

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE

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THESSALONIANS.

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WRITER. The Apostle Paul (1. 1).

Date. The Epistle was written from Corinth, A.D. 54, shortly after Paul's departure from Thessalonica (Acts 16., 17.), and is the earliest of his letters.

Theme. The theme of the Epistle is threefold: (1) To confirm young disciples in the foundational truths already taught them; (2) to exhort them to go on to holiness; (3) to comfort them concerning those who had fallen asleep. The second coming of Christ is prominent throughout. The Epistle is incidentally most interesting as showing the richness in doctrine of the primitive evangelism. During a mission of about one month the apostle had taught all the great doctrines of the Christian faith.

The divisions of the Epistle are sufficiently indicated by the chapters: I. The model church, and the three tenses of the Christian life, 1. 1-10. II. The model servant and his reward, 2. 1-20. III. The model brother, and the believer's sanctification, 3. 1-13. IV. The model walk, and the believer's hope, 4. 1-18. V. The model walk, and the day of Jehovah, 5. 1-28.

CHAPTER 1.

Part I. The model church, and the three tenses of the Christian life.

PAUL, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

A.D. 54.

^a Churches (local). 1 Thes. 2.14. (Acts 2. 41; Phil. 1.1.)

^b Acts 17.1.

^c Lit. operative faith, and laborious love, and hope-filled patience.

^d Election (corporate). 2 Thes. 2.13. (Deut. 7.6; 1 Pet. 1.2.)

^e Gospel. 1 Thes. 2.4, 8, 9. Gen. 12. 1-3; Rev. 14.6.)

^f Assurance. 2 Tim. 1.12. (Isa. 32.17; Jude 1.)

^g Acts 13.52.

^h Holy Spirit. vs. 5, 6; 1 Thes. 4.8. (Mt. 1.18; Acts 2.4.)

ⁱ Rom. 10.18.

^j 2 Thes. 1.4.

^k 1 Cor. 12.2; Gal. 4.8.

^l Christ (Second Advent). vs. 9, 10; 1 Thes. 2.19. (Deut. 30.3; Acts 1.9-11.)

^m from among.

ⁿ Mt. 3.7; Rom. 5.9.

6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

9 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

CHAPTER 2.

Part II. The model servant, and his reward.

FOR yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:

¹ That is: election, 1. 4; Holy Spirit, 1. 5, 6; 4. 8; 5. 19; assurance, 1. 5; Trinity, 1. 1, 5, 6; conversion, 1. 9; second advent of Christ, 1. 10; 2. 19; 3. 13; 4. 14-17; 5. 23; walk, 2. 12; 4. 1; sanctification, 4. 3; 5. 23; day of Jehovah, 5. 1-3; resurrection, 4. 14-18; the tripartite nature of man, 5. 23.

² The tenses of the believer's life here indicated are logical and give the true order. They occur also in v. 3. The "work of faith" is to "turn to God from idols" (cf. John 6. 28, 29); the "labour of love" is to "serve the living and true God": and the "patience of hope" is to "wait for his Son from heaven" (cf. Mt. 24. 42; 25. 13; Lk. 12. 36-48; Acts 1. 11; Phil. 3. 20, 21). Paul repeats this threefold sequence in Tit. 2. 11-13.

2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at ^aPhilippi, we were ^bbold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

3 For our exhortation was not of ^cdeceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

5 For ^dneither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:

6 Nor of men ^esought we glory, neither of you, nor ^fyet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth ^gher children:

8 So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to ^hhave imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

9 For ye remember, brethren, our ⁱlabour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the ^jgospel of God.

10 Ye ^kare witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father ^ldoth his children,

12 That ye would walk ^mworthily of God, ⁿwho hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received ^oit not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually ^pworketh also in you that believe.

14 For ye, brethren, became ^qfollowers of the ^rchurches of God which in Judæa are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they ^shave of the Jews:

15 Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and ^ttheir own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

A.D. 54.

a Acts 16.12.
b Acts 17.2,3.
c 2 Pet.1.16.
d 2 Cor.2.17.
e John 5.41,44; Gal.1.10.
f her own.
g Rom.1.11.
h Acts 20.34,35;
i 2 Thes.3.7,8.
j Gospel. vs.4, 8,9; 1 Thes.3.2. (Gen.12.1-3; Rev.14.6.)
k Eph.4.1.
l 1 Cor.1.9;
m 2 Thes.2.14;
n 2 Tim.1.9.
o Jas.1.18;
p 1 Pet.1.23.
q imitators.
r Churches (local).
s 2 Thes.1.1,4. (Acts 2.41; Phil.1.1.)
t Acts 7.52.
u Acts 17.5,13; 18.12.
v Rom.1.16, note.
w Sin. Rom.3.23, note.
x Satan.
y 2 Thes.2.9. (Gen.3.1; Rev.20.10.)
z Rewards.
aa 2 Tim.4.8. (Dan.12.3; 1 Cor.3.14.)
ab 2 Cor.1.14; Phil.4.1.
ac Jude 24.
ad Christ (Second Advent).
ae 1 Thes.3.13. (Deut.30.3; Acts 1.9-11.)
af Acts 17.15.
ag Gospel.
ah 2 Thes.1.8. (Gen.12.1-3; Rev.14.6.)
ai Eph.3.13.
aj John 16.2;
ak 1 Cor.4.9;
al 2 Tim.3.12;
am 1 Pet.2.21.
an v.1.
ao 2 Cor.11.2,3.
ap Temptation.
aq 1 Tim.6.9. (Gen.3.1; Jas.1.2.)
ar Gal.4.11.
as love.
at Phil.1.8.
au 2 Cor.7.6,7.
av Eph.6.13,14;
aw Phil.4.1.
ax Bible prayers (N. T.). 2 Thes.1.11,12. (Mt.6.9; Rev.22.20.)
ay Mt.5.48, note.

16 ^bForbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be ^csaved, to fill up their ^dsins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

17 But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but ^eSatan hindered us.

19 For what ^fis our hope, or joy, or ^g'crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye ^h'in the presence ⁱ'of our Lord Jesus Christ ^j'at his coming?

20 For ye are our glory and joy.

CHAPTER 3.

Part III. The model brother, and the believer's sanctification.

WHEREFORE when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;

2 And sent ^aTimotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the ^bgospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

3 ^cThat no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that ^dwe are appointed thereunto.

4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

5 For this cause, ^ewhen I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, ^flest by some means the tempter have ^gtempted you, and our labour ^hbe in vain.

6 But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and ⁱcharity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, ^jdesiring greatly to see us, as we also ^kto see you:

7 Therefore, brethren, we were ^lcomforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:

8 For now we live, if ye stand ^mfast in the Lord.

9 For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;

10 Night and day ⁿpraying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might ^operfect that which is lacking in your faith?

11 Now God himself and our

Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.

12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound ^bin love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:

13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, ^dat the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

CHAPTER 4.

Part IV. The model walk, and the believer's hope.

FURTHERMORE then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would ^habound more and more.

2 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, ^tthat ye should abstain from fornication:

4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the ⁱGentiles which know not God:

6 That no man go beyond and ^kdefraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, ^mbut unto holiness.

8 He therefore that ⁿdespiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his ^oholy Spirit.

9 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are ^ptaught of God to love one another.

10 And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

11 And that ye study to be quiet, and ^qto do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

12 That ye may walk ^rhonestly toward them that are without, and ^sthat ye may have lack of nothing.

A.D. 54.

a Or, *guide*.

b 1 John 4.7,12.

c 2 Thes.2.17;

1 John 3.20.

d Christ (Second Advent).

1 Thes.4.14-

17.(Deut.30.3;

Acts 1.9-11.)

e Or, *request*.

f Or, *beseech*.

g Col.1.10.

h 1 Cor.15.58.

i 1 Cor.6.15,18.

j Eph.4.17,18.

k Or, *oppress*.

l Or, *overreach*.

m Lev.11.44;

Heb.12.14;

1 Pet.1.14,16.

n Or, *rejecteth*.

o Holy Spirit.

1 Thes.5.19.

(Mt.1.18;

Acts 2.4.)

p John 15.12,17.

q 1 Pet.4.15.

r 1 Pet.2.12.

s fallen asleep.

t Faith.

2 Thes.2.11,

12.(Gen.3.20;

Heb.11.39.)

u Resurrection. vs.13-

17; 2 Tim.2.

18.(Job19.25;

1 Cor.15.52.)

v 1 Cor.15.20.

w precede.

x Christ (Second Advent)

vs.14-17; 1 Cor.

15.23,51,52.

(Deut.30.3;

Acts 1.9-11.)

y Rev.20.5,6.

z 1 Cor.15.51.

a Church

(true). Heb.

12.23.(Mt.16.

18; Heb.

12.23.)

b John 14.3.

c Day (of Jehovah).

vs. 1-3; 2 Thes.

2.1-8.(Isa.2.

10-22; Rev.

19.11-21.)

d Lk.12.39,40;

2 Pet.3.10;

Rev.16.15.

e Gen.7.11; Mt.

24.27; Lk.17.

26,27; 2 Pet.2.

5; 3.6.

f Eph.5.8;

1 John 2.8.

g sons.

h Mt.25.5; Rom.

