

NOTES ON THE EPISTLES TO THE THESSALONIANS

JOHN MILLER

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PAUL'S LETTERS TO THE THESSALONIANS - WHEN AND WHERE WRITTEN (W. BUNTING)

The first of these letters is one of the earliest parts of the New Testament. It was probably written before any of the four Gospels, or the Acts of the Apostles. On his first visit to Thessalonica, Paul and his companions had journeyed from Philippi, where they had been shamefully treated, beaten with rods and imprisoned (Phil.2:2¹). The response to Paul's preaching in Thessalonica was remarkable, "Of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few", consorted with Paul and Silas (Acts 17:4²). The Jews stirred up persecution, and after the uproar, Paul and Silas went by night to Beroea, and later to Athens and Corinth. From Athens Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to comfort and assure the saints in their persecutions. The report brought back by Timothy had been a great cheer to the apostle. Presumably from Corinth Paul wrote this letter following receipt of the report from Timothy.

Amongst other things, the letter seeks to comfort the saints and to correct some misunderstandings which had arisen regarding those who had fallen asleep. The letter sheds a flood of light on the inspiring truth of the coming of the Lord for His saints. It is thought that the second letter to the church of the Thessalonians was written during Paul's extended stay at Corinth. We know

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.2.2>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2017.4>

that he remained there for a year and six months (Acts 18:11³). The main purpose of the letter was to correct some erroneous ideas which had arisen in the minds of some of the saints regarding the coming of the Lord. They had assumed that the day of the Lord had already arrived, and in consequence there was no purpose in continuing their daily employment.

Silas and Timothy were with the apostle in Corinth, and it may be assumed that the letter was dictated to one or other of them. However, Paul takes up the pen to write the closing salutation, "The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all" (1 Thess.3:17⁴,18⁵).

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2018.11>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.3.17>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%203.18>

COMMENTARY ON 1 THESSALONIANS 1

1 Thess. 1:1¹

Silvanus is Silas of Acts 15:22²,32³,39-41⁴, who was one of the “chief men among the brethren,” and one of the prophets, whom Paul chose as his fellow-worker after Barnabas parted from him in Antioch, and they went forth, being commended to the grace of the Lord. In Acts 16:1-3⁵ we read of Timothy’s going forth to the work of the Lord: “Him would Paul have to go forth with him.” These three men wrought together in the Lord’s work in Macedonia, where they planted churches in Philippi and Thessalonica. Here they are joined together in this letter from Paul to the Thessalonians. The manner in which this church is addressed is somewhat unique – “in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

This shows what the Lord prayed for in Jn 17:20⁶,21⁷: “Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us: that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me.” This oneness

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.1.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2015.22>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2015.32>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2015.39-41>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2016.1-3>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2017.20>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2017.21>

in “Us” is seen in the church of the Thessalonians, and the effect of this unity was felt far and wide in their collective testimony. Without seeking to enter into a discussion on the textual grounds as to whether in Paul’s greeting it is simply “grace and peace,” or whether “Grace and peace are from the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,” we may say that in others of Paul’s epistles, from Rom. to Philemon, grace and peace are in every one from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (the Lord Jesus Christ though present in the AV/KJV is omitted in the RV, in Col.1:2⁸). I am disposed therefore to accept the wording of the AV/KJV as correct.

1 Thess.1:2⁹,3¹⁰

Paul writes similarly in Rom.1:8¹¹,9¹²; Phil.1:3¹³; and Col.1:3¹⁴,4¹⁵: In other epistles he gives thanks for the saints. Prayer and thanksgiving make an excellent combination. It is well when we have many things and persons to thank God for, and many persons and things to pray for. The remembrance of these three servants of God was unceasing on behalf of the Thessalonians; of their work of faith, a work which sprang from a living faith (“Faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself.” – Jas.2:17¹⁶); their labour (Gk. *kopos*, wearisome toil, such as only

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.2>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.1.2>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%201.3>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.8>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%201.9>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.1.3>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.3>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col%201.4>

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love can bear without murmuring) of love; and their endurance of hope. All three things originated in and sprang from our Lord Jesus Christ, not simply that their endurance of hope was in Him. Indeed the words are in the genitive, and should read, “of our Lord Jesus Christ.” These holy men were acting as the Lord’s remembrancers (see Isa.62:6¹⁷,7¹⁸).

1 Thess.1:4¹⁹,5²⁰

Election here is that of Eph.1:4²¹, in that God chose believers in Christ before the foundation of the world. This is referred to in 2 Thess.2:13²²,14²³: “But we are bound to give thanks to God alway for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, for that God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto He called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Paul was ready to endure all things that God’s elect might be saved, even as he wrote to Timothy, “I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim.2:10²⁴). Thus it was with the elect in Thessalonica, that to them the gospel did not come in word only, but in power, in the Holy Spirit, and in much

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.2.17>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.62.6>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2062.7>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.1.4>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%201.5>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.4>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.13>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%202.14>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.10>

assurance. Some commentators associate these words with the manner in which Paul preached the gospel.

It seems to me rather to indicate the manner in which the gospel came to the Thessalonians. There is undoubtedly a relationship between how the gospel is preached and the effect it has on the hearers, as there is between the arrow leaving the bow and striking the target. What Paul is saying is like the arrow striking the target, as to the power it had on the hearts of the hearers. The gospel came unto them in power, etc. Literally it “became” (Gk. *egenethe*, a form of *ginomai*, to become) unto (Gk. *eis*, into) them, in word, in power, in the Holy Spirit, in much assurance. The assurance was clearly not Paul’s assurance that he was preaching the right gospel or preaching the gospel aright, but the assurance of those that heard it. Paul and the others backed their gospel preaching with their Christian living – “toward you for your sake.” They practised what they preached. It ill becomes preachers to be as the Pharisees, who said and did not.

1 Thess.1:6²⁵,7²⁶

Ye became (the same word as in verse 5 above, a form of *ginomai*), imitators (Gk. *mimetes*, from which the English word “mimic” is derived) of us, and of the Lord, whose behaviour was seen in that of the preachers. They accepted the word of the preachers in much tribulation (from men) and with much joy of the Holy Spirit (from God). They were a happy, suffering people. Thus the whole church became a pattern of behaviour to the new-born believers in the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia;

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.1.6>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%201.7>

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this work of the Lord was a new work in those parts. Thus it was that Paul and his fellows imitated the Lord, their converts imitated them, and other believers elsewhere found in the Thessalonian church a pattern to imitate. Happy are young converts who find in others an excellent pattern to follow.

1 Thess.1:8²⁷

A brilliant light had been lit in Thessalonica, and from this church the light streamed out to distant parts. Aristarchus and Secundus, of Acts 20:4²⁸, and Gaius, of Acts 19:29²⁹, were possibly men in the forefront of the work and used by the Spirit in the diffusion of the word of the Lord. So powerful was the testimony of the Thessalonians that it reached far beyond the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia, for in every place their faith towards God had gone abroad. We have here a pattern assembly in testimony; one in which preaching and practice were in harmony.

