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## 1 Thessalonians 2

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

# 1 Thessalonians 2.

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## Topics.

- Preaching the Gospel to please man or to please God.
- God tests our hearts.
- Paul was like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.
- Walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own glory.
- God's wrath has come upon the Jews.
- You are our crown, our glory and joy.

**The previous chapter:** in the previous chapter Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were absolutely thrilled with the Thessalonians faith because they had forsaken idols to faithfully serve God and in the face of much persecution were faithfully standing firm in their faith. Paul and Silvanus were in Athens the capital city of Greece and had sent Timothy to them (1 Thess. 3:1-2).

**NOTE:** for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

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## 1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-6

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1

### Paul and Silas Suffered for the Gospel.

- **1 Thessalonians 2:1-6:** For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. <sup>2</sup>But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. <sup>3</sup>For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, <sup>4</sup>but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. <sup>5</sup>For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed— God is witness. <sup>6</sup>Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ.

Paul's words "We had suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi" (v1) does not refer to the Christian brothers at Philippi since Paul wrote to them saying:

- Therefore, my beloved brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord" (Philip. 4:1-23), and said, "It was kind of the Phillipians to share in his trouble from the beginning of the gospel and enter into partnership with him in giving and receiving" and he thanked them for continuously sending help for his needs (Philippians 4:14-16).

Paul's statement most likely refers to the Jewish authorities at Philippi (a city of Macedonia) since he had been put in prison there for proclaiming the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and the words:

- We had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict (v2).

Clearly shows that just because a faithful brother is serving the Lord it does not mean it will always be an easy path here. Paul proclaimed Christ at Philippi amongst much tribulation.

**Preaching the Gospel to please man or to please God:** Paul's said, "I do not preach the Gospel to please man, but to please God (v4), does not mean that he dogmatically sticks to the letter of the law as a legalistic teacher does, but that he does not alter it to appeal to self, ego and pride or to win the approval of others.

**Flattery and greed:** from Strong's Concordance flattery means a parasite or free-loader and greed (covertness in KJV) means selfishness, by implication it carries the idea of fraudulency and extortion thus flattery and greed in the context of (v5) carries the following two ideas: -

1. Paul does not use smooth talk and charm or enticing promises (i.e., the promise of healing or a prosperous life to persuade people into the faith).
2. Paul is not in the ministry as a freeloader meaning he does not rely on others to support him, but rather works to support himself.

Obviously certain brothers and sisters did give to Paul at various times, but mostly he supported himself by his trade of tent making. Though he could have made demands to be supported by others (v6) he chose not to for the following two reasons: -

1. So that he would not be a burden to anyone.
2. So that he would not be under the control of those who supported him.

**God tests our hearts:** God uses trials, persecution and hardships to test our faith to see whether it is genuine. It is very easy to praise God when things are good, even the unbelieving world is joyful and thankful when life is charmed, the real test of a brother or sisters faith is when it faces the unexpected crisis in life it is then that true faith is revealed (i.e., do they give up or endure)? The following words of Habakkuk are a perfect example of great faith:

- Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation" (Habakkuk 3:17-18).

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2

### **Paul, Silvanus and Timothy in their preaching did not:**

- Seek glory, flattery, adulation or praise from people.
- Expect to get a free ride for serving God.
- Appeal to people with flattering words to entice them into the Gospel.
- Proclaim the Gospel to get gifts or money.
- Viewed suffering for the Gospel as God testing their hearts.

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## **1 THESSALONIANS 2:7-10**

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### **Paul was like a Nursing Mother taking Care of her Own Children.**

- **1 Thessalonians 2:7-10:** But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. <sup>8</sup>So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. <sup>9</sup>For you remember, brothers, our labour and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. <sup>10</sup>You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers.

How beautiful was the attitude of Paul and those who ministered with him toward those they ministered to. They saw those who sat under their ministry as their children and themselves as a nursing mother. This is a perfect picture of a shepherd and his flock since everything a mother does

for her child is done from love and caring about their well-being. Nothing a nursing mother does is devoid of love whether it be feeding them or disciplining them everything is motivated by her desire to see them grow and mature into a strong healthy child able to face all the trials life brings across their path, this is the godly attitude Paul and those with him had toward those they ministered to. Paul's comment:

- Because you became very dear to us (v8).

Shows that Paul and those ministering with him not only valued the friendship of the Thessalonian brothers and sisters, but that they also shared their lives with them and the words:

- We shared with you not only the gospel but also our own selves (v9).

Means that they not only sacrificed their own time, leisure, sleep and rest to share the Gospel with them, but also worked long hours to support themselves so that they would not be a financial burden to anyone in Christ or to those seeking the Lord. Paul's statement:

- You know how holy, righteous and blameless our conduct was toward you (v10).

