

# *Study Notes For I Thessalonians*

## **(Chapter Two)**

**I Thessalonians 2:1-2** - As we enter into chapter two of this epistle, the context is not changing. The focus continues from the point that Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus knew the congregation in Thessalonica was a fruitful work. Here is what we will consider in this article: *“For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention”* (I Thessalonians 2:1-2).

In our previous study, we considered how that Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus knew that their labor was not in vain. The word of God had “free course” among the saints in Thessalonica (II Thessalonians 3:1). So, we will not repeat that in this study. What is interesting about the start of this chapter is that Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus are pointing out to the Thessalonians that their (Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus) entrance in unto them was not in vain. These were words of reassurance. The brethren in Thessalonica had no need to be concerned that Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus would think they were a waste of effort. The fact is, their continued faithfulness was a lifeline for Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus. Consider what was written later in this epistle: *“But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you: Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord”* (I Thessalonians 3:6-8).

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus refer to what happened in Philippi prior to the Gospel being taught in Thessalonica. Go back and read the account of these events (Acts 16:11-17:15). After reading that account, you saw Timotheus mentioned by name once (Acts 17:14). You do not read Silvanus directly mentioned at all. What should you make of that? The answer is, nothing. If you read that account you read words like “we” and “us” (Acts 16:12; 16:13; 16:16, etc.). Acts is the second letter written to Theophilus (Acts 1:1). The first letter is the book of Luke (Luke 1:1-4). So, “we” and “us” in Acts chapters sixteen and seventeen include Luke, though you do not read Luke’s name in the book of Acts at all. The fact is, Luke is only mentioned in Colossians 4:14 and II Timothy 4:11. From that we can and should learn that when Paul was out preaching there were often others with him that are not mentioned by name in the text. In our study we learn that Silvanus and Timotheus were with him in Philippi and Thessalonica even though Silvanus is not directly mentioned.

The phrase “shamefully entreated” is translated from the Greek word “ὕβριζω” which means this: “to exercise violence, that is, abuse: - use despitefully, reproach, entreat shamefully (spitefully)” (Strong’s # 5195). You can find that Greek word in four other Scriptures (Matthew 22:6, Luke 11:45, Luke 18:32, and Acts 14:5) translated in the KJV as “entreated them spitefully”, “reproachest”, “spitefully entreated”, and “to use them despitefully.” Those who are faithful to our Lord’s will have long faced such treatment for the faith (Matthew 5:10-12, Matthew 10:34-39, Luke 6:22-23, John 15:18-23, John 17:9-17, Romans 3:8, Romans 8:17, Philippians 1:28-30, II Thessalonians 1:4-8, II Timothy 2:10-12, Titus 2:7-8, Hebrews 11:32-38, I Peter 2:9-12, I Peter 3:14-18, and I Peter 4:13-19).

Paul certainly knew a lot about suffering for the cause of Christ (II Corinthians 4:8-10). He wrote about suffering “persecutions” (II Timothy 3:11-12). He said he took pleasure in persecutions (II Corinthians 12:10). Paul was essentially a magnet for persecution and for suffering (II Corinthians 11:21-33). Most people who study the Scriptures know this about Paul. In a short period of time men such as Silvanus and Timotheus would see that being with Paul was dangerous (physically speaking). Consider this, what does that say about those who continued to choose to be close companions with Paul? The Scriptures teach us that we know brethren by their fruit (Matthew 7:15-20). Those who continued to do the Lord’s work as companions of Paul show us their faithfulness through their fruit.

We should not take it lightly that men continued to work alongside Paul. Not all men chose to do so. Notice: *“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments. Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words. At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge”* (II Timothy 4:10-16).

Not only did Silvanus and Timotheus continue with Paul, but they were “bold” in speaking the Gospel. Those that teach the truth must be bold (Ephesians 6:18-20). The fact that they preached boldly speaks to their faithfulness. When Barnabas sought to give credibility to Saul [Paul] early after his conversion, one of the points he used was that Paul spoke the Gospel boldly (Acts 9:27). Solomon wrote: *“The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion”* (Proverbs 28:1). Paul wrote this to the saints in Philippi: *“According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death”* (Philippians 1:20).

They were not bold because it was easy. Remember, we have read that they were bold with much contention. We read what they faced in Thessalonica. It was not an easy road. These men proved their faithfulness by their actions.

**I Thessalonians 2:3** - Our study picks up from where we left off in our last article. Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus are still writing about their initial work in Thessalonica. The text we are going to study in this article is this: *“For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile”* (I Thessalonians 2:3).

An exhortation is: “Imploration, hortation, solace: - comfort, consolation, exhortation, intreaty” (Strong’s # 3874). There are multiple times wherein the Greek word translated as “exhortation” [παράκλησις] in this text is translated in the KJV as “comfort” (Acts 9:31, Romans 15:4, II Corinthians 1:3-4, II Corinthians 7:4, and II Corinthians 7:13). So, Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus are reminding the saints in Thessalonica about how they came at first and delivered comfort to them.

The word translated “deceit” [πλάνη] is an interesting word to study. One dictionary says: “Fraudulence; subjectively a straying from orthodoxy or piety: - deceit, to deceive, delusion, error” (Strong’s # 4106). Another dictionary says: “(1) a wandering, a straying about; 1a) one led astray from the right way, roams hither and thither; 2) metaphorically, 2a) mental straying, 2a1) error, wrong opinion relative to morals or religion, 2b) error which shows itself in action, a wrong mode of acting, 2c) error, that which leads into error, deceit or fraud” (Thayer). In other verses the word is translated as “error” (Matthew 27:64, Romans 1:27, James 5:20, II Peter 2:18, II Peter 3:17, I John 4:6, and Jude 1:11), “deceive” (Ephesians 4:14), and “strong delusion” (II Thessalonians 2:11). So, Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus did not deliver comfort in a way that would cause the people of Thessalonica to err or be deceived. Idolatry provided such false, erring comfort (Zechariah 10:2). These brothers in Christ were distinguishing their teaching from that which was associated with false religion.

We then read the word “uncleanness” in this verse. That term is translated from the Greek word “ἀκαθαρσία” which is defined as: “impurity (the quality), physically or morally: - uncleanness” (Strong’s # 167). This term is consistently translated as “uncleanness” in the KJV (Matthew 23:27, Romans 1:24, Romans 6:19, II Corinthians 12:21, Galatians 5:19, Ephesians 5:3, and Colossians 3:5). Later in this epistle, this was written: *“For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness”* (I Thessalonians 4:7). Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were stressing that when they came to Thessalonica initially to preach the Gospel they did not come with any impure motives.

We need to also look into the word that is translated “guile” [δόλος]. The dictionary definition of this term is: “(an obsolete primary probably meaning to decoy;

compare G1185); a trick (bait), that is, (figuratively) wile: - craft, deceit, guile, subtlety” (Strong’s # 1388). This term is translated in the KJV as “subtilty” (Matthew 26:4 and Acts 13:10), “deceit” (Mark 7:22 and Romans 1:29), “craft” (Mark 14:1), and “guile” (John 1:47, II Corinthians 12:16, I Peter 2:1, I Peter 2:22, I Peter 3:10, and Revelation 14:5). Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus are telling these brethren that their initial time teaching in Thessalonica did not include any craftiness.

Now, let’s think about what we have studied through thus far in this article. Teaching the truth brings comfort (Romans 15:4) and hope (Colossians 1:5). These men had to declare their integrity for a reason. False teachers and false doctrine can also bring messages that make people “feel good” (so to speak). In a context about false teachers this was written: *“For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage”* (II Peter 2:18-19).

The false prophets of old were guilty of bringing a false peace to the erring children of Israel. Notice: *“Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar: Say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it. Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it? Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even rend it with a stormy wind in my fury; and there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in my fury to consume it. So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof: and ye shall know that I am the LORD”* (Ezekiel 13:10-14). Did you notice that those prophets “seduced” God’s people? This is why Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus are reminding their brethren that they did not come and do such when they first met.

In the second epistle to the church in Corinth we get some insight as to why Paul made such an effort to set himself apart from those that taught error. He wrote: *“But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works”* (II Corinthians 11:12-15). Remember, we are not just

supposed to try what is taught to us, but also to examine the teachers as well (Matthew 7:15-20). Think on these things!

**I Thessalonians 2:4** - *“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts”* (I Thessalonians 2:4). How were Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel? In the first century, men did not grab a Bible and go preach the Gospel. While these men are writing this letter to the saints in Thessalonica; the New Testament was not complete. That should be an obvious point. So, they were not standing in front of audiences and preaching from the New Testament as Gospel preachers can today. What we will see in this study is that the Spirit was directly involved in these men preaching the Gospel. That will show us how they were put in trust with the Gospel.

In the first century, Christians received gifts directly from the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:13-24, Acts 19:1-7, and I Corinthians 12:3-11). In contexts concerning spiritual gifts, we see that God chose those set in certain positions within the body of Christ in the first century. Notice: *“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way... But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.). And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ”* (I Corinthians 12:27-31 and Ephesians 4:7-13).

In both of the contexts above, it was clearly stated that those things were temporary. We know that spiritual gifts continued until, *“that which is perfect is come”* (I Corinthians 13:8-13). We know we have the complete, perfect word of God now. We also know there are no Apostles today walking about and laying hands on individuals to give them the Spirit of God. So, being allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel does not apply today.

We do not know much about Silvanus, but there is plenty revealed in the New Testament about Paul and Timotheus. Paul was hand-picked by the Lord to be an

Apostle (Acts 9:1-20). He was given what to teach by our Lord (I Corinthians 2:1-16 and Galatians 1:11-16). Apostles did not have to study the Scriptures and prepare a lesson. They did not have to prepare to stand before men and teach. Jesus said this to His twelve Apostles: *“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you”* (Matthew 10:16-20).

Timotheus was chosen by Paul (Acts 16:1-4). He was aided by the Holy Spirit in teaching (II Timothy 1:6-14). So, he was not like preachers of today. However, he was not moved in the same manner that Paul was. Timothy was limited to teaching what he had been taught by Paul (I Corinthians 4:17 and II Timothy 2:1-4). For example, the Holy Spirit told Paul where and when to go (Acts 16:5-10). Timotheus was told by Paul where to go and when to go to that place (I Timothy 1:3-7).

