

The colour coding is my own addition – Neil Godfrey, November 2023

Paul's posts are in *large italics*.

The Marcionite writing is in large straight characters.

The anti-Marcionite additions are in small size, straight characters.

Other additions are in small font, italics.

FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

I Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians, in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be to you.

PRAISE OF THE THESSALONIANS

2 We give thanks to God at all times for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; 3 always reminding us before God our Father of the work of your faith, the work of your charity, the steadfastness with which you hope¹ in our Lord Jesus Christ. 4 We know, beloved brothers, that you have been chosen by God, 5 because our preaching among you was not with words only, but with power, with the Holy Spirit,¹ with deep conviction, for you know that we have been such among you for your good. 6 And you yourselves have been imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in the midst of much tribulation with joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you have become an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaie. 8 For it is from you that the word of the Lord has sounded in

Macedonia and Achcia; nay, your faith in God has spread everywhere, so that we have no need to speak of it. 9 They themselves tell how we were welcomed among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for his son from both, whom he raised from the dead. dead, Jesus who will deliver us from the impending wrath.

1. The object of this hope is the coming of Christ.

1. The Holy Spirit is in overload here. This observation applies to verse 6 where the Holy Spirit does not even offer any meaning.

OBLIQUE ATTACK AGAINST CHARLATAN PREACHERS

11 You yourselves know, brothers, that our arrival among you was not fruitless. 2 But after having suffered and received insults, as you know, in Philippi, we were full of confidence in our God and we preached the gospel of God to you with much struggle. 3 Our preaching was not inspired by error or by impure motives or by fraud; 4 But as God has counted us worthy to entrust the gospel to us, so we speak, not to please men, but to please God who searches our hearts. 5 As you know, we have never had words of flattery in our mouths; we have never made the gospel a pretext for greed: God is our witness. 6 We have not demanded honor from men, neither from you nor from others. Although we, as apostles of Christ, could have placed ourselves in charge of you, 7 we acted with delicacy among you. As a nurse tenderly cares for her children, 8 so in our love for you we would have liked to give you not only the gospel but our very life, so dear had you become to us. 9 You remember, brothers, our labor and our pain. It was by working night and day, so as not to be a burden to anyone, that we preached the gospel of God to you. 10 You are witnesses, and God is also, how holy and righteous and blameless we have been in our conduct among you who are faithful. 11 You also know that we have been to each of you as a father is to his children, exhorting you, comforting you, 12 begging you to act worthy of God, who has called you into his kingdom and his glory.

ANGER HAS REACHED THE JEWS

13 Therefore we also give thanks to God continually, that when you received the word of God which we preached, you received it, not as the word of men, but as it really is, as the word of God who works in you believers. 14 For you, brothers, have been imitators of the churches of God which are in Christ Jesus in Judea, because all of you have suffered from your own people what they suffered from the Jews, 15 who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets. They persecuted us too. They do not please God and are the enemies of all men, 16 preventing us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved; so that their sins continually accumulate. But anger affected them forever.

TIMOTHY

17 But we, brothers, having been for some time deprived of you in body but not in heart, have had a strong desire to see your faces. 18 That is why we wanted to go to you - I, Paul, the first time and then the second - but Satan kept us back. 19 For who will be our hope, our joy, our crown of glory before our Lord Jesus at his coming, but you? 20 Yes, you are our glory and our joy. III For this reason, not being able to be patient any longer, we made up our minds to stay on our own in Athens, 2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's minister in the good news of Christ, to strengthen you and to give you comfort in your faith, 3 so that no one might be shaken in the tribulation which is now coming on us; for you yourselves know that we are destined for that. 4 When we were with you, we gave you the news that tribulation was coming on us; as you know, it has come on us. 5 For this reason, not being able to be patient any longer, I sent to you to see what was the state of your faith, fearing that the tempter might have been tempting you and that our work would have been in vain. 6 But Timothy, who has just come here from you, gave us news of your faith and your love; he said that you still have a good memory of us, desiring to see us as we also desire to see you. 7 For this reason, brothers, in the midst of our troubles and tribulations, we have been comforted by your faith. 8 Now we

are living because you are still in the Lord. 9 How can we give thanks to God for all the joy you give us in the sight of our God? 10 Night and day we make a prayer to him that we may see you and make good what is lacking in your faith. 11 May God our Father and our Lord Jesus make our way to you straight. 12 As for you, may the Lord increase and make your love for one another and for all people to abound, as we have for you, 13 so that your hearts may be made strong so that they may be blameless in holiness before God our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints¹. Amen.

