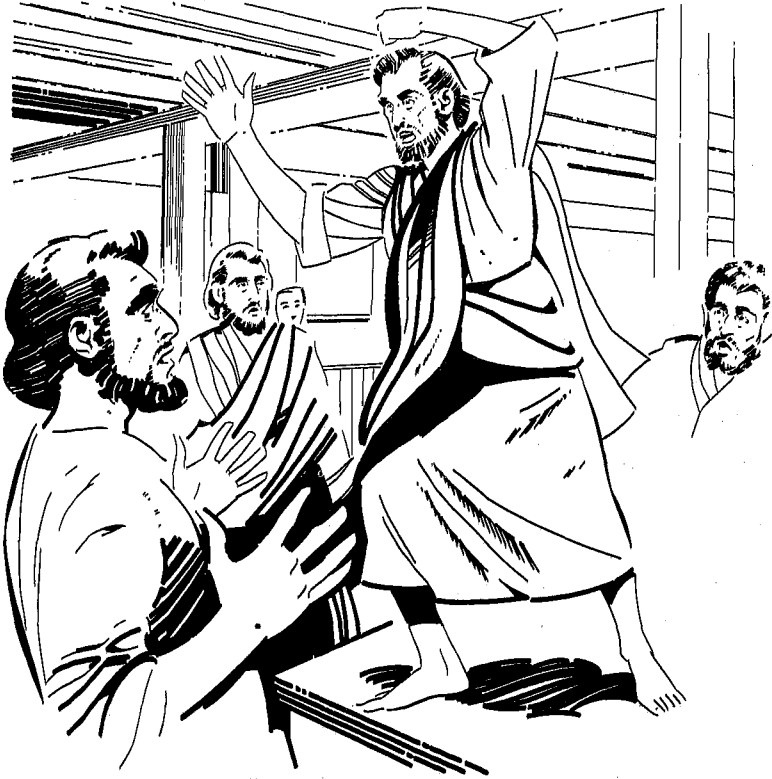


I THESSALONIANS, CHAPTER TWO

Chapter Topic:

Paul's Good Record Among The Thessalonians



"We were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God."
I Thess. 2:2

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

I Thessalonians, chapter two (2:1-16)

Chapter Topic—"Paul's Good Record Among the Thessalonians"

1. Paul's entrance in unto the Thessalonians to preach was not _____ 2:1
2. In what city had Paul suffered before coming to Thessalonica? 2:2. _____
3. In spite of past sufferings, Paul was _____ in God to speak the gospel in Thessalonica. 2:2.
4. In Thessalonica, Paul spoke the gospel of God with much _____ 2:2.
5. Paul's preaching and exhortation was not based on three things. What were these? 2:3. _____;
_____;
6. With what was Paul allowed to be put in trust? 2:4.
_____.
7. Whom did Paul seek to please? 2:4. _____.
8. What does God do to our hearts? 2:4. _____.
9. What two things did Paul NOT use in his ministry at Thessalonica? 2:5.

_____;
10. Who was witness that Paul did not use a cloke over covetousness? 2:5. _____.
11. What did Paul NOT seek from the Thessalonians? 2:6.
_____.
12. What did Paul have authority, as an apostle of Christ, to be? 2:6. _____.
13. Among the Thessalonians, Paul had been _____ 2:7.
14. To the Thessalonians Paul had been like a _____ cherishing her own children. 2:7.
15. What two things was Paul willing to have imparted to the Thessalonians? 2:8. _____;
16. Paul was willing to do this, because the Thessalonians were _____ unto him. 2:8.
17. What two things could the Thessalonians remember about Paul? 2:9. _____;
18. What did Paul do day and night in Thessalonica? 2:9.
_____.

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19. Paul labored, because he would not be _____ unto any of the people, 2:9.
20. What two peoples were witnesses to Paul's conduct among the Thessalonians? 2:10, _____;
21. In what three ways had Paul behaved among the Thessalonians? 2:10, _____; _____;
22. Paul had _____, and _____ and _____, as a _____ doth his own _____, 2:11.
23. For what purpose had Paul thus exhorted them? 2:12.

24. Unto what has God called us? 2:12.

25. The Thessalonians received the word of God, "not as the _____ of _____, but as the _____ of _____, 2:13.
26. Paul says, "The word of God (which) _____
_____ in you that believe." 2:13.
27. The Thessalonians became followers of the _____ of _____ which (were) in _____, 2:14.
28. The churches of God in Judea were "in" whom? 2:14.

29. Of whom had the Thessalonians suffered things? 2:14.

30. Of whom had the churches of God in Judea suffered? 2:14.

31. What did the Jews do to the Lord Jesus? 2:15.

32. What did the Jews do to the prophets? 2:15.

33. What had the Jews done to Paul? 2:15.

34. Did the Jews please God? Yes or No. (Circle which)
35. The Jews "are _____ to all men." 2:15.
36. What did the Jews forbid Paul to do? 2:16.

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37. What did the Jews fill up? 2:16. _____
38. What was come upon the Jews? 2:16. _____
39. Memorize I Thess. 2:13.

(The remaining "Thinking Through Thessalonians" questions on chapter two are treated as part of chapter three.)

I THESSALONIANS, CHAPTER TWO (2:1-16)*

Chapter Topic: *"Paul's Good Record Among the Thessalonians"*

Outline

- II. Paul's good record among the Thessalonians; 2:1-16.
 - A. Paul's work among them; 2:1-12.
 1. Not in vain; 2:1.
 2. Bold; 2:2.
 3. Sincere; 2:3.
 - a. Not of deceit.
 - b. Not of uncleanness.
 - c. Not of guile.
 4. Only what God allowed; 2:4.
 5. Used no flattering words; 2:5.
 6. Used no cloke of covetousness.
 7. Sought no glory; 2:6.
 8. Gentle; 2:7.
 9. Self-supporting; 2:8-9.
 - a. Why; 2:8.
 - b. How; 2:9.
 10. Backed up by a holy life; 2:10.
 11. An exhorting ministry; 2:11-12.
 - a. As a father does his children; 2:11.
 - b. That they would walk worthy of God; 2:12.
 - B. Thanks for the way they received the word; 2:13-16.
 1. As the word of God; 2:13.
 2. They became followers of the churches in Judea; 2:14-16.
 - a. Thessalonians suffered of their countrymen; 2:14a
 - b. Judeans suffered of the Jews; 2:14b-16.
 - (1) The Jews killed Jesus; 2:15.
 - (2) The Jews killed the prophets.
 - (3) The Jews persecuted Paul.