What does still apply today in this verse we are looking at in this article is that we are to please God as He tries our hearts. We know how to please God in much of the same way the Thessalonians did. Notice: *“Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus”* (I Thessalonians 4:1-2). Like men and women of all times, we are to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing (Colossians 1:10). We will receive our eternal reward or punishment based on whether or not we obeyed the will of our Lord (John 5:28-29 and Revelation 22:14).

The judgment of our Lord is not based solely upon what can be seen outwardly. When David was chosen to be the king of Israel, this was said: *“But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart”* (I Samuel 16:7). So, we should understand that whatever it is man may think is hidden from God, they are mistaken (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, Isaiah 29:15, and Jeremiah 23:24). The fact that God tries the heart is a truth that has long been taught. In fact, it was even sung in times past by the children of Israel. Notice: *“The LORD shall judge the people: judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me. Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins”* (Psalms 7:8-9). So, let us all be sure we are clean within and without (Matthew 23:25-26)!

**I Thessalonians 2:5** - *“For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness”* (I Thessalonians 2:5). In our study last week we considered how the Lord entrusted Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus with the Gospel. One of the reasons those men could be trusted with the saving message of the word of God is that they handled it correctly. When there is an important message that needs to be delivered, you want a faithful messenger to carry that message. Solomon wrote: *“A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador is health... As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters... He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool cutteth off the feet, and drinketh damage”* (Proverbs 13:17, Proverbs 25:13, and Proverbs 26:6).

The people in Thessalonica knew that Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus did not use flattering words among them. The Greek word translated “flattering” is defined just as it is translated (Strong’s # 2850). Flattery is, “excessive and insincere praise, given especially to further one's own interests” (New Oxford American Dictionary). Remember this definition in this study. When we talk about the “cloke of covetousness” that speaks directly to a person furthering their own interests.

Our Lord is not a fan of flattery. Notice: *“Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak. The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us? For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him. The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times... He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips... A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin”* (Psalms 12:1-6, Proverbs 20:19, and Proverbs 26:28).

Preaching the word of God is just that; preaching the word of God. Paul instructed Timothy saying: *“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine”* (II Timothy 4:2). A man who takes on the role of teaching the word of God must be committed to preaching the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:20; 20:26-27). Reproving, rebuking, and exhorting will not often result in the hearers “liking” the messenger of the truth (I Kings 18:17-18, I Kings 21:20, I Kings 22:1-38, II Chronicles 24:20-21, II Chronicles 36:14-16, Proverbs 15:12, Isaiah 29:21, Jeremiah 20:7-8, Amos 5:10, Amos 7:10-16, Matthew 23:34, John 3:19-21, John 7:7, John 8:31-59, Acts 5:25-42, Acts 7:51-58, and Galatians 4:16). True teaching is not flattering at all.

The Greek word [πρόφαισις] that is translated “cloke” is defined as: “an outward showing, that is, pretext: - cloke, colour, pretence, show” (Strong’s # 4392). It is translated “pretence” (Matthew 23:14, Mark 12:40, and Philippians 1:18) and “shew” (Luke 20:47) in other passages of Scripture. So, Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus are saying they were not fakers when they were teaching in Thessalonica.

They were not deceiving the people of Thessalonica with a covetous motive. One of the traits of a false teacher is covetousness. Notice: *“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not”* (II Peter 2:1-3).

What comes to mind for me in this study is, the many “Gospel Meetings” I have sat through in the past with so-called “preachers” buttering up audiences before they “preached” their message. Men like that need to be marked and avoided (Romans 16:17-18). This is exactly what Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus did not do when they came preaching the Gospel. Notice what was written to the Corinthians: *“For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ... But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God”* (II Corinthians 2:17 and II Corinthians 4:2).

By these men writing “God is witness” they are essentially making a legal reference. Both the Old and New Covenants make the point of having two or more witnesses for confirmation of truth (Deuteronomy 17:6, Deuteronomy 19:15, Matthew 18:15-17, II Corinthians 13:1, I Timothy 5:19, and Hebrews 10:28). What greater witness could one call upon besides God? Paul made a similar point to the saints in Rome (Romans 1:9 and Romans 9:1) and Galatia (Galatians 1:20). So, how did God bear witness of such things? Well, He did so by confirming men with signs, wonders, etc. (Hebrews 2:1-4). Later in this chapter, these men will call upon Thessalonians and God as witnesses towards their conduct in Thessalonica (I Thessalonians 2:10).

**I Thessalonians 2:6** - *“Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ”* (I Thessalonians 2:6). This statement surely sets Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus apart from others. Men who take on the work of preaching the Gospel of Christ do not always do so with good intentions (Philippians 1:15-16). Many gloried after the flesh in the first century (II Corinthians 11:18). It is not good for men to desire their own glory (Proverbs 25:27).



God is the one who should be glorified (Matthew 5:14-16, John 15:8, Romans 16:27, I Corinthians 6:20, I Corinthians 10:31, and I Peter 4:11).

There is a challenge that existed in the first century that still exists today. That challenge is that people want to glorify those who preach the Gospel. This is true even when the man preaching the Gospel isn't seeking glory. It was especially true when preachers performed miraculous acts to confirm the Gospel. Notice this: *"And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them"* (Acts 14:8-18).

