the Holy Spirit ceases to be involved in God's providential intervention in this world, the empowering of His witnesses, Rev 11:3-4, etc. But, precisely in the sense that at Pentecost He CAME into this world in the role of bringing the Church, the body of Christ, into being, and indwelling every individual member of it, when 1 Th 4:13-18 comes true He will CEASE to be in its midst, in this world. The Parousia reverses Pentecost. As long as the Church is in the world He empowers its witness, adds members to it, and continues to work through it, making Believers the salt of the earth, preserving it from corruption, and the light of the world discouraging evil, Mt 5:13-14; Jn 3:19. We will no longer be present in this world in that role when 1 Th 4:13-18 occurs. That the Restrainer is currently active in this way in the Church and the Believers the readers knew from Scripture, and from experience. The Holy Spirit acting in us, and on behalf of us and the Gospel, readily fits the role of Restrainer.

With the Church taken Home, the Holy Spirit is free to work in / witness to and through Jewish people as the time to "Restore the Kingdom to Israel," will have come, Acts 1:6-7, on the terms Peter proclaimed, and the Rulers and Nation ignored, Acts 3:18-26. In the wise purposes of God this involves not the restraint of man's rebellion, but its revelation. The nominally-Christian, human-run Church Organisation that remains will be no restraint on evil. In fact it could readily set

2:8-12 The SATANIC STRATEGY, its BRIEF TRIUMPH in THE WICKED / LAWLESS REBEL, under God's permissive will, and the LORD'S FINAL JUDGMENT INTERVENTION.

2:8. THEN- Paul turns from the situation NOW, while the Restrainer prevents the full Revelation of rebel wickedness, to His removal that allows the wicked one to be manifested. While that is the next step in the development of God's purposes, when that will happen is unstated, and we're not told here how long it will take the process of 2:9 to reach completeness - and when ripe, be destroyed.

THE WICKED/lawless ONE - Anomos- Singular- Lawlessness embodied in a man. The Rebel against God, and His revealed will. Paul, writing to encourage those suffering the impact of oppressive evil, wasn't interested in the career of that man. He emphasises the Lawless One's place in the sovereignty of God, and then speaks of his destruction.

BE REVEALED- #2:3 WHOM THE LORD Jesus- Jesus is omitted in some Mss but in any case He is the LORD, God's man born under the Law, Gal 4:4, in contrast to the Lawless man of Satan.

SHALL CONSUME- [RT]- To use up, consume, destroy. OR Overthrow- Anelei [Nes]- Slay, as in LXX Isa 11:4. Probably scribes unaware of his association changed andei to analisko as "Consume" seemed more logical with "Mouth."

WITH THE SPIRIT/breath OF HIS MOUTH- Not likely to be consumed by his fiery breath in spite of 1:7-8. It echoes LXX Isa 11:4 "He will smite the earth with the word of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips destroy the wicked." A vivid picture, though the use of "Breath" seems odd to us, cp Ex 15:8; Job 49; Ps 29:3-6; 33:6; Isa 30:33; Jer 25:30-33 Idols have no breath and are powerless. The life breath of the Living God is powerful. The arrogant, ruthless Man of Sin, the Superman in his glory, being like a dust mote in the sunshine, blown away at the slightest breath of the Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus triumphed over Evil on the Cross, Phil 2:9-11; Col 2:15, but He will enforce /Apply that victory for the Universe to see when He returns in Judgment, 1 Cor 15:20-28 Rev 20 To know that even Satan's masterpiece of Powerful Anti-God violence will not stand a moment when faced by the Lord, strengthens and comforts those who know they are on His side. The Lord's coming is relevant to all the lives of all of us, as it gives God's eternal verdict on the true value of every option we face. Paul is writing encouragement, and goes straight to the point with a vivid picture of God's almighty power acting at His sovereignly chosen time.

word usually describes a definite action, Eg a marriage ending with the husband's death, Rom 7:2. A Christian's obligation to the law ending at his conversion, Rom 7:6. At the Lord's Coming all Satan's work is brought to nothing. See Rev 19:11-20

WITH/by THE BRIGHTNESS /splendour- #Epiphaneia- A shining forth upon Used of the Lord's coming in glory and setting up His Kingdom. The blazing brightness and Coming are inseparable. Both Parousia /Presence, and Epiphaneia /Manifestation, shining forth, were used by the Greeks of the Gods appearing to save humans OR the splendid state visit of an Emperor. Epiphaneia was used of a confrontational appearance, as here - His Glory confronting his enemies to their utter demoralisation and defeat, as in Mt 24:27-30

HIS COMING- #2:1. As in 1 Th 2:19, 3:13; 4:15; 5:23 but his "Parousia" isn't welcomed, as is that in 1 Th 4:13-18, as it's also a confrontational "Epiphany." His Power and Glory is displayed in His saving His people, and in executing Judgment on his enemies. Follow the word through 1 Tim 6:14; 2 Tim 1:10; 4:1, 8. Titus 2:13. Epiphaneia is used in Acts 2:20 "Parousia" emphasises Presence. The Lord is with us now, in a sense but will be so fully, visibly, the total reality of our environment. "Epiphaneia" refers to His presence as the visible manifestation of God's power and love coming to His people's need. "Apokalupsis" 1:7, is the revelation of God's Purposes coming to their fulfilment. The rise of the Maccabees was seen as being an Apokalupsis in response to Antiochus Epiphaneia as man of Sin. But that was only a partial picture of the coming oppressor, and Deliverer /Deliverance.

2:9. COMING- #2:1. The Anti-Parousia of the Anti-Christ. Not Satan incarnate, but his puppet. An insolent parody of God incarnate, so same words used of both.

SATAN- The powerful rebel angel opposed to God, His people, and all good. Our Lord made clear that those who rejected Him, were Satan's children, Jn 8:44. His working was involved in hindering Paul, 1 Th 2:18. Paul doesn't under-estimate the enemy, but shows him as he is in God's sight. The processes involved in the Rebel's Coming will be appropriate to the nature, character, aims, of Satan.

WITH/displayed in ALL means every kind of POWER/counterfeit miracles- #1:7. Dunamis, in the plural can mean miracles, works of power, but here it is singular. So, All kinds of Power, or Power in the highest degree, (demonstrated in all kinds of signs and wonders.)

SIGNS- Semeion- Used of miracles which by registering on human senses revealed something of God, His power, wisdom, love, holiness, etc. and so supported a message. The resurrection of Jesus, the sending of the Holy Spirit, and subsequent miracles were SIGNS that Jesus was indeed Messiah, and atoning sacrifice, and that the Apostles were His authorised

4. True signs of truth, But here deceiving signs, supporting a lie.

LYING/false- Something intended to deceive. When Satan is free to act, he may well empower real miracles, but even if so they come from a Liar and Deceiver, so their purpose and result is deception. Truth comes from God, and is safe, and saving. These signs and wonders are intended to deceive. They confirm the truth-rejectors in their wrong ways, and give apparent confirmation to the Man of Sin's claims. So they must occupy a period of time during /after his revelation, and before his destruction by the Coming of the Lord. Cp the miracles of the False Christ's Mt 24:24; Mk 13:22, and those done by the 2nd Beast of Rev 13:13.

WONDERS- Teras- Something strange that makes people wonder. A sign appeals to the understanding, a wonder to the imagination.

2:10. WITH ALL DECEIVABLENESS /that deceives- Apate- That which gives a false impression as do riches, Mt 13:22 Sin, Heb 3:13, Lusts, Eph 4:22 ALL= every kind of /all possible / to the fullest extent.

UNRIGHTEOUSNESS /evil- #Adikia- A= Not, Dike= Right. Whatever isn't right with God, His revealed will, or the standard of human conscience. Deceit is wicked, and wickedness is deceitful. It deceives those who practice it, who end in hell, and often are miserable in this life. His wickedness will deceive /in a wicked way he will deceive. As in Eden, Wickedness, anti-God, anti-human, will use his every deceitful trick to deceive mankind, and they will prefer that to God's plan for them. Deceit originates in wickedness, fulfills its purposes, and results in it. An equivalent to Rebellion / Anomia. Satan may seem to be an Angel of light, in promoting "Good" rebellion, but the purpose and outcome is unchanged.

PERISH/are perishing- Apollumi- To ruin/be ruined for their intended purpose as the wineskins were DESTROYED, Lk 5:37. Those who are perishing, present participle, a continuous process, leading to a certain result, 1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 2:15; 4:3. "Perishing" describes the class of people who follow, and share the rightful fate of, the Son of Perdition, 2:3; 1 Cor 1:18. It isn't something done to them - they aren't being perished. Their state is determined by their own choice. Being saved, is the result of submitting to God's choice.

BECAUSE - The Greek means they get what justice must give them in view of their actions. There's a plain reason for their sad state as with Herod, Acts 12:23 They're not mere dupes. God doesn't allow that to happen Nor unwilling victims of Satan's snares, or God's (imaginary) negative election. The cause of their damnation lies in themselves, in their reaction to God and Satan, Mt 23:37.

RECEIVED NOT/refused to- Dechomai- To receive deliberately and readily what is offered. Used in 1 Th 1:6; 2:13 of the Believers' response to the Gospel. These were not happy to hear it. Any refusal to love / accept the truth carries with it the penalty that it helps the rejectors to believe the false alternatives. Aorist tense - looks back to a specific point at which they

necessarily saw it, or verbalised it, as such. They preferred not to respond to God and the Gospel, when God sought to awaken this love / desire. This is why they perish. Why deceit inevitably wins their co-operation. Whatever we believe about election, the lost carry the responsibility for their damnation.

THE LOVE - #1:3. Selfless, self-sacrificing love. They refuse to listen to the truth, because it threatens self-will, self-centredness etc. There is an inevitable cost to self in any positive response to truth.

TRUTH- #Aletheia- Truth, adequately revealed - nothing forgotten or hidden. A= Not. Letho- to forget. Lanthano= to escape notice. The Gospel presents the truth about human nature, the consequences of human choices, and the Saviour who is the Truth, Jn 14:6; Eph 4:21, and who is the answer to all human needs. It's not that they made a conscious, rational rejection of the Gospel from God who is The Truth, and who offers Himself to men in it. They made sure they didn't reach that stage by refusing to let any desire to know the truth about sin and salvation gain a foothold in their thinking. Paul goes straight to the heart of things. The Truth / Lie accepted and lived in, decides Salvation / Damnation, Heb 10:26 See also 2Cor 4:2; Eph 2:8; 2Tim 2:25; 1Pet 1:22 Truth includes the witness of Creation, Rom 1:18-20 The refusal of truth opens the door to all sorts of error, Rom 1:21-28 Those who reject the love of the truth, automatically set themselves up to fall for the attractive-to-self lie.