1 Thess.1:9³⁰,10³¹

Paul did not need to say anything about the Lord's work in Thessalonica, for the report of the entrance of the Lord's workers there had been related far and wide, of how the Thessalonians had turned to God from their idols. They first found the living and true God, and then their idols were given up. The evils of idolatry fell from them like withered autumn leaves. Their ser-

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.1.8>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.4>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2019.29>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.1.9>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%201.10>

vice (bondservice) was from henceforth to God who is both living and true, in contrast to the service of lifeless false idols, which are nothing at all in the world (1 Cor.8:4³²). They served God as they waited for Jesus His Son from heaven. “Which delivereth (delivered, AV/KJV) us from the wrath to come” (RV), is not to be understood as though the Lord is continually delivering us from the wrath to come. The word “delivereth” in the Greek is a present participle, which simply means that He is the delivering One from the wrath to come. He delivered us from coming wrath when He saved us through grace.

COMMENTARY ON 1 THESSALONIANS 2

1 Thess.2:1¹,2²

The Thessalonians knew that the entering in of these servants of God among them had not been in vain (see Acts 17:1-9³). The gospel had wrought great and blessed changes among them. Paul and Silas before they came to Thessalonica had been shamefully treated in Philippi. The prison, the rods, and the stocks, had left deep marks in their memory, which the kindly treatment of the jailor had not effaced (Acts 16:19-40⁴). We can see the boldness of the Lord's servants in Acts 17, and also the conflict that they faced in the preaching of the gospel in Thessalonica. The Jews incited the rabble fellows of the city to make an assault on the house of Jason, and they dragged him and certain brethren before the rulers of the city. In consequence of the general uproar, the brethren sent away Paul and Silas to Beroea by night.

1 Thess.2:3⁵,4⁶

Paul calls the preaching of the gospel by himself and the others, "our exhortation" (Gk. *paraklesis*, either exhortation or comfort according to the context). The gospel may be of exhortation

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.2.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%202.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2017.1-9>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2016.19-40>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.2.3>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%202.4>

and persuasion, exhorting men to be reconciled to God, and the gospel may be taught, in which the fundamental facts of the gospel are expounded. The former is how the gospel should be presented to the sinner, the latter to the believer. Paul's gospel was not of error (Planes, wandering), a delusion causing people to wander in their mind. It was not of uncleanness or impurity, such as were the practices associated with pagan religions. It was not of guile or fraud. As men whom God intrusted with the gospel, which brings boundless blessings to men, they were not men-pleasers, but their object was to please God who proved their hearts.

1 Thess.2:5⁷,6⁸

Flattery is a deadly bait used by crafty men to catch simple souls. It was practised in Eden's garden by the old Serpent when he said to Eve that they would become as gods if they ate of the forbidden fruit (Gen.3:4⁹,5¹⁰). David spoke of the unfaithful in his time: "They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: With flattering lip, and with a double heart, do they speak. The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, The tongue that speaketh great things" (Ps.12:2¹¹,3¹²) The Thessalonians knew that Paul used no flattery in his preaching when he laid the charge of sin against them (Rom.3:9¹³,19¹⁴). Their preaching was no cloke to cover

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.2.5>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%202.6>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.3.4>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%203.5>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.12.2>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2012.3>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.9>

a covetous heart. They were not preachers, as some who preach according to their stipend, with one eye on their sermon and the other on the collection bag. Persons not pounds were what Paul and his fellows sought. They did not seek glory of (Gk. ek) men, neither from (Gk. apo) the Thessalonians nor others; and though they might have been burdensome (for such as preach the gospel should live of the gospel – 1 Cor.9:14¹⁵), as apostles of Christ, they did not exercise their right in this respect.

1 Thess.2:7¹⁶,8¹⁷

The preachers were placid, mild (or gentle) among the Thessalonians. Their gentle demeanour was like that of a nurse (a suckling mother) who cherishes (Gk. thalpo, to impart warmth, as a hen by brooding) her own children. Their loving desire for the Thessalonians was such that they were well pleased or delighted to impart the gospel of God to them, but, like a suckling mother, they imparted their souls or lives to them, because they were very dear to them. Nothing could be more tender than this Christ-like love.

1 Thess.2:9¹⁸

There is little difference of meaning between labour and travail, though the latter includes the idea of pain. The apostle and his co-workers wrought in manual labour in Thessalonica, as he did

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%203.19>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.9.14>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.2.7>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%202.8>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.2.9>

in Corinth (Acts 18:3¹⁹), when he wrought with Aquila at tent-making. He says here, that they so wrought that they might not be a burden to the Thessalonians in preaching the gospel to them. What suffering, self-denying, and loving servants of Christ these men were, and what an example they have left behind!

1 Thess.2:10²⁰,11²¹,12²²

Men could only testify to the outward actions of righteousness and blamelessness, but God witnessed to the holiness of the hearts from which those actions sprang. Such was the standard of conduct of himself and his fellows toward the Thessalonians. The person who lives holily before God will not fail to live righteously and blamelessly before men. Without holiness of heart a man's righteousness is but the garb of the Pharisee. As a father must be careful of his behaviour before his children, the apostle was careful of his behaviour before his spiritual children. In verse 7, they acted as a mother, and here, in this verse, they acted as a father. Paul says that they dealt with each one of the Thessalonians, exhorting, encouraging or consoling, and testifying; the object in all this was that they might walk worthily of God, the One who calls (GK. kalountos, present participle, the calling one) into His own kingdom (i.e., the kingdom of God) and glory. This is the present kingdom of God, expressed in the churches of God, God's little flock.

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2018.3>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.2.10>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%202.11>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%202.12>

The glory is that of Jn 17:22²³,23²⁴, which was given by the Father to the Son in connexion with His work on earth, as He said, "And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and lovedst them, even as Thou lovedst Me." "Given" is in perfect tense in the Greek showing that the giving in the past remains to the present; and the object of giving this glory is that the Lord's disciples may be one in a visible unity which has a bearing on testimony to the world.

1 Thess.2:13²⁵

Here thanks are given to God for the reception from (Para, from, of, indicating source or origin) Paul and his co-workers of the word of the message or of hearing the word of God and not of men which wrought in the believing Thessalonians, as the living word should ever do.

1 Thess.2:14²⁶,15²⁷,16²⁸

The brethren in the church of God in Thessalonica became imitators of the churches of God in Judaea, because the same doctrine which was taught in the churches of God in Judaea was taught in Thessalonica. Unity in doctrine results in unity of prac-

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2017.22>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2017.23>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.2.13>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.2.14>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%202.15>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%202.16>

tice. The churches of God in the Fellowship of God's Son (1 Cor.1:9²⁹) in the time of the apostles were taught and held the same doctrine, even as Paul wrote of "my ways which be in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church" (1 Cor.4:17³⁰). The result of the same doctrine held and practised led to similarity of suffering. The Jews killed both the Lord and the prophets and drove out the apostles and others. Likewise the brethren in Thessalonica suffered the same things of their countrymen. Paul adds concerning the Jews, that they pleased not God, and were contrary to all men. They also forbade Paul and the others to preach the gospel to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up to the full the measure of their sins.

God's wrath came upon them to the uttermost, as Paul shows in Rom.11³¹, in their being cast away nationally, except a remnant according to the election of grace. The wrath of God which appointed that they should stumble nationally at Christ, the Stone of stumbling and Rock of offence (1 Pet.2:8³²), and on whom they could not believe (Jn 12:36-43³³), was until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in (Rom.11:15³⁴,25³⁵).

1 Thess.2:17³⁶,18³⁷

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.1.9>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.4.17>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2.8>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2012.36-43>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.15>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.25>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.2.17>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%202.18>

“Being bereaved,” here, is similar to the experience of parents who have lost their children, but Paul speaks of bereavement for a season, for an hour, and that in presence, not in heart. He greatly desired and endeavoured to see the Thessalonians time and again, but there was always some hindrance which Satan (the Adversary) put in the way. Whom or what he used we are not told. We see here the Adversary unveiled as the opposer of the Lord’s work and workers, as he is in some other parts of the Scriptures (Zech.3:1³⁸,2³⁹).

1 Thess.2:19⁴⁰,20⁴¹

Here the apostle contemplates the Lord’s coming again, and the presence of the Thessalonians in that coming as a sufficient reward for the labours that these servants of God had expended. He views them as their hope, joy and crown of glorying. Indeed, this will be the chiefest of all crowns of God’s servants, when they see in the glory the fruit of their labours.

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.3.1>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech%203.2>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.2.19>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%202.20>

COMMENTARY ON 1 THESSALONIANS 3

1 Thess.3:1¹,2²,3³

Paul could not bear the suspense of not knowing how the Thessalonians were faring, and he decided to send Timothy, and himself be left alone at Athens. Timothy therefore was sent to Thessalonica to establish and comfort the saints in their faith, that they should not be moved, disquieted or shaken in mind, by the tribulations which were common to both Paul and themselves. He said that they knew that saints were appointed to these afflictions. Paul in sending Timothy was acting similarly to both Jacob and Jesse in past times, who sent Joseph and David to see how it fared with their brethren. All parents know the common anxiety of love for their absent children. This epistle is said to have been written by Paul from Athens at the time of the arrival back of Timothy from Thessalonica. (See end of AV/KJV which says, "Written from Athens." Certain modern commentators say, "Written from Corinth.")

1 Thess.3:4⁴,5⁵

The affliction of which Paul had beforehand told the Thessalonians and others came to pass, as we see in Acts 17, and as is al-

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.3.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%203.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%203.3>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.3.4>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%203.5>

luded to in the previous chapter. But lest they should have been tempted by the devil to give up the Christian warfare, like the rocky-ground hearers of Matt.13:20⁶,21⁷, he sent Timothy that he might know their faith, lest his work should be in vain, for he feared the evil work of the tempter.

1 Thess.3:6⁸,7⁹,8¹⁰

The arrival of Tim.in Athens from the Thessalonians with the good news that their faith had stood the shock of the afflictions which they were enduring brought great joy. They also held the apostle and his fellows in loving regard, for Timothy bore testimony to their faith and love, and of how they longed to see Paul and Silas; this longing was mutual, for Paul longed to see them. Midst the present distress of the apostle the tidings brought by Timothy were a great comfort. "Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord," said Paul. If the work of the apostle had collapsed after he left the different cities he visited, then the memory of Paul would have perished. But when saints stood fast in the Lord, God's servants lived on, as they do now, embalmed in the imperishable records of Holy Scripture. These records will live for ever, and further, they are the test which God applies and will yet apply to the lives of those that have followed after, as to whether they will walk in the light of, and in obedience to, these divine truths therein contained.

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.13.20>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2013.21>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.3.6>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%203.7>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%203.8>

1 Thess.3:9¹¹,10¹²

“Thanks is itself a return for God’s favours.” Praise is the declaring of God’s excellencies. Here Paul asks what thanksgiving he could render to God for all the joy he had in the Thessalonians. Here we see the up-surge of the tide of joy in this great-souled man; in him surged the joy of the Lord. In the face of the hindrance of Satan, Paul’s prayers abounded exceedingly, beseeching that he might see again the face of these beloved Thessalonians.

Only God could rebuke Satan for his hindrance (Jude 1:9¹³); and until God did this Satan would continue to hinder the desire of the apostle. Paul’s object in again visiting the Thessalonians was to perfect (Gk. *katartizo*, which means, sometimes, to repair or mend, to render perfect, also to supply or make good what is lacking; it is used in the second sense here, in verse 10) that which was lacking or deficient in their faith; for it must be remembered that the Thessalonians were but young believers.

1 Thess.3:11¹⁴,12¹⁵,13¹⁶

Paul, following his earnest pleading that he might see the face of the Thessalonians, leaves the matter with God, that He and the Lord Jesus might direct his way towards them. His desire was for an increase of their love to each other and toward all men. If this

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.3.9>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%203.10>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%201.9>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.3.11>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%203.12>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%203.13>

is so, there will be no fear but that the behaviour of saints towards others will be as it ought to be. The love of Paul and his fellows abounded towards the Thessalonians. The object of this was the establishing of their hearts blameless in holiness before God the Father at the coming of the Lord. Jn writes somewhat similarly, when he says, “that if He shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming” (1 Jn 2:28¹⁷).

“With all His saints” – “with” (Meta, with a genitive, as here, means, with, together with) may signify the coming of the Son of Man, when His saints shall come with Him, as in 2 Thess.1: 10¹⁸: But, if we read coming (Gk. parousia) as presence, it would read – “at the presence of our Lord Jesus with all His saints,” and would indicate His coming for His saints. As the construction of the passage indicates our hearts being established in holiness before our God and Father, it seems to indicate the latter view and not the former.

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.28>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.1.%2010>

COMMENTARY ON 1 THESSALONIANS 4

1 Thess.4:1¹,2²

Here Paul reaches the closing part of his epistle, and says, “Finally,” or for the rest; he exhorts them in the Lord Jesus, with that authority derived from Him, as they had previously received in the ministry of himself and the others, how they ought to walk and to please God. “Walk” here, as in very many other places in the Scriptures, signifies the entire conduct of a person. Paul says that they were so walking, but sought that this good beginning they had made in their behaviour should abound yet more. He refers to his former injunctions or commands that he had given to them in this matter through the Lord Jesus.

1 Thess.4:3³

Paul comes down heavily on irregular conduct which has from ancient times stained the history of mankind – the lewd intercourse of the sexes. Fornication, being one of man’s immoral members (Col.3:5⁴), is a form of sin against which the Scriptures wage a ceaseless warfare. Paul says, that “the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.” “Flee fornication,” he says (1 Cor.6:13⁵,18⁶), even as Joseph did when en-

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%204.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.3>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.3.5>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.6.13>

ticed in Egypt (Gen.39:12⁷,15⁸). God's will is a life of sanctification from moral corruptions.

1 Thess.4:4⁹,5¹⁰,6¹¹

Whilst, no doubt, both sexes are included in this corrective word of the apostle, the male sex, is, I think, more in evidence. He is to possess or keep his vessel in sanctification and honour. Men should ever think of how their act may affect the following generation both mentally and physically, and not be wholly engulfed in their own passing pleasure of lust. The Gentiles in Paul's time were, and also are to-day, in a sordid state in this matter, but God's saints should know better, as both God's grace in their hearts and His word should teach them holy living. Certainly where a brother transgresses and wrongs his brother in this matter, this raises a serious issue, and the Lord is an avenger in all such things, as Paul had forewarned and testified to the Thessalonians.

1 Thess.4:7¹²,8¹³

The object in the call of God out from among them to a path of separation is not to uncleanness, but to perfecting holiness

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%206.18>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.39.12>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%2039.15>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.4>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%204.5>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%204.6>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.7>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%204.8>

in the fear of God (2 Cor.6:14-7:1¹⁴). Paul says that we “were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh” (Gal.5:13¹⁵). We are called in sanctification. Sanctification means a setting apart from what is common. This is the root meaning of holiness. A saint is a holy one, set apart to a life of holiness (1 Cor.1:30¹⁶). Paul says that he that sets aside or rejects this teaching of sanctification, rejects not man, but God, who has given each believer the Holy Spirit, who is the Sanctifier of saints.

1 Thess.4:9¹⁷,10¹⁸

Philadelphia, love of the brethren, is taught us by the grace of the new nature, the result of the new birth, by the indwelling Spirit of God, and by His word. This love the Thessalonians showed to all the brethren who were in Macedonia, and they were encouraged by the apostle to abound more and more in this grace. Love begets love.

1 Thess.4:11¹⁹,12²⁰

Some are naturally quiet, and some are talkative. The latter need more grace to give heed to the apostle’s exhortation to be ambitious to be quiet. Some are lazy, and some are diligent in busi-

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.6.14-7.1>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.5.13>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.1.30>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.9>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%204.10>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.11>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%204.12>

ness, and the former need more grace, and the latter need wisdom not to let their business swallow them up. Paul had enjoined upon the Thessalonians “a quiet, industrious, holy life.” Saints are to live a grateful, courteous, becoming life toward those who are without, and being diligent and honest may have need of nothing.

1 Thess.4:13²¹,14²²

We come now to one of the most illuminating paragraphs in the New Testament relative to the coming of the Lord for His saints of this dispensation, who form the Church which is His Body. Old Testament saints will not share in this resurrection, but will be raised in connection with the Lord's coming to earth (Dan.12:1-3²³; Rev. 11:18²⁴; Rev.20:4-6²⁵). We are not able to shed light on which is the correct reading “them which are asleep” (AV/KJV) (perfect tense) or “them that fall asleep” (RV) (present tense), but these young believers in Thessalonica required to be instructed, as we do, as to what will happen to saints who die or fall asleep before the coming of the Lord.

First of all, saints are not told not to sorrow when their loved ones fall asleep, but they are not to sorrow as the rest who have no hope. The rest, the unsaved who have no hope, have no hope of reunion nor will they wish any in eternity, as we see from the rich man's words in hell (Lk.16:27-31²⁶). The joyous hope of re-

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.13>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%204.14>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.12.1-3>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.%2011.18>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.4-6>

union in resurrection is based upon the words, “if we believe that Jesus died and rose again,” for “if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which have fallen asleep in Christ have perished” (1 Cor.15:17²⁷,18²⁸). But Christ having been raised, then them also that are fallen asleep (or fallen-asleep ones) through (not in) Jesus will God bring or lead with Him. There have been differences between Greek scholars in regard to the Greek here, as we see from the RV Margin.

Some think it should read “fallen asleep through Jesus,” and some, “will God through Jesus bring with Him.” I am of the opinion that the reading should be, “fallen asleep through Jesus,” that is the Jesus mentioned earlier in the verse, who died and rose again. Jesus died, He did not fall asleep, but saints fall asleep through or because of Him who died and rose again, for had He not died and risen again their death would not have been a sleep; they would have perished. “Shall God bring with Him”: this should not be read as though it means the sending by God of the souls of the saints with the Lord when He descends into the air, as we read later on, but it means the bringing from the dead the sleeping ones in that resurrection of which Christ is the First-fruits (1 Cor.15:20²⁹). “With Him” does not mean at the same time, but is the “with” of association, similar in meaning to our being quickened, raised and seated with (Gk. *sun*) Him in the heavenlies (Eph.2:5³⁰,6³¹), this being the spiritual quickening of

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.16.27-31>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.17>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%2015.18>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.20>

the soul, while that of 1 Thess.4:14³² is the raising and quickening of the dead in Christ in a bodily resurrection.

1 Thess.4:15³³

What Paul says here is backed by his claim that it is the word of the Lord. The living saints in Christ at the Lord's coming shall have no precedence over the dead in Christ; they shall not precede them that are fallen asleep in Christ.

1 Thess.4:16³⁴,17³⁵,18³⁶

Three definitions are given to what seems to me to be the same thing. The Lord descends from heaven while this sound is heard, which is described as, "in a shout" (of command), "in voice of archangel," and "in trump of God." The result of this command to assemble will be, that the dead in Christ will rise first. Though it is clear that the dead in Christ will be the first to rise of all the redeemed dead, who will rise each in his own order or rank (1 Cor.15:23³⁷), yet "first," in verse 16, is in relation to the living in Christ. The first in the upward movement will be of the dead in Christ. Then they that are alive at the Lord's coming shall join

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.5>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%202.6>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.14>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.15>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.16>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%204.17>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%204.18>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.23>

them and shall together with them be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

Only here is it revealed where the meeting will take place between the Lord and His saints; no other portion of Scripture reveals this. Only God can speak of “first” and “then,” as the upward movement of the quickened dead and the changed living will be so close to each other. The reunion of sleeping and living saints will be complete as they ascend to meet the Lord together in the rapture of that glorious day. So shall they ever be with the Lord. The sorrow of verse 13 is meanwhile largely dispelled by the comfort of verse 18: What a blessed hope as compared with the bleak outlook of the future in the case of those who do not believe in the Lord or in resurrection! How glorious that reunion of saints in the glory of God!

COMMENTARY ON 1 THESSALONIANS 5

1 Thess.5:1¹

The coming of the Lord to the air for all who are in Christ is not related to the times and the seasons. These have to do with earthly events connected with the nations and the nation of Israel. This dispensation of grace in which we are is a unique period of time in the dealings of God with men, during which the Lord is building what He calls, “My Church,” which is the Church which is His Body (Matt.16:18²; Eph.1:22³,23⁴), the Bride of the Lamb.

1 Thess.5:2⁵,3⁶

The day of the Lord begins with the descent of the Son of Man from heaven (Acts 2:16-21⁷, and many Old Testament Scriptures), when He comes “in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus” (2 Thess.1:7⁸,8⁹). This day is more than a

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.5.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.16.18>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.22>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%201.23>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.5.2>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%205.3>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.16-21>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.1.7>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%201.8>

thousand years in extent, as we learn from 2 Pet.3:10¹⁰, for in it the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works therein shall be burned up. This brings us to the judgement of the Great White Throne (Rev.20:11¹¹), when the earth and the heaven shall flee away from the face of Him who sits upon the throne, and no place will be found for them. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, when men least expect it; when they are saying, “Peace and safety,” then sudden destruction shall come upon them, and there will be no escape.