* We have placed 2:17-20 with chapter three.

- (4) The Jews please not God.
- (5) The Jews are contrary to all men,
- (6) The Jews forbade Paul to speak to the Gentiles; 2:16.
 - (a) They fill up their sins always.
 - (b) Wrath is come upon them.

THOUGHTS FROM THE OUTLINE

Of I Thessalonians, chapter two

Paul's work among the Thessalonians should be a pattern for every preacher or other Christian worker. We should ask ourselves, "Has our work been like Paul's—not in vain, bold, sincere? Have we used flattering words, covetousness, or sought glory of men?"

Then the way the Thessalonians received the word which Paul preached is a pattern to every one who hears the word. They (1) received the word as the word of God, not the word of men, and (2) they became followers (or imitators) of the Judean churches which had suffered for their faith. The Thessalonians did not shun the full consequences of obeying the gospel. Can we in this generation assume that we are privileged to receive the blessings of Christ without sacrifice or suffering, when Christians in other ages and places have endured so much?

Text (2:1)

I For yourselves, brethren, know our entering in unto you, that it hath not been found vain:

Translation and Paraphrase

1. For you yourselves, brethren, (saw and) know that our entering in unto you (when we came to Thessalonica to preach) was not fruitless (or useless).

Notes (2:1)

1. Letting in a fresh breeze of truth will usually soon blow out a room full of poisonous lies. After Paul left Thessalonica, some people, most likely Jews, had apparently accused him of being a flatterer, a deceiver, immoral, and money hungry. I Thess. 2:3, 5.
2. Therefore in this second chapter Paul takes up the matter of his good record among the Thessalonians. (This is the chapter topic,) Paul thoroughly demolishes all the insinuations against him. This really was not very hard to do. For, as he reminds the Thessalonians, they themselves knew all about what he had done among them.

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3. The type of "entrance" which Paul had unto the Thessalonians was a vindication of Paul himself and all he stood for. His record of accomplishment and conduct was good enough to silence any malicious accusers.
4. In our outline, we have called the section 2:1-12 "Paul's work Among Them." It seems to be an elaboration of Paul's statement in 1:5, "Ye know what manner of men we were among you."
5. In 2:1, Paul picks up the thought of 1:9, where he had mentioned what "matter of *entering in* we had unto you." The word translated *entrance* here in 2:1 is the same word that is translated *entering in* in 1:9.
6. Paul's visit to the Thessalonians had most certainly NOT been "in vain." "In vain" (Gr., *kenos*) means "empty, vain, devoid of truth, fruitless, without effect." (Thayer) The fact that Paul left a flourishing church there was proof that his visit was not in vain. The Thessalonians themselves could vouch for that fact.

Text (2:2)

2 but having suffered before and been shamefully treated, as ye know, at Philippi, we waxed bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God in much conflict.

Translation and Paraphrase

2. On the contrary, even though we had suffered previously (in many places), and had been treated insultingly at Philippi (just before we came to Thessalonica), as you know, we were bold (and free) in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God (even though we did so) in much anguish of mind.

Notes (2:2)

1. This verse emphasizes that Paul's work among the Thessalonians was BOLD. Boldness is the first great need of Christian workers. It takes much boldness to go knock on a stranger's door, seeking an opportunity to talk about Christ. It takes boldness to teach God's word in a place where people do not want what you are teaching. If a person has already endured opposition in other places, the boldness is doubly tested, because of fears created by past difficulties. The early Christians prayed for boldness. Acts 4:29. Paul asked for prayer that he might speak boldly. Ephesians 6:19-20; Philippians 1:20. Did you ever pray that God would give you boldness? Some people are bold to practice evil, but we need to be bold to declare the whole counsel of God.

2. Before Paul ever came to Thessalonica, he had been rejected at several towns during his first missionary trip. See Acts, chapters 13 and 14. He had been stoned at Lystra. Acts 14:19. Truly he had "suffered before."
3. Then at Philippi, the city he visited immediately before preaching in Thessalonica, he was treated most shamefully. The expression "shamefully entreated" (Gr., *hubridzo*) means "to treat one insolently and shamefully," emphasizing the attitude of the abusers. This accurately describes the treatment Paul received at Philippi. There he was (1) arrested illegally after healing a girl; (2) put through a mock trial; (3) scourged unlawfully; (4) severely imprisoned. Read Acts 16:11-40 for details.
4. In the light of Paul's previous experiences, it would have been understandable if he had been fearful and hesitant in Thessalonica. His work might have been "in vain" (or fruitless) because of fears generated by past experiences. BUT that was not the case. (The word *but* used in this verse (Gr., *alla*) indicates a strong contrast between the possibility of his work being in vain, and what it actually was.) Paul's boldness in preaching in Thessalonica is described in Acts 17:1-5.
5. Paul was bold "in our God" to speak. If it had not been for the help and fellowship of God, Paul could never have done what he did. It was only by God's help that Paul went in triumph from place to place. II Cor. 2:14. It is likewise only by God's help that we can do His work.
6. The phrase "the gospel of God," is frequently used by Paul and other writers in the N.T. See I Thess. 2:8, 9; Rom. 1:1; 15:16; II Cor. 11:7; Mark 1:14; I Pet. 4:17. The phrase, "gospel of Christ," is also quite common. See I Thess. 3:2; Phil. 1:27.
7. Paul may have been bold in preaching in Thessalonica, but he was far from insensible to the mental anguish, and the possible physical pain also. He declares that he spoke the gospel "with much contention." The word translated "contention" (*agonia*) is the word from which we get our English word "agony." It refers to severe mental struggles and emotions, agony, anguish. Any sincere preacher often preaches in agony, fearing he will not say the words he ought to say, or fearing he will say things he should not say, and sometimes fearing how people will receive what he says. The acute suffering in Paul's mind shows how far he was from being a Stoic. Suffering is real. But, thank God, it has its rewards, both in the development of our personalities, and in heaven.