THAT THEY MIGHT/and so BE SAVED- In refusing to want to know the truth, especially that concerning themselves, sin, God, and Salvation they made that Salvation impossible for them, 1Th 2:16. Their being saved was God's purpose in providing Salvation 1Tim 2:4-6; 2Tim 1:9; Titus 3:7, and Paul's purpose in preaching it, 1Cor 10:33 Being saved would have been the result if they had received that Gospel. Others welcomed the truth in order to be saved, because Salvation was their goal, and as a result were saved. These didn't and as a result are perishing / open to deception / find it attractive, and will continue in that state unless they repent. Be saved is Passive - God's action, not they should save themselves. The Truth exists, and is brought to men so that they might be saved. God has no pleasure in the Death of the wicked, Ezek 33:11. Choosing to reject the truth, they remain ignorant of the magnitude both of the cost, and the blessing offered. And of the Godless eternity they chose in choosing a Godless life here and now. (This section answers a serious question - If the Gospel was true, and the consequences so vast, why didn't everyone accept it?)

2:11. FOR THIS CAUSE /reason- The refusal of Saving Truth. GOD SHALL SEND/sends THEM- Paul has written of Satan, and his Agent, the Man of Sin, their evil workings, triumph and final disaster. As he writes of those who choose to follow them he sets all this in its place in the Sovereignty of God, and His righteous actions. Evil operates with His permission, among those who qualified for it by their ignoring / refusing God's Grace. This leaves them in Adam's rebellion, Satan's legitimate sphere. God's sending isn't His primary activity, which is directed at the production of those who

He, as ultimate source of Creation / Redemption, has provided for man. The flip side of Salvation offered to those who receive / believe is that refusal to believe, preferring the Lie, automatically involves believing and receiving the Lie.

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** This is a Judicial action. It might seem to the persecuted Christians that Evil was all-powerful and triumphant, and it would be even more so when the Man of Sin ruled the World, But God remains in control. He restrains sin NOW. And when the Man of Sin triumphs, he will be able to deceive only those who have already refused the love of the Truth, and chosen the lie which he embodies. Within God's will, men are allowed to have their own way NOW, And, if that is Satan's way, they will by God's decree share it fully then, and the fate which is its just desert.

God who permits evil, subject to limitations, decrees that those who refuse to eat, starve. Beyond that, every step of sin leads on to a further stage, and this takes place by God's decree. God sends a working of error on those who love error and they gladly receive and live in it. Those who in Rom 1:26-27 saw themselves as enjoying sexual pleasure in defiance of God were in fact receiving God-ordained recompense for their having chosen those sins.

Behind the Moral Law of cause and effect is a Moral God, who intervenes into its workings only in Mercy. He created the universe and set it running on His principles. He ordered it for His purposes. He over-rules it also. God isn't passive. He uses the very defiance of Satan and man to play their part in His purposes. Satan's act in 1 Chron 21:1 is described as God's act in 2 Sam 24:1. God will send, in that future day, but the present participle indicates that what happens in a hidden restrained form now, will then be seen in full, Rom 1:18-32

Faced with the folly, misery, and evil of this world it's easier to find fault with God and His Creation, than it is to receive the love of the truth and seek the truth from Him. When God had created the world, in His perfect insight he saw it as very good. But it held the potential for incredible Excellence - God's purpose that Mankind should be in His Image and likeness. This involves our being created with the freedom to choose what we will be. (Try imagining a totally obedient Robot, programmed to be God!)

God doesn't give and take back, Rom 11:29. Doesn't make offers, and cancel them when the way they are taken up displeases Him. He knew from the first that Satan would rebel. Knew that Adam and Eve would grasp the option Satan offered. He accepted this and created man knowing that He in the person of the Son must be made sin for us that He might bring many sons and daughters home to Glory in His likeness, Heb 2:9-11. He gave His Son, in infinite Love, at infinite cost, for their Salvation, and they refused Him, Heb 10:26-31. They will now receive one who comes in his own authority Jn 5:43

What Satan does is within the permissive will of God and appropriate to God's righteous character and purposes, as He always provides a way of escape, 1 Cor 10:13, which the Damned refused. In this God is acting morally, Jn 12:36-50 15:18-25. God doesn't delude them into this state, but acts according to their state of having chosen delusion. Rewarded according to their works Rev 20:12.

He refuses light, and has darkness. Hardens himself, and will be hardened. Shuts God out and will be left desolate, Mt 23:37-38 Refuses truth, and will have total deceit. Refuses eternal life, and will have eternal death.

Any idea of God sending a delusion that results in the destruction of the deluded is horrifying to modern man. If the reason is the idea that the only God we will acknowledge is one who does everything we want, in our way, to be nice to us, and grant us our desires and wishes, THAT is because we are already snared in the deceit and delusion of the Wicked One. To refuse to admit that God is GOD, and has total right to do His will without submitting his plans to us for approval is part of refusing the Love of the Truth. When we begin to want the truth we begin to see things as they really are.

STRONG/a powerful- Energeia- As in 29 a supernatural working of DELUSION- Plane- Deceit, delusion, error. A wandering from or forsaking of the right path in doctrine or morals - they often affect each other. In English, Planet - leading sailors astray if they used it to steer by, thinking it was a star. Deluding error is already functioning, but it will come to its fulness in the future when God gives men up to it as in Rom 1:21-28 11:1-8. Such blindness is the Divine Judgment that's inevitable upon those who close their eyes to the truth. We lose the capacity to use what we refuse to use. Satan is involved 2Co 4:4 as in 29, and their own action, as in 2Pet 1:9.

BELIEVE A/the LIE- Man has the God-like, God-given responsibility / privilege to choose freely moment by moment, and must accept the eternal consequences which too often he chooses to ignore. So when men are sent the Gospel with its God-energised option of receiving the truth and being saved, He is also inevitably sending them the Satan-energised option of choosing the lie and being damned, Jn 15:18-25 It's the only alternative to God's will. God isn't the source of any error. Error operates in human nature, Jas 1:13-14 in response to Satan. But as they had chosen to delight in lies, an inward working of error is the inevitable consequence of their preferring error, and God uses it as the instrument of their punishment, Prov 5:22 Cp Lying Spirit to Ahab 1 Ki 22 to offer what Ahab was determined to believe anyway, but wished to go through the form of asking God's will. See also Ezek 33:30-33 (Self as God is THE Lie, as in Eden, that man by his own action can make himself God, Gen 3:5; Jn 8:44; Rom 1:23-25 We need to pray Ps 139:23-24, often.)

When men persistently resist the Truth their mind becomes enslaved by error. This is by God's Law, and therefore His action. Those who commit themselves to the LIE / Satan do so as completely, and progressively as those who commit themselves to the TRUTH / Christ, and Salvation. Cp Isa 28:14-18. Unto their believing - a foreseen intended result. To lie / believe Lies by choice, deadens the capacity to distinguish truth from lie and makes men credulous of the incredible. Rejection of the Truth leads to

who have so built on the Lie. As in Rom 1:25 the rejection of the gift of rational Truth - Creation has a Creator, so with Redemption. Alternatives are false as not based on God, and His will. So, trust in them leading to destruction is God's Judgmental act.

2:12. DAMNED/condemned- Krino- To distinguish and decide judicially. The word Krino stresses that the action is just, as well as inevitable. They'll get what is right /deserved. Obviously this is condemnation. God sets the scene. Man chooses his own role, which is often to defy God, and is permitted to do so if that is his considered / persistent choice. God who decrees that truth-refusers are ensnared by lies, and Salvation-refusers are damned, and that men have the right to choose which they will have, has done all He can for their Salvation, Heb 10:26-31. We, whose eyes have been opened are to do all we can to convince the blinded ungodly of their danger.

WHO have not BELIEVED NOT THE TRUTH- #2:10. Aorist tense= at some point they deliberately rejected the Truth /God revealed in the Gospel and so are condemned already, Jn 3:16-21, 36 This rules out the possibility of being enlightened as to the nature and purpose of Satan's bait. Shutting off any inflow of pure water from God dooms the isolated pod of humanity to become a cesspool.

\*NOTE\* This echoes 1:8 in different words. God in His Word states essential truths in alternative ways Eg Receive Christ; Believe on / have Faith in Him; Open the door to Him; Follow Him; Call on His Name; Look to Him; etc. These enable us to gain a fuller, better understanding of how Salvation is received, and make sense to different people. It also makes the creating of simplified "Correct /The only Valid" formulas impossible. And these would, in fact, put a human mechanical process in the place of a real intervention in the heart of the Spirit of God, and our responding to it.

HAD PLEASURE/delighted IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS /Wickedness- #2:10. An act of will, chosen direction, preferred option. It wasn't just thoughtlessness. Evil had been their desired "Good." They acted not simply through pressure of circumstances, though this world does pressure in that direction, but because they gladly chose that option. Whatever it may have looked like to them or others at the time, there was a point at which they CHOSE Satan, by choosing the option he offered, defying /ignoring God. On the surface it appears that Satan triumphs in all his wicked purposes. But Men themselves choose deceit and slavery. And all this happens in God's universe under God's Sovereignty as part of His purposes of Mercy, Rom 9:21-23

And it all proceeds within the operation of that Human Freewill essential for any of mankind to achieve God's goal of Christ-likeness. And at the incredible cost to God of Calvary, which gives them the opportunity to receive this as a gift of God's Grace. To refuse the Gospel in the day of Grace is a final choice, but even beyond that all will be judged by their response to what truth they knew /what evil they delighted in. The Gospel-



after the Rapture. But when the Feast begins, the door is shut. None who refuse the invitation to the supper will be at it, Lk 14:24.

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** This is addressed to the situation of the Persecuted Saints and Persecutors at Thessalonica. It applies directly to believers in / rejectors of the Gospel. It also sheds light on the situation and fate of anyone, in any age, who has any light - and all have the witness of Creation, Rom 1:19-32 And the consequence of their response to the light that they have. What Paul wrote makes sense readily to those whose situation is similar to the Thessalonian Believers - Christian minorities in hostile third world situations ground down by poverty and injustice. Western Christians, with their privileged position in a Society that still gives a measure of protection, or even preference, to them and their Christian beliefs, are tempted to shrug off the message, to their spiritual and eternal impoverishment. Cp 2 Pet 3:10-14. We're far down the moral slide. Refuse love of truth-> Deceived by lies-> God gives up-> Delight in evil-> Judgment Falls. Denial of moral absolutes helps the process.

2:13-17 THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE BELIEVERS' LIVES AND THEIR RESPONSE.

2:13. BUT WE - marks a transition. ARE BOUND / ought always TO GIVE THANKS / thank - #1:3. We need to know about Evil, and its defeat, but we must not dwell on it. Instead we must remember what an unceasing debt of gratitude we owe to God, and concentrate our attention on things that are good and profitable Phil 4:4-9. Giving thanks to God was his duty to them, for the Christian virtues in their lives in 1:3; Here it is his duty to God for His triumphant eternal purposes seen in what He is doing in their lives. This far outweighs deceitful rumours, persecution from lawless blasphemers, and the doom of the wilfully deceived. Paul has answered their questions about the Parousia and turns to their living to God's Glory.

BRETHREN / Brothers BELOVED / bved - #Agapao - See #1:3. To love unselfishly, sacrificially, persistently, fully, in a social or moral sense. The constant attitude of God towards mankind, Jn 3:16; Rom 5:8. But particularly those who believe on the Lord Jesus, Jn 14:21; Eph 5:25 Men may hate and persecute them, but God loves them, Rom 8:35; 2 Cor 5:14; Gal 2:20 Rev 3:9.

LORD - Paul again uses the Lord Jesus, and God, as interchangeable. Lord is used more often in 1 and 2 Th than anywhere else. GOD FROM THE BEGINNING - Ap Arche - As in Isa 63:16; Mt 19:4. The reason for the debt of thanksgiving is God's action. Some Mss have Aparche - Firstfruits, but Philippi was that in Macedonia. Aparche could be true in the sense of "Best part" as in LXX Num 18:12, a value judgment, OR in that their conversion was the promise of a harvest through their preaching. Ap Arche makes better sense.

CHOSEN / chose YOU - Haireo - To choose for oneself, as in Phil 1:22 Heb 11:25 Paul usually uses Pro'orizo as in Eph 1:5-6. or Eklegeo as in Eph 1:4. Haireo is used in LXX Deu 7:6; 26:18 of God's choice of Israel. The Greek emphasizes God chose for Himself, not who was chosen. God's

first great mark of God's Love is "He chose you." The Jesus who will come in Judgment loved them and chose them for His own. Salvation arises not from human efforts, and isn't preserved by human effort, but by God's Pre-Creation Love. God's personal choice of persons, Chosen YOU for Himself is emphatic, Jn 15:16. This the basis for what follows.

CHOSEN into blessing, not to damn those not chosen, but to be a blessing to them as far as the others will permit them, by preaching the Gospel to them. Election is a puzzling truth, but comforting to those chosen. Their security doesn't rest on them, their decision, their Faith, or Paul's confidence in their sincerity and progress. God's Choice came FIRST. Then their call came through the Gospel, and their Believing. See 1 Th 1:4; 5:9; Rom 8:28-29; 1 Cor 1:27-29.

TO- Eis- into, SALVATION/be saved- Soteria- Deliverance, safety, health, salvation. Used of deliverance from earthly situations, Lk 1:69; Acts 27:34, etc. OR for Spiritual and Eternal Salvation granted to those who repent and claim Christ as Saviour by Faith, Rom 1:16; Eph 1:13, etc. This was the purpose of God's choosing, 1 Th 1:10; 2 Th 2:13. Salvation doesn't operate automatically. It involves the work of the Holy Spirit, and man's response of faith to the Gospel. Scripture states and stresses God's choosing purpose, plus these. One or other may seem to dominate in Bible statements, but they interpenetrate each other. If God's work stood alone man's moral freedom is ruled out. If our faith stood alone a cold rationalistic religion would be all we had. Salvation is the opposite of the Perishing, Destruction, Delusion and Doom of 2:10-12.

THROUGH SANCTIFICATION/the sanctifying work OF THE SPIRIT- It is God's work being stressed - Loved, Chosen, Sanctified, but it also links with our spirit, and our belief that follows. It's in our spirit that we're set apart, the rest of us follows as the Holy Spirit witnesses with our Spirit of our sonship, Rom 8:16. It's the action of the Holy Spirit that brings conviction in our hearts, appeals for response, and facilitates our New Birth. This sets us apart for God if we respond, by bringing to bear on us the word of truth for belief and continuance in the Faith.

The energy of God the Spirit works on those in themselves dead to God, in sins, 1 Cor 6:11; Eph 2:1-8; 1 Th 1:5; 1 Pet 1:3. Luther "I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, or come to him." The Spirit, awakes the initial faint desires after God, convicts of sin, leads to Christ, brings faith to the heart - without these we remain helpless under the influence of the world, flesh, and devil. The Spirit alone can introduce in the heart the moral attitude to receive the love of the truth, before we can believe it, and be made free by it Jn 8:32 Sanctification is then the process of detaching us from the world /self /sin, and attaching us to God to be increasingly conformed to His will, Rom 8:1-14; 1 Th 3:13; 4:7-8; 5:23

BELIEF OF/in THE TRUTH- #2:10. Stated awkwardly in the Greek, but it means both Faith in the truth, and Faith created in response to hearing the truth. Our experience of Salvation is the work of the Holy Spirit, but He works by facing us with the Truth - God, and His Will revealed in Scripture,

salvation follows, and depends on God's part. Neither should be over-emphasized as the Bible teaches both Election / Predestination, and Human Responsibility. Our belief in truth is in response to, and completes the work of God's Spirit in us. (In contrast to the doomed, 2:10-12.)

2:14. WHEREUNTO HE CALLED YOU/ to this- Paul now sums up, as in 1:11. The world saw them as a struggling group of oddities, and resented, despised and persecuted them. In a sense they were the product of Paul's efforts in living and preaching the Gospel to them. and their own efforts in response. But in God's will such preaching called them to Salvation, Rom 10:8-17; Gal 1:6-9. And their response gave them a part in the eternal purposes of God that Paul is describing. We need to keep in view God's eternal purposes, and the place of Preacher and Hearer within them.

BY/ through OUR GOSPEL- God has given it to men to make their own, and proclaim. It's THE Gospel, in THE book, but those who respond to it can generally share only what they have made their own. It's a sacred trust to claim, and use fully, demonstrating it in our life as Paul did. He preached Christ as he experienced Him, Phil 1:20; 1 Tim 1:11-16; 2 Tim 1:6-11. Election encourages Evangelism, and is in fact the basis of it. Faithful preaching has an essential place in effecting in TIME God's eternal purposes, Rom 10:13-15. Let's respond to the challenge of that.

TO THE OBTAINING OF/ that you might share in- The Gospel believed set them on the sure way to Glory. Under the Devil's fiercest attacks the weakest child of God can cling to his Lord secure. The Lord is Faithful, 3:3, to His purpose and His Promise, and to those who have fled to Him for refuge. That encourages us not to foolhardiness, but to take all precautions - Stand Firm, Hold Fast..

THE GLORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST- All have come short of Glory, Rom 3:23 We're saved from wrath, 1 Th 1:10; 2:10-12; 5:9, to Glory. The Lord Jesus has already been Glorified as the result of accomplishing Salvation / Redemption 1 Tim 3:16 etc. When that Glory is displayed, it's shared with us, as it involves us. We will be receiving glory from the Lord, and contributing to His Glory, Jn 17:22-24; Acts 3:13; Rom 8:17-30; 1 Cor 15:43; 2 Cor 3:1-18; 4:17; Phil 3:21; Col 3:4; 2 Th 1:7-12; 2 Tim 2:10; 1 Pet 5:10. Paul sets the this world scene (the Gospel, Christ's death and resurrection, and their response of faith) against its background of eternity. The cure for present problems / the enabling for present challenges lies in looking back to God's eternal purpose in choosing us, and forward to its fulfilment in Glory. Being called to suffer rejection with Him now, means we're called to share Glory with Him forever, Rom 8:15-21. Therefore it is for us to value the in-shining of Glory that is ours already 2 Cor 3:18. And wonder and worship. Our Glory will be to reflect Him, His Glory.

thought - what Believers must do in response to all that God is doing on their behalf, towards fulfilling His glorious purpose for them. Doctrine is always followed by exhortation, It's the foundation on which we're to build, something to live out, not something to argue about. Reminders of our election / predestination are given as a stimulus to earnest human effort, not fatalism. It's the reason for our efforts, and the assurance of their final success. Assurance that God's sovereign Grace will triumph in our lives is the challenge to live for Christ, Rom 12:1. Against the fact of the evil that lies behind the world's opposition, its coming fulness, and destruction, Paul urges us to get full value out of all that God's eternal purposes have for us. Confidence in God's stable triumphant purpose, is the basis for stable and triumphant lives here and now.

STAND FAST/firm AND HOLD to- Krateo- To be strong, take and hold, as Herod LAID HOLD OF John, Mt 14:3. They faced persecution, 1 Th 2:14, and deceiving rumours, 2:1-2, but God had placed them securely in His eternal loving purposes. In View of God's Grand and Gracious work and Calling we're to stand firm against, and in the midst of, Evil. Not in human will-power or blind stubbornness, but in: The Faith, 1 Cor 16:13. The Lord, Phil 4:1; 1 Th 3:8. One Spirit, Phil 1:27, as Brothers standing firm in the Christian Fellowship, mutually supporting / encouraging each other. Holding forcefully to: The Lord's Name, Rev 2:13; Sayings, Mk 9:10; Confession of Christ, Heb 4:14; Hope in Christ, Heb 6:18; His headship, Col 2:19; Biblical Doctrine, Rev 2:25

THE TRADITIONS/teachings- #Paradosis- A Tradition. A handing down or on. In Mt 15:2 etc it meant the accumulated teachings of the Rabbis, which hindered, and confused the message of God's Word, as does the accumulated Religious Wisdom of men today. These inevitably frustrate the very purposes of God that they profess to defend. Here it is the God-approved / confirmed body of truth being proclaimed by Paul and the other Apostles, and Prophets, Rom 6:17; 10:17; 1 Cor 4:17; 11:2; Gal 1:6-9; Eph 2:19-22 4:21; Col 2:6-8; 1 Th 2:13; 4:1-2; 2 Th 3:6; Heb 2:1-4. Paul called these traditions OUR Gospel, 2:14; Phil 4:9; 1 Th 4:11. These assured truths had been handed down authoritatively to them. They must not let them go in pursuit of any alternatives, no matter how attractive.