Shows that godly behaviour in a minister of the Gospel is manifested by self-sacrifice and denial of their own pleasures and luxuries for the well-being of others.

**Blameless:** in this context does not mean without sin, but that they are blameless in their behaviour before brothers and sisters in the Kingdom of God and before those outside God's Kingdom.

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## 1 THESSALONIANS 2:11-12

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### **Walk in a Manner worthy of God, who calls you into His Own Glory.**

- **Thessalonians 2:11-12:** For you know how, like a father with his children, <sup>12</sup>we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

Though Paul taught the Scriptures to those who he brought to Christ he did not view himself as a teacher but rather as a father who cared for his children. In his letter to the Corinthians he wrote: -

- For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel (1 Cor. 4:15).

These beautiful and endearing words of Paul reveal two things:

1. When a repentant sinner comes to Christ they are "Delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of his beloved Son" (Col 1:13) and in this sense they become a newly born spiritual child.
2. Though many teach the Bible, not all who teach are willing to sacrifice their own well-being for those who follow them as a natural father gives his life for his children as Paul and those ministering with him did for those they ministered to.

**Walk in a manner worthy of God:** not every brother and sister in Christ is called into full time ministry, but all are called to encourage each other in the faith and to live their life in a manner that honours God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**God calls you into His own Kingdom:** Paul's statement, "God calls you into his own kingdom" (v12) clearly shows that those who are saved to eternal life are called into a Kingdom.

Those outside of this Kingdom are invited into it through the Good News of the Gospel and through the Lord Jesus Christ. There are two common theories today amongst religious leaders concerning this Kingdom:

1. That the Kingdom of God exists worldwide as an invisible spiritual Kingdom in the hearts and minds of those who are in Christ. Those who hold to this theory believe this Kingdom dwelling in the hearts and minds of faithful brothers and sisters in Christ amongst all nations is manifested outwardly in speech and behaviour that honours God through the faithful global church and individual brothers and sisters who belong to the family of Christ.
2. This Kingdom will not exist until the Lord Jesus Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. Since both of these theories are true they can be easily harmonised.

**The Kingdom of God:** prior to the resurrection no-one, not even the apostles fully understood that Jesus was going to be put to death and rise again they basically preached only the Kingdom of God on earth because they never really understood that Jesus was going to be its eternal King, but after the resurrection the apostles focus is on the King of the Kingdom rather than the actual Kingdom itself. This is because whoever belongs to the King will inherit the Kingdom. Jesus the King is the royal path into the Kingdom, while the Kingdom is the inheritance of those who belong to the King. The Kingdom of God has existed, in different forms and shapes throughout history. It existed in the Old Testament under the Judges, David and Solomon and many other kings of Israel. It was not a perfect Kingdom and never has been. Jesus was not the King and many of the kings that did reign were far from godly nevertheless, it was God's Kingdom because God was the King. Today there is an invisible and spiritual Kingdom of God existing through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ which has taken on a different shape and form to that of the Old Testament Kingdom. When Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's literal and visible Kingdom on earth God's Kingdom will take on a different shape again, but even this is not the final and ultimate shape of the Kingdom as it will once again change its appearance at the Great White Throne judgment when God descends to earth and is ALL IN ALL. It is the King who determines whose Kingdom it is and not the shape or form of it. Even though all four Kingdoms mentioned have been different in shape, form and appearance they are all called God's Kingdom simply because God and the Lord Jesus Christ is their King whether the Kingdom is seen or unseen. For further information see the title:

- Kingdom (ON WEBSITE MENU).

**God calls you into His own glory:** the words, "God calls you into his own glory" (v12) transcends the mind of the ardent Bible student to the following awe-inspiring mystery that will take place at the sound of the last trumpet and our natural mortal, dishonourable, and perishable body is not only raised to be a spiritual imperishable body in glory, power and immortality, but also raised in the image of the Lord Jesus Christ to eternal glory (1 Cor. 15:42-51) this is the breath-taking and eternal glory God is calling those in Christ into.

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## 1 THESSALONIANS 2:13-14

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### The Word of God not the Word of Men.

- **1 Thessalonians 2:13-14:** And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. <sup>14</sup>For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews.

The brothers and sisters in Thessalonica accepted the word of God not as the word of men, but as what it really is, the word of God (v13).

**NOTICE:** the emphasis Paul puts on the word of God (i.e., as it really is, the word of God this no-doubt is because his next statement, the word of God, is at work in believers (v13) is only true if like the Thessalonians those who hear it believe it is the word of God and not the word of men. Without faith not only is the word of God limited to being intellectual knowledge, but it is also robbed of its life changing power.