1. Reminiscence of Zechariah, XXV, 5. These "saints" are the angels spoken of in the second epistle, I, 7. As for the "holiness" spoken of at the beginning of the sentence, it designates perseverance in the law Christian. In the Old Testament holiness results from observing the law; under Paul's pen it results from belief in the mission of Christ. Formerly all Jews were saints; now all Christians are saints.

TWO MORAL LESSONS

IV Finally, brothers, you who have learned from us how you should conduct yourselves and please God, we ask and pray to you in the Lord Jesus to conduct yourselves as you do and to progress further. 2 You know what commandments we have given you from the Lord Jesus. 3 For what God desires is your sanctification; that you abstain from fornication; 4 that each of you know how to possess his body with holiness and honesty, 5 not with disorderly lust as the pagans who do not know God do; 6 that one does not cause harm or injury to his brother in matters, because the Lord takes vengeance on all these things, as we have already told you and testified. 7 For God has not called us to impurity but to holiness. 8 Therefore whoever rejects this does not reject man but God who also has given you his holy spirit.

9 As for brotherly love, you have no need for anyone to write to you about it, for it is God himself who has taught you to love one another. 10 And this you do to all the brothers throughout all Macedonia; but we urge you,

brethren, to do more, 11 and to honor your peace, to attend to your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we have commanded you, 12 that ye may live honorably. towards those outside and not needing anyone.

THE COMING OF THE LORD

13 We do not want to leave you ignorant, brothers, about those who have died, so that you do not grieve as others who have no hope grieve. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, let us also believe that God will bring through Jesus and with him those who are dead. 15 For we declare to you this by the word of the Lord: We who are alive and remain for the coming of the Lord will not precede those who are dead, 16 because the Lord himself, at a given command, will the voice of the archangel, with the sound of the trumpet of God, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first ¹. 17 Then we who are alive will rise up together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1. The author simply means that the dead will be resurrected; but having introduced the resurrection in a context that excludes it, the demands of adaptation have led him to speak as if the question of priority between the dead and the living were his sole objective.

V As for times and occasions you do not need anyone to write to you about them; 2 for you yourselves know perfectly well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 When they say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction will come upon them, as the pains of childbirth fall upon the pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you, brothers, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief. 5 For you are all children of the light and children of the day; we are not of the night nor of the darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep like others, but let us watch and be on our guard. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. 8 But we who are of the day, let us be considerate, ¹ clothed with the breastplate of faith and love, and having hope as our helmet of savior, 9 because God has not placed us there for wrath but for the acquisition of salvation ² through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10

who died for us, that whether we were awake or asleep, ³ we might live with him. **11**
Therefore exhort one another and edify one another as you do.

1. "Let us be careful not to abandon the protective weapons which are faith, charity and hope; let's make sure we don't lose them. " The verb nephomen does not mean that the Thessalonians must be sober.
2. On "salvation" see Delafosse, The Epistle to the Romans, p. 18.
3. This verse, which supposes Christians already dead, is foreign to Paul.

EXHORTATIONS

12 We ask you ¹, brothers, to show respect to those who work among you, who are your leaders in the Lord and who warn you. 13 Have great affection for them because of their work. Be at peace with each other. 14 We urge you, brothers, to warn those who live in disorder, to encourage those who are discouraged, to support the weak, to be patient with all. 15 See that no one repays evil for evil, but strive to do good to one another and to all. 16 Rejoice always. 17 Pray without ceasing. 18 In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit ². 20 Do not despise the prophecies. 21 But examine all things, and hold fast to what is good. 22 Abstain from every kind of evil. 23 May the God of peace sanctify you entirely; May your spirit, your soul, your body, your entire being be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you keeps his word; he will do it.

25 Brothers, pray for us. 26 Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss [?]. 27 I beseech you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren. 28 May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

1. These verses put us face to face with a community in which there are men who "work" for the spiritual good of their brothers, who "direct", who give "warnings", therefore facing a community which has a beginning of organization. If an organization, however rudimentary, had existed in Thessalonica, Paul could not have avoided mentioning it, and making at least some allusion to it in the texts where he speaks of the means he has taken or intends to take to strengthen the faith of the Thessalonians. His silence proves that the community of Thessalonica was then amorphous. Verses V, 12-13 are not from Paul. They are probably from the author who wrote 19-21 and who is discussed in the following note.
2. Verses 19-21 prescribe to accept only after control the manifestations of the Spirit, that is to say ecstasy, glossolalia, prophecy. Their author belongs to the

moderate fraction of the Montanist party, which believed in the outpouring of the Spirit but condemned the extravagances of certain Montanists. The entire end of chapter V, from 12 and except 26, is perhaps by the same author. In any case it is not from Paul.