

NOTES

I. UNIT TEN – “What’s Really Been Left Behind!” – Paul’s Thessalonian Letters

A. Learning About Paul From Paul’s Pen

1. Paul was a “_____” pastor.
 - a. There are _____ references to prayer in all but two of his letters (Galatians & Titus).
 - b. Eight are references to Paul’s _____ prayer life (e.g. Rom 1:10; Phil 1:9).
 - c. Paul *may have* used a “_____” when he prayed (e.g. “mention” in Rom 1; Eph 1:16; 1 Th 1:2; Phlm 4).
 - d. Paul prayed privately (Rom 1:10) and with _____ (Col 1:3) for the spiritual growth of his converts.
 - e. Paul _____ others what he was praying for them (1 Th 3:10; 2 Th 1:11; Phil 1:9-11; Col 1:9-14).
 - f. Paul prayed the “Prayer of _____,” *not* the “Prayer of Jabez” (others and the Story vs. self and comfort).
2. Paul valued _____ above power and prestige.
 - a. _____ believers were his “crown” of honor in life (1 Th 2:19; Phil 4:1).
 - b. Paul ran from the “_____” spotlight (1 Th 2:6; 1 Cor 3:5-7).
3. Paul modeled the _____ he wanted others to embrace:
 - a. suffering (1 Th 2:1, 14)
 - b. “marrying” one’s visible life to the _____ (1 Th 2:8)
 - c. pursuing a “_____” life (1 Th 2:10; 4:11-12)
 - d. exhorted, comforted and taught, depending upon the _____ (2:11-12 and 5:14)
 - e. a commitment to countercultural _____ (2:10 and 3:13; 4:7)
 - f. the discipline of personal _____ for others (1:2 and 2 Th 3:1)
4. Paul had a _____ heart, not just a scholar’s mind (e.g. Romans).
 - a. He reminds them he was as “_____” with them as a “nursing mother” (*trophos*; 1 Th 1:7).
 - b. Even his exhortations to them came from the heart of a “_____ with his children” (2:11).
 - c. His affection for them cause him to want to share his own “_____” (*psuche*) with them, not just the Story (2:8).

B. Learning About the Thessalonian Church From Paul’s Pen

1. Thessalonica was hostile, not hospitable!
 - a. The _____ was opposed by Jews *and* Gentiles (1 Th 1:6; 2:14; Acts 17:1-9).
 - b. Thessalonica was a place of _____ license, *not* limitation (1 Th 4:3-8).
 - (1) A statue of Dionysus was discovered ad the Temple of Serapis in Thessalonica.
 - (2) The cult of Dionysus would have made _____ orthodoxy and orthopraxy confusing at best, nearly impossible at worst:
“Born of a mortal mother, Dionysus was fully divine and immortal, yet concealed his divinity in human form.”

“Phallophoria was an ancient Greek celebration involving a procession of people carrying images of phalluses in honor of the god, Dionysus.”

—Delia Morgan, Dionysian scholar

(3) Thessalonica was _____ to the hope of the resurrection:
“...for this woman had this surname, while she was still among the living. Because of her special disposition and good sense, her devoted husband created this tomb for her and also for himself, in order that later he would have a place to reset together with his dear wife, when he looks upon the end of life that has been spun out for him by the indissoluble threads of the Fates.”

—tomb inscription from Thessalonica

2. The Thessalonian believers had a long way to _____ .
 - a. Paul wants to “fill up” what is lacking in their _____ (1 Th 3:16).
 - b. They don’t seem to understand or accept church _____ (4:12-13).
 - c. Some were exploiting _____ either because of their wrong theology, or a sense of entitlement (Paul speaks of “idleness” 4x in these letters).
 - d. Their theology of the “_____” was immature and had been polluted by popular ideas (1 Th 4:13-5:11; 2 Th 2).
3. They were growing in only _____ of Paul’s key “Kingdom Qualities”:
 - a. Paul makes 11 clear references to their “_____,” all positive.
 - b. He makes 8 clear references to their “_____,” all positive.
 - c. Paul makes only 2 references to their “_____,” and both indicate a struggle (1 Th 1:3; 4:13).
 - d. _____ had brought good news about their “faith” and “love” being intact, but *not* their “hope” (3:6).
 - e. Paul’s pastoral passion was that they “_____” in these three qualities:

“Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to live and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more....Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more,” 1 Thessalonians 4:1, 9, 10

“We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.” 2 Thessalonians 1:3
 - f. Paul informs them that “hope” does not depend upon “work” or “labor,” like faith and love, but upon “_____” (*hupomone*) and correct doctrine (*agnoeō*, 4:13; 1:3).
4. They may have felt “_____” by Paul, based on his repeated reassurances:

“But since we were torn away (apophanizō) 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, because we wanted to come to you— I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us.” 1 Thessalonians 2:17, 18

“For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain....as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may

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see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?"

1 Thessalonians 3:5, 10

5. SUMMARY: The infant Thessalonian church, though healthy, needed Paul's pastoral care in four key areas:
 - a. Remaining steadfast in the _____ of ongoing persecution (1:14; 2 Th 1:5-8).
 - b. Understanding holiness in a _____ deviant culture (1 Th 4:3-8).
 - c. Understanding when "helping can be _____" — idleness vs. helplessness (1 Th 4:11-12; 2 Th 3:6-15).
 - d. Having a theology of Christ's _____ that balances hope and responsibility.
- C. A Closer Look at the Long View: The Return of Christ
 1. There was much _____ about this doctrine in the first century:
 - a. Jesus, Peter, John, James and Paul all _____ about it (Mt. 24; 1 Cor 15:49-53; Phil 3:20-21; Col 3:13; Jn 11:25-26; 1 Jn 2:28; 3:2; 2 Pet 3; Jms 5:8).
 - b. Paul devotes _____% of his first letter and _____% of his second teaching *and* reteaching on the "end times" (cf. 2 Th 2:5).
 - c. Understanding *Paul's* _____ is essential for our investigation.
 - (1) In 1 Thessalonians, his goal is _____.
 - (2) In 2 Thessalonians, his goal is _____.
 - d. Understanding *their* _____ is essential for our interpretation.
 - (1) They were _____ because they assumed (or had been taught) dead believers would not participate in the Day of the Lord with living believers (1 Th 5:13).
 - (2) They had been taught that the Day of the Lord had _____ and Christ's return was imminent, causing some to become idle and unruly (2 Th 3:6, *ataktōs*).
 2. This is still a much _____ about this doctrine in the 21st century.
 - a. The _____ series has outsold the Chronicles of Narnia.
 - b. Most of the confusion/conflict hovers around the _____ of two events and two time periods:
 - (1) **EVENTS:** the "_____ " and the "second coming" (*neither* of these phrases are in our Bibles).
 - (2) **PERIODS:** the "_____ " and the "millennium" (only the first term is in our Bibles).
 - c. Understanding some key words used in the New Testament is a helpful first step:
 - (1) "coming" — *parousia*, (24x)
 - (a) used by Jesus (3x), Paul (7x), James (2x), Peter and John (1x).
 - (b) by the time of the NT, its primary use inside and outside the Church was for the "_____ of royalty."
 - (2) "revelation/revealing" — *apokolupsis/apokoluptō* (5x for Jesus)
 - (a) used for the "revealing of the sons of God" (Rom 8:19).

- (b) used for the “revealing” of the “mystery of the _____” (Rom 16:25).
- (c) used for the “revealing” of the “man of lawlessness” (2 Th 2:3,8).
- (d) used for the return of Jesus Christ in (1 Cor 1:7; 2 Th 1:7; 1 Pet 1:7)
- (3) “appearing” — *epiphaneia* (6x, all by Paul, all for Jesus)
 - (a) a distinctly “_____” word
 - (b) Paul directly links this word to the _____ of the Tribulation (2 Th 2:8).
- (4) “meet” — *apantēsis* (3x, 1 Th 4:17; Mt 25:6; Acts 28:15)
 - (a) word is always used for a gathering of people to _____ and _____ an important person someplace.
 - (b) used of the _____ and bridegroom
 - (c) used to describe the Roman believers who had travelled over 50 miles to “meet” Paul the prisoner and escort him to _____.
- (5) Paul uses all four of these words _____ in these two letters.
- 3. Clarifying what Paul is *NOT* saying will help us understand what he *IS* saying.
 - a. In 1 Thessalonians
 - (1) Paul is makes *no* reference whatsoever to _____ in his discussion of the “rapture.”
 - (2) Paul makes no reference to the “_____” of the “great snatch” (Gk *harpazo*), only the details surrounding it (the “what”).
 - (3) Paul says the return of Christ will come “like a _____” for unbelievers, *not* believers (cf. 1 Th 5:2,4).
 - (4) Paul makes no mention of the “_____” following the “meeting” with Christ in the air, only *where* the meeting will occur and who’s been “invited.”
 - b. In 2 Thessalonians
 - (1) There is nothing in Paul’s words to allow us to conclude he is referring to two separate _____:
 - (a) “...*the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven...*” (1:7-8)
 - (b) “...*the coming of our Lord Jesus...*” (2:1)
 - (2) There is nothing in the _____ to indicate a distinction between the “coming of the Lord Jesus” (2:1) and “the day of the Lord” (2:2).
- 4. Paul *is* saying somethings in these letters that *would* provide comfort and correction:
 - a. The living and dead faithful *will* “_____” Jesus *together* (*episunagoge*) in the clouds, and be with Him from that point on (I.e. wherever *Jesus* is, they will be).
 - b. The *parousia* will be accompanied by loud and _____ activities (angels, trumpet, a loud cry) and the violent destruction of the “man of lawlessness.”

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- c. They need to heed _____' original teaching on this subject: *"Take heed that you are not misled"* (Mt 24:4).
- d. None of this has yet been set in motion because of some vital details they've _____ (cf. 2 Th 2:5) have to take place first:
 - (1) the " _____" (ESV), "apostasy" (NAS) *apostasias* (Gk)
 - (2) what/who is " _____" the "man of lawlessness" must cease from "holding" (noun is neuter in 2:6 and masculine in 2:8). *"Frankly, I confess that the meaning of this [verse] completely escapes me."* –Augustine
 - (3) the "man of lawlessness" must be _____.
- e. Their view of the return of Christ must *never* contribute to a lack of commitment to this _____ and those in it (i.e. "idleness").

D. Predictive Prophecy: What's *Really* Been "Left Behind"

- 1. God's purposes for predictive prophecy must always _____ our study of it.

- a. God gives _____ of the Story *before they happen* to demonstrate that it is truly *His* Story:

"To whom will you liken me and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be alike? Those who lavish gold from the purse, and weigh out silver in the scales, hire a goldsmith, and he makes it into a god; then they fall down and worship! They lift it to their shoulders, they carry it, they set it in its place, and it stands there; it cannot move from its place. If one cries to it, it does not answer or save him from his trouble. "Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'" Isaiah 46:5-10

- b. God gives us the _____ of the Story so that His children will give their lives to the Story:

- (1) living a life consistent with the Story - personal _____

"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." 2 Peter 3:10-13

- (2) telling the Story to those who haven't heard it yet - _____

"Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith-- to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen." Romans 16:24-27

(3) showing mercy, compassion and love to those we meet - _____

“Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.” Matthew 24:42-46

2. Any view of biblical prophecy that reduces my commitment to the one true Story under the guise of “_____” violates the purpose of prophecy.

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