For us these Traditions are embodied in the NT, written down as directed by the Holy Spirit 2 Pet 1:1-21. They cover all we need to know for doctrine, worship, witness, and daily life, 2 Tim 3:15-17. God has given them to us. They have brought us Salvation. We must not neglect or alter them in any way, but hold them fast as our guide to live by, and our message to proclaim. (Resisting all pressure to conform to convenient alternatives, even if supported by the OT, Gal 1:9-14, or Church tradition.)

To so hold fast is not to be bound by the deadening letter of the Law, 2 Cor 3:6. The Spirit is the Author of Scripture and uses it to transform us, 2 Cor 3:16-18. The very Freedom in which Gal 5:1 urges us to stand fast is set out in the traditions which we must hold fast, as they defend us from slavery to OT Law, human traditions, and false claims to revelations not in

first. Scripture is full and final. All alternatives either duplicate what it says, or deny some aspect of it by adding to it.

Each new generation must go direct to the Word of God, and face the challenge of 1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 2:2; Titus 2:1, trusting God, by His Spirit, to interpret afresh His unchanging authoritative Word and show its relevance to the life we must live in, and the witness we must make to, the ever-changing world around us. What God has so given us is to be received humbly, held fast, and transmitted faithfully. Cp Rom 16:22; Col 4:16; 1 Th 5:27.

BY WORD of mouth OR BY EPISTLE/letter- The Gospel as preached to them, or set out in Paul's First Epistle to them. For us the authoritative statements from the Historical Jesus, and living Lord, 1 Cor 11:23, conveyed by the Apostles, with the addition of revelations through the Prophets validated by the Apostles, and confirming miracles, Heb 2:1-4. In contrast to 22. Paul doesn't here mention prophetic messages / Spirit, as they needed to be checked against the authorised traditions, 1 Th 2:13; 5:19-21; 1 Cor 14:37. And, as Scripture was completed would become irrelevant.

2:16. NOW- Their ability to stand firm/hold fast, is limited, so their only hope is to grasp the wonder of the source of those traditions as in 2:13-14. But knowing this doesn't automatically enable them to do so. So Paul passes from thanksgiving for what God has done, to intercession that He may do it, as in 1 Th 3:9-13; 5:23-24; Rom 1:8-10; Phil 1:3-9; Col 1:3-4. Teaching and exhortation are effective only by God's activity. We must trust and obey Him in His working in our lives. Paul has been urging them to activity, but now by turning to God in prayer for them he points their eyes to God, for only in Him can we do anything, Jn 15:5

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** God's revealed purpose assures the security of the believer, and for this Paul has given thanks. This is followed by practical exhortation to effort by the Believer. This is followed by prayer, as God alone can enable practical effort. Prayer isn't a way of getting God to do what we want, or, to do what He has promised. Rather, by moving us to pray, He draws us into fellowship with Himself so that we can be part of His doing what He has promised.

May OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF - Back to the main theme, the activity of God and Christ. What the Brothers are asked to do in 15; God is asked to do in 16-17 as they are the two sides of the one coin. See how the two sides alternate in 1 Th 5:4-24. Paul again directs His prayer to Father and Son, placing the Son first this time, (Perhaps because of the recent contrast between Him and the Man of Sin.) Himself is emphatic, as in 3:16; 1 Th 3:11; 5:23. The Power of Evil working in the world towards the final Show-down is so obviously more powerful than the Christian, that

behalf.

GOD EVEN OUR FATHER- Not a distant deity, but God whose Fatherhood we already experience, in Grace-given fellowship. (This expression assures us that Paul wrote this. It's totally improbable that any faker would echo 1Th 3:11-13, and yet reverse the order.)

LOVED US- #1:3. Singular. God loves us as a united Being. Paul doesn't use verbs in the plural after any mention of God. That God loves men is stated in Rom 5:5; 8:39, 2 Cor 13:14; 1 Th 1:4, that Christ does, Rom 8:35-37; Gal 2:20 2 Cor 5:14; 2 Th 2:13. Loved and Gave are both in the Aorist tense - specific actions with continuing effect. In one sense they are decisions before Creation, and immutable, Eph 1:4. This is the basis of Paul's confidence in God's activity on their behalf, and the basis on which His current love functions. Yet in a different sense entering history in the Son dying for us on the Cross, and entering our personal experience by the work of the Spirit at the point of our conversion.

THROUGH/by His GRACE- #1:2. GIVEN/gave US- These things come through God's Grace, and are guaranteed by it. Given Freely, not in any obligation, or under any limiting constraint. God's gift expresses and depends on His Love, not our fitness.

EVERLASTING/eternal CONSOLATION/encouragement- Paraklesis- A calling to one's side, to meet one's need. Para= alongside, Kaleo= to call. So, help, strengthening, encouragement, exhortation, comfort. The alongside, ever-present meeting of current need, 2 Cor 1:3. The work of a Parakletos= Advocate, Comforter, Jn 14:16; 1 Jn 2:1. What God gives is final and abiding, in contrast to the transient joy and sorrow of this life, and the temporary triumph of Evil. The prospect of the Persecutors is doom. The Joy and Glory of the believers is assured eternally, 1 Pet 5:10; Jude 24. God gives eternal, unfailing, unfading comfort and encouragement in the face of current trials. And encouragement in respect of eternity. The source of the believer's encouragement is given as God, 2 Cor 1:3; Christ, Phil 2:1; the Holy Spirit, Jn 14:16; Acts 9:31; Scripture, Rom 15:4; fellow-Believers 2 Cor 7:6; Col 4:11.

GOOD- #Agathos- Good in character and beneficial in effect. The content of our confident expectation is Good, and that expectation is Good, firmly based. Encouragement and good hope are together in Rom 15:4-5. Hope is an essential part of any message that is to grip the hearts and change lives. Cp the appeal of Communism to those without hope financially, etc - a False hope as it turned out.

HOPE - Elpis- A confident and happy expectation of something good is the meaning in the NT as it's based on the promises of God, dependent on the Grace of God to us, and the indwelling of "Christ in you the hope of Glory," Col 1:27. Always a far more confident expectation than is implied by hope in English. People can say "I hope to be in Heaven," meaning no more than when they say "I hope to win at Lotto!" Similarly "Good Hope" was apparently used re life after death in the then world, as a mere vague, sympathetic wish. Biblical hope is the basis for a course of consistent

Believer does what he does because he is responding to God's Word, and so has reason to believe that it is pleasing to God and ultimately a blessing to himself and others. Our hope is directed towards /Eis= into God, 1 Pet 3:5, rests upon Him, Rom 15:12, and is secure in Him, 1 Th 1:3. Good hope is a present possession, fulfilled in the future.

2:17. COMFORT/Encourage- #Parakaleo- Para= Beside, Kaleo= to Call. The fact is even better than the word, as God the Holy Spirit, as Parakletos, is not only available at our side, but indwells us with all the wisdom, power, holiness, and love that we need, to strengthen, encourage, teach, and sharpen our conscience so that we can do and say everything that's good / all kinds of good, in spite of all that hinders and opposes them. Paul's wish / prayer is given in confident sincerity - he himself has made himself available for this very work of comforting / strengthening them, 1 Th 2:11; 4:18; 5:11.

YOUR HEARTS- The heart is so central to bodily life it came to stand for the whole rational, emotional, volitional life of a person with moral responsibility towards God, and fellow man. God works with us at the centre of our being so that we can change our behaviour. Mt 12:34; 15:18-19; Phil 2: 12-16.

STABLISH/strengthen- #Sterizo- To make secure, establish, confirm. Sterix= a prop. Just as builders make a framework stable by putting cross timbers in place, so must Bible teachers and converts put time and effort into seeing the inter-relationships between doctrines, and between different aspects of Life in Christ. Peter was to Sterizo his brothers, Lk 22:32 Paul hoped to Sterizo the saints in Rome, Rom 1:11.

There's no point to propping up Church traditions / routines that God hasn't established and isn't using. But human commitment and effort is needed to ensure God's work goes on well. Paul thanks God for their Salvation, a stable state granted to them, 13-14. He appeals to them to stand firm in it, 15. And prays that God will establish them, 16-17. This stability rests on the Love of God, 2:13, 16; 3:5.

IN EVERY GOOD #2:16 WORD- #2:2. The message they had received from Paul, and were responsible to pass on, would need the backing of their daily life / work. (Work comes before Word in many Mss, as with the Lord in Lk 24:19. Acts 1:1; Phil 2:15-16.) This leads on to Paul's detailed urging them to honour God in their practical living. The future Glory spelled out in 1 Cor 15 ends with a practical challenge. The bullying Servant so acts because he doesn't expect his Master's return, Mt 24:48-49. Our inward heart and the outward behaviour that expresses it go together, Mt 15:19.

WORK /deed- God made us for this, Eph 2:10, and it's our privilege in spite of persecution. Having been given Good hope is no reason for slacking, but the very grounds for ever-increasing, stronger, more confident Good activity in the ordinary duties of everyday life, cp Rom 15:18; 2 Cor 10:11; Col 3:17.

## CHAPTER THREE .

### CALL FOR ACTION - CHRISTIAN LIVING .

3:1-5 PRAYER - FOR THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL, PROTECTION OF PREACHERS, AND PRACTICAL LIVING.

3:1. FINALLY BROTHERS/Brothers- #1:3. As usual this indicates that Paul, having dealt with doctrine, is taking up the practical application of it to the restless, disturbing behaviour of some Believers. As usual he softens it by a general introduction, and a reminder of his human frailty that needs their prayers, as their frailty needs his. "Brothers" is emphasized, the key to his attitude.

PRAY FOR US- Present tense - keep on praying for us. Paul turns from the prophesied future, to present responsibilities. Having poured out his heart in prayer for them, he asks them to stand with him in prayerful concern for the progress of the Gospel, as he, like them is surrounded by ungodly men. This is a reminder that no-one is self-sufficient in God's work, 2 Cor 3:5, and that prayer contacts the God whose strength triumphs over the human weakness of His servants, 2 Cor 12:9-10. Praying for each other draws us closer in affection and fellow-stewardship, and lifts us out of our selfishness in trial or triumph. Asking for their prayer emphasises how important prayer is. See Rom 15:30-32 2 Cor 1:11, Eph 6:18-19; Phil 1:19; Col 4:3, 1 Th 5:17, 25 Philem 22 (1 Cor and Gal lack request for prayer. Because other things must be faced first?)

THE WORD/message OF THE LORD MAY HAVE FREE COURSE /spread rapidly- The Message of the Gospel which is about the Lord Jesus, and given by /coming from Him. Those blessed by the Gospel help spread it by praying. It's God who spreads the Gospel and is glorified in its triumph, Isa 55:11; 1 Th 1:8. Cp Luke's description of the Gospel's activity in Acts 6:7; 12:24; 13:48 Cp Ps 19:4 quoted in Rom 10:18. God's Word is central, the "Tradition" we must hold fast. Each generation must be willing to shed any cultural accretions in order to pass it on acceptably to our hearers of the next generation.