1 Thess.5:4¹²,5¹³

These verses show clearly the error of those who hold that saints of the Church which is Christ’s Body shall pass through the time of the Great Tribulation. If saints of the Church shall pass through the Tribulation, then that day, the day of the Lord, shall overtake them. But the reason given that they will not do this is, that they are sons of the light and of the day. We are not of the world’s dark night; but we see the shades of that night gathering around us, a sign of the coming great apostasy, when men shall acclaim a corruptible man to be god (2 Thess.2:3¹⁴,4¹⁵), but that will not make him God whatever they do or whatever he claims for himself. It will be the worst form of idolatry which has ever appeared and it will overspread the earth.

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet.3.10>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.11>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.5.4>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%205.5>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.3>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%202.4>

1 Thess.5:6¹⁶,7¹⁷,8¹⁸

We are exhorted not to sleep (as, alas, the five wise virgins did, as did also the foolish in the parable of Matt.25:1-13¹⁹), as do the rest, such as have no hope (1 Thess.4:13²⁰); but we are to watch or be awake, and to be sober, as vigilant sentinels who are armed with breastplate and helmet, as those that await the dawn of day. It becomes sentinels to watch on behalf of the souls of men, neither to sleep nor be drunken. “Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night.” The morning will come for some, the night for others.

1 Thess.5:9²¹,10²²

This verse should be read in the context in which it is found, in the consideration of the saints of this dispensation in regard to the day of the Lord and the wrath of that day. Also, “us” of verse 9 is dispensational in character, and does not apply merely to Paul and the Thessalonians. That hardly needs to be said. The wrath to which we are not appointed or set is quite evidently that of the day of the Lord; that wrath we shall not see, the reason being that we are set to the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, for before the day of wrath comes upon this earth we shall have been saved finally and fully by that salvation which

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.5.6>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%205.7>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%205.8>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.25.1-13>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.13>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.5.9>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%205.10>

is nearer to us than when we first believed (Rom.13:11²³), with that salvation which is ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Pet.1:5²⁴). It is this hope of salvation which we have as a helmet as we watch for the dawn of day.

How comforting and assuring are the words, though they give no excuse for sleeping, that the Lord died for us, that whether we wake (watch) or sleep (not live or die), we should live together with Him! Our being with the Lord and living with Him is not determined by our waking or sleeping, but by our having received Him by faith. It was even so with the five wise virgins. They entered the marriage feast because they had oil in their vessels with their lamps, not because they had kept awake. Saints would be in great peril, if their being with the Lord was dependent on their watchfulness. “Wherefore,” said Paul, “exhort (or comfort) one another, and build each other up.” This the Thessalonians also did.

1 Thess.5:12²⁵,13²⁶

Here Paul asks them to know their leaders in the Lord, men who laboured among them and admonished them. “Over them” (Gk. prostemi) means literally, to stand before, and signifies to be set over or appointed with authority. The word is rendered “ruleth” (Rom.12:8²⁷; 1 Tim.3:4²⁸); “to rule” and “ruling” (1

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.13.11>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.1.5>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.5.12>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%205.13>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.8>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.3.4>

Tim.3:5²⁹,12³⁰); “rule” (1 Tim.5:17³¹); “maintain” (Tit.3:4³²,8³³). The men referred to were elders or overseers of the church of God in Thessalonica. They were to be highly esteemed for their work’s sake. Paul called upon the saints to be at peace among themselves, for this would give the elders less work and trouble.

1 Thess.5:14³⁴,15³⁵

Here Paul addresses the overseers in their responsibility in caring for the saints. The disorderly, the fainthearted, the weak, come in for special mention as to how they were to be treated, and the overseers were to be long-suffering toward all. Saints rendering evil for evil were not to be tolerated, but they were to follow after good, one saint toward another, and toward all. This is love in practice.

1 Thess.5:16³⁶,17³⁷,18³⁸,19³⁹,20⁴⁰,21⁴¹,22⁴²

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.3.5>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim%203.12>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.5.17>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.3.4>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%203.8>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.5.14>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%205.15>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.5.16>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%205.17>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%205.18>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%205.19>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%205.20>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%205.21>

Whilst these words may have a special application to overseers who stand before the saints and should be pattern men, they are of general application to all saints. One is reminded of the similarity of these exhortations to those of Rom.12⁴³, and also of the manner in which they are given. These exhortations are so simple and their meaning so self-evident that they call for no comment.

1 Thess.5:23⁴⁴,24⁴⁵

Here the Sanctifier is called the God of peace. See other references to the God of peace (Rom.15:33⁴⁶; Rom.16:20⁴⁷; 2 Cor.13:11⁴⁸; Phil.4:9⁴⁹; Heb.13:20⁵⁰). This entire sanctification is a setting apart of the whole person from sin in every form. It is explained further in what follows. I am of the opinion that the AV/KJV rendering here is better than the RV, except that “may” should take the place of the words, “I pray God,” in the AV/KJV which being in italics are shown not to be in the Greek. Thus it would read, “May your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless.” Thus the sanctification is of the whole person, of spirit and soul and body subsisting, and is to be preserved blameless at or in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The spirit of the redeemed person is that part of man on which the Spirit

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%205.22>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.5.23>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%205.24>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.33>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.20>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.13.11>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.4.9>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.13.20>

of God works, and the spirit of man should control the soul, the reasonable soul, the person. The soul should control the body in its appetites and desires.

Alas, if the body gains control, then indwelling sin will enslave the soul, and the spirit will be cast as it were into prison and darkness, and as a consequence, the Holy Spirit will be grieved and quenched. The God of peace will sanctify us wholly, if we allow Him, and our whole being of spirit and soul and body will act in harmony, which is the root idea in peace. If the body with its appetites is allowed control, then sin will enter, the harmony will be broken, bringing grievous disturbance to the whole system within, and this will result in blameworthiness at the coming of the Lord.

1 Thess.5:25⁵¹,26⁵²,27⁵³,28⁵⁴

Paul frequently besought the prayers of the saints, as here. A holy kiss was the mode of salutation in those past times; in this country a warm shake of the hand is the mode of salutation. Paul adjures them that they read this epistle publicly to all the brethren. He closes his epistle, as in every epistle of his, with, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.5.25>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%205.26>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%205.27>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%205.28>

COMMENTARY ON 2 THESSALONIANS 1

2 Thess.1:1¹,2²

The second epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians followed closely on the writing of the first. The second forms the complement of the first; for whereas the first deals in the main with the Lord's coming to the air for His saints who comprise the Church which is His (Christ's) Body, commonly called the coming of the Son of God (1 Thess.1:10³), the second deals principally with the coming of the Son of Man to earth in judgement, and with events which will immediately precede that coming, especially with the apostasy and the revelation of the man of sin. In addition, the last chapter gives warning against unreasonable and evil men, and deals with disorderly conduct in the church in Thessalonica, and the course of admonition by the church is in addition to that indicated in 1 Thess.5:14⁴, where the overseers are exhorted to admonish the disorderly. It will be noted that the manner of address of the epistle is similar to the first.