Do not think this problem only existed in the first century or even today just among people of the world. Within the body of Christ there seems to be some sort of desire to exalt men who preach the Gospel of Christ. Think about the church in Corinth. Notice what was written to them: *"Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul... And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour... And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think*

*of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another” (I Corinthians 1:12-13; 3:1-8; 4:6).*

Today, there are many so-called “preachers” that want to have degrees of men, write books, have social media followers, attend special speaking arrangements, and other forms of notoriety. This problem exists not only because those men are glory-seekers, but just like the points above establish; people like to glorify men. We’d do well to never exalt man. Furthermore, we should avoid those men that want to be glorified. Jesus said: *“He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him”* (John 7:18). It speaks volumes of Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus in that they did not seek their own glory (II Corinthians 10:17).

In addition to not being glory-seekers, they also did not want to be a burden to their brethren. It is not that they were not worthy of financial support, for they were (I Corinthians 9:1-14). It is not just that they didn’t want to be burden though. We will see this as we further study this letter and the next one to the saints in Thessalonica. These men are going to instruct these brethren to labor with their own hands (I Thessalonians 4:11). There were those among them that did not want to work at all (II Thessalonians 3:6-13). Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were attempting to be examples to be followed even in this regard.

Before our study concludes, did you notice at the end of verse six that these three men are considered apostles? How is this so? Do you recall that Barnabas was called an apostle (Acts 14:14)? Yet, there is nothing written about Barnabas, Silvanus, and Timotheus being made Apostles by Jesus. The key to understanding this comes down to the meaning of the word “apostle” throughout the New Testament. The word in I Thessalonians 2:6 means: “a delegate; specifically an ambassador of the Gospel; officially a commissioner of Christ (“apostle”), (with miraculous powers): - apostle, messenger, he that is sent” (Strong’s # 652). It applied to those chosen by Jesus to hold the office of an Apostle of Christ (i.e. Matthew 10:1-4). However, it is also used in general as “messenger(s)” (II Corinthians 8:23 and Philippians 2:25). We know that Timothy was chosen, not by Jesus Himself, but by Paul (Acts 16:1-4). This is a good lesson in how we have to be careful in our studies.

**I Thessalonians 2:7-8** - As Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus continue to remind the saints in Thessalonica of their entrance in among them, we find these words: *“But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us”* (I Thessalonians 2:7-8).

The gentleness that these brethren came to the Thessalonians with is what Paul will later remind Timothy to use in preaching the Gospel. What he wrote to Timothy will explain not only the gentle approach, but why as well. Notice: *“But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will”* (II Timothy 2:23-26).

When we consider the point of “as a nurse” we get some more insight. The Greek word translated “nurse” [τροφός] only appears in this one verse. The definition is: “a nourisher, that is, nurse: - nurse” (Strong’s # 5162). From the perspective of those teaching, the nourishing comes through the words of faith (I Timothy 4:6). So, you have them using a gentle approach in teaching the truth. That is what the people of Thessalonica needed.

A gentle approach as a nurse is not always the approach a teacher must take. There are times wherein a sharp rebuke is needed (II Corinthians 13:10 and Titus 1:10-14). Jesus was meek [gentle; Strong’s # 42350 (Matthew 11:28-30)]. He is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11; 10:14). Yet, there were many times wherein He did not use a gentle approach (Matthew 8:23-27, Matthew 12:22-42, Matthew 16:21-23, Matthew 23:1-36, Luke 11:37-54, Luke 24:15-27, John 2:13-17, etc.). He was not apologetic for being offensive either (Matthew 15:1-14). So, those who dare take upon themselves the responsibility of teaching need to carefully consider how to approach people in different situations.

To get more insight of the point, consider the thought of a nurse cherishing her children. When you study the way the Apostle Paul looked at those he taught you find statements like these: *“Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord... To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour”* (I Timothy 1:2 and Titus 1:4). Thus, from these facts, we can see a parental approach to teaching.

With all that we have considered already, the statement *“being affectionately desirous of you,”* makes a lot of sense. The idea conveyed from the Greek “ἠμείρομαι” is: “(a yearning; of uncertain affinity); to long for: - be affectionately desirous” (Strong’s # 2442). Paul’s parental-like affection for his brethren is very clear in the Scriptures. He wrote this to the saints in Corinth: *“Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved”* (II

Corinthians 12:14-15). Outside of what we are reading in this letter about Silvanus, we don't have much more that we can say about him on this point. However, with Timothy, we do have more insight. For example: *"But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel"* (Philippians 2:19-22).

As if the point hadn't been made already, these brothers in Christ wrote, *"we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us."* The Greek word that is translated "souls" [ψυχή] has various meanings. Aside from "soul(s)" it is translated in the KJV as "life" or "lives" (Matthew 2:20; 6:25; 10:39; 16:25; 20:28, Mark 3:4; 8:35; 10:45, Luke 6:9; 9:56; 12:22-23; 14:26; 17:33, John 10:11; 10:15; 10:17; 12:25; 13:37-38; 15:13, Acts 15:26; 20:10; 20:24; 27:10; 27:22, Romans 11:3, etc.), "mind(s)" (Philippians 1:27 and Hebrews 12:3), and "heartily" (Colossians 3:23). They could have therefore meant their lives here on earth (I John 3:16) or their actual soul as in the spirit within us (Matthew 10:28). That same Greek word is used in the two Scriptures I just cited. Whether they meant life external or internal, they are emphasizing their love for the saints in Thessalonica.

Brethren, we need to understand that faithful teachers of the word of God are risking their souls to help others with the Gospel (James 3:1). That should speak volumes to those who have an understanding of what that means. In addition to the spiritual risks, there is also the anxieties that come with teaching and trying to help people get to Heaven (Romans 9:1-3 and II Corinthians 11:28). Faithful teachers of the Gospel strongly desire to see those they are teaching succeed spiritually. They will risk it all to help their students be saved. Think about this statement: *"Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all"* (Philippians 2:17). So, from these faithful teachers we are reading the words of; let us consider that sound preachers shouldn't only be judged for their faithful teachings. They should also be measured by their love for their brethren!

**I Thessalonians 2:9** - There were times when the Apostle Paul chose to labor with his hands to provide partial financial support for himself. For example, he did such when he was in Corinth (Acts 18:1-3; cf. I Corinthians 4:1-2). What we will look at in this study is that Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus did this when they were in Thessalonica. Here is what we will study in this article: *"For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God"* (I Thessalonians 2:9).

As we engage in this study it is important that something is made clear. Those who have given themselves to the preaching of the Gospel are authorized to receive financial support from those they teach. This pattern began first when Jesus sent the twelve out while He was still on earth. Notice: *“These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city”* (Matthew 10:5-15). Such did not just apply to the Apostles. Jesus taught the same thing when He sent out the seventy to teach (Luke 10:1-12).

After Jesus died and left this world to be on the right hand of the Father in Heaven, those who taught the Gospel were still worthy to be supported by those they taught. To the Corinthians, Paul wrote this: *“Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. Mine answer to them that do examine me is this, Have we not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working? Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel”* (I Corinthians 9:1-14).

While in Corinth, Paul chose not to take support from them locally (I Corinthians 9:15). However, aside from working with his own hands there, notice this: *“I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service”* (II Corinthians 11:8). The next verse, similar to what we read about the Thessalonians, gives the reason why. Notice: *“And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself”* (II Corinthians 11:9).

Financial support is not just based on preachers being “needy” either. Notice what was written to the saints in Philippi: *“But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God”* (Philippians 4:10-18).

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus didn’t want to be “chargeable” [burdensome]. That is not the only reason they chose to labor with their hands. They chose to work with their hands to give an example for the lazy ones in Thessalonica to learn from (II Thessalonians 3:7-12). These men taught not only by word, but by deed as well (I Timothy 4:12).

**I Thessalonians 2:10** - After reminding the saints in Thessalonica how they worked with their hands while they were in Thessalonica (I Thessalonians 2:9); Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus wrote this: *“Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe”* (I Thessalonians 2:10). Earlier in this chapter we saw that Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus referred to God as a witness to their behavior in teaching (I Thessalonians 2:5). We will not cover that point again in this study.

What we are seeing now is that these brothers refer to the saints in Thessalonica as witnesses to their behavior while they were in Thessalonica (cf. I Thessalonians 1:5). Having a good reputation matters (Proverbs 22:1). One of the qualifications of an elder

is having a good report from those within and on the outside (I Timothy 3:7). One of the qualifications of a widow, to be taken under the care of the local church, is that she is well reported of for having done good works (I Timothy 5:10). We read of Demetrius having a good report of all (III John 1:12). That tells us a lot about him. Paul and some of those laboring with him had individuals that were slandering their good names (Romans 3:8). Since messengers of the Gospel are measured, in part, by their fruit (Matthew 7:15-20); they needed brethren that would speak well of them. It is common that people are aware of “marking” someone who is false (Romans 16:17-18). However, saints are also taught to “mark” those who are faithful as well (Philippians 3:16-17).

Think about how great it is that these brothers could refer to the saints in Thessalonica as witnesses to their character and behavior. In other words, the saints in Thessalonica were references for Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus. Consider this: *“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well”* (III John 1:4-6). Paul knew the power of having someone speak well of you. Think about how Barnabas aided him greatly after he initially obeyed the call of the Gospel when no one trusted him (Acts 9:1-31).

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus specify that the saints in Thessalonica could bear witness to their behaving holily, justly, and unblameably. The Greek word translated “holily” [ὁσίως] only appears in this one verse in the New Testament. The definition of that term is: “piously: - holily” (Strong’s # 3743). That tells us that the saints in Thessalonica witnessed that these brothers were devoutly religious. They were not just those that spoke the word of God, they lived it (I Timothy 4:12-16 and James 1:18-27; 2:14-26).

The Greek term “δικαίως” is translated in this verse as “justly” (Strong’s # 1346). That term is defined as: “1) just, agreeably to right; 2) properly, as is right; 3) uprightly, agreeable to the law of rectitude” (Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon). When we consider this Greek word, it is also translated “righteousness” and “righteously” in other passages. As commentary on this word, consider those passages: *“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame... Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world... Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously”* (I Corinthians 15:34, Titus 2:12, and I Peter 2:23).

The Greek term “ἀμέμπτως” is translated “unblameably” in this verse. The definition of this term is: “faultlessly: - blameless, unblameably” (Strong’s # 274). The

only other time this Greek word is used in the New Testament is in this same letter and is translated as “blameless” in that verse. Notice: *“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (I Thessalonians 5:23).

