

1 THESSALONIANS: VERSE-BY-VERSE THROUGH PAUL'S FIRST EPISTLE
SESSION 4 | 1 THESSALONIANS 2:4-12

1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-4 | PAUL RECOUNTS HIS VISIT

- Verses 3-4 – (also included on session 3)
 - The **exhortation** (v. 3) in Thessalonica, being the **gospel of God** (v. 2), thus the Gospel of the circumcision, was **not of deceit** (v. 3).
 - The Greek is *πλάνη* [plane], from which we get *planet*, due to the moving nature of a planet. The word is used 10 times in the New Testament and translated as *error* in seven of those occurrences.
 - It was not in *error* or *delusion* (as the word is translated in 2 Thess. 2:11) that Paul proclaimed the kingdom Gospel.
 - It is interesting that Paul goes to the trouble of explaining that his speech was not in **deceit** (error), **nor of uncleanness, nor in guile** (v. 3). Why would Paul go to such lengths to let us know he wasn't saying the wrong thing? Perhaps it is because he was entrusted with the gospel to the *uncircumcised* (Gal. 2:7), yet the only Biblical record records him giving the gospel of the *circumcised*.
 - In verse 4 Paul tells us that, even though the speech is not recorded in Scripture, the Gospel which was **put in trust** with Paul *was also spoken* as Paul was **allowed of God**.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:5-12 | PAUL'S MANNER OF MINISTRY IN THESSALONICA

- Verses 5-6 –
 - Paul spends a few lines describing how they *did* and *did not* carry out the ministry (having discussed the content in the previous section).
 - He explains that they **did not use flattering words** (v. 5). It has been said that the Hellenistic rhetorical style of the day was long flattering speeches to gain favor. Paul certainly gained no favor, as can be seen in Acts 17. He must have quickly “got to the point.”
 - They also did not come with a **cloak of covetousness** (v. 5). A cloak is, in this case, used metaphorically for a *pretense*. Why would one come with a *pretense of greed*? I believe the statement can simply be understood as, “We did not come for what we could get out of it.” That is, their only motivation was to share truthful information about the Messiah and about God's work in the world today.
 - Furthermore, they did not seek the glory of men (v. 6). Especially, this is to be the recipients of honor given to reputable men. Though **we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ** (v. 6), they made no demands upon the people of Thessalonica.
 - In short, Paul claims that they had only the best of intentions in sharing the message in Thessalonica. They were not there for the hospitality they could receive, the crowds they could gather, or the service that could be rendered unto them. They were there for the work of God alone.
- Verses 7-9 –
 - In verses 5-6 Paul shared how they *did not* carry out ministry. Now he shares how they *did* carry out ministry.
 - He begins by saying they were **gentle**, as a nursing mother (v. 7). It is easy to see how this is clearly nothing more than an illustration. However, when Paul says he would like to present the

- Corinthian church as a **chaste virgin to Christ** (2 Cor. 11:2), theologians immediately build a “bride of Christ” theology. The church is no more the bride of Christ than Paul is our mother.
- Paul was **affectionately desirous** of the Thessalonians (and likely all other places he visited). His desire was to invest his life into people, *along with* sharing **the gospel of God** with the Thessalonians. The investment of his *life* was in order to see an advance of **the gospel of God** (a phrase he uses twice, once in verse 8 and once in verse 9, having also used it in verse 2).
 - In verse 2 we noted that the **Gospel of God** is not what Paul would call “my Gospel.” Rather, it is the Gospel of the Kingdom. How do we know this? By allowing scripture to interpret itself. The phrase is used seven times, with three of the seven in this chapter. Consider the other four instances:
 - Romans 1:1-2 - verse 2 defines this Gospel as being **promised afore**, which would conflict with Paul’s gospel, which **in other ages was not made known** (Col. 1:26).
 - 2 Corinthians 11:7 - Paul mentions preaching **the gospel of God** without charge to the Corinthians. The Corinthian church was established by Jews and God-fearing gentiles (Acts 18:1-11).
 - 1 Peter 4:17 - The context is clearly the judgment of Israel, beginning **at the house of God**, and then asking, **what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?** Kingdom righteousness and judgment is in view.
 - Romans 15:16 - This is the most difficult of the references. This verse appears to say that Paul ministers the **gospel of God** to the Gentiles. However, a closer look at the Greek text explains the matter clearly.
 - The heart of the sentence: I have written to you.
 - The subject: I
 - The verb: have written
 - The *indirect* object: you
 - The direct object: ministering the gospel of God.
 - Supplemental to the sentence: keeping in mind the grace that is given to me to minister to the gentiles.
 - Summary: *I have written to you...ministering the gospel of God. I did so mindful of the message I give to gentiles.*
 - Thus Paul did not write about his task of ministering the gospel of God to the gentiles, but rather he wrote to the Jews at Rome, writing the Gospel of God, all the while mindful of his apostleship to the Gentiles.
 - Note that, while Romans 15:16 is difficult, a basic principle of interpretation is to allow the *easy passages* to shed light on the *difficult passages*. The easy passages above are very clear. The more difficult one aligns when you build on the foundation of the easy.
 - Verses 10-11 –
 - Paul continues the testimony of his manner of ministry, which was *holy, just, and unblamable* in behavior. In summary, the ministry was likened unto the way a father would act toward his children.
 - Verse 12 –
 - The goal of Paul’s ministry to those in Thessalonica was **That ye would walk worthy of God**.
 - The Thessalonians were **called** by God **unto his kingdom and glory**. His glory *is* His kingdom, and references to God or the Christ in *glory* are inevitably Kingdom references.
 - One should take care not to assume that *because the Thessalonians were called into His kingdom, so am I*. This would be reading *more* from the text than it actually says. The Thessalonian church was born in the synagogue, out of the elect, the chosen nation which was given the Kingdom promises.