2 Thess.1:3⁵,4⁶

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.1.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%201.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.1.10>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.5.14>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.1.3>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%201.4>

These servants of God gave thanks to God continually for the Thessalonians, for that their faith grew exceedingly, and their love toward each other abounded. Their glorying or boasting in them in other churches of God must have been by letters which were sent to the different churches, for we know of no journey by the apostle from Athens (Acts 17) until he departed from Athens and came to Corinth (Acts 18:1⁷). The Thessalonians were a suffering people, as we see from the first epistle, and also here we read of their patience and faith in the persecutions and afflictions which they endured.

2 Thess. 1:5⁸,6⁹

Such as have caused God's saints to suffer will themselves suffer divine displeasure for their acts of persecution. We do not speak of those who have repented of their acts, as the Apostle Paul did. This is a righteous thing with God, and the suffering of saints at the hand of the wicked is a manifest token of God's righteous judgement which will come upon the wicked for their wickedness. At the same time, and in God's manifold wisdom in dealing with His own, those who stand the test of suffering, whose faith does not give way, are thus counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which they suffer; that is, such saints as are in the kingdom of God. The kingdom is not something that is entered once for all, nor is it entered by the new birth, though all must be born again before they can either see it or enter it.

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2018.1>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.1.5>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%201.6>

The words of Acts 14:22¹⁰ are helpful, where Paul is seen confirming the souls of the disciples in the churches of God in Galatia, as it says, “Confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the Faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.” The words of Heb.12:28¹¹,29¹², show also continuity in the reception of the kingdom of God: “Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: for our God is a consuming fire.” Believers who are in the kingdom of God and are guilty of any of the sins of 1 Cor.5:11¹³; 1 Cor.6:9¹⁴,10¹⁵, Eph.5:5¹⁶ cannot inherit or have any inheritance in the kingdom of God. Hence they must be put away by the church of God, which is the local expression of the kingdom of God. See Rev.1:6¹⁷, where the seven churches of God in Asia are described as having been made a kingdom and priests by the Lord Jesus unto His God and Father. This was God’s kingdom then. The kingdom of God is not entered by being in a spiritual frame of mind, nor are persons out of it if their spiritual condition of happiness is not on a high plane.

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2014.22>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.12.28>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%2012.29>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.5.11>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.6.9>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%206.10>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.5>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.1.6>

The kingdom of God is righteousness, the right acting of those who are together in obedience to the call of God, righteousness which is according to the teaching of the Faith (Jude 1:3¹⁸; Acts 14:22¹⁹,23²⁰; Matt.6:10²¹,33²²; Rom.14:17²³,18²⁴). The kingdom of God was taken from Israel, and given to the little Flock of the Lord's disciples in the beginning of this dispensation (Matt.21:43²⁵,31²⁶,32²⁷; Lk.12:31²⁸,32²⁹; Acts 1:3³⁰).

2 Thess.1:7³¹,8³²

The words of the Lord Jesus, in Lk.18:7³³,8³⁴, speak of the same time as that of the verses above: "Shall not God avenge His elect, which cry to Him day and night, and He is longsuffering over them? I say unto you, that He will avenge them speedily. How-

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%201.3>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2014.22>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2014.23>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.6.10>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%206.33>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.14.17>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2014.18>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.21.43>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2021.31>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2021.32>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.12.31>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lk%2012.32>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.3>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.1.7>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%201.8>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.18.7>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lk%2018.8>

beit when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find (the) faith on the earth?” God has betimes visited men in judgement for their wicked persecution of His saints, as witness the parable of the kingdom of heaven, in Matt.22:1-14³⁵, in which the Lord showed God’s punishment of the Jews by the Rom.for their shameful treatment and killing of His servants. But the full recompense of the wicked upon the earth will be when the Lord Jesus, the Son of Man, is revealed from heaven with His angels in flaming fire, when vengeance will be taken on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

This gospel is, I judge, the gospel of the kingdom, which will be preached unto all the nations (Matt.24:14³⁶). The subject of the gospel of the grace of God, which is preached in this dispensation (Acts 20:24³⁷), and the gospel of the kingdom, is the same in both cases, even “the Lord Jesus”; the former case tells of Him who died, was buried and raised again, and went back to heaven; the latter case of His imminent return to earth in judgement. “Obey not” (Gk. *me hupakouo*) means to refuse to listen, hence to refuse to submit and obey. The attitude shows intentional neglect or sheer rebellion.

2 Thess.1:9³⁸,10³⁹

Those who refuse to listen to the gospel shall suffer punishment or pay the penalty (Gk. *dike*, judicial punishment), and this

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.22.1-14>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.24.14>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.24>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.1.9>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%201.10>

penalty is eternal destruction (Gk. *olethros*, vengeance, perdition, destruction). This is not annihilation, an end of being, but an eternal or continuous state of punishment. Vain are the hopes of those who persist in refusing to hear and obey the gospel, that sometime in eternal fire of eternal punishment (see Matt.25:41⁴⁰,46⁴¹) they will cease to be. It is said of the Devil, that he, with the beast and the false prophet, will be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Rev.20:10⁴²). Even so will it be with the wicked of the human race (Rev.20:14⁴³,15⁴⁴). The punishment of the wicked envisaged in the verses above will begin when the Lord comes back to earth with His angels and His saints, when He will come to be glorified in His saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that have believed.

All who have believed will be with the Lord in that day of judgement and victory. The condition of being with Him is not obedience and faithfulness, but simply one of believing, though those who are with Him in His war against the beast and his ten confederate kings will be such as are “called and chosen and faithful” (Rev.17:12- 14⁴⁵).

2 Thess.1:11⁴⁶,12⁴⁷

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.25.41>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2025.46>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.10>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.14>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2020.15>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.12-%2014>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.1.11>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%201.12>

The object or end of the prayers of God's servants was that God might count them worthy of their calling. They had been called out to a path of separation, as in 2 Cor.6:14-7:1⁴⁸, and called into the Fellowship, as in 1 Cor.1:9⁴⁹, which is similar to the call, in 1 Thess.2:12⁵⁰, "God, who calleth you into His own kingdom and glory." The purpose in their being counted worthy was that there might be fulfilled in them, or brought to completeness, every desire or good pleasure of goodness, toward God (see Hos.6:4⁵¹; Jer.2:2⁵²), and work of faith (1 Thess.1:3⁵³), toward men, with power, that the name of the Lord Jesus might be glorified in them, and they in Him, and this could only be through the grace of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.6.14-7.1>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.1.9>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.2.12>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Hos.6.4>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jer.2.2>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.1.3>

COMMENTARY ON 2 THESSALONIANS 2

2 Thess.2:1¹,2²

The coming of the Lord and our gathering unto Him is what is referred to in 1 Thess.4:16³,17⁴: They were not to be quickly shaken in their mind, as to what the apostle taught them, from whatever cause, by spirit, by word, nor by epistle purporting to have been written by the apostle, as that the day of the Lord was then present. Certain things, which are afterwards stated, must transpire ere that day is present.