Text (2:3)

3 For our exhortation is not of error, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

Translation and Paraphrase

3. For (you see) the message which we urge you to accept is not (something that springs) from misleading error (which we hold), nor from (any sexual) uncleanness (such as the Gentile religions often practice), nor from (any) hidden scheme (by which we seek to trap you).

Notes (2:3)

1. When a man knows he is telling the truth, he will speak confidently, and have a ring of reliability in his tone. Paul was willing to endure all the troubles he experienced in Thessalonica, because he knew that his message was true, pure, and without concealed secrets.
2. The word "exhortation" (Gr., *paraklesis*, from *parakaleo*) has a double significance. It includes the idea of rousing the slothful, and also of comforting the sorrowful. (McGarvey)
3. Paul's exhortation was not "of deceit." "Deceit" means "error" or "wandering," or "straying about." It refers to error that is not merely the result of ignorance, but of evil intentions. The false brethren who taught the Gentile Christians to keep the law of Moses were guilty of such deceit as this.
4. "Uncleanness" refers to sexual indulgence and impurity. Note I Thess. 4:4, 7; Rom. 1:24; Colossians 3:5. The prophetess Jezebel taught people to commit fornication. Rev. 2:20. But Paul neither practiced nor taught such things. Some of the mystery religions in Thessalonica practiced moral uncleanness. See Introductory Section VI, par. 11.) Paul's exhortation was not of that species.
5. "Guile" comes from a Greek word, *dolos*, meaning "bait," hence a lure or snare. The word therefore indicates craft or deceit by which people may be trapped. It refers to any hidden purposes or motives, especially bad ones. The minister of Christ must not have any secret motives or requirements that he plans to spring on his disciples.
6. "The ministerial work must be managed purely for God and the salvation of the people, and not for any private ends of our own. This is our sincerity in it. A wrong end makes all the work bad from us, however good in itself." (Richard Baxter)

Text (2:4)

4 but even as we have been approved of God to be intrusted with the gospel, so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God who proveth our hearts.

Translation and Paraphrase

4. Instead (of our message being rooted in such wicked motives as we have just mentioned, we govern ourselves by this standard, namely that) just as we have been tested (and approved) by God to be entrusted with the good news, in (just) that manner we speak, not as (those who are) seeking to please men, but (seeking to please) God, who (constantly) tests our hearts (to see if we are sincere).

Notes (2:4)

1. To put this verse briefly, it says, "We did and said only what God approved us to say." Paul did not preach anything motivated by deceit, uncleanness, or guile (2:3), but only what God approved him to say.
2. God told Jonah the prophet to preach unto Nineveh "the preaching *that I bid thee*." (Jonah 3:2) God approved Jonah to preach only a certain message. Likewise God gave Paul a certain message to deliver. Paul delivered what he was supposed to, and nothing else. It is always a temptation to inject our own feelings, opinions, and hobbies into our preaching. We do well in our preaching not to go beyond what is written. (I Cor. 4:6; American Stan. Vers.). Speak where the Scriptures speak, and leave our own opinions out.
3. The word translated "allowed" actually means "approved," particularly that which is approved by testing. People test metals like gold by melting them over fire. If no impurities come to the top, then the gold is said to be "tested" or "approved," or "tried by fire." God likewise tests and approves us. No greater honor could come to us than to be approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel.
 "To be put in trust with the gospel is the highest conceivable responsibility; the sense of it is enough to exclude every base motive and deceitful practice." (Findlay)
4. There are two words in this verse that are translations of the same word. The King James version does not make this apparent. (Our translation indicates it.) The words are "allowed" and "trieth."

(1) "Allowed" (Gr., *dedokimasmetha*) means "tested" or "approved."

(2) "Trieth" (*dokimadzonti*) means "tests."

God tests us for our ability and sincerity. If we measure up to His requirements, we are declared to be "tested" and "approved" to do whatever God sees fit.

5. Many Scriptures teach us that God tests and tries human hearts, so as to know their innermost secrets. "The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold, but Jehovah trieth the hearts." (Prov. 17:3; Amer. Stan. vers.) See also Jeremiah 11:20; I Cor. 4:5; Rom. 2:16.
6. God's testing of our hearts is a continual thing. The verb "trieth" is in the present tense, indicating continuous action. God must continually test our hearts, for sin can creep into them at any time and change them from good to evil.
7. It was always a joy to Paul to think that he had not only been forgiven for his fierce unbelieving past, but even entrusted with preaching the gospel he had once opposed. I Tim. 1:12: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." See also I Tim. 1:11; Eph. 3:2-3, 7-8.
8. Since God had given Paul the gospel, Paul tried to please *God*, rather than men. There is much in the gospel that is distasteful to the natural man—its humiliating exposure of our sin and helplessness, its demands for our acceptance of God's will, the fact that it claims to be the only unchangeable truth, and the severity of its judgments upon those who reject. A preacher can become popular by saying only what the people want to hear. See Isa. 30:9-10; II Tim. 4:3-4. Paul would not do this, and we dare not do it either. Remember, God is testing our hearts continually!
9. In one way, however, Paul did seek to please men. See I Cor. 9:19-22, especially 22b: "I am become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." If Paul could gain the good will of people without compromising God's message, he certainly did so, even if that meant extra effort and discomfort to him. When he was among Jews, he ate Jewish food and lived like a Jew insofar as doing so did not violate the gospel. Thus also he did among Gentiles. By doing this, he was able to win more people.

Text (2:5)

5 For neither at any time were we found using words of flattery, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness, God is witness;

Translation and Paraphrase

5. (We avoided other wrong doings besides men-pleasing while we were with you;) for neither were we at any time found using flattering speech, as you (well) know; neither (did we use any) pretext (to cover a motive) of covetousness, God is (our) witness (that we are telling the truth about that).

Notes (2:5)

1. God had preserved for us in this verse (and paragraph) a record of how an inspired apostle went about preaching in a city where the gospel had never before been heard. We must imitate his methods and motives.
2. "As to his *outward* conduct (that it was without flattery) Paul calls the Thessalonians to witness; as to his *inward* desires (that they were without covetousness) he calls God to witness." (McGarvey)
3. Flattering words are often very powerful, and can bring about some spectacular results. Such words will win the favor of the majority of people. Absalom stole the hearts of the people of Israel by flattery. II Samuel 15:2-6. But flattery is dangerous to use, and its effects are not lasting. It should be avoided. Good-will gained through flattery will not stand the tests that brotherly love produced by conversion will stand. "He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favor than he that flattereth with his tongue." Prov. 28:23. See also Prov. 29:5; 26:28; 6:24.
4. The word "cloke" means "a pretext," or "pretense," or "show." Jesus said that the scribes "for a pretense (cloke) make long prayers." Mark 12:40. Their long prayers covered up their desire for the praise of men.

Thus a "cloke of covetousness" would be a pretended manner such as a person would use to cover up the fact that he wanted money. Covetous men have often used such a pretense. "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." II Peter 2:3. Paul did not put a cloke over covetousness, for he had none to hide.

5. Paul did not use his ministry as a pretext for making money. Acts 20:33. "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel." The world of the Greeks was full of teachers and philos-

ophers who travelled about lecturing and disputing, seeking to live by their wits. Notice Acts 13:6-12; 19:13-20. Paul was that kind of a man, and he was careful to conduct himself so that he could not possibly be accused of being one. Preachers must be supported, according to God's command, but if money becomes their motive, they have missed the path altogether.

6. It might almost appear that Paul used an oath when he called upon God to witness that he had not been covetous among the Thessalonians. However, inasmuch as Paul was an inspired man, it would be presumptuous of us to judge him. See I Cor. 2:15. Paul had the mind of Christ perfectly. I Cor. 2:16. What he said here was, therefore, befitting before God.

But for ourselves, we should avoid saying, "By God," that anything is true or not true. Let your "Yes" mean "Yes," and your "No" mean "No." Whatsoever is more than these cometh of the evil one. Matt. 4:37. Paul's words were acceptable by God. But we cannot know with the certainty of Paul when such a statement would be an oath, and when we would be stating a harmless fact. Therefore, "Swear not at all." Matt. 5:34.

Text (2:6)

6 nor seeking glory of men, neither from you nor from others, when we might have claimed authority as apostles of Christ.

Translation and Paraphrase

6. Neither (were we ever found) seeking glory from men, neither from you, nor from (any) others, though we have authority to be burdensome (and demand that you support us) as apostles of Christ.

Notes (2:6)

1. How hard men will strain to get glory and honor in this world! They will lie to get it. They will embezzle money so they can appear greater than they truly are. They will run down other people so that they themselves can appear better by contrast. But Paul did not even seek glory when he could have legitimately claimed it.
2. What is this *glory* which Paul did not seek? The word naturally suggests honor and praise. Paul did not seek that type of glory. In this verse he denies the motive of ambition, as he denied the motive of covetousness in verse five.

Jesus said that He did not receive "glory" from men. John 5:41. But those who opposed Jesus sought honor (glory) one of another. John 5:44. "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. Paul was that type of a man. He sought no glory from men, only from God.

3. However, the word "glory" has another meaning, which is suggested by the context. (By "context" we mean the verses that go immediately before and after this verse.) The context suggests that the glory which Paul shunned was the *financial gain* that he might have obtained from his office and work.
4. Thus the two meanings of "glory" are:
 - (1) Honor and praise.
 - (2) Financial rewards and support.
5. Paul had every right to demand financial support from his converts, even if that required making himself burdensome to them. I Cor. 9:6-14. But Paul supported himself by his own labors, and did not collect support from them. This he did to impress upon them the sincerity of his intentions and message.
6. There are three negatives (in verses 5 and 6), each introduced by the Gr. conjunction *oute*, which we should notice:
 - (1) "Neither . . . used we flattering words."
 - (2) "Nor a cloke of covetousness."
 - (3) "Nor . . . sought we glory."

Can you make these same emphatic denials in describing your service to Christ?

Text (2:7)

7 But we were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children:

Translation and Paraphrase

7. But (instead of seeking glory) we were gentle (while we were) in the midst of you. (Indeed we treated you so) that it was as if a nurse were cherishing her own children.

Notes (2:7)

1. A man seeking his own glory would have been domineering and demanding. But Paul was gentle among the Thessalonians.
2. He treated them as a nurse would cherish and protect her own children. The word *own* should be in the translation before the

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word *children*. A nurse, even a devoted one, would probably be more loving and attentive to her own children, than to the children of strangers. Paul considered the Thessalonians to be as dear and close to him as a nurse's own children would be to her.

3. Gentleness is never weak. Gentleness is the strong self-sacrificing spirit which makes heroes and martyrs. Abraham Lincoln was gentle. Jesus was gentle. But how strong He was! The Lord's servant must be gentle and not strive. II Timothy 2:24. The real power of a man is seen not in how violent he can get, but in what he can endure with gentleness.
4. There is some uncertainty about one word in this verse. Some New Testament manuscripts have "gentle" (Gr., *epioi*), as our common King James version has, and some have "babes" (*nepioi*). By dropping the first letter of the word for "babes" we get the word for "gentle." The American Standard Version margin says, "Most of the ancient authorities read "babes." (That seems an overly strong statement to us.) Westcott and Hort's Greek N.T. has "babes" in the text. Nestle's Greek N.T. (which we are following) has "gentle" in the text, and "babes" in the margin.

To us it seems that the word "babes" would make little sense in this verse. (Why should Paul say, "We were babes among you"?) Furthermore, it does not have overwhelming manuscript support. Its chief support is the Latin text and the Vatican manuscript. We feel that the King James version is correct in adopting the reading, "gentle."

Text (2:8)

8 even so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were well pleased to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were become very dear to us.

Translation and Paraphrase

9. Even so (in the same manner as the nurse cherishing her own children, we,) yearning after you (greatly as we did,) were well-pleased to impart unto you not only the good news of God, but even our own lives, because ye were (that) beloved unto us.

Notes (2:8)

1. Paul's feelings toward the Thessalonians overflowed with love so deep and genuine that it led him to make many great sacrifices for them. He worked day and night to support himself while with them.

The true minister of Christ does not count the cost to him of helping people to know Christ. Anything he can give he will give.

2. Paul was like Jesus, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister. Matt. 20:28.
3. II Cor. 12:15—"And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved."
4. Concerning the "gospel of God," see notes on I Thess. 2:2, paragraph 6.
5. Paul's self-sacrificing sincerity is also seen in Romans 9:1-3, where Paul says that he could wish himself accursed from Christ for the sake of his brethren in the flesh, the Israelites, if that would help save them.

Text (2:9)

9 For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

Translation and Paraphrase

9. For you remember, brethren, our toil and hard labor, (how that by) working night and day so that we would not be burdensome to any of you, we preached unto you the good news of God (without charging you a cent).

Notes (2:9)

1. This information about Paul's manual labor in Thessalonica is not given in the book of Acts. But Acts records how Paul worked similarly in Corinth. See Acts 18:3; II Cor. 11:9; I Cor. 4:12. See also notes on I Thess. 2:6, paragraphs 5 and 6.
2. Paul's laboring in Thessalonica (2:9) set an example for the "labor of love" by the Thessalonians. I Thess. 1:3.
3. Paul's labor in Thessalonica also set an example for those who were inclined to be idle. See II Thess. 3:8-9.
4. What are the literal meanings of the words translated "labour" and "travail"?
 - (1) "Labour" (Gr., *kopos*) means "intense labor, united with trouble, toil. It gives prominence to the fatigue involved." (Thayer)
 - (2) "Travail" (Gr., *mochthos*) means hard and difficult labor, and it gives prominence to the hardship involved. It does not mean birth-pains. This is another word. See I Thess. 5:3.

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5. We probably should understand the phrase, "labouring night and day," to mean that Paul began work even before daylight and worked on after dark in the evening.
6. Can we honestly say that we have the sincerity and dedication of Paul? May God help us to have the earnestness and the spirit of joyful self-sacrificing that possessed him. If we had more of his disposition, we might have more of his results.
7. Regarding the expression, "gospel of God," see notes on I Thess. 2:2, par. 6.

Text (2:10)

10 Ye are witnesses, and God *also*, how holily and righteously and unblamably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe:

Translation and Paraphrase

10. You (yourselves are) witnesses, and God (also), how holily (toward God), and righteousnessly (toward men), and unblameably (toward all) we behaved (ourselves) toward (you,) the believing ones.

Notes (2:10)

1. Paul saw in his hard physical labor a sacredness. The holy man sees in life's duties a sacredness, and in life's sacred acts a duty.
2. Paul's insistence upon the righteousness of his conduct almost compels us to think that he was answering some accusations and criticisms that had been thrown at him.
3. "Holily" means "undefiled by sin, pure." It expresses a relationship between our activities and God.
4. "Justly" means "in a just or righteous manner; in harmony with what is right." It expresses a relationship between our activities and men.
5. "Unblameably" (Gr., *amemptos*) means "deserving no criticism, not subject to blame." The same Greek word is used in I Thess. 5:23, where it is translated "blameless."

Text (2:11-12)

11 as ye know how we *dealt with* each one of you, as a father with his own children, exhorting you, and encouraging you, and testifying, **12** to the end that ye should walk worthily of God, who calleth you into his own kingdom and glory.

Translation and Paraphrase

11. (We truly behaved unblameably toward you,) even as ye know how that (we dealt with) each one of you as a father (would

deal with) his own children, exhorting you, and encouraging, and testifying (to you).

12. That you would be walking (that is, conducting yourselves) worthily of God, who calls you into his kingdom and (his) glory.

Notes (2:11-12)

1. During the short time Paul was with the Thessalonians, he exhorted "every one" of them, meaning each one individually. This in itself is an astounding accomplishment. (How did he ever have time to do manual labor in addition to all of this personal exhorting?) Concerning the meaning of the word "exhort" or "exhortation," see notes on I Thess. 2:3, paragraph 2.
2. Paul not only "exhorted" them, but also "comforted" them. The ministry of comforting and consoling people is most needful. This world has an abundance of things that cause grief, fear, and sorrow, and a scarcity of comforting. Real comforting means very much to people.
3. Paul had behaved toward them as a father would behave toward his own children. (The word *own* is important, and should be in the translation, as also in 2:7.) Any father worthy of his position would instruct his children in the right way to live, and urge them to do it. Paul had done that very thing to the Thessalonian disciples.

Paul did not have the Thessalonians addressing him as "Father Paul," in the fashion of the Roman Catholic clergy. (Remember, Jesus said, "Call no *man* your father upon the earth." Matthew 23:9.) But even so, Paul was a spiritual father to the Thessalonians in every sense that a man can be. I Corinthians 4:15: "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet ye have not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."

4. Paul urged them that they walk *worthy of God*. The word, "worthy," means "of equal weight." We must imagine a set of balances, with God in one side. On the other side of the balances, we must place our "walk" (or manner of life), and it must be "worthy" (of equal weight) of God. This may seem impossible. Whether it is impossible or not, it is certainly difficult. Paul had to exhort and testify repeatedly to the Thessalonians to get them to do this.

2:11,12 THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

Probably we ought not to say that it would be impossible to be *worthy* of God, since Paul taught us to walk *worthy* of God not only here, but in other places as well. Vol. 1:10: "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord." See also Ephesians 4:1; Phil. 1:27 (in American Standard version); II Thess. 1:5. (Also see notes on II Thess. 1:11, paragraph 4.)

5. For specific instructions about how we "ought to walk" (or live), see I Thess. 4:1-12, the section entitled, "The walk of the Christian."
6. How sublime and dignified a Christian's character may become! It is actually possible to walk *worthy* of God. Paul's good record among the Thessalonians was crowned by his efforts to stimulate his converts to the noblest possible way of living.
7. Notice that we are called unto (or into) God's *kingdom* and glory. The kingdom of God is "visible as the church on earth." (B. W. Johnson.) There are many Scripture verses that indicate that the kingdom of Christ has already been established on earth, and is practically synonymous with the church. Here are a few:

Col. 1:13—"God hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."

Matt. 16:18-19—"I will build my church . . . and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

Rev. 1:9—"I John . . . am your brother, and companion . . . in the kingdom . . . of Jesus Christ."

Hebrews 12:28—"Ye are come . . . to the general assembly and church . . . Wherefore having received a kingdom that cannot be shaken . . ."

(See also the *Special Study* on page 250, "The Throne of His Father David.")

8. Of course the kingdom of God will extend into the future life in a more glorious form. II Tim. 4:18; II Pet. 1:11.
9. The glory of God which we share includes such future promises as the resurrection of the dead, transformed bodies, the new heaven and earth, and other glories.

STUDY SUGGESTIONS

1. At this point in your study of I Thessalonians, we urge you to turn back to the outline of chapter two, and review the points in this section, 2:1-12, which is called "Paul's work among them."

2. Also it would be well for you at this time to turn ahead to the "Did You Learn?" questions, following the notes on 2:16. You should now be able to answer questions 1 to 29.

Text (2:13)

13 And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe.

Translation and Paraphrase

13. And we also thank God unceasingly for this (cause, namely) that when ye received (the) message which ye heard from us, (even the message) of God, you (welcomed and) received it not as a message from men, but as (what) it truly is, (the) message of God, which (is not just another dead philosophy, but is a living word that) also works actively in you that believe (it).

Notes (2:13)

1. Any man who has a burning conviction that the apostles of Christ taught the words of Almighty God would rejoice to see people receive the apostles' teachings as the word of God.
2. Paul was so pleased that the Thessalonians had received his message as the word of God, that he thanked God for this "without ceasing."
3. Paul knew perfectly well where his gospel came from, "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not after men." Galations 1:11. When the Thessalonians received his gospel as coming from God, as he KNEW it had come, he was most thankful.
4. This verse should forever establish the fact that we cannot have a faith like the apostles had, and then deny the miracles and prophecies and other things which the apostles taught.

Modern interpreters try to make the Bible acceptable to unbelievers by "demythologizing" it. Thus they reject such things as miracles and prophecies as being myths. Let us say right now that we do not believe that the Bible has myths in it. It is a combination of God's actual words, with the true history of His dealings with men.

We accept the testimony of the honest men who penned the Bible, that Jesus actually was born of a virgin, and actually walked on the water, and actually died for our sins, and rose

2:13 THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

bodily from the tomb, and is coming again. A believer has no part with an unbeliever. See II Cor. 6:15; II John 9-11.

5. This verse (2:13) begins the second section of chapter two, a section giving Paul's thanks for the way they received the word. The section covers 2:13-16. See outline of chapter two. The section is somewhat of an elaboration of Paul's statement in 1:6: "Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction."
6. To "receive" the word, of God as the Thessalonians received it, carries the idea of welcoming it as well as just taking it. (The Gr. verb *dechomai* has that connotation.) The teachable attitude of the Thessalonian Christians was in sharp contrast to that of the Jews, who not only refused to be taught themselves, but would not let Paul teach anyone else.
7. As if it were not a sufficient privilege for the Thessalonians to have received the word of God for its own sake, Paul adds further food to heaven's table of blessings, by saying that "the word of God is *working* within you."

The word of God is not some dead philosophy or speculation, but is living ("quick") and active. Hebrews 4:12. It is like good seed which springs up when it is planted. Luke 8:11. The word of God does not return void (and fruitless) unto God; but it is like rain that comes down from heaven and causes grass and flowers to grow out of the ground. The word of God accomplishes whatever God sends it worth to do. Isaiah 55:10-11.

The word of God, because it is living and working, causes sinners to be born again and saved. We are "born again," not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God." I Peter 1:23.

Then, after being born again, the word of God continues to work within us. (The middle voice of the verb *energeo* indicates that the word of God is self-operative, and self-sustaining.) God is at work within Christians, working through His word and His Spirit, causing them both to will (or desire) and to work (accomplish) His good pleasure. Philippians 2:13. We have power from heaven energizing within us:

8. Something is working in YOU:
 - (1) Is it the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience? Ephesians 2:2.
 - (2) Or is it the word of God? I Thess. 2:13.

Text (2:14)

14 For ye, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judaea in Christ Jesus; for ye also suffered the same things of your own countrymen, even as they did of the Jews;

Translation and Paraphrase

14. (It is obvious that you truly received the gospel as the word of God,) for you became imitators, brethren, of the churches of God which are in (the land of) Judea in Christ Jesus, because you also suffered the same things from your own people as they also (did) from the Jews.

