

1 THESSALONIANS: VERSE-BY-VERSE THROUGH PAUL'S FIRST EPISTLE

SESSION 2 | 1 THESSALONIANS 1:2-7

1 THESSALONIANS 1:2-4 | THANKSGIVING FOR THESSALONIANS

- Verse 2 –
 - **Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus** (v. 1)(from here onward I will mostly refer to the author as Paul, with recognition that he included Silas and Timothy as fellow authors) begin with a note of thanksgiving **always for you all**.
 - Indeed there will not be a negative word about the Thessalonians in his letter.
 - Perhaps one reason for his overwhelming gratitude is that his original reception in Thessalonica was not well received by the Jews (Acts 17:1-10). In the midst of danger, men like Jason stepped forward in leadership and belief. Paul never forgot, it seems, and was forever grateful.
 - In verses 2-4 Paul mentions three ways he expressed his thanksgiving. The first, in this verse, is that they were in the habit of **making mention of you in our prayers**. While we are not told the content of his prayers, it does show us that Paul was a believer in the practice of prayer for the believer.
- Verse 3 –
 - The second aspect of giving thanks was **remembering...your work...labour...and patience**.
 - The Thessalonians were *hard working patient people*, and for this Paul was grateful.
 - Their work was *faithful*, their labor was *loving*, and their patience was *hopeful*.
 - Who wouldn't be grateful for friends like that!
- Verse 4 –
 - The third aspect of Paul's thanksgiving is that he is **knowing** of the Thessalonians **election of God**. Paul is thankful because he knows of an elect group in Thessalonica that has placed belief in Jesus as both *Messiah* and *Savior*.
 - One of the most consistent (and deadly) errors of the church is to assume that the description of any group of people in the writings of Paul is a description of all saved people.
 - If one takes the approach that "since the Thessalonians were elect, then all believers must be elect," then you must be, by logical necessity, a Calvinist. However, one does *not* need to make such a conclusion.
 - We cannot deny that the Thessalonians were elect of God, for verse 4 is simply too plain. However, we do not need to conclude that *you and I* are elect of God.
 - Indeed, the Bible teaches that *Israel* is the elect nation, and thus the Jewish people are the "chosen people."
 - We have concluded in session 1 that *the Thessalonian believers were 100% Jewish*.
 - Even having received the Gospel of the grace of God, they had not forfeited their elect status and recipients of the Abrahamic and Davidic promises and covenants.

1 THESSALONIANS 1:5-7 | WHO DID THEY FOLLOW?

- Verse 5 –
 - It would be hard, in my opinion, to make a case that **our gospel** was anything other than the Pauline gospel of grace. However, in Acts 17, Paul seems to be sharing the Gospel of the Kingdom (see session 1).
 - But note that in Acts 17 the Gospel is shared in **word only**, and here Paul is arguing just the opposite for **our gospel**.
 - It seems perfectly reasonable to me that Luke records Paul's sharing of the Kingdom Gospel, for the purpose of Luke's writing was to show the diminishing of Israel.
 - Since Luke's record is the only record we have, we can conclude that we simply do not know about the presentation of the Pauline Gospel, which was likely taking place among those who separated themselves unto Paul.
 - Our only "record" is what is included in this verse, where we are told that there was **power**, which appears to be supernatural manifestations (though the grammar does not require it).
- Verse 6 –
 - There is a hidden truth in this verse, and it illustrates the *overlap principle* that the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Gospel of grace had a period of *overlap* wherein *both gospels* were proclaimed. Almost undeniable truth of this overlap is found in Galatians 2:7, where both Peter and Paul are preaching their respective Gospels.
 - In this verse, the Thessalonians are **followers of us, and of the Lord**. Being Jews, the Thessalonians were *supposed to follow the Lord*, who was **a minister of the circumcision...to confirm the promises made unto the fathers** (Rom 15:8). However, if you and I follow the Lord directly, we will be following the Law (for He taught the Law).
 - Consider 1 Corinthians 4:16, 11:1, 2 Thessalonians 3:7, 9, 1 Thessalonians 2:14, Philippians 3:17, all of which Paul commends following him.
 - The Thessalonians were Jews, and therefore, under their promises and covenants, were living under the Law and were followers of the Lord. But they were also recipients of the Gospel of grace, and thus were followers of Paul. This is a unique position during that time of overlap.
- Verse 7 –
 - The Thessalonians were encouraging **ensamples** of the believers in **Macedonia and Achaia**, being the provinces of Thessalonica and Athens, to the south, respectively.
 - What is an **ensample**? Numerous King James Bible advocates will argue that it is something different than *example*, but the evidence shows these two to be the same thing, one carrying a more antiquated spelling. T
 - The Greek word τύπος [tupos] is translated as *ensample, example, pattern, form, figure, fashion, and print* in the New Testament.
 - For a thorough discussion on *ensample vs example* see *The King James Bible in America* by Bryan Ross (Dispensational Publishing House, 2019).