2 Thess.2:3⁵,4⁶

The day of the Lord cannot come or be present until two things take place, (1) the falling away or the apostasy, and (2) the Rev. of the man of sin, the son of perdition, who is also called the antichrist, and the (wild) beast (1 Jn 2:18-22⁷; Rev.13:3-8⁸,12-15⁹, etc.). Mankind, with the exception of the faithful remnant of Israel, and the multitude of faithful witnesses scattered over the

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%202.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.16>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%204.17>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.3>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%202.4>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.18-22>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.3-8>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2013.12-15>

earth, and others who will succour them, will apostatize completely from God and will worship the beast and his image when the beast is revealed. The man of sin and the (wild) beast describe the same person who is the object of worship. The second beast of Rev.13:11-18¹⁰ is the false prophet, not the antichrist. As to what some have alleged, that the Jews, the apostate Jews, would not acknowledge a Gentile to be a messiah, I think it will be found, from Ezek.21:25¹¹, that the deadly wounded one (the beast with the death-stroke or deadly wound, of Rev.13:3^{12,12¹³}) is the prince of Israel, whose day is come, in the time of the iniquity of the end.

So that all that has been said about the apostate Jews not receiving a Gentile king (indeed we do not know whether the antichrist will be a Jew or a Gentile by race, though he sits on a Gentile throne), and that the second beast who is a Jew is the antichrist (Rev.13:11-18¹⁴), is just so much unsupportable exposition. (On this subject, see my notes on the book of the Revelation.) The man of sin exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped. This agrees with what is said in Dan.11:36-39¹⁵: “The king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods ... Neither shall he regard the gods of his fathers, nor the desire of women,

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.11-18>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.21.25>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.3>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2013.12>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.11-18>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.11.36-39>

nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his place (office) shall he honour the god of fortresses: and a god whom his fathers knew not (the Dragon, or Devil – Rev.13:4¹⁶) shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.

And he shall deal with the strongest fortresses by the help of a strange god (the Devil).” These words show clearly that the man of sin is the king that shall come, the last of the kings of the north, the antichrist and the (wild) beast. Some few have taught that the man of sin is Judas Iscariot, because both are called “the son of perdition” (2 Thess.2:3¹⁷; Jn 17:12¹⁸). There is as much sense in this, as if we were to say, that because Jud.as (Jn 6:70¹⁹) and Satan are called in Gk. *diabolos* (Devil), therefore Judas and Satan are the same person. The temple (Gk. *naos*) of God is that which will yet be built in Jerusalem, probably by the Jews. Though God shall not dwell therein, yet that place is His by right, hence it is called “the temple of God.”

2 Thess.2:5²⁰,6²¹,7²²

“Your mind”, of verse 2, about these coming events was formed by the teaching of the apostle, as he shows in the above verses: “Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.4>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.3>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2017.12>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%206.70>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.5>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%202.6>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%202.7>

these things?” We have in verses 6 and 7, “that which restraineth,” and “one that restraineth,” or “the restraining thing,” and “the restraining one.” Restraineth, Gk. *katecho*, means here to hinder or impede. The “restraining thing” is the coming apostasy which must come first. “The restraining one” is the Devil, who will hold back until the season (the condition of time appropriate to the revelation of the man of sin, “when the transgressors are come to the full” – Dan.8:23²³) arrives, which is in the time of the great apostasy. The old interpretation of verse 8 is quite incorrect, that the one that restrains is the Holy Spirit, whose restraint will be removed when He is taken out of the way at the coming of the Lord for the Church.

This interpretation implies that the Holy Spirit will not be in the earth to restrain the uprising tide of lawlessness. Far from the Holy Spirit being taken from the earth, there will be a worldwide out-pouring of the Spirit upon all flesh before the day of the Lord comes, as is shown from Joel 2:28-32²⁴; Acts 2:16-21²⁵: The battle between the Spirit-filled saints of that period and the antichrist or (wild) beast will be vigorous and fierce, as the book of Revelation shows. The quotation from Joel 2 by Peter in Acts 2 was an application of what that prophet said as to what was transpiring in Jerusalem at Pentecost, but it was by no means the fulfilment of the Joel prophecy.

The words of verse 7 above are, in my opinion, better rendered as follows: “Only he who restrains at present, until out of the midst he become.” He who restrains is the Devil, and he who shall be-

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.8.23>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Joel%202.28-32>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.16-21>

come out of the midst is the antichrist or (wild) beast. When he rises out of the midst, then shall be revealed the lawless one. If the one who restrains and is taken out of the way were the Holy Spirit, then the revelation of the beast would take place consequent upon the Lord's coming for the Church, which cannot be supported from Daniel and Revelation.

2 Thess.2:8²⁶,9²⁷,10²⁸

When the man of sin or (wild) beast rises from the midst, "out of the sea" (Rev.13:1²⁹) – "the waters which thou sawest, ... are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (Rev.17:15³⁰) – "then shall be revealed the lawless one." Him "the Lord Jesus shall slay" (Gk. analisko, take away or destroy, not slay, as we learn from Rev.19:20³¹, where are told that the beast and the false prophet "were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone") with the breath (Gk. pneuma, spirit or breath) of His mouth. He shall also bring him to nought (Gk. katargeo, to render inactive, make useless: see of death, 2 Tim.1:10³²; of the Devil, Heb.2:14³³; etc.), not annihilate, by the appearing (Gk. epiphaneia), or brightness, of His coming (Gk. parousia).

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.8>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%202.9>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%202.10>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.1>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.15>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.20>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.1.10>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.2.14>

The coming (parousia) of the lawless one, the beast or antichrist, is according to the working of Satan, “in every power and signs and wonders of falsehood” (translated literally), all of which will be aided and abetted by the false prophet, who shall work great signs in the sight of the beast, and shall deceive them that dwell on the earth (Rev.13:13³⁴,14³⁵). Such wonders of falsehood shall be connected with the deceit of unrighteousness, for sin is ever a deceitful thing (Heb.3:13³⁶). This deceit shall be to the perishing ones, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. They loved falsehood rather than truth, hence they were deceived, and they loved to be deceived. What a sad story! But is it different in kind from what exists today? Nay verily: the deceit may be different in measure, for deceit will then have reached its high water-mark, but it is not different in kind from the many forms of deceit practised now.

2 Thess.2:11³⁷,12³⁸

Herein lies the cause of the rise of antichrist; men in general want to be told lies, because they have pleasure in unrighteousness. They want to sin; they neither want to be righteous nor to do righteousness. Men need not blame the devil or the antichrist; the state of the world, which will admit of the last tragic scenes of Gentile government and behaviour, will be that which men have made it for themselves. Hence we have the awful reality and truth of these verses, that God will send them a working of error,

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.13>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2013.14>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.3.13>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.11>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%202.12>

that they all may be condemned who believe not the truth. The condition of men's hearts will be fully revealed in that they will actually love lying rather than truthfulness, hence the devil, the father of lies, will find men an easy prey.

2 Thess.2:13³⁹,14⁴⁰

Paul gives thanks again for the Thessalonians, that God chose (Gk. haireo, strictly "to take, to choose"; elsewhere he uses Gk. eklego, to pick, to choose, for election) them from the beginning unto salvation, in sanctification of the Spirit, which is God's side of salvation, and belief of the truth, which is our side. In 1 Pet.1:1⁴¹,2⁴², we have election and sanctification of the Spirit again spoken of, but there it is unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, which is the New Testament answer to Ex.24:3-8⁴³: But in verse 13 above sanctification of the Spirit is unto salvation. These facts should be carefully noted. It was unto this salvation that the Thessalonians were called through the gospel which had been preached by God's servants.

2 Thess.2:15⁴⁴

Seeing that this was God's purpose regarding them, in election, salvation and glory, they were exhorted to stand fast and firm, and to hold fast the traditions. "The traditions" were the oral

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.13>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%202.14>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.1.1>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet%201.2>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.24.3-8>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.15>

instructions or instructions by letter which were given by the apostles to the saints while as yet there was no New Testament. The epistles to the Thessalonians were among the first, if not the first, parts of the New Testament to be written, so we see how the saints of those days were shut up for instruction to the teaching of the apostles (Acts 2:42⁴⁵) which was the traditions (1 Cor.11:2⁴⁶; 2 Thess.2:15⁴⁷; 2 Thess.3:6⁴⁸). The word traditions ceased to be used in the inspired writings of the New Testament as these writings began to appear and be circulated among the saints.

2 Thess.2:16⁴⁹,17⁵⁰

The words, “which loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace,” apply to the Father. But Paul wishes the Lord Himself and God the Father to comfort and to stablish the Thessalonians in every good work and word. The thought of the Father having loved us and given to us eternal comfort and good hope through His wondrous grace is very precious indeed. Eternal comfort – nothing can disturb the inward state of rest of the soul that rests completely in Him who says, “Come unto Me ... and I will give you rest.”

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.42>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.11.2>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.15>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.3.6>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.16>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%202.17>

COMMENTARY ON 2 THESSALONIANS 3

2 Thess.3:1¹,2²

Finally, or for the rest, the apostle asks them to pray for him, as he often does throughout his epistles, that the word of the Lord might run rapidly and be glorified in reaching the throne of the hearts of the hearers, even as it had in reaching the hearts of the Thessalonians. There are ever opposers of the work of the Lord, hence Paul writes of unreasonable and evil men, “for,” said he, “all have not (the) Faith.” The definite article is present before faith and should appear, as evidently it is the Faith and not faith.

2 Thess.3:3³

“The evil” would point out some definite form of evil, but no evil is mentioned. It seems more natural to conclude that it is “the evil one” who is envisaged. The Lord, who is faithful, would stablish or fix firmly, and guard them from the evil one. He would guard them as a sentinel, for the evil one goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet.5:8⁴).

2 Thess.3:4⁵,5⁶

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.3.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%203.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.3.3>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.5.8>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.3.4>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%203.5>

“In the Lord” is a term which implies subjection to His will; and Paul was confident in Him that they were so subject that they both did and would do what he commanded them, within the compass of the Lord’s will. His wish for them was, that the Lord would direct their hearts into the love of God, which is the mainspring of all true acting, and into the patience or endurance of Christ. The endurance of the Master should be the endurance of all who follow Him.

2 Thess.3:6⁷,7⁸,8⁹

Whilst the overseers were exhorted, in 1 Thess.5:14¹⁰, to admonish the disorderly (Gk. ataktos, “principally spoken of soldiers who desert their ranks”), we have here a state of disorder which calls for admonition to be administered by all within the church; all the saints being commanded in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to withdraw themselves from the disorderly. This command would be made by a public announcement by the overseers to the church. The apostle and his fellows had taught them how to walk orderly when they were with them, and had shown orderly behaviour by working in manual labour to maintain themselves while they preached to the Thessalonians. He described how that they had wrought night and day in ceaseless toil, working and preaching, so that they would not be a burden to any of them.

2 Thess.3:9¹¹,10¹²

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.3.6>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%203.7>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%203.8>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.5.14>

Paul had the right, as one who preached the gospel, to live of the gospel (1 Cor.9:14¹³). But to show themselves ensamples for others to follow, these men wrought to keep themselves, so as to make the gospel without charge (1 Cor.9:18¹⁴). How wholesome are his words, “If any man will not work, neither let him eat”!

2 Thess.3:11¹⁵,12¹⁶

Lazybodies become busybodies, officious, prying, intermeddlers, persons who are a stain on any community and serious causes of trouble with their tittle-tattle. Such Paul commanded and exhorted in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work in quietness, to give their tongues a rest and their hands work to do, and to eat their own bread, and not that of others.

2 Thess.3:13¹⁷

The saints in Thessalonica in general were well-doing people, and they were exhorted not to be weary in well-doing.

2 Thess.3:14¹⁸,15¹⁹

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11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.3.9>
 12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%203.10>
 13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.9.14>
 14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.9.18>
 15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.3.11>
 16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%203.12>
 17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.3.13>
 18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.3.14>
 19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%203.15>

If the corrective words of this epistle were not obeyed by any one, that man was to be marked (Gk. *semaino*, from *sema*, a sign or mark, and means to signify, also to declare, to announce), and the saints were not to keep company or associate with him, so that he might be ashamed of his conduct. He was to be admonished as a brother and not accounted as an enemy. This is admonition within the church.

2 Thess.3:16²⁰,17²¹,18²²

We read of the God of peace several times. Here we have the Lord of peace Himself who would give them peace always and in every way. Paul's wish was, "The Lord be with you all." As of old, so now, He will be with us, if we be with Him. Here is Paul's salutation, a salutation in every one of his fourteen epistles, that of "grace." It is given under his own hand, as in 1 Cor.16:21²³; Col.4:18²⁴: See in contrast Rom.16:22²⁵, and also Gal.6:11²⁶.

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.3.16>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%203.17>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%203.18>

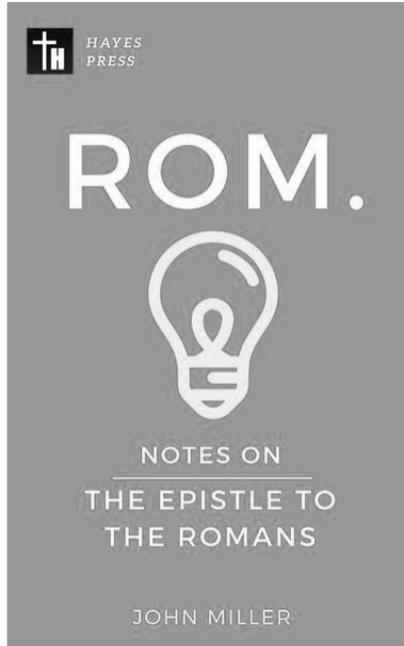
23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.16.21>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.4.18>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.22>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.6.11>

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