Notes (2:14)

1. There is no more painful hurt that a person can endure than for his own friends and relatives to turn against him because he has received Jesus Christ as his Lord. The unkindest cut of all is one from the sword of our own people, those with whom we have pleasant memories and blood kinship.
2. The Thessalonians endured such anguish when the Jews set their whole city on an uproar against the Christians. Acts 17:5-9.
3. But this very experience, and others like it that followed, marked them as truly one with the children of God everywhere. For by their sufferings, they became followers (or, more accurately, "imitators," as in I Thess. 1:6) of the Christians in Judea.
4. Judea was the main homeland of the Jews, with Jerusalem being its capital. It was there that the church of Christ was started. Churches were soon in existence in many of the villages of Judea. Paul calls these churches, "the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus." Note that you cannot be "of God" and not be also "in Christ Jesus." (These churches were also called the "churches of Judaea which were in Christ." Gal. 1:22.)
5. The churches in Judea soon suffered persecution. Stephen was killed. Acts 7:59-60. A great persecution followed his death. Acts 8:1, 3. Many of the Hebrew Christians lost their homes and property. Hebrews 10:32-34. The unbelieving Jews tried to exterminate the followers of Christ, just as they had sought to kill Christ himself.
6. Paul could well have written the same words to the Thessalonians that he wrote to the Philippians: "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Phil. 1:29.

Text (2:15-16)

15 who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove out us, and please not God, and are contrary to all men; **16** forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved; to fill up their sins always; but the wrath is come upon them to the uppermost.

Translation and Paraphrase

15. (These Jews are the people) who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and have persecuted (and pursued) us, and (they) please not God, and are antagonistic to all men.
16. preventing us (if they possibly can) from speaking to the Gentiles so that they could be saved. (All of this wickedness is working) unto the (result, that they, like the Amorites of old, are) filling full their (cup of) sins always. But (God has not overlooked this wickedness any more than He overlooked the iniquity of the Amorites.) Rather, the wrath (of God) has come upon them to the (bitter) end.

Notes (2:15-16)

1. Facts about the Jews.
 - (1) They killed the Lord Jesus.
 - (2) They killed the prophets.
 - (3) They persecuted and pursued Paul.
 - (4) They please not God.
 - (5) They are contrary to all men.
 - (6) They forbade Paul to speak to the Gentiles.
2. This list of charges which Paul lays upon the Jews would be enough in modern times to raise screams of "Anti-Semitism!" from coast to coast. Nonetheless, everything which Paul said about them was true.
3. They killed the Lord Jesus. We have observed in recent times a lot of propoganda trying to get people to stop blaming the Jews for killing Jesus. But the fact remains that Pilate, the Roman governor who sentenced Jesus to die, did not want to do so. See John 19:6, 12. Only the mob pressure from the Jews prevailed upon him to do it.

The Jews had tried to kill Jesus several times previously, before He finally was crucified. See John 8:59; 10:31; Luke 4:29.

Just fifty days after Jesus died, right in Jerusalem where He was killed, the apostle Peter said publicly to the Jews, "YOU

have taken (Jesus) and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Acts 2:23. No Jew there could deny that Peter spoke the truth about their deed.

4. The Jews killed their prophets. Jesus himself laid this charge upon them. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee." Matt. 23:37. See also Matt. 23:29-35; Acts 7:52.

The Jews during their history had turned against Moses. They persecuted Jeremiah. Amos was told to leave and prophesy no more. Amos 7:12. Micaiah was imprisoned. I Kings 22:24-28. Hanani imprisoned. II Chron. 16:7-10. Zechariah slain. II Chronicles 24:20-22. This list could go on and on.

5. The Jews had persecuted Paul, almost from the moment he had become a Christian. To list all the places where Paul had been hounded and persecuted by the Jews would be to list every place he ever visited—Damascus, Jerusalem, Antioch of Pisidia, Lystra, etc. Shortly before this letter was written, Paul had had to leave Berea, because Jews had come all the way from Thessalonica to run Paul out of town. See Acts 17:10-13.

This was such an unreasonable thing for them to do, sort of a "dog in the manger" attitude. But, "there is no limit to what religious prejudice will really do when men's eyes become blinded." (Ironside, ADDRESSES, p. 28.)

6. The Jews please not God. Probably of all the charges made by Paul against the Jews, this one would be the most hotly disputed. But as proof that Paul was right when he said, "The Jews please not God," let us remind you that God's prophets which He sent to the Jews confirm Paul's judgment:

- (1) John the baptist called them a "generation of vipers." Matt. 3:7.
- (2) Isaiah called them a "sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters." Isa. 1:4.
- (3) Jeremiah said that they were all grievous revolters, walking with slanders. Jer. 6:28.
- (4) Malachi declared God's judgment, that "from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances." Malachi 3:7.

Jesus said to his apostles, "Whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service to God." John 16:2. The mistaken zeal of men like Saul of Tarsus led them even to commit murder in God's name. This certainly did NOT please God.

2:15,16 THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

Now we must, in all fairness interject, that there have always been many devout, gracious, open-hearted Jews, men like their father Abraham. Paul himself acknowledged this, for he himself was a Jew. Romans 11:5. Many Jews honestly considered what Jesus said and did, and many became Christians. But many closed their minds, and became violent against Christ and His followers. In doing that, they did NOT please God.

7. The Jews are contrary to all men. "Contrary" (Gr., *enantios*) means "opposite, antagonistic, etc."

The Jews of Paul's time delighted in hatching all manner of sedition, private conspiracy, and rebellion. Tacitus, the Roman historian, brands them as "the enemies of all men." The great Jewish doctor of the law, Gamaliel, himself tells of two violent rebellions of the Jews. Acts 5:36-37.

The Jews despised the Gentiles as unclean. They would not enter the house of Pilate the Roman governor. John 18:29. The apostle Peter said to Cornelius, "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation." Acts 10:28.