13.12,13.

i 1 Pet.5.8.

j Isa.59.17;

Eph.6.14,17.

k Mt.1.16,

note.

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are ^aasleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 For if we ^bbelieve that Jesus died and ^crose again, even so ^dthem also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive ^eand remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not ^fprevent them which are asleep.

16 ^gFor the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ ^hshall rise first:

17 ⁱThen we which are alive ^jand remain shall be ^kcaught up together ^lwith them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever ^mbe with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

CHAPTER 5.

Part V. The model walk, and the day of Jehovah. (Cf. Rev. 19. 11-21, note.)

BUT of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

2 For yourselves know perfectly that the ^aday of the Lord ^bdo cometh as a thief in the night.

3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then ^csudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

4 But ^dye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

5 Ye are all ^ethe children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

6 ^fTherefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be ^gsober.

7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the ^hbreastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of ⁱsalvation.

9 For God hath not appointed us

¹ Not church saints only, but all bodies of the saved, of whatever dispensation, are included in the first resurrection (see 1 Cor. 15. 52, note), as here described, but it is peculiarly the "blessed hope" of the Church (cf. Mt. 24. 42; 25. 13; Lk. 12. 36-48; Acts 1. 11; Phil. 3. 20, 21; Tit. 2. 11-13).

to wrath, but to **obtain** ^asalvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

10 Who died for us, that, ^bwhether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know ^cthem which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And ^dbe at peace among yourselves.

14 Now we ^eexhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the ^fweak, be ^gpatient toward all *men*.

15 See that none ^hrender evil for evil unto any *man*; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all *men*.

16 Rejoice evermore.

17 Pray without ceasing.

A.D. 54.

^a Rom.1.16,

note.

^b Rom.14.8,9;

^c 2 Cor.5.15.

^d Heb.13.7,17.

^e Mk.9.50.

^f *beseech.*

^g Rom.15.1.

^h Eph.4.2.

ⁱ Prov.20.22;

^j 24.29; Mt.5.

^k 39,44.

^l *Holy Spirit.*

^m 2 Thes.2.13.

ⁿ (Mt.1.18;

Acts 2.4.)

^o *every form*

^p *of.*

^q *Sanctify,*

^r *holy (per-*

^s *sons) (N.T.).*

^t 1 Tim.4.5.

^u (Mt.4.5;

^v Rev.22.11.)

^w 1 Cor.1.8,9.

^x 1 Cor.10.13;

^y 2 Thes.3.3.

^z *adjure.*

18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

19 Quench not the ¹Spirit.

20 Despise not prophesyings.

21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

22 Abstain from ²all appearance of evil.

23 And the very God of peace ^ksanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your ¹whole spirit and soul and body be preserved ^lblameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Faithful *is* ^mhe that calleth you, who also will do *it*.

25 Brethren, pray for us.

26 Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.

27 I ⁿcharge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

¹ Man a trinity. That the human soul and spirit are not identical is proved by the facts that they are divisible (Heb. 4. 12), and that soul and spirit are sharply distinguished in the burial and resurrection of the body. It is sown a natural body (*soma psuchikon* = "soul-body"), it is raised a spiritual body (*soma pneumatikon*), 1 Cor. 15. 44. To assert, therefore, that there is no difference between soul and spirit is to assert that there is no difference between the mortal body and the resurrection body. In Scripture use, the distinction between spirit and soul may be traced. Briefly, that distinction is that the spirit is that part of man which "knows" (1 Cor. 2. 11), his mind; the soul is the seat of the *affections, desires*, and so of the *emotions*, and of the active *will*, the self. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful" (Mt. 26. 38; see also Mt. 11. 29; and John 12. 27). The word translated "soul" in the O.T. (*nephesh*) is the exact equivalent of the N.T. word for soul (Gr. *psuche*), and the use of "soul" in the O.T. is identical with the use of that word in the N.T. (see, e.g. Deut. 6. 5; 14. 26; 1 Sam. 18. 1; 20. 4, 17; Job 7. 11, 15; 14. 22; Psa. 42. 6; 84. 2). The N.T. word for spirit (*pneuma*), like the O.T. *ruach*, is trans. "air," "breath," "wind," but predominantly "spirit," whether of God (e.g. Gen. 1. 2; Mt. 3. 16) or of man (Gen. 41. 8; 1 Cor. 5. 5). Because man is "spirit" he is capable of God-consciousness, and of communication with God (Job 32. 8; Psa. 18. 28; Prov. 20. 27); because he is "soul" he has self-consciousness (Psa. 13. 2; 42. 5, 6, 11); because he is "body" he has, through his senses, world-consciousness. See Gen. 1. 26, *note*.