Christians are taught of God to be holy (Ephesians 1:4 and I Peter 1:13-16). Christians are taught of God to be just by faith and in works (Romans 1:17 and Romans 2:13). Christians are taught of God to live in a manner that we are without blame (Philippians 2:12-16). Consider how these things come together in having us prepared for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless”* (II Peter 3:9-14).

Finally, the saints in Thessalonica were referred to as “you that believe.” It is possible for believers to fall away (Luke 8:13-14, Hebrews 3:12-13, Hebrews 6:4-6, etc.). Yet, this is a phrase of hope. Those that believe are those in whom the word of God is actively, productively working (I Thessalonians 2:13). From what we can read, there was more hope for these brethren than for some others in the first century (i.e. Galatians 1:6-10; 3:1-3; 4:11; 5:7-9).

**I Thessalonians 2:11-12** - *“As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory”* (I Thessalonians 2:11-12). Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus are reminding the saints in Thessalonica about their approach in teaching when they were in Thessalonica. The Greek word that is translated “exhorted” [παρακαλέω] has a broad definition. That definition is: “To call near, that is, invite, invoke (by imploration, hortation or consolation): - beseech, call for, (be of good) comfort, desire, (give) exhort (-ation), intreat, pray” (Strong’s # 3870).

It was common for brethren to be exhorted to continue in faithful service to our Lord. Notice: *“Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God... I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation*



*wherewith ye are called... Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus”* (Acts 14:22, Ephesians 4:1, and I Thessalonians 4:1-2). As you read in the first Scripture quoted in this paragraph, continued faithful service to the Lord comes at a price (Psalms 37:12-15, Matthew 5:10-12, John 16:33, and II Timothy 3:12). So, the next point was as important then as it is now. Brethren need to be comforted from time to time.

We know one source of comfort is the Scriptures (Romans 15:4). However, the Scriptures are not our only source of comfort. Faithful brethren play a large role for saints in affliction to be comforted. Consider what Paul wrote about persecution he faced and how he was comforted during that time: *“Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more”* (II Corinthians 7:4-7). The parental-like relationship Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus had with the brethren in Thessalonica undoubtedly aided them in comforting the saints in Thessalonica. Yet, that relationship was not just used for comforting these brethren.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus charged these brethren as a father does his children. The Greek word that is translated “charged” [μαρτυρέω] is an interesting word. One definition of this term is: “to be a witness, that is, testify (literally or figuratively): - charge, give [evidence], bear record, have (obtain, of) good (honest) report, be well reported of, testify, give (have) testimony, (be, bear, give, obtain) witness” (Strong’s # 3140). When you do a word study, you find that translations of this word in the KJV include “bear witness” (Luke 11:48, John 1:7, John 1:8, John 5:31, John 5:36, John 8:18, John 10:25, John 15:27, John 18:23, John 18:37, Acts 23:11, I John 1:2, and I John 5:8), “testify” (John 2:25, John 3:11, John 5:39, John 7:7, John 15:26, Acts 26:5, I John 4:14, and Revelation 22:16), “bear record” (John 8:14, II Corinthians 8:3, I John 5:7, and III John 1:12), etc. So, Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus gave witness to these brethren in a manner that a father would his child. That is not the way I would normally think of the English word “charge.” When I think of the word “charge,” I think of it as a command like it is used in Deuteronomy 3:28 and I Timothy 6:13.

What would Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus be testifying about? When we look back at the book of Acts we get some answers. For example, in Acts 14:3 we see the giving of testimony unto the word of the grace of our Lord and confirming it with signs

and wonders. Paul acted as a witness for Christ (Acts 23:11). Paul gave witness accounts for Christ of things which were long ago recorded by the prophets and Moses (Acts 26:22). So, that is our answer. Paul and the other Apostles were able to testify of things they were eye witnesses of concerning our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 24:46-48, Acts 2:29-32, Acts 3:15, Acts 4:33, Acts 10:39-42, Acts 18:5, I Corinthians 15:15, I John 1:1-3, and I John 4:14), which then and now serves as a motivator for faithfulness among the saints. We have the words of faithful men who saw the evidence that our faith is rooted in (I Corinthians 15:1-26).

We have, in the study of this context, talked about the parental-like relationship in teaching (cf. I Thessalonians 2:7-8). To the Corinthians, this was written and it serves as great commentary on this point: *"I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel"* (I Corinthians 4:14-15).

The calling all saints experience is through the Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord (II Thessalonians 2:14). Christians are supposed to walk [to tread all around] in a worthy manner (Ephesians 4:1). Jesus is our ultimate example of how we are to behave ourselves (I John 2:1-6). Our conduct has to be as becometh the Gospel (Philippians 1:27). Through Jesus Christ, our Heavenly Father has made us citizens of the kingdom (Colossians 1:12-23). As Christians, our conversation [citizenship] is in Heaven (Philippians 3:20). When people observe our behavior, they should see people that behave like citizens of the kingdom of God rather than people of the world (Romans 12:1-2). As children of God, our conduct has to be above and beyond that of people of the world (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1). Just as Jesus behaved Himself in a worthy manner, all Christians need to do such as well!

**I Thessalonians 2:13** - *"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe"* (I Thessalonians 2:13). The statement "for this cause" refers back to the previous verse: *"That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory"* (I Thessalonians 2:12).

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were thankful to God, without ceasing, because the saints in Thessalonica received the word of God aright. They had already told these brethren that they were thankful for them (I Thessalonians 1:2-3). This appears to be typical for Paul (Romans 1:8-9). The specific here is for their reception of the truth. Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus knew that glory belonged to God for this rather than to themselves. Consider what Paul wrote to the church in Rome: *"So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed*

*of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith... So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 1:15-17; 10:17).*

Obedience is two-fold. God’s part is accomplished through His word as you have just read. Man’s part is in either receiving or rejecting His word. Rejecting the word of God is as simple as just not receiving it. Jesus said: *“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”* (John 12:48). Receiving the word of God is not just an intellectual acceptance. Reception of the word of God includes obedient action and continuation of such thereafter. Notice: *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers... Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain”* (Acts 2:36-42 and I Corinthians 15:1-2).

The Thessalonians did not consider the Gospel to be the words of men. They were right. Men such as Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were not preaching their own words. While Silvanus and Timotheus were taught by Paul (II Timothy 2:2) and they taught what they heard (I Corinthians 4:17); Paul received what he taught from the Lord through the work of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 2:1-13). Notice what Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia: *“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ”* (Galatians 1:8-12). If you’d like to consider more on the inspiration of the word of God (II Timothy 3:15-17), consider the following Scriptures: II Samuel 23:2, Job 32:8,

Jeremiah 1:9, Matthew 10:16-20, John 16:1-13, I Corinthians 14:37, and II Peter 1:20-21.

The word of God is the truth (John 17:17). The truth is in Jesus (Ephesians 4:21). Whether we use the terms “truth”, “word”, or “Gospel” in reference to what the Lord has spoken; we are talking about the same thing (Colossians 1:5). Spiritual birth is through the word of God (James 1:18 and I Peter 1:23-25). Even under the Old Law, conversion was dependent upon the word of our Lord (Psalms 19:7). Yet, the word of God does not stop working at the point of conversion. We see this by what Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus wrote to the Thessalonians in this verse we are studying. Remember, specifically, these words: *“the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”*

The phrase “effectually worketh” means: “to be active, efficient: - do, (be) effectual (fervent), be mighty in, shew forth self, work (effectually in)” (Strong’s # 1754). The Gospel doesn’t just aid one in becoming a Christian, the Gospel keeps working (I Peter 2:1-2). Remember what Jesus taught in what is known as the “Parable of the Sower”: *“And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred”* (Mark 4:20).

What we learn here about the saints in Thessalonica is that they permitted the word of God to work in them and through them. They were not just hearers of the word, they were also doers (James 1:19-27). If they or we desire to spend eternity in Heaven, we have to do more than just intellectually receive the truth (Matthew 7:13-27, Luke 6:46, and Luke 11:28).

**I Thessalonians 2:14-16** - In our last article we talked about how the Thessalonians had received the word of God and it was effectually working in them (I Thessalonians 2:13). Evidence of such is seen in what we are going to study in this article. Notice: *“For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost”* (I Thessalonians 2:14-16).

When persecutions arise, those who are not rooted in the faith fall away (Mark 4:17). These saints did not fall away. Instead, they followed the pattern that congregations in Judaea had laid forth. There were times of great persecution against the saints in Judaea (Acts 8:1-3). We have already talked about how the saints in Thessalonica received the word of God with much affliction (I Thessalonians 1:6).

What Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus wrote in this context is interesting. Since the brethren in Thessalonica were aware of what they were facing from their own countrymen, the focus turns more to what the Jews did against the cause of Christ. Before we get into what was mentioned, let's take a moment and think about the relevance. I do not know why the Holy Spirit had Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus take this approach. What I do know is that it would have been beneficial for the saints in Thessalonica to know that they were not the only Christians suffering persecution. Peter was moved by the Holy Spirit to take this teaching approach in his writings too. Notice: *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world"* (I Peter 5:8-9). The fact is, all faithful Christians have or will at some point in time face some sort of persecution for the faith (Matthew 5:10-12, Matthew 10:34-39, John 17:6-20, Acts 14:22, II Timothy 3:10-12, and I Peter 4:12-19). Now, let's examine what was said of the things the Jews did against our Lord and the work of our Lord.

The Jews murdered Jesus (Matthew 26:1-27:66, Acts 2:22-23, and Acts 10:36-39). It is important to remember that some of them repented and were converted. Remember how this happened: *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers"* (Acts 2:36-42).

While some repented and were converted, many of the Jews continued to be opposed to the work of our Lord after He ascended into Heaven. The leaders of the Jews had the Apostles arrested, beaten, instructed not to teach the Gospel any more, etc. multiple times (Acts 3:1-5:42). Herod persecuted the church and killed James (Acts 12:1-4). The Jews vehemently pursued the Apostle Paul seeking many ways in which they could kill him (Acts 14:19-23:35). They continued to do what their forefathers sinfully did (Matthew 23:33-39).

The Jews were not at all pleased that the Gospel was sent to the Gentiles. You can see this early on in Acts 13:13-52. It was such a problem that division between

Jews and Gentiles plagued congregations. We see that in Antioch (Acts 15:1-35). When you read the letter to the church in Rome, the Jews thought they were better than the Gentiles and vice versa (Romans 1:1-12:3). Peter erred and Barnabas was carried away from the faith through these things (Galatians 2:11-17). This was a huge problem and is in the background of many things written in the New Testament.

So, why were the Jews so vile? Why were they contrary to all men? Why were they forbidding the word of God from being taught? If you put the following Scriptures together, you should get a pretty clear answer to those questions I posed: *“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me... Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God”* (John 16:1-3 and Romans 10:1-3).

The Jews had become full of sin. They and those in Thessalonica that persecuted the saints will face the wrath of God (II Thessalonians 1:3-10). Our Lord takes persecution against His people personally (Acts 9:1-5). We should learn from this context that hatred against God's people is global. Set your mind, as they did, to be steadfast no matter what we face!

**I Thessalonians 2:17-20** - We have considered the affection of Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus earlier in this chapter (I Thessalonians 2:7-11). Now, we will look further into their care for the saints in Thessalonica. Notice: *“But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy”* (I Thessalonians 2:17-20).

If you will recall, earlier in the establishment of the work in Thessalonica, Paul had to be sent away by night (Acts 17:1-10). I am not sure that this is what is being referred to here in this context. It is certainly possible that Paul returned to Thessalonica at some other time. At some point the saints in Philippi sent financial support to Paul in Thessalonica (Philippians 4:16). Paul, Silvanus, Timotheus are not able to be physically present in Thessalonica at the time they are writing this letter. However, they were with them in heart (cf. II Corinthians 7:3). Paul spoke to other congregations saying that he was absent in the flesh, but present in the spirit (I Corinthians 5:3 and Colossians 2:5).

Now, think about something concerning the Apostle Paul specifically. Daily, he faced a sort of anxiety that no “preacher” today really faces. Consider: *“Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches”* (II Corinthians 11:28). I work to help brethren in a few different locations. However, none of them are dependent upon me in any way as congregations were upon Paul. I cannot even imagine the stress that put upon him. Yet, he was not focused on the stress it caused him. Instead he was conflicted when he was not able to be among the saints. Notice: *“For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh”* (Colossians 2:1). He could not be in two places at once. So, his level of care for all the congregations he labored with weighed heavily upon him. While we cannot say Silvanus and Timotheus faced the exact same pressure, they did face some of it. Paul said Timothy shared the same level of care for brethren as he did (Philippians 2:19-23).

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus wanted to be with their brethren in Thessalonica. We know the importance of seeing brethren face to face (II John 1:12 and III John 1:13-14). That does not apply only to teachers of the Gospel. All brethren need to be present in each other’s lives. That is a large part of why we are instructed of God to assemble together in person (Hebrews 10:23-25). These brethren made haste to see the saints in Thessalonica. Again, this was not a unique desire just for the saints in Thessalonica (Romans 15:23).

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were hindered from coming to Thessalonica. This was not only the case with the saints in Thessalonica. For example, we can see that Paul was hindered from visiting the saints in Rome (Romans 15:22). The one causing the hinderance was Satan. Satan was personally at work in the first century (Luke 4:1-13, Luke 22:31-32, and I Peter 5:8-9). However, it is possible that this is a figure of speech too. Satan can be used as a figure representing evil (Acts 26:18 and I Timothy 5:11-15). With Ananias, it was said that Satan had filled his heart to lie to the Holy Ghost (Acts 5:3). However, Satan was not controlling him or anything like that (Acts 5:4). Such was a figure of speech. You are either a servant of God or a servant of Satan based upon what you do (I John 3:1-10). So, whether or not Satan was personally hindering Paul or evil stood in his way, I cannot tell for sure from this text. As was discussed already in this chapter, the Jews were standing in the way of the Lord’s work very often (I Thessalonians 2:14-16). Calling those Jews who did such things Satan would certainly be a just charge if that is what was happening in this text (John 8:44; cf. Matthew 16:21-23). Thankfully, we do not literally have Satan hindering us today (II Peter 2:4 and Jude 1:6). As we move away from thoughts about Satan, let’s turn our attention back to what the saints in Thessalonica meant to Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus.

We know the first hope of all Christians is our Lord (II Thessalonians 2:16 and Titus 2:13) and the salvation that awaits us through Him (I Peter 1:3-9). As teachers of the Gospel, Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus also found hope, joy, etc. (cf. Philippians 4:1) through those they taught. In particular, through looking forward to the salvation those that they taught would receive. These brothers did not want their labor to be in vain. Paul expressed that to multiple congregations in the first century. Notice: *“I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain... Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain”* (Galatians 4:11 and Philippians 2:14-16). We will see that concern expressed to those in Thessalonica in the next chapter (I Thessalonians 3:5).

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus gloried in the saints in Thessalonica (II Thessalonians 1:1-4). Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were able to find joy in their brothers and sisters in Christ in Thessalonica (I Thessalonians 3:8-9). When a faithful teacher of the Gospel of Christ sees those they teach be faithful, there is a great sense of joy (Philippians 2:2). John wrote this: *“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth”* (III John 1:4). Faithful teachers of today feel the same way. Those they teach are either a great joy or a great disappointment. What are you to those that have labored that you might be saved?