BE GLORIFIED/honoured- #1:9, #1:10. Be received with honour, exalted. Present tense, continuing progress, and glorifying. Usually it's the fast runners who are glorified by being seen to be champions, and rewarded as such. Here it is the Gospel, and the Lord Himself that is glorified by its rapid spread and effectiveness in the lives of those who respond to it, and display something of His character and work, 2:17; Mt 5:16. The initial response at Corinth was slow. The triumphs came later, perhaps in answer to their prayers, Acts 13:48 We should be much in prayer concerning the presentation and reception of the Gospel, that the Lord may be honoured in both, even when Christ is rejected, 2 Cor 2:14-17.



pray that God in other places should by the Preaching of the Gospel produce rapid and God-honouring results, 1 Th 1:5 - 2:12.

DELIVERED- The rapid, successful spread of the Gospel depends in part on the freedom of the Messengers to do their work. Paul's concern for his own preservation is always associated with his being able to continue the work he was called to do, Rom 15:30-31, 2 Cor 1:10. He never had an easy time in evangelising, 2 Cor 1:8-11; 11:23-29.

FROM UNREASONABLE /wicked- A topos- A= Neg. Topos= Place. Out of place, inappropriate, used in Lk 23:41; Acts 25:5; 28:6 (No harm.) The response of some to the Gospel is inappropriate, not what it deserves, wicked. They respond that way because they prefer darkness, and so don't take it to be what it is and trust themselves to it. Opposition to the Gospel is unreasonable. A Papyrus document records "We accept no responsibility for the actions of our A topos son." God disowns the A topos actions of those whose response to the Gospel is persecution, and whose destiny is doom.

WICKED /evil MEN- #Poneros- Active Evil, bad in effect. Evil that causes labour, pain, and sorrow. From Ponos= Heavy Labour.

ALL MEN HAVE NOT /not every man has FAITH- #1:3. It's not characteristic of mankind that they respond to God with trust, or respond positively to the Gospel. A predictable result wherever it is preached. As with "Who hath believed?" Isa 53:1= Only a few have Faith / are willing to listen to God and trust Him. An obvious statement but leads neatly into FAITHful 3:3.

3:3. THE LORD IS FAITHFUL- Pistos- Believing, trusting, OR Faithful, reliable, loyal. See FAITH, #1:3. The basic meaning of the Hebrew word Faith / Faithful, is firmness, steadfastness, reliability. Man can't be expected to Believe, and may well violently persecute, but the great fact is the Faithfulness of God, who is always faithful, 1 Cor 1:9; 10:13; 1 Th 5:23-24; 2 Tim 2:13; Heb 10:23 Faithful is His name, Rev 19:11. Paul's confidence in their progress rests on the faithfulness of God. As he lives by this truth, having asked their prayers for him, he turns to apply it to them. That the Lord is Faithful to suffering Believers who trust Him is our comfort and strength. Usually Paul writes that God is Faithful, but maybe here says the Lord because He will be the Visible answer to the Visible Man of Sin in the future day, We may waver 2:2, He doesn't. Saying "The Lord is faithful" while praying is equivalent to saying the "Amen" 2 Cor 1:18-20 Paul delights to contrast the frailty, failure, and sin of Man with God's Perfectness, Eph 2:3-4; 2 Tim 4:16-17. To turn from the difficulties made by men, to the Faithfulness of God is the sure way to cut the opposing evils down to size in our eyes. God's Faithfulness is all-important 1 Sam 3:19; Isa 55:11; Jer 1:12.

Being rescued, 3:2, and being strengthened and protected here, will be IN persecution, etc, not totally from it.

KEEP /protect YOU- Phulasso- To guard, protect. A Military term. From Phulax= A Guard, Keeper, Acts 5:23, 12:6. LXX uses in Gen 4:9 "Am I my brother's KEEPER and the Lord KEEPING His own, Ps 121:5, 7; 140:4; 141:9. See Jn 17:12; Rom 2:26; Gal 6:13.

FROM the EVIL one- #3:2, While it can refer to Evil in general as in Rom 12:9 there's no thought of a completely impersonal evil power in the Bible. We're to trust in God's keeping power in the face of all evil - the evil men we meet, and the Evil One behind them all, Mt 6:13; Eph 6:16. The Evil one in contrast to the Faithful One.

3:4. CONFIDENCE- Peitho- To convince by argument, have a reasoned conviction.

IN THE LORD - His confidence isn't in the reliability of human nature, but of human nature in the Lord. In the Lord we may depend on men who in themselves are weak, unstable, wilful, foolish. Paul is talking about a confidence beginning with their conversion and continuing. He knows the Lord, and in Him /knowing Him, has confidence that He will complete the work He has begun in them, Phil 1:6. This confidence moves Paul to Pray and Teach, confident that his doing so is part of the Lord's purposes of Grace for them, and expecting that they in the Lord will respond according to those same purposes.

Those in God's faithful keeping, 1 Pet 1:5 can work out what God works in them, Phil 2:12-13. While giving assurance of their preservation by the Lord's faithfulness, Paul tactfully acknowledges his confidence in them / the part they play in it, along with his confidence in the Lord. The Believer is the actively responding object of God's Grace, and Gracious action, 2 Pet 1:1-11.

THE THINGS WE COMMANDED/command YOU- #Parangelo- Para= Beside. Angello= To Announce. To hand on an announcement / command. These two epistles give an indication of the range and nature of Paul's commands, 2:6-15; 1 Th 4:2-7. Paul gives full credit to their current performance.

3:5. May THE LORD - 1:1. Mentioned 4x in vs 1-5. Emphasising the Lord's direct, constant, close involvement in our lives.

DIRECT YOUR HEARTS- Kateuthuno- Guide, make straight. Euthus= Straight. A prayer wish for the future as with 2:16-17. Paul directed and

the Lord Himself they must rely on. He prays that the Lord will guide them, confident that He will be faithful in doing so. Heart means the whole inner being - thoughts, emotions, and will. Before daring to give instructions re the idlers, etc, Paul lifts his eyes, and theirs, to the Lord who alone can enable us to will, and to work at doing the things that please Him, Phil 2:12-13. Direct Hearts expression is used in LXX 1 Chr 29:18; 2 Chr 12:14; 19:3; 20:33 Their further growth / progress is provided for in the instructions that follow. It is only as the Lord enables them that the confidence that he's expressed in them will be seen to be justified.

INTO THE LOVE OF GOD/God's love- #1:3. Their love for God is involved, but that love is based on, a response to, and enfolded in God's Love for them, Rom 5:5; 8:28; 1 Cor 2:9; 1 Jn 4:7-19. A greater understanding and appreciation of the doctrine of God's Love is helpful. But what Paul is asking for, and encouraging them to be guided into, is the removal of anything that hinders God's love for them being effective in their hearts and lives. Progress in this will move them into experiencing closer fellowship with God in mutual love - much needed under persecution. And experience of God's Love for them will strengthen them in obedience to God's will which Paul is revealing to them.

PATIENT WAITING FOR CHRIST/Christ's perseverance- #1:4. We're to wait patiently, purposefully, energetically for the Lord's coming, 1 Th 1:10. But it's the patience OF Christ in the Greek. Not just His example, but the endurance which Christ on earth, patterned for us, and provides for us, of abiding in God's Love, Jn 15:9-11. It's the steadfastness He imparts as we look to Him that is reflected in His Followers, Heb 12:1-3, in a steadfast walk towards His Coming.

### 3:6-15. ALL BELIEVERS SHOULD WORK - PAUL THE APOSTLE'S COMMAND AND EXAMPLE.

(Paul is conscious of his right and responsibility to command Believers to obey the Lord's Word given to him for them, 3:4, 10, 12; 1 Th 4:2, 11. But speaks affectionately to them as brothers who with him are committed to obedience as God's children. He set an example in that family, by choosing to act as they should, rather than as an Apostle had the right to act, 1 Th 2:6-9. How we live is important. The inner reality, and the outward expression of it cannot survive without each other. In 1 Th 4:11-12 he'd urged the responsibility to earn one's living, but some ignored that. Now he specifically commands the whole church to take action on the matter, expecting them to obey, 4-5. Gives the principle, 10. Addresses the disorderly, 11-13. Says what to do if these stubbornly refuse, 14-15.)

3:6. WE COMMAND YOU BROTHERS/Brothers- #3:4. IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST- A solemn, emphatic lead into a new subject. Paul is consciously representing the Lord as he speaks, and speaking on His authority, Rom 1:5; 1 Cor 1:1, 10; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal; 1:1; 1 Th 1:5; 2:4,

His mouthpieces, Eph 2:20 3:5; 1 Th 4:15. Brothers have the responsibility to rebuke each other, Lev 19:17. How we live while waiting for Christ, 1 Th 1:10, is very important, Mk 13:34. Paul's trust in their progress is "in the Lord" and so is his exhortation directed to that end. Failure to obey will be disobedience to /loss of fellowship with, the Lord.

**WITHDRAW YOURSELVES** keep away from- Not exclude them, push them out, but avoid associating with them. The relationship - brother - is unchanged. He needs to adjust to the realities of Christian life. So Brotherly love requires brotherly distancing from his course of action until he realises he must choose between it, and normal fellowship. Withdraw the hospitality of a spread table and listening ear, to make him realise he is out of step. Cross off the list for church handouts, but no suggestion of exclusion from the Lord's Table.

His action divides him off from the others. That division is to be shown visibly. The Church must discipline its members, 1 Cor 5:11-12. Disorderly members are a concern of the whole church as they set a bad example, cause friction, damage the witness, and stunt themselves spiritually. If the church as a whole takes obedient action in love for the Lord, and the disturbers, it will grow in spiritual maturity and confidence in Him, and it will help to fulfil the prayer of 3:1. All problems tackled in Faith and Love become blessings. Commanded in the Name to withdraw from all who disgrace that Name by disorderliness.

**WALKETH/does not live-** #Peripateo- To walk around, to live, behave. A course of action which, taken a step at a time, produces a lifestyle, and ensures a goal - desired or not. The whole round of activities of the individual life is made up of choices taken a step at a time.

**DISORDERLY/**is idle- #Ataktos- Disorderly, unorganised, idle, or insubordinate. A= Neg. Tasso= To put in order, arrange. Not keeping in step, or in rank. They were out of step with God's obedient people in ignoring 1 Th 4:11-12, and not earning their living. Maybe the unsettling of 2:2 prompted the idea "The end is near. It's not worth working. The Lord will provide." Persecution may have limited them to manual work and Greeks scorned that as being for Slaves. They may have felt super-spiritual in showing disregard for material matters, criticising the business-oriented on whom they sponged (Cp Hippies, or Hindu Gurus making fortunes by teaching Westerners that material things don't matter!) Indolence among the urban poor was a recognised problem in the Roman World, as today. Christian charity if abused could make it worse. The church must see that it wasn't so abused. Paul's command sets the provider free to stop handouts, and puts pressure on the supported to try to find work and support themselves. If Christians encouraged productive work, paid taxes, and so added to the wealth and stability of the community they were being good citizens. An idle life is in itself not good, or seen as beneficial by the world, and is specifically not Christian. The Lord was being misrepresented / the Testimony hindered by their conduct.

FROM US - Orally while with them, written in 1 Th 4:11-12, and by Paul's example. They had no excuse. The general traditions covered the responsibility to work and support self.

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** I'm sure this specific solution to this specific problem provides guidance for our handling of problems in general. But we must maintain fellowship with each other in as many areas of life as possible, in line with Rom 14. If we all move forward as commanded in Eph 4:14-16 and refuse to be interested in / take sides on side-issues by withdrawing from any involvement, the forward momentum will sweep the issues aside. Differences will remain as harmless, minor blemishes, or outgrown. Cp Rom 16:17-18, re divisives, and Prov 26:20

3:7. you YOURSELVES KNOW - \*1:8. HOW YE /you OUGHT TO - Dei - A Logical necessity, Opheilo #1:3 is a Moral obligation owed. Being a disciple logically meant following the master's example. How much more so when Paul was both an Apostle speaking for the Lord, and a Spiritual "Father in Christ," 1 Cor 4:15-16. The general terms of how Christians ought to live were known, but some preferred to forget.

FOLLOW US /our example - Paul didn't abandon his tent-making because he believed the Lord might come at any moment. Rather, the joy of it strengthened his resolve to fulfil his normal duties, with his eyes on the Lord, 2 Cor 5:7-10. They needed no detailed set of rules - they had seen Paul's pattern of behaviour that modelled Christian living in the will of God. More specific commands are now made. Cp 1 Th 1:6; 2:1-14; 3:3, 10; 4:1-2, 12; 5:2, 6, 14; 1 Cor 4:16; 11:2; Phil 3:17; 4:9; Heb 13:7.

NOT..DISORDERLY /idle - Atakto - Did not live as loafers. Their life set up a living tradition that made obvious what the verbal tradition meant. An effective understatement. Even the importance of his spiritual work as Evangelist and Apostle was not allowed by Paul to rule out his responsibility as a man to pay his way. The normal human obligation to pull his weight and contribute to meeting the material needs of the community.

3:8. EAT ANY MAN'S BREAD /food - Gen 3:19 decreed that in a fallen world it was our normal human responsibility to work for our living, and they did, 2 Cor 11:7. Paul isn't saying he never accepted hospitality. When in Thessalonica he apparently stayed with Jason, Acts 17:7, and accepted gifts from established churches when they chose to send them, Phil 4:15-16. But he made every effort to pull his weight and pay his way even though it meant long hours working hard in a despised occupation - Tent maker /leather working. He refused to demand or expect to be supported without contributing to his keep. Not merely that they worked sufficiently hard in Spiritual things that they were justified in eating. They paid their

concerns to be able to provide for their own material needs.

FOR NOUGHT/without paying for it BUT/On the contrary WROUGHT/we worked WITH LABOUR/labouring AND TRAVAIL/toiling NIGHT AND DAY - Emphasizes that they gave themselves energetically to working long hours, to the point of exhaustion - chatting the Gospel as they went, 1 Th 2:5-12.

NOT BE CHARGEABLE/a burden TO ANY OF YOU- Epibareo- Epi= Upon. Bareo= A Weight, etc. In fact making a positive input into the local economy! Eph 4:28 See 1 Th 2:9; 2 Cor 12:13-18. This preserved his freedom, 1 Cor 9:12.

3:9. NOT BECAUSE WE do not HAVE NO POWER/right- Exousia- Authority power, Freedom to act. From Exesti= it is lawful. (In an ancient will a man states he retains the Exousia to control his property as long as he lives.) It's non-physical power, as opposed to brute Force, often used of the authority that goes with a particular position / role. Those who receive Christ have and exercise the right to be called God's children, Jn 1:12. All Exousia is given Christ, so He gives us His work, on His terms in Mt 28:18. He has decreed that His sent servants have the right to expect those who benefit from their ministry to meet their material needs, Mt 10:9-10; Lk 10:7; 1 Cor 9:4-19; 1 Tim 5:18; 3 Jn 5-8. But our EXAMPLE is more important than our RIGHTS, and Paul chose not to use that right to material support. He seems to have been the only Apostle to do so. But the Jewish Apostles worked where the right of a Rabbi to be supported by those benefiting from his teaching was normal. Paul, working among Gentiles where wandering Philosophers, Miracle workers, Exorcists, Advisers, etc were a byword for dishonesty, had good reason to make clear from the start that he and his Gospel were not in that class.

TO MAKE OURSELVES AN EXAMPLE/model- Tupos- Model for imitation or warning. From Tupto= to strike. As a die struck a corresponding impression on a coin, so our example sets a pattern of life for those we influence. It was a deliberate action of setting an example, stated strongly in Greek. The lifestyle of the preacher, and the content of his Gospel are inseparable, and those who respond have in some sense an obligation to do as the preacher does, as well as what he says. See 1 Th 1:7; Phil 3:17; 1 Tim 4:12; Titus 2:7; 1 Pet 3:15-17. Apart from the setting of an example, Paul's labour in material things helped the spread of the Gospel, 3:1.

TO FOLLOW US- To Paul, setting an example was more important as an Apostle, than enjoying the privileges of his position.

3:10. WHEN WE WERE WITH YOU WE COMMANDED gave YOU this rule- #3:4. The general instructions / Traditions Paul had kept on giving them included this dear statement summary of the need for all believers to live responsibly in the current world to win approval for God, and the Gospel, Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:22-4:1; 1 Tim 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-14; 1 Pet 2:18-25 Greek

"Hippie" tradition despising commitment to training or regular work. They were to serve God IN the work of his world.

IF ANY/a man WOULD/will NOT WORK NEITHER SHOULD HE shall not EAT- The Jewish statement based on Gen 3:19 was "If I don't work I have nothing to eat." This says if anyone is not willing to work you shouldn't feed him. From the first, Believers rejoicing in their brotherly fellowship in Christ, naturally shared what they had with other Believers, Acts 2:42-47, welcoming them to share the hospitality of their houses. A fellowship meal to which believers brought food and drink might be associated with the Lord's Supper. At times this was abused, 1 Cor 11:20-22 2 Pet 2:13-14; Jude 12-13. Like the Synagogues, the churches ran a "Food Bank" to help the starving poor, Acts 6:1-6. This is a plain command that in doing so the church is to actively discourage anyone from being a drone. (This doesn't refer to excluding them from the Lord's Table where the Bread taken is not to be regarded as FOOD.)

The command not to support shirkers doesn't contradict Christian kindness. It is kindness to discourage them from behaviour which grieves the Lord and brings His Name into reproach. Paul's deep concern for the poor is seen in Rom 15:26-28 2 Cor 8:1-15; 9:1-15; Gal 2:10. Sadly not all Christians are good workers, but we're all commanded to do our work heartily as to the Lord, Col 3:23 None looked more eagerly for the Lord's Coming, and worked harder for spiritual goals, than Paul, or took his earning his living more earnestly. Those who didn't work were a burden to the Community, and a threat to the fellowship and mission of the church. The early Christian writing, the Didache 12:3 says to deal sharply with those who tried to avoid work by being a "Christian." This cuts the ground from beneath the feet of religious hermits, Holy men, etc. All Believers must do honest work that contributes to the good of the community at large as well as to the Church fellowship.

3:11. SOME..WALK #3:6 AMONG YOU DISORDERLY/are idle- #3:6. Paul is responding to news he'd heard. Disorderly life among them would disturb and distract worship and witness by causing tension between workers who are expected to supply the needs of all, and loafers who take it for granted they'll be fed. Plus uncertainty and argument about what lifestyle honours God. The loafers set a poor model for the children of others. Paul may have known the names of problem people were, but as in 1 Cor 5:1 doesn't name them. This makes it easier for us all, in any age, to apply it to ourselves as needed. Among- their conduct means that they're not truly OF the Church fellowship, and makes it uncertain that they were true Believers. Those in Jude 12 were godless intruders. But, real or counterfeit Christians, as long as they were among them, the Church is responsible to correct their behaviour, 1 Cor 5:11-13.

WORKING NOT AT ALL/they are not busy- Ergazomai. BUT/they ARE BUSY BODIES - Periergazomai- Peri- Around. Ergon- Work. Busy on the sidelines giving advice, rather than getting on with their own work. The word can suggest taking evasive action - finding a way to get by without working. It implies doing something about work which doesn't really belong to it. Cp Periergos- Busybodies, 1 Tim 5:13, and the adjective Periergos

argument as being superior to work. Among such the truth of the Lord's Coming would easily be viewed as something for excited talk and rumours that filtered away their time. This would bring Christians / the Gospel into disrepute. They weren't just muddling around, they were actively intruding in other people's business, as well as evading their own responsibility. Their conduct reminds me of returning to a noisy classroom to find work set neglected and the injured pseudo-innocence with which pupils would say "Nothing Sir!" when asked what they were doing.

3:12. THEM THAT ARE SUCH /such people WE COMMAND- #3:4. Paul turns to the idlers, and without a trace of impatience or contempt gives a command as Apostle, and father in Christ, saying "If this applies to you, this is what you need to do about it." He didn't take over the lives of converts laying detailed rules on them, but taught and lived the general principles of Christian living, and made specific applications as here, when they had failed to take the point for themselves. An appeal to conscience requiring all to evaluate where they stood in the matter, and adjust their lives as needed.

EXHORT/urge- #2:17. Standing with them to encourage, exhort, help as a Brother in Christ who experiences their situation and models the desired response to it, as in Rom 1:11-12. Though it's the third time Paul has had to raise the matter, he does so patiently and kindly.