We admit that it is plain evident history that Gentiles (and even professed Christians) have been cruel to the Jews throughout the centuries. But the Jews have themselves been guilty of everything that they have suffered from others. Gentiles and Jews alike are guilty before God.

8. The Jews forbade Paul to speak to the Gentiles. Nothing roused the Jews to more fury than for Paul to go to the Gentiles with the gospel of Christ.

Paul, in telling about his conversation and life before the Jews in Jerusalem, said, "And He (Jesus) said unto me, Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. And they gave him audience *unto this word*, and then lifted up their voice, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air. . . ." Acts 22:21-23.

It was always the same story wherever Paul went. The Jews tried to prevent him from teaching the Gentiles. In Lystra the Jews from Antioch and Iconium persuaded the people (Gentiles) to stone Paul. Acts 14:19; 17:13.

9. The result of all these wicked acts by the Jews, was that "they fill up their sins always." This expression appears to be a reference to what God had long before said about the wicked Am-

rites in the land of Canaan: "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." Gen. 15:16. At a later date God indicated that their iniquity was full, and that their own land would vomit them out. Lev. 18:24-28.

To say that the Jews resembled the heathen Amorites, whom they conquered in the time of Joshua, was perhaps a crowning insult, but not an exaggeration.

10. As a result of the iniquity of the Jews, wrath was come upon them to the uttermost, or "unto the end." This does not mean that wrath would continue upon them to the end of the world. For Paul himself prophesied that the Israelites would return to God before that time. Romans 11:25-26. Rather, "wrath unto the uttermost" means wrath that fully expends itself.

God's wrath against the Jews was particularly demonstrated at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Already at the time when Paul wrote this epistle, the great rebellion of the Jews against the Romans was taking form. When the rebellion finally came in 66 A.D., it led to a bloody war, in which the walls, temple, and much of the rest of Jerusalem were demolished and burned down. 97,000 people were carried away captive into slavery, and eleven hundred thousand (1,100,000) perished, many by starvation and killing one another. Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us about this in *Wars of the Jews*, VI, ix, 4.

Paul was certainly correct when he said that wrath was come upon them to the uttermost.

11. This statement about "wrath upon them to the uttermost" leaves some overly sensitive people shuddering with dislike and unbelief. Some interpreters even assert that this statement must be a "later interpolation" into the text. (So Moffatt, Interpreter's Bible, etc.) There is no proof whatsoever of such an opinion. It is just the reaction of the "natural mind" of man to God's judgment. Naturally, men do not like to accept what God says about such things as hell, the blood of Jesus, God's wrath, and the judgment. See I Cor. 2:14. But surely we must accept anything that God says. The Thessalonians did. I Thess. 2:13.

STUDY SUGGESTIONS

1. You have now come to the closing verses of the second part of chapter two. We urge you to review the outline of chapter 2.

THINKING THROUGH THESSALONIANS

2. Also you should now try to answer the remaining questions in the section that follows. Questions over the second section of chapter two are questions 30 to 45.

DID YOU LEARN?

(Questions over I Thessalonians, chapter two)

1. What is the topic of chapter two (2:1-16)?
2. What is the first main point of the outline of this chapter? (Point A)
3. What are its Scripture limitations?
4. What did the Thessalonians themselves know about Paul's entrance unto them? (2:1)
5. What Scripture verse and word does the "entrance" of 2:1 refer back to?
6. Where had Paul suffered immediately before he came to Thessalonica? (2:2)
7. In spite of Paul's previous sufferings, how did he speak in Thessalonica? (2:2)
8. What are the two ideas (or the double significance) in the word "exhortation"? (2:3)
9. Paul denies that his exhortation was prompted by three things. What were they? (2:3)
10. To what does "uncleanness" refer? (2:3)
11. What does the word "guile" mean? (2:3)
12. Paul spoke the gospel, as he was allowed by whom? (2:4)
13. What does the word "allowed" in 2:4 actually mean?
14. What two words in 2:4 are translations of the same word?
15. Whom did Paul seek to please, and whom did he not seek to please? (2:4)
16. What does God do to our hearts? (2:4)
17. What type of words did Paul not use? (2:5)
18. Who was witness of that fact? (2:5)
19. Over what did Paul not put a "cloke"? (2:5)
20. Who was witness of that fact? (2:5)
21. What two meanings are given for the word "glory"? (2:6)
22. As apostles of Christ, what could Paul have demanded? (2:6)
23. Paul was gentle among the Thessalonians, like a what? (2:7)
24. What two things was Paul willing to have imparted to the Thessalonians? (2:8)
25. When did Paul labor while he was among them? (2:9)

CHAPTER TWO

26. In what three ways had Paul behaved himself toward them that believe? (2:10)
27. Paul had exhorted them as a _____ would do. (2:11)
28. How did Paul exhort them to walk? (2:12)
29. Into what does God call us? (2:12)
30. What is the second main point in the outline of chapter two? (Point B)
31. What are its Scripture limitations?
32. As what did the Thessalonians receive the message which Paul preached? (2:13)
33. What did the way the Thessalonians received his words make Paul do? (2:13)
34. What did the word of God do in the Thessalonians? (2:13)
35. Of whom had the Thessalonians become followers because of their sufferings? (2:14)
36. Of whom had the Thessalonians suffered? (2:14)
37. What had the Jews done to Jesus? (2:15)
38. What had the Jews done to their prophets? (2:15)
39. What had the Jews done to Paul? (2:15)
40. What proof is given in the notes that Paul was correct when he said, "The Jews please not God"?
41. What attitude did the Jews have toward all men? (2:15)
42. What did the Jews try to keep Paul from doing? (2:16)
43. Whom did the Jews resemble in that they "filled up their sins always"? (2:16)
44. How far was God's wrath come upon the Jews? (2:16)
45. At what event was God's wrath upon the Jews especially demonstrated? (2:16)
46. Write out from memory (or recite) I Thess. 2:13. It begins, "For this cause also thank we . . ."