**The Thessalonians became imitators of the churches of God in Judea:** Jewish converts in Thessalonica who had forsaken Moses law and Jewish customs and traditions became, imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that were in Judea (v13) in the sense that they also suffered intense persecution from Jewish religious leaders who held fast to Moses Laws, Jewish customs and traditions as did the churches that were established in the land of Judea.

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## 1 THESSALONIANS 2:15-16

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### **The Jews Killed both the Lord Jesus and the Prophets.**

- **1 Thessalonians 2:15-16:** who (the Jews) (v14) killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind <sup>16</sup>by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But God's wrath has come upon them at last!

Amongst various religions there is sometimes strong debate in regards to who killed Jesus, this is because there is no single answer to this question since, the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus generation the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes falsely condemned him to death and then enticed the Gentile Romans to actually kill him, but if mankind had never sinned or could attain to God's perfect standard of Holiness God would not have needed to:

- Give his only Son so that those separated from him by sin would not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16).

Therefore, we all indirectly had a part in slaying the sacrificial Lamb of God who willingly laid down his life for us.

**The Jews opposed all mankind:** the words, "All mankind" in the following verse, "The Jews displeased God and oppose all mankind" (v15) refers to the Gentile nations in contrast to the nation of Israel only. Paul is saying, that the Jews who held fast to Moses Law, Jewish customs and traditions opposed the apostles and whoever proclaimed the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ from teaching it to all other nations, languages and peoples.

**God's wrath has come upon the Jews:** the words, "Fill up the measure of their sins" not only refers to the Jews rebellion and rejection of Christ and opposing those who proclaimed Jesus name in the New Testament, but it also embraces all the rebellion of the Jews against the prophets and against God as it is recorded in the Old Testament. This is why Paul says, "God's wrath has come upon them at last!" (v16). God's wrath in this context could refer to two things:

1. To the control the Caesars of Rome's had over the Jewish religious leaders and the suffering the armies of Rome inflicted on the nation of Israel.
2. To the end of the entire Levitical priesthood and Jewish religious laws, ceremonial rites, customs and traditions, since Jesus death and resurrection crushed and destroyed the power and control the chief priest, Pharisees and scribes had over the common people.



This is because the Good News of the Gospel not only proclaims that no-one needs a human priest or any type of religious system to know God and be saved to eternal life, but also that whoever humbles themselves before God in repentance and accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour will be saved to eternal life. Since Jesus resurrection he is the only High Priest those saved or anyone seeking God needs today. It is in this sense that the wrath of God has come upon the religious leaders and authorities of Israel who opposed the apostles and those proclaiming Christ since they are not needed by anyone seeking God today and have therefore been made redundant.

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## 1 THESSALONIANS 2:17-18

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### **We were Torn Away from you, in Person not in Heart.**

- **1 Thessalonians 2:17-18:** But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, <sup>18</sup>because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan (Satanas) hindered us.

The words, "Torn away from you, but not in Heart" (v17) carries the same idea as the term "We were with you in Spirit" it means the following two things:

1. The Thessalonian brothers and sisters were in the heart and mind of Paul and those ministering with him as a loved sweetheart, is in the heart and mind of the one who loves them.
2. That Paul and those ministering with him deeply cared for the Thessalonians spiritual well-being.

**Satan hindered us:** the word Satan in the Hebrew and Greek language does not have a capital **\*S\*** and means an adversary, one who withstands, opposes or resists another and not some kind of evil angelic powerful spirit creature as portrayed in Hollywood horror movies. Nevertheless, it is a word that has come to symbolize everything that is the total opposite to what is good, decent and right and that is opposed to God and His will and throughout the Bible is often personified as the arch enemy of good and of God. The word Satan, also embraces within its meaning every evil attitude within in the human heart that is in opposition to God, the Lord Jesus Christ and anyone who proclaims the Gospel of Christ. This evil within the human heart was outwardly manifested in the beatings Paul received from the hands of the Pharisees and priest for preaching the Gospel.

The original meaning of Satan in the Hebrew and Greek language means one who opposes another in purpose or act which in Paul's life was the religious leaders of his generation. the words, Satan hindered us (v17) in this context does not refer to an evil creature, but rather to the Caesars of Rome and their armies and to the Jewish priests and religious leaders since it was them who withstood and opposed the Christian faith.

For further information see the title:

- Satan in, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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## 1 THESSALONIANS 2:19-20

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### **You are our Crown, our Glory and Joy.**

- **1 Thessalonians 2:19-20:** For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? <sup>20</sup>For you are our glory and joy.

How beautiful are these words of Paul, he refers to the Thessalonian brothers and sisters who embrace his teaching not as the word of man, but as the word of God (v13) as his crown and his glory, clearly showing that it was not material things or the riches of this world that Paul valued, but rather his treasure was in those who faithfully followed Christ.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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