BY/- Dia- through [RT] in- En [Nes] OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST- Cp 36. Through, or In Him= In fellowship with the Lord, and because of the relationship of each to the Lord they must so act. To ignore such an appeal to the fellowship of love in the body places oneself outside that fellowship - isolation is appropriate.

Paul appeals to the erring Christians as being his brothers in Christ, because work is an important response to the Lord, Col 3:22-25 (150yrs ago a Mr Heelis, a ship's officer asked an Indian "sweeper" why he did his work so carefully and well, while others didn't. The reply "Because I am a Christian, Sir" convicted him of his own sin. Converted, he became a pioneer missionary in India.)

WITH QUIETNESS /to settle down- Hesuchia- As the crowd quietened as Paul spoke Hebrew, Acts 22. LXX Shalev- At ease, calm rather than orderliness. But a well-ordered life that calmly takes its responsibilities for granted and supports itself and dependents, adds to the peace of the Church community. Work without fanfare, the opposite of excitement and attention seeking. A Jewish saying ran "When a man eats his own bread he is of a quiet and orderly mind. Less so if eats that of Father or Child, and least if that of others." The opposite of a restlessness of mind that disturbs, unsettles or upsets others.

THEY WORK /earn AND EAT THEIR OWN BREAD- Earn their own living. OWN emphatic. They had ignored 1 Th 4:11. It is now a direct command.



us to get PAID work, OR, are on a retirement pension, this requires us to make the effort to find unpaid work for the Good of men, and the Glory of God. As we do what we can we will find fellowship with the Lord in it, as Dorcas did, Acts 9:39.)

3:13. BUT YE BRETHREN/and as for you Brothers- #1:3. Addressing the whole church again. Closing, as in Rom 16:17; 1 Cor 16:22

BE NOT WEARY/never tire of- Enkakeo- To be weary, faint, lose heart. En= In. Kakos= Base, evil. A despicable and disgraceful lack of responding in faith that says "Why should I bother? I've done enough!" to the challenges of life - very easy to fall into. Aorist "Don't begin and continue to be guiltily wearied, or slack, Lk 18:1; 2 Cor 4:1, 16; Gal 6:9; Eph 3:13.

WELL DOING/doing what is right- Kalopoieo- Doing what is Kalos= Good, fine, beautiful. The unreasonable demands of loafers rapidly generates "Compassion fatigue." But the fact that some abuse Christian kindness, is no reason to cease caring activity. God wants His people to discriminate so as to give lovingly and effectively to those in real need, and not to be softhearted fools who allow themselves to be so overburdened as to have to give up. Keep on doing the right thing, their own work, to God's glory, 1 Cor 10:31. The faults and follies of others may move us to pride, a Judgmental critical attitude, OR discouragement, and we can use these as an excuse for our own loss of active working. We must not cease from doing right in any form, because some take advantage of it. To expand understanding of Kalopoieo check Mt 12:12; Lk 6:27; Acts 10:33; Rom 7:21; Gal 6:9; Jas 2:8, 19, where Kalos and Poieo appear as separate words. Doing positive good to others, helping them to do what they and God want them to do is very different from meddling in their affairs, and taking over their lives. Their generosity survived - 2 Cor 8:1-5.

3:14. IF ANY MAN does not OBEY NOT OUR WORD/ instruction- Logos. Assumes most will obey. Logos is used in OT for the Ten Commandments, LXX Ex 34:28 His Command is also God's Command, as Paul was authorised by and acting in fellowship with God, 1 Cor 14:37; 1 Th 4:15. Paul speaks in a self-controlled, kindly way, and expects them to obey / the Lord to enable them to obey. No-one has that authority today, though some would claim it for the Pope, and at the opposite extreme some Cult-style leaders claim it. But from the first it was conceded that the authority of the Apostles was unique. Eg Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch who had a very high view of a Bishop's position wrote to the Roman church "I do not give you orders as Peter or Paul, they were Apostles." The well-being of the Church today depends on our obedience to Christ in the NT. The Positive expectation helps compliance.

NOTE THAT MAN- Present tense, continuous process, don't judge by the impression gained from isolated incidents. Don't rely on hearsay, slander, criticism, or point him out to others. Keep him under observation for yourself, and make sure you are not seen to be in any way associated with

walk in that disorderly way, but it's wrong to make judgments on inadequate grounds, Isa 29:20-22 Make the decision from a study of his habitual action. See Mt 18:15-17; Acts 5:1-10; 1 Cor 5:3-5; 1 Tim 5:19-20 Titus 3:10. Cp Rom 16:17. Be aware of so as to avoid.

HAVE NO COMPANY/do not associate WITH HIM- Literally, "Don't mix with." Don't go around with him, be known as his friend and supporter in his stand, by treating him as if his conduct made no difference and so encourage him to continue as he is. To argue with him increases his feeling of self-importance. To treat him badly fosters a sense of martyrdom. Quietly withdrawing leaves him to stew in his own juice - and hopefully get sick of it and repent /be restored. The whole congregation is to do this. Cp 1 Cor 5:9-11; 2 Cor 2:5-11, but here it included exclusion from the Lord's Table.

HE MAY BE/feel ASHAMED- His behaviour is "Out of step/Out of fellowship" with the Gospel, so unacceptable. Their not being willing to listen to his gossip or welcome him to meals, will help him to realise this, face the reality, and change. Cp Titus 2:8. To win him back to helpful fellowship made possible by his repentance /changed attitude towards orderly living is the goal. The cessation of ordinary fellowship, and the supply of free food, should bring him to his senses. Or, test whether he belongs in the church and values Christian Fellowship as a reality beneath the outward show, OR has just been using it as those did in 2Pet 2:13; Jude 12

3:15. NOT AS AN ENEMY- Gentle, kindly desire for his restoration to true fellowship, on God's terms, not his own rebellious ones, is now emphasized. We all fail. We should all be concerned to help others who fail. The attitude in which we do this is vital. The behaviour is recognised as a barrier to fellowship, and rejected, needs to be done away with, but the person and his fellowship valued. One of the problems of enforcing discipline is that it's so easy to let personal feelings, likes /dislikes become involved, and we are distressed that the offender has caused this. It's then so easy for us to speak with impatience and annoyance. To do so will arouse hostility, and it may seem to him to be a pecking-order confrontation. (The Synagogue discipline Paul submitted to in order to keep access open was limited to 39 strokes [reduced from 40 by the Rabbis], because more might make the recipient feel unwanted! Deu 25:3; 2 Cor 11:24) Today's loose church fellowship, state support, assertion of "rights" etc, and discipline being frowned on in the world at large makes difficulties. But, discipline is God's will, and we still need to check our spirit before attempting to admonish.

ADMONISH/warn- Noutheteo- To put in mind. Nous= Mind, Tithemi= to put. A warning instruction to Minds. Alerting people to things that are wrong, giving instruction with regard to them. As in Acts 20:31; Rom 15:14; 1 Cor 4:14. Col 1:28 3:16; 1 Th 5:12, 14. Used in LXX of Eli failing to "Admonish" his sons, 1 Sam 3:13. Not expressing one's annoyance at the wrong behaviour by telling them off in an abrasive manner. But help them to an understanding of where they're at, where they should be at, and how

the blessing they'll be moving into. For this "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly," Col 3:16 is essential. Sadly those of strong opinions / prejudices, with little heart's concern for others, are the quickest to want to act in putting right those in the wrong! Continue warning him in a brotherly way, that his behaviour is not what a brother should be doing. It's because he is a brother he should be warned, and our attitude must be that of a brother - a sense of belonging together that cannot be happy without real fellowship because we value him. It's the church as a whole that continues to admonish, so they still meet and fellowship in worship. The Bible basis of the church's action must be made clear to him, and he must see that it's untainted with personal hostility, or it may lose all its value. It isn't kind to simply neglect to act, or to ignore him / his action. How and when action should be taken is left to the occasions that arise.

AS A BROTHER- #1:3 He's still within the Assembly, and its circle of care, but the appropriate fellowship is reduced to urging him to get in step with the others by obeying God's Command through Paul. The brotherly attitude is essential if any wounds faithfully inflicted are to be recognised as those of a friend, Prov 27:6. The treatment is not as strong as in Mt 18:15-17 as he remains a brother, not heathen / publican, but here it's only the offended party's permitted attitude as YOU is singular. Not as strong as 1 Cor 5:9-13 where the matter is more serious, and the man referred to as being CALLED a Brother, but reinstatement was in mind there too, 2 Cor 2:5-11. Assuming that profession is reality, and acting on that assumption is natural to love - It believes all things, as long as possible and is abandoned with deep regret. This has a creative effect - as our being called saints, children of God, friends, etc is a challenge that helps us live up to our profession. Not as though he were a Brother, but because he is a brother, Lev 19:17. Discipline can only be effective - a man persuaded to change his ways - if loving concern for him, and desire for fellowship - his contribution, is obviously the motive.

As a despised, persecuted minority in a pagancity the foolish behaviour of the idlers would be an added reproach to the Lord and the Gospel, so it must be dealt with. But any bitterness and divisiveness displayed in dealing with it would certainly add to that reproach.

### 3:16-18 FINAL MESSAGES, BLESSING AND SIGNATURE.

3:16. THE LORD OF PEACE HIMSELF - Generally we read The God of Peace, as in 1 Th 5:23 but the Lord IS our Peace, who has made Peace for us, Eph 2:14-15; Col 1:20 Messiah was to be the Prince of peace and rule a Kingdom of peace, Isa 9:5-> etc. Paul has dealt with the situation that was disturbing the assembly fellowship by making wise rulings and provision for what might occur. He closes by bringing them into the presence of the only source of peace. He alone can enable the admonition to be given and accepted in a way that promotes peace. Paul prayed as he wrote / worked.

strife and disorder Cp Col 3:15; 1 Cor 14:33 It is the wholeness that will be experienced by the positive contribution of all the believers, in accepting fellowship with each other in the Lord. "Himself" emphasises His close personal involvement with them.

GIVE YOU PEACE - #1:2. See Rom 15:33; 16:20; 2 Cor 13:11; Gal 6:16; Phil 4:7-9. He gives peace, because of who He is, and what He has done and so causes us to be at peace. Paul had laid a heavy task on them to deal righteously in love, with difficult people, while beset by constant persecution, but the Lord Himself would be to them all they needed, Jn 14:27. (Spoken in the turmoil as he faced betrayal, forsaking and death.) The Lord is man as well as God, and so is pointed to as having the fellow-feeling that we need at all times, every circumstance. Peace is the total well-being of the local church fellowship. The calm of heart that comes from God that is real whatever our circumstances may be, Num 6:26; Jn 16:33 A peaceful close to a stormy Epistle. Suffering saints, and foolish saints alike need peace, and Him who alone can grant it.

ALWAYS/at all times BY ALL MEANS/and in every way- Every way is likely to be the original. Some Mss have in every place, as in 1 Cor 1:2. At all times in every situation. Cp Rom 3:2; 2 Cor 2:14; Phil 1:18; 1 Th 1:8; 1 Tim 2:8.

THE LORD BE WITH YOU ALL - Ruth 2:4; Lk 1:28; Gal 6:18; 2 Tim 4:22; Phm 25 The Lord's presence / involvement sought, welcomed, and shared, Mt 28:20 His concern is for ALL His own, Rom 15:33; Phil 4:9. The Lord who walks on the stormy sea speaks peace to it, and His own. Acts 18:10; 2 Cor 1:4.

3:17. THE SALUTATION OF PAUL/I Paul write this greeting- Papyrus letters from Paul's time show the closing salutation in an obviously different hand from the body of the letter. Using someone who was an expert in writing rapidly and legibly, for the body of the letter set him free to concentrate on thinking out the subject matter, and its expression in clear language, Rom 16:22

WITH/in MY OWN HAND. THE TOKEN/distinguishing mark- He does all he can to confirm the genuineness of the letter and so do away with any excuse to ignore its contents, cp Gal 6:11; 1 Cor 16:21-23; 1 Th 5:27. So he gives the final greeting / farewell, Grace, and Peace, in his own distinctive printing.

3:18. THE GRACE - #1:2. OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST BE WITH YOU ALL. AMEN. He commenced and ends with Grace. In grace God has given us all things needed for life and Godliness 2 Pet 1:3. Although some were not acting in grace, and peace, Paul has no desire to exclude them. Those praised and those rebuked alike need Grace, and he desires it for

of the Church, 20yrs after the Cross, to a small group of ordinary people, it gives a message for all ages. How much today we all need the Lord's Grace, Peace, and Presence. Only as we give His Word first place in our lives is this possible. To disregard it is to despise, distrust, and disregard Him, and His authority. If His Word is to run freely and be honored throughout the earth it must do so in the Church itself.

## APPENDIX 1. The SECOND Coming of Christ, the MAN OF SIN etc.

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS, by pointing out past situations that in some ways correspond to the predictions start well, and are useful if viewed as partial fulfillments which exhibited some of the features of the predicted rise of Evil, and its Judgment. But none of those involved were "Destroyed by the Brightness of His Coming." THE Anti-Christ is the one who is visibly destroyed by THE Christ.

Many Christians, some of them Godly, ignore, or refuse to see any factual, to-be-fulfilled-in-future-human-history content in such Scriptures. Instead they use them as a source of timeless Moral and Spiritual Principles which may be applied to events in the past, and to the current world in which we live. This has the advantage of setting them free from the bitter arguments, and foolish interpretations of the past, and those of weird cults in the present.

The Moral and Spiritual principles involved in the full flowering of godless humanity, and its final destruction in the triumph of the Crucified are no doubt the most important lessons for us to learn from these Scriptures. But, they stand or fall with the events which will authenticate them. No doubt our understanding of what is meant by the words and symbols used is less than accurate. Principles and Truths can be drawn from such Scriptures only when what the Lord Jesus taught, (and Isaiah, Daniel, Zechariah, Paul and John wrote) is accepted as describing real events. Timeless Moral and Spiritual Principles, detached from their Embodiment / Manifestation in a future crisis of Coming and Judgment, are powerless when changes in society make them inconvenient and unpopular. Only Religious professionals with a need to safeguard their living are likely to see any point in defending such principles, while at the same time teaching that Paul etc wrote nonsense about coming events because they were "Men of their Age," sharing its ignorance / enthusiasms, and not professional theological graduates living in a scientific age."

Understanding that the Lord might come at any moment is seen in the NT as sharpening the importance of living each day to the full to the Glory of God. Sadly, in the history of the Church those movements emphasizing the nearness of the Lord's Coming have often been too little concerned with practical Christian living. IF it's the Lord we have our eye on and are rejoicing at the thought of His Coming, we will like Paul live every day in His presence, 2 Cor 5:7-10, Lk 12:36 If we're self-preoccupied, eager to satisfy our curiosity as to details, and proud of our imagined mastery of them, our sense of spiritual superiority over those less well-informed / interested will make it easy for us to

3:17 and our unloving eagerness to put others right in their beliefs.

It's impossible to give full value to the Scripture in Rom Chapters 9-11 without believing in a Spiritual revival for national Israel. And I've met only one attempt to give full value to the prophecies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, a form of which is set out below.

Reasons for believing there are two separate events involved in the Lord's Coming: McDonald. (Abbreviated.)

The RAPTURE (Harpazo)= The Lord taking up the Church. // The REVELATION (Apokalupsis) of the Lord in Glory and Judgment.

1. Christ comes to the AIR 1 Th 4:17. // To the EARTH Zech 14:4.
2. Comes FOR His Saints Jn 14:3; 1 Th 4:16-17. // WITH His saints 1 Th 3:13, Jude 14
3. Is a Mystery= unknown in OT times. // \$ the subject of many OT prophecies, Ps 72; Isa 11; Zech 14 etc.
4. No preceding signs in Heavens. // Heralded by such signs, Mt 24:29-30
5. Is identified as the DAY OF CHRIST, 1 Cor 1:8; 2 Cor 1:14; Phil 1:6, 10. A time of blessing, 1 Th 4:18. // Identified with the DAY OF THE LORD (OT) as a time of Judgment, 2 Th 2:1-12.
6. An instantaneous event, so presumably invisible, 1 Cor 15:52 // Visible worldwide, world-changing, Mt 24:26-30 Rev 1:7.
7. Concerns the Church Jn 14:1-4; 1 Cor 15:51-58 1 Th 4:13-18. // Concerns Israel & Gentile Nations, Mt 24:1-25 Rom 11:26
8. Christ comes as Bright and Morning Star, Rev 22:16. // He comes as Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings, Ml 4:2-3.
9. Proclaimed in John. // Prominent in Matthew, Mark and Luke, but hardly mentioned in John's Gospel.
10. Those taken go into blessing, 1 Th 4:13-18. Those left behind are left in Judgment 1 Th 5:1-3. // Those taken are for Judgment, those left behind are left for blessing, Mt 24:37-41.
11. No system given of events preceding Rapture. // An elaborate dating system is given - 1260 days/42 months/3.5 years.. Dan 7:25 12:7; 11, 12; Rev 11:2; 12:14; 13:5.
13. Title Son of Man never used in connection with Rapture. // Revelation spoken of as the Coming of the Son of Man in Mt 16:28 24:27; 30 39 26 64 Mk 13:26 Lk 21:27.

Scriptures urge us to eagerly expect the Lord's Coming, and our bodily transformation, with no intervening event, Rom 8:23 1 Cor 11:26 2 Cor 5:2; Phil 3:20-21; Titus 2:13; Heb 9:28 (Not dealing with Sin, as He does during the Tribulation); 1 Jn 3:2; Jude 24 Rev 3:11; 227, 12, 20 Verses referring to His Servants being ready to meet their Master also apply to us, but not to us only, Mt 24:42-44; Mk 13:32-37; Lk 12:36

The sequence in Revelation is the Church on Earth, the scene in Heaven, and only THEN Judgment / Tribulation beginning. (Though Revelation isn't always a step by step record.) The removal of the Church, as a reversal of Pentecost, restrains the manifestation of the "Man of Sin" before the Tribulation / Judgment, 2 Th 2:2-8.

At present we're being not taken OUT OF (Ek) the World, but kept FROM (Ek) the Evil / Evil One, Jn 17:15. Those who Keep His Word will be kept FROM OUT OF (Ek) the coming hour of world-wide trial / testing, Rev 3:10. A specific event that goes far beyond the tribulation God's people in all ages, experience, and benefit from, in varying degrees, Mt 24:22 in contrast to Jn 16:33 Acts 14:22 Rom 5:3. That "Tribulation" is the Coming WRATH the Lord delivers us FROM OUT OF (Ek) at His Coming, 1 Th 1:9-10.

Some think that as the promised REST of the persecuted Believers, and Suffering for the persecutors are associated with the Lord's Coming in Glory and Judgment, in 2 Th 1:7, the Church must still be on earth then, having endured the Tribulation. In one sense, with every Child of God, we have already entered into our REST, (Katapausis, which with Anapausis means rest from work.) Heb 4:10. In another sense the Persecutors have been suffering in Hades for 1900 years, and the Thessalonian Believers have been enjoying REST - and at the Lord's Coming we will join them. The point made in 2 Th 1:7 is that when the Lord is revealed in Glory the position of persecuted Believers and persecuting world will be totally reversed, and that will be obvious to all. That we will have been enjoying REST (Anesis) with the Lord since He caught us up to Heaven, 1 Th 4:17, is ignored in order to sharpen the contrasted role reversal.

That the expression "The Blessed Hope, and Glorious Appearing," Titus 2:13 is so phrased has been taken by some to mean that they are one event, but the same Greek construction in Lk 14:23 and Eph 2:20 doesn't mean that the highways and the hedges are the same things, or the Apostles and Prophets the same persons.

References to THE Tribulation are specifically Jewish. Much of Isa chapters 56-66 Jer 30:7; Zech chapters 11-14: Mt 24:15-16, 20 makes no sense if applied to the Church. Evangelical Clergymen from Bishop Ryle to Rev John Stott, agree that Scripture teaches a future blessing for Israel.

While we must confess that it's impossible to give full weight to the most natural interpretation of ALL individual Scriptures on this or any subject - Some must be accepted as fixed points, and others re-interpreted to fit them into any common picture. We're responsible to gain for ourselves, and share with others the most likely, and most God-honouring over-all understanding that we can. But, it is presumptuous folly to imagine that we can ever get all the details right,

them for their beliefs, Rom 14:1-13.

However, faced with having to write off substantial portions of Scripture as erroneous, and mistaken, or accept that the above footnotes point in the general direction indicated by God's Word, I accept their ideas as the most helpful I've met.

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(Criticism/Correction/Addition is welcomed. Please feel free to use this material in any way at all, to the glory of God. )

Other Booklets:

Listening to the Lord:- Habakkuk, Ruth, Haggai; Romans 1-4; 5-8; 9-11; 12-16; 1 Corinthians 1-4; 5-7; 8-11; 12-14; 15-16; 1 Corinthians 1-5; 5-9; 10-13; Colossians; 1 Thessalonians; 2 Peter & Jude; Revelation parts 1 and 2



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