

1 THESSALONIANS: VERSE-BY-VERSE THROUGH PAUL'S FIRST EPISTLE
SESSION 7 | 1 THESSALONIANS 3:11-4:5

1 THESSALONIANS 3:11-13 | PAUL'S FINAL REMARKS ABOUT HIS DESIRED VISIT

- Verse 11 –
 - Paul closes this section with a prayer that **God himself** would **direct our way unto you**.
 - The word **direct** is the translation of the Greek *κατευθύνω* [kateuthuno] which is “the ultimate guidance.” In effect, Paul says, “we put our return to you into God’s hands.”
- Verse 12 –
 - Paul’s prayer is that they **increase and abound in love**. Grammatically, **increase and abound** are one unit, not two requests. Paul prayed that they would love others with the same love that Paul had toward them.
 - For those living in *any* dispensation, love toward another is a good start toward fulfilling the demands of the dispensation.
- Verse 13 –
 - The goal was **hearts unblameable** and that they would be **in holiness before God** at the Second Coming.
 - A few things to consider:
 - The statement appears to be concerning the Second Coming, for this is the only coming in which Jesus returns **with all his saints**. Compare Revelation 20:14, where the Lord is accompanied by an army upon white horses. Compare also Zechariah 14:5, where the term **saints** is also used and the context is without doubt the Second Coming. Deuteronomy 33:2 all but defines **saints** in this context as angelic beings.
 - God was doing this work, however, there must be the *possibility* that this work would be hindered by the Thessalonians themselves and the work would not be accomplished. Why else make it a prayer?
 - The statement presumes that the Thessalonians will stand **before God, even our father** at the Second Coming, and appears to be standing before Him in judgment. However, at the Second Coming, the judgement is before Jesus Christ. The best solution comes in Romans 14:10-12, where verse 10 says **we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ** and verse 12 says **every one of us shall give account of himself to God**.
 - Implications:
 - This requires that the Thessalonians are involved in the Second Coming judgment, which makes no sense if they are involved in the rapture judgment.
 - This is a judgment of holiness and blamelessness, thus by necessity requires a presentation of good works (including the love mentioned here).
 - Everything about the judgment at the Second Coming appears to be Kingdom related, and thus unrelated to the age of grace.
 - None of the above aligns with believers who are complete in Christ.
 - The solution:
 - The Thessalonian believers were both/and when it comes to Kingdom believers and church-age believers.

- Being part of one is not mutually exclusive to being part of the other.
- Believers today are *not* Kingdom-age believers; thus the application of these verses is secondary. A direct application requires a post-tribulational rapture and a works-based judgment.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-8 | HOLY LIVING IN LIGHT OF JUDGMENT

- Verse 1 –
 - The word **Furthermore** connects this instruction with the previous verses concerning final Kingdom judgment. Don't study chapter four without the context of chapter 3.
 - Paul gives an interesting word when he says that they **ought to walk** in the manner **ye have received of us**.
 - Paul said to the Corinthians to **keep the ordinances, as I delivered them** (1 Cor. 11:2), having just told them to be **followers of me** (1 Cor. 11:1).
 - In Philippians 4:9 Paul says that **those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do**.
 - This is interesting because we would *expect* Paul to say, "follow the Torah" or "follow the words of Jesus," but instead he sets *himself* up to be the standard. This is either unacceptable arrogance or the natural result of Paul's apostleship to the nations.
- Verse 2 –
 - Expanding on the previous verse, Paul says that the **commandments** (παραγγελία [parangelia], using a softer word, which could be a *charge*, as in 1 Tim. 1:18) were **by the Lord Jesus**.
 - This does not mean that they were spoken of by the Lord while on earth, but rather they were spoken of by the Lord to Paul, who passed them to the Thessalonians.
- Verses 3-5 –
 - One of the commandments given (v. 2) is **that ye should abstain from fornication** (v. 3). Sexual purity is God's will because God's will for the Thessalonians was **sanctification** (v. 3). The word **sanctification** is ἁγιασμός [hagiasmos], built on the adjective *hagios*, which is *holy*, and the suffix *-mos*, which makes an abstract noun out of an adjective. The word could simply be translated, "your holiness." It is used as a noun, not a verb.
 - Verses 4 and 5 give two additional insights into what Paul intended by their sexual purity:
 - Verse 4 - to **possess his vessel in sanctification and honor**. That is, self-control sexually.
 - Verse 5 - to not have **the lust of concupiscence**. The Greek says, in effect, "lust upon lust."
 - Note that they were not to behave **as the Gentiles which know not God**. Two matters of importance:
 - In English, the word "**which**" is a defining word, not a restrictive word (*that* is restrictive).
 - Paul speaks of **Gentiles** as *other than* the audience at hand, thus the audience must of logical necessity be *Jewish*. While many commentaries are quick to say that the word **Gentiles** simply means "non-Christians," there is not a shred of evidence from the pages of Scripture to prove such a fabricated claim.