

ROBERT K. SPRADLING

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A.M.

THE SON OF PERDITION

June 1983  
Bees P.M.

II THESSALONIANS 2:1-12

ON FEBRUARY 5, 1962, JEAN DIXON WAS GAZING OUT OF HER BEDROOM WINDOW TOWARD THE EAST. AS SHE DID SO, ACCORDING TO HER TESTIMONY, SHE SAW QUEEN NEFERITTI AND A PHARAOH STEP OUT OF THE RAYS OF THE SUN. IN HER VISION SHE SAW A BABY IN THE ARMS OF THE QUEEN. ON ONE SIDE, JEAN DIXON SAW A PYRAMID. THE PHARAOH AND THE QUEEN CAME TOWARD HER THRUSTING THE BABY FORWARD INDICATING THAT HE WAS BEING OFFERED TO THE WHOLE WORLD. FROM THIS BABY CAME FORTH BRIGHT RAYS OF LIGHT. THE PHARAOH AND THE QUEEN THEN DEPARTED AND AS THE QUEEN PAUSED FOR A DRINK OF WATER, SHE WAS STABBED IN THE BACK WITH A KNIFE. MISS DIXON'S ATTENTION THEN SHIFTED BACK TO THE BABY AND SHE REALIZED THAT HE HAD ALREADY ATTAINED MANHOOD. A SMALL CROSS MATERIALIZED ABOVE HIS HEAD AND KEPT GROWING LARGER. PEOPLE FROM ALL NATIONS, RACES, AND COLORS CAME TO WORSHIP HIM IN A SPIRIT OF WORLD UNITY. ANOTHER VISION INDICATED THAT THE CHILD WAS BORN IN THE MIDDLE EAST ABOUT 7 A.M. ON FEBRUARY 5, 1962 OF HUMBLE PEASANT ORIGIN. THIS ONE WOULD RISE TO BECOME A WORLD LEADER BEGINNING TO RECEIVE POWER IN THE 1980'S AND CONTINUING TO THE ZENITH OF HIS POWER UNTIL 1999 AT WHICH TIME THE WORLD WOULD BE AT PEACE. FOR HE WOULD RESOLVE THE PROBLEM OF WAR. LET ME STRONGLY EMPHASIZE THAT I HAVE NO FAITH IN THIS KIND OF PSYCHIC PHENOMENON. I THINK IT IS SO MUCH HOCUS-POCUS. I MENTIONED IT SIMPLY AS A BASIS TO REMIND YOU THAT EVEN THE WORLD OUTSIDE OF THE CHURCH AND BIBLE PREACHING CHURCHES FEEL THAT THE WORLD IS BEING PREPARED FOR SOME KIND OF SUPER MAN WHO WILL DELIVER THE WORLD FROM ITS STAGERING PROBLEMS. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THE STAGE OF HUMAN HISTORY IS BEING SET FOR SUCH AN AMAZING PERSON. HE WILL BE AN EVIL GENIUS, SPECTACULAR AND SUPERNATURAL IN HIS METHODS.

THE WORLD WILL STAND IN AWE AND THEN IN FULL WORSHIP OF HIM ACCORDING TO REVELATION 13:1-8. THIS PERSON WILL BE SATAN'S MAN. HE WILL BE THE COMPOSITE OF ALL OF THE CHARACTERISTICS MEN ADMIRE. HE WILL BE: IMPRESSIVE, INTELLIGENT, CLEVER, AN ORATOR, AND THE ULTIMATE POLITICIAN. JESUS PREDICTED SUCH A PERSON WOULD COME WHEN HE SAID, "I AM COME IN MY FATHER'S NAME AND YE RECEIVE ME NOT: IF ANOTHER SHALL COME IN HIS OWN NAME, HIM YE WILL RECEIVE." (JOHN 5:45) IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THERE ARE NO LESS THAN 8 TERMS USED TO DESCRIBE THIS PERSON. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THERE ARE TWICE THAT MANY. HE IS MENTIONED PRIMARILY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS OF DANIEL AND ISAIAH AND THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS OF REVELATION AND II THESSALONIANS. HAL LINDSEY'S NEW BOOK "THE TERMINAL GENERATION" DEVOTES CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION TO THE WORLD STAGE BEING SET FOR THE ANTI-CHRIST. "THE INFUX OF EASTERN RELIGIONS AND CULTS, AND THE ATTENTION TO THE OCCULT ARE PREPARING THE WORLD TO ACCEPT THE ANTI-CHRIST WHO WILL COME INTO WORLD POWER LARGELY THROUGH HIS OCCULTIC, SUPERNATURAL POWERS." THE ANTI-CHRIST WILL NOT APPEAR TO BE EVIL. HE WILL SEEM TO BE THE ANSWER TO ALL THE WORLD'S ILLS. HE WILL HAVE ELECTRIFYING ANSWERS FOR THE DESPERATE CRISIS THAT ARE NOW MOUNTING. HE WILL DECEIVE ALL THOSE WHO HAVE NOT DEVELOPED A LOVE FOR TRUTH WHICH IS IN THE BIBLE. THIS ONE WHO SEEMS SO GOOD AT FIRST WILL BRING ABOUT THE TOTAL ENSLAVEMENT OF PEOPLE .... LAST SUNDAY EVENING WE BEGAN A STUDY IN THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS. THE SECOND CHAPTER OF THIS EPISTLE HAS A GREAT DEAL TO SAY ABOUT THE ANTI-CHRIST.

# I. HE WILL COME TO POWER IN A TIME OF GREAT APOSTASY - VERSES 2-3

THE WORD APOSTASY OCCURS IN THE GREEK TEXT OF VERSE 3. IT MEANS "TO STAND AWAY FROM." IT REFERS TO SOMEONE WHO ONCE PROFESSED TO BELIEVE THE BIBLE BUT HAS MOVED AWAY FROM THE GREAT TRUTHS OF THE FAITH. IT REFERS TO THOSE WHO HAVE DEFECTED FROM THE TRUE FAITH OF THE BIBLE, OR A DEPARTURE FROM BIBLE DOCTRINE. APOSTASY CANNOT HAPPEN TO A GENUINE BELIEVER, BUT RATHER IT IS CHARACTERISTIC OF THOSE WHO PROFESSED A LOVE FOR THE TRUTH BUT ARE IN FACT NOT BORN AGAIN.

IT SPEAKS OF THOSE WHO READILY ABANDON GOD'S WORD. AFTER THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH, THE APOSTASY OF CHRISTENDOM WILL BE COMPLETE. THERE IS WIDE SPREAD APOSTASY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD TODAY, BUT IT WILL REACH ITS COMPLETION SHORTLY AFTER THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH. WHEN PEOPLE WILL ABANDON ALL PRETENSE OF ALLEGIANCE TO CHRIST AND THE BIBLE, THE ELEMENTS OF SUCH A MOVEMENT ARE IN SOCIETY TODAY, BUT A FINAL WORLD WIDE APOSTASY IS YET FUTURE. IT WILL CULMINATE THE DEVIL'S DREAM, NAMELY, A GREAT WORLD WIDE SUPER CHURCH UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE ANTI-CHRIST. THE STATE OF APOSTASY IN AMERICA IS GRAPHICALLY DESCRIBED IN HAROLD LINDSELL'S NEW BOOK CALLED THE BATTLE FOR THE BIBLE. IN THIS BOOK LINDSELL POINTS OUT HOW THERE ARE STILL MANY BIBLE BELIEVING CHRISTIANS IN MAJOR DENOMINATIONS IN AMERICA BUT BY AN LARGE THE MAJOR DENOMINATIONS HAVE ABANDONED THE BIBLE AS A STANDARD OF FAITH AND PRACTICE! PAUL REMINDED THE THESSALONIANS NOT TO BE OVERLY CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR PERSECUTION MENTIONING THAT THERE MUST COME FIRST A GREAT APOSTASY BEFORE THE COMING OF THE LORD. A WORD SHOULD BE SAID ABOUT A POPULAR INTERPRETATION OF THE PHRASE "A FALLING AWAY FIRST." ONE WELL KNOWN WRITER HAS TRANSLATED THE PHRASE "A CATCHING AWAY" SUGGESTING THAT THIS IS A REFERENCE TO THE RAPTURE. HOWEVER, IN MY JUDGMENT IT IS A FORCED INTERPRETATION. THE BASIC IDEA OF APOSTASY IS NOT TO "CATCH AWAY" BUT TO "FORSAKE." THIS WORD IS USED MOST OF ALL IN THE NEW TESTAMENT TO SUGGEST A DEPARTURE FROM DOCTRINE. THIS VERSE AND OTHERS ARE A CLEAR WARNING TO GOD'S PEOPLE TO BEWARE OF APOSTASY. IT IS ONE THING TO PROFESS FAITH IN CHRIST, IT IS ANOTHER THING TO POSSESS HIM. MANY CHURCHES AND DENOMINATIONS NO LONGER BELIEVE THAT DOCTRINE IS IMPORTANT, THEREFORE APOSTASY IS INEVITABLE FOR SUCH GROUPS. THEY OPEN THEMSELVES UP FOR ALL KINDS OF CULTS AND ISMS. IT IS MY FIRM CONVICTION THAT THERE IS A WIDE SPREAD DEPARTURE FROM BIBLE FAITH. I HAVE BEEN AMAZED HOW PEOPLE COULD SIT IN A CHURCH AND LET THEIR CHILDREN BE TAUGHT BY TEACHERS WHO DO NOT BELIEVE THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD. THEY REMIND ME OF A MINISTER WHO WAS IN A BOOK SHOP WHEN A WOMAN CAME IN TO BUY A BOOK. WHEN ASKED WHAT KIND OF BOOK SHE WANTED SHE REPLIED, "OH, JUST ANYTHING."

WHEN THE ASSISTANT BROUGHT HER A BOOK SHE RAPIDLY GLANCED THROUGH IT AND SAID "I'LL TAKE IT." HALF AN HOUR LATER, THE MINISTER WAS IN THE MEAT MARKET WHEN THE SAME WOMAN CAME IN DEMANDING A STEAK. SHE SCORNFULLY REFUSED THE FIRST AND SECOND CUT THAT SHE WAS OFFERED, INSISTING LOUDLY "THE BEST THAT YOU HAVE." WHEN SHE HAD FINALLY RECEIVED THE STEAK AND PAID FOR IT SHE ANNOUNCED FOR ALL TO HEAR, "I AM PARTICULAR ABOUT WHAT I EAT." ALL TOO OFTEN PEOPLE ARE PARTICULAR ABOUT WHAT THEY FEED THEIR BODIES AND NOT PARTICULAR WHAT THEY HEAR IN THE HOUSE OF GOD, "JUST ANYTHING WILL DO." THIS IS THE WAY APOSTASY BEGINS AND CONTINUES. THE ATMOSPHERE OF THIS TIME OF APOSTASY WILL BRING THE ANTI-CHRIST INTO POWER. HE IS DESCRIBED BY TWO VERY INTERESTING TERMS IN VERSE 3. (1) "MAN OF SIN." THIS PHRASE LITERALLY MEANS THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS. THE WORD SIN IS THE WORD "ANOMIAS." THE CHIEF CHARACTERISTIC OF THE ANTI-CHRIST WILL BE LAWLESSNESS. WALVOORD HAS SAID "JUST AS WE REFER TO CHRIST AS THE MAN OF SORROWS, BECAUSE HE WAS A MAN WHO ENDURED MUCH SORROW, SO THIS PERSON IS A MAN OF LAWLESSNESS. HIS VERY LIFE WILL BE CHARACTERIZED BY BLASPHEMOUS SIN AGAINST GOD. HE WILL BEGIN HIS CAREER AS A HIGH HANDED TYRANT OBLIVIOUS TO THE NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF ANYONE EXCEPT HIMSELF. WE ARE SEEING THE BEGINNING OF A SPIRIT OF LAWLESSNESS IN OUR TIME WHICH WILL COME INTO FULL BLOOM AFTER THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH. THEN SATAN'S LAWLESS SYSTEM WILL SWEEP THE WORLD. AT NO TIME IN HISTORY HAVE SO MANY LAWBREAKERS GONE UNPUNISHED. MANY CRIMES IN AMERICA ARE COMMITTED WITH NO THOUGHT OF INVESTIGATION LET ALONE ARREST AND TRIAL. THIS ATMOSPHERE IS THE BREEDING GROUND FOR A KIND OF LAWLESSNESS WHICH EVENTUALLY WILL BECOME UNCONTROLLABLE WHEN GOVERNMENT GIVES UP ITS GOD GIVEN FUNCTION OF PUNISHING EVIL DOERS AND REWARDING GOOD. IN MY JUDGMENT, THE PICTURE THAT IS BEING SET ACROSS THE WORLD OF LAWLESSNESS WILL NOT BE REVERSED IN ANY SIGNIFICANT MEASURE. (2) "THE SON OF PERDITION" THE ONLY PERSON DESCRIBED BY THIS TERM IN THE BIBLE WAS JUDAS ISCARIOT. "WHILE I WAS WITH THEM IN THE WORLD, I KEPT THEM IN THY NAME; THOSE THAT THOU GAVEST ME I HAVE KEPT, AND NONE OF THEM IS LOST BUT

THE SON OF PERDITION; THAT THE SCRIPTURE MIGHT BE FULFILLED." (JOHN 17:12) THE FACT THAT THE SAME TERM IS USED TO DESCRIBE BOTH THE ANTI-CHRIST AND JUDAS ISCARIOT DOES NOT MAKE THEM THE SAME PERSON AS SOME HAVE MISTAKENLY SUPPOSED, BUT RATHER PUTS THEM IN THE SAME CATEGORY. THEY HAVE THE SAME COMMON ORIGIN AND ETERNAL PLACE OF DOOM. THE FULL EXTENT OF RELIGIOUS APOSTASY IS DESCRIBED IN VERSE 4 WHERE THE ANTI-CHRIST WILL PUBLICLY SET HIMSELF AGAINST GOD AND PROCLAIM HIMSELF TO BE A DIVINE BEING. HE WILL BACK UP THIS PRONOUNCEMENT WITH SUPERNATURAL POWERS MENTIONED IN VERSE 9. HE WILL DECLARE HIMSELF TO BE THE ONLY GOD WHOM MEN SHOULD WORSHIP. (COMPARE REVELATION 13:1-8) THE FACT THAT HE POSSESSES SUPERNATURAL POWERS WILL CONVINCE SOME THAT HE IS A DEITY. ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE, THE ABILITY TO DO SUPERNATURAL THINGS IS NOT NECESSARILY A SIGN OF DEITY. (COMPARE REVELATION 13:13, DEUTERONOMY 13:1-3, EXODUS 7:12-13) THE TEST OF DOCTRINE IS THE WORD OF GOD NOT SOME KIND OF SUPERNATURAL SIGN. IT IS INTERESTING THAT A DISPENSATION OF TIME ENDED WITH A GENERATION OF MANKIND REJECTING THE TRUE CHRIST. THE PRESENT DISPENSATION WILL END WITH MANKIND ACCEPTING THE ANTI-CHRIST.

## II. HE WILL COME TO POWER AFTER THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH - VERSE 1,7

THE PHRASE IN VERSE 1 "OUR GATHERING TOGETHER UNTO HIM" IS A REFERENCE TO THE FIRST PHASE OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST WHICH IS COMMONLY CALLED THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH. (COMPARE 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18) THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH IN THESSALONICA WAS THE COMING OF CHRIST FOR THE CHURCH NOT LOOKING FORWARD TO THE COMING OF THE ANTI-CHRIST ON THE HUMAN SCENE. IN VERSES 6-7 PAUL TALKS ABOUT A DIVINE RESTRAINT WHICH IS HOLDING BACK EVIL UNTIL THE WICKED ONE HAS BEEN REVEALED. ACCORDING TO PAUL THE MYSTERY OF LAWLESSNESS IS ALREADY IN PROGRESS IN HIS TIME. THE STREAM HAD ALREADY STARTED WHICH WOULD TERMINATE IN AN OCEAN OF UNBOUNDED LAWLESSNESS. THE WORDS "WITHHOLDETH, AND LETTETH" ARE WORDS WHICH SUGGEST RESTRAINT OR HOLDING BACK.

THE PERSONAL PRONOUN "HE" IN VERSE 7 SUGGESTS THAT THIS RESTRAINING INFLUENCE IN THE WORLD IS INDEED A PERSON! THERE IS A RESTRAINING FORCE IN THE WORLD WHICH WILL CONTINUE IN OPERATION UNTIL THE RESTRAINER IS REMOVED. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT IN MY JUDGMENT THAT THIS DIVINE RESTRAINER IS THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HE WILL BE TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY AT THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH. AFTER THIS EVENT THE LAWLESS NATURE OF THE ANTI-CHRIST WILL BE MADE MANIFEST. THE REMOVAL OF THE CHURCH FROM THE WORLD WILL SIGNAL AN ERA OF LAWLESSNESS UNPRECEDENTED IN HUMAN HISTORY. I AM GLAD THE CHURCH WILL NOT BE HERE DURING THAT TIME. THE WORLD WILL NOT BE A PLEASANT PLACE TO LIVE IN WHEN ALL CHRISTIANS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE GONE. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT BELIEVERS ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH AND AS SUCH ACT AS A PRESERVING INFLUENCE AGAINST MORAL DECAY. IT IS MY OPINION THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD IS ONE OF THE FEW REASONS WHY GOD HAS NOT MOVED IN JUDGMENT ALREADY. WHEN THE CHURCH IS TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY, SATAN'S MAN WILL IMMEDIATELY GAIN PROMINENCE.

III. HE WILL COME INTO POWER THROUGH GREAT  
DECEPTION - VERSE 9-12

THE LIE HAS BEEN ONE OF SATAN'S FAVORITE TOOLS FROM THE BEGINNING OF HUMAN HISTORY. HE DECEIVED EVE WITH A WELL CHOSEN LIE. IN VERSE 10 SALVATION IS LINKED TO TRUTH. MEN CANNOT BE SAVED UNLESS THEY HEAR THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD. THE ANTI-CHRIST WILL LEAD A WORLD WIDE CAMPAIGN USING THE LIE TO DECEIVE MEN. DELUSION WILL BE SO RAMPANT THAT MEN WILL PUT THEIR FAITH IN UTTER FRAUD AND MEET THE FATE OF ALL THOSE WHO PLAY WITH EVIL. THERE IS NO OTHER ANSWER FOR THE NEED OF THE HUMAN HEART APART FROM THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST AND HIS GRACE. EVERYTHING ELSE THAT PROFFESSES TO DEAL WITH MAN'S ETERNAL NEED IS A LIE. IF MEN CHOOSE TO BELIEVE THE PHILOSOPHIES OF MEN INSTEAD OF THE WORD OF GOD THEY WILL ULTIMATELY BE LOST. THIS IS CLEARLY TAUGHT IN THE BIBLE.

IV. HE WILL COME TO HIS END THROUGH DIVINE JUDGMENT - VERSE 8

ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION, THE ANTI-CHRIST WILL MOUNT A CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE CITY OF JERUSALEM DURING AN ENGAGEMENT KNOWN AS THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON. (REVELATION 16:12-16) IT WILL BE AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME WHEN HE MEETS HIS DOOM AT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST. HIS PRIDE IS SO GREAT THAT HE WILL IMAGINE THAT HE HAS ABILITY TO WAR AGAINST CHRIST. THE SWORD OF CHRIST'S MOUTH ACCORDING TO REVELATION 19:15 IS HIS ALMIGHTY WORD. ACCORDING TO DANIEL 8:25 AND 11:45 THE ANTI-CHRIST WILL BE "BROKEN WITHOUT HAND." AND "HE SHALL COME TO HIS END, AND KNOWN <sup>None</sup> SHALL HELP HIM." HIS ETERNAL DOOM AND DESTINATION IS DESCRIBED IN REVELATION 19:20 AND 20:10 AS THE LAKE OF FIRE. HIS END WILL BE THE SAME AS HIS "BOSS" AND ALL THOSE WHO REJECT JESUS CHRIST AS LORD AND SAVIOUR. IT IS NOT A PRETTY PICTURE BUT IT IS A SOBERING REMINDER THAT GOD WILL DEAL WITH EVIL.

ROBERT K. SPRADLING

AUGUST 15, 1976

*Swi Center*  
P.M. 1983 A.M.

## THE PEOPLE WHOM GOD CHOOSES

### II THESSALONIANS 2:13-17

12m.  
THIS YEAR, IS A YEAR OF CHOOSING. BOTH MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES ARE CHOOSING PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES, AND IN NOVEMBER AMERICANS WILL CHOOSE A PRESIDENT. SOME MEN WILL GO TO ALMOST ANY LENGTHS TO BE CHOSEN FOR HIGH POLITICAL OFFICE. THEY ARE WILLING <sup>to spend</sup> PERSONAL FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF THOUSANDS OR MILLIONS OF DOLLARS, SUBJECT THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES TO CLOSE PUBLIC SCRUTINY, SPEND LONG HOURS CAMPAIGNING IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A DESIRED POLITICAL OFFICE. MOST OF US WILL NEVER KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CHOSEN PRESIDENT OF A COMPANY, LET ALONE PRESIDENT OF OUR COUNTRY! AS A MATTER OF FACT, MOST OF US COULD BE CALLED JUST AVERAGE IN EVERY WAY. AVERAGE INTELLIGENCE, AVERAGE INCOME, AVERAGE JOB, AVERAGE CHILDREN, AVERAGE MARRIAGE, ETC. WE DON'T MIND BEING AVERAGE IT'S BELOW AVERAGE THAT BOTHERS US. (RELATE CHOOSING OF GERTRUDE FOR VOLLEYBALL TEAM.) THE THESSALONIAN CHURCH WAS TERRIBLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE SEVERE PERSECUTION OF THEIR CHURCH. ALONG WITH THIS DIFFICULT SITUATION, PAUL HAD SPOKEN OF THE POWER OF THE ANTI-CHRIST IN THE PREVIOUS VERSES AND HIS WIDE SPREAD INFLUENCE IN THE END TIME. TO COUNTER ALL OF THIS MATERIAL, PAUL MENTIONS AN ASTOUNDING FACT, NAMELY, THE THESSALONIANS AND ALL BELIEVERS HAVE BEEN CHOSEN AND CALLED OF GOD TO SALVATION.

#### 1. TO BE CHOSEN OF GOD IS A REASON FOR PRAISE - VERSES 13-14

PAUL'S ATTITUDE WAS DIFFERENT FROM MOST PEOPLE. WHEN THE AVERAGE PERSON THINKS ABOUT TERMS LIKE ELECTION, PREDESTINATION, FOREKNOWLEDGE, AND TERMS OF THIS NATURE, THEY HAVE A TENDENCY TO BLAME GOD. THERE IS A FEELING BY SOME PEOPLE THAT GOD ARBITRARILY SELECTS SOME PEOPLE TO GO TO HEAVEN AND DOOMS OTHER PEOPLE TO GO TO HELL.

- ① No B. ly designed Heaven on merit  
 ② If enough - 2 - God justified  
 ③ God is able - just - fair CANNOT

THE LATTER PART OF THIS STATEMENT IS JUST NOT A BIBLE FACT! (THIS SUBJECT IS NOT ONLY A DIFFICULT ONE BUT ONE THAT IS GROSSLY MISUNDERSTOOD) MEN SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT IT IS A MATTER OF PURE GRACE THAT GOD SAVED ANYBODY. AND WE SHOULD PRAISE GOD THAT HE DECIDED TO SAVE ANY RATHER THAN CHARGE HIM FOR NOT SAVING ALL. IT IS NOT GOD'S FAULT THAT ANY SINNER EVER MISSES HEAVEN.

AS STRONG HAS WELL POINTED OUT, IT IS NOT TRUE THAT BECAUSE THE GOVERNOR PARDONS ONE CONVICT FROM THE PENITENTIARY HE MUST THEREFORE PARDON ALL. WHEN HE PARDONS ONE, NO INJURY IS DONE TO THOSE WHO ARE LEFT. HOWEVER, WITH GOD, THE PARDON IS OFFERED TO ALL. NOTHING PREVENTS MEN FROM BEING PARDONED EXCEPT THEIR UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT IT! SOMEONE HAS WELL SAID "NO MAN CAN BE SAVED WITHOUT GOD, BUT IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT THERE IS NO MAN WHOM GOD IS NOT WILLING TO SAVE." THE QUESTION SINNERS SHOULD BE ASKING TODAY IS NOT "AM I ONE OF THE ELECT?" BUT RATHER "WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?" ONE PREACHER IN THE LONG

AGO WAS CRITICIZED FOR PREACHING ON THE SUBJECT OF ELECTION AND YET ENCOURAGING SINNERS TO COME TO CHRIST. SOMEONE TOLD HIM HE SHOULD PREACH ONLY TO THE ELECT. HE REPLIED THAT IF SOMEONE WOULD PUT A CHALK MARK ON ALL OF THE ELECT HE WOULD PREACH ONLY TO THEM! HENRY WARD BEECHER SAID "THE ELECT ARE THE WHOSOEVER WILLS, THE NON-ELECT ARE THE WHOSOEVER WANTS!"

V.13 IN THE TEXT OF VERSE 13 PAUL GAVE THANKS TO GOD THAT THE THESSALONIANS WERE CHOSEN TO SALVATION. IN VERSE 14 THE THESSALONIANS ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN CALLED THROUGH THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL AND THEIR GOAL IS THE GLORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. LET US LOOK AT THE TWO KEY WORDS IN THESE VERSES. ① CHOSEN. THE LORD DID NOT CHOOSE US BECAUSE OF SOME SPECIAL MERIT IN OUR MAKEUP. THE INITIATIVE WAS WHOLLY HIS. ("YE HAVE NOT CHOSEN ME, BUT I HAVE CHOSEN YOU...." JOHN 15:16) ("ACCORDING AS HE HATH CHOSEN US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, EPHESIANS 1:4) THIS VERSE IN EPHESIANS TEACHES THAT GOD, BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, CHOSE ALL BELIEVERS TO SALVATION IN CHRIST WITH ALL OF ITS BLESSINGS AND OBLIGATIONS. THE REASON FOR SUCH ACTION IS WHOLLY IN THE GRACE OF GOD AND TOTALLY APART FROM MERIT ON OUR PART.

② ~~CALLED.~~ THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF THE CALL OF GOD TO THE SINNER IN TWO WAYS. (A) A GENERAL CALL TO ALL MEN - "LOOK UNTO ME AND BE YE SAVED, ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH; FOR I AM GOD AND THERE IS NONE ELSE," (ISAIAH 45:22) (MATTHEW 11:28, REVELATION 22:17, REVELATION 3:20) THIS GENERAL

22:1-6 CALL MAY BE REJECTED AND UNHEEDED. COMPARE MATTHEW 1-6. SIMPLY STATED, GOD GIVES MAN THE OPPORTUNITY TO SAY NO TO GOD! HOWEVER, TO REJECT THIS CALL MEANS THAT MAN IF RESPONSIBLE AND ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD AND ULTIMATELY WILL BE PUNISHED FOR REFUSING TO HEED GOD'S CALL. IF MEN REFUSE THE CALL OF GOD THEY ALONE ARE RESPONSIBLE!

(B) THE SPECIAL CALL OF GOD WHICH IS EFFICACIOUS IN POWER RESULTING IN BRINGING THE BELIEVING SINNER TO CHRIST. (PHILIPPIANS 3:14, II PETER 1:10) TO THIS YOUNG, TROUBLED CHURCH PAUL APPEALS TO THE GREAT DOCTRINES OF GOD'S ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGNTY! IN OUR DAY, WHEN MAN IS THE CENTER OF OUR THINKING THERE NEEDS TO BE A RETURN TO SOME OF THE GREAT DOCTRINES OF THE WORD OF GOD. THAT GOD IS ABSOLUTELY SOVEREIGN IN HIS DEALINGS WITH MAN WILL PUT COURAGE INTO MEN TO DEAL WITH WHATEVER SITUATION LIFE OFFERS. LET ME EMPHASIZE ONCE AGAIN THAT PAUL'S APPROACH TO THIS VERY CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECT IS FAR DIFFERENT THAN MOST MEN. HE STATES THESE PROFOUND TRUTHS IN SIMPLE TERMS POINTING OUT ONE CLEAR FACT THAT OUR SALVATION DID NOT ORIGINATE WITH MAN AND DID NOT COME INTO EXISTENCE AS A CRASH PROGRAM TO DEAL WITH MAN'S SIN. GOD WAS FULLY AWARE AND FULLY IN CHARGE OF THE HUMAN SITUATION AT ALL TIMES. SOMEONE ASKED SPURGEON ON ONE OCCASION IF HE BELIEVED THE BIBLE TAUGHT THAT GOD CHOSE HIM IN CHRIST BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. SPURGEON REPLIED, YES, IT MUST BE SO THAT GOD CHOSE ME BEFORE I WAS BORN BECAUSE IF HE HAD WAITED UNTIL AFTERWARDS HE NEVER WOULD HAVE CHOSEN HIM! LET ME HASTEN TO ADD A CLOSING WORD - THIS IS A VERY DIFFICULT DOCTRINE - THE ANSWER TO WHICH IS NOT EASY TO PACKAGE. HOWEVER, ALONG PHILOSOPHICAL AND LOGICAL PATHS ONE MUST BE VERY CAREFUL TO LET THE CLEAR TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE DETERMINE OUR BELIEF ON ANY GIVEN SUBJECT. "WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH" SHOULD BE OUR APPROACH. ONE OTHER WORD OF ADMONITION. THE BIBLE NEVER TEACHES THAT SOME MEN ARE ELECTED TO SALVATION AND OTHERS ARE ELECTED TO DAMNATION.

IF MEN GO TO HELL, IT WILL BE IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING GOD TRIED TO DO TO STOP THEM. NOT BECAUSE OF SOME ETERNAL DECREE WHICH MADE THEM PAWNS IN THE HANDS OF A MECHANICAL GOD. IF YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN, PRAISE GOD WITH PAUL FOR WHAT GOD HAS ACCOMPLISHED IN YOUR BEHALF. IF YOU ARE NOT SURE OF YOUR POSITION YOU CAN'T ACCEPT THE ADMONITION OF PETER TO "MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE."

## II. TO BE CHOSEN OF GOD IS A REASON FOR PERSISTENCE - VERSE 15

THE FACT THAT OUR SALVATION HAS ETERNAL DIMENSIONS SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE BELIEVER EVEN IN THE MIDSTS OF SEVERE TESTING AND PERSECUTION. IN PREPARING THIS STUDY, I CONSULTED SEVERAL MODERN TRANSLATIONS CONCERNING THE PROPER TRANSLATION OF VERSE 15. THE GREEK TEXT WAS THE MOST HELPFUL. TO DESCRIBE THIS PERSISTENT ATTITUDE THE TEXT SIMPLY SAYS "STAND" AND "HOLD." THE WORD STAND COMES FROM A WORD THAT SIMPLY MEANS TO STAND AS OPPOSED TO SITTING. STAND UP, STAND FIRM, FOR YOUR FAITH. PLANT YOUR FEET, DIG IN YOUR HEELS, AND HOLD ON TO THAT WHICH IS PRECIOUS IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. BE DOGMATIC, AND EVEN MORE, BE "BULL DOGMATIC." DON'T GIVE IN TO EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE AND EVERY PRESSURE OF SOCIETY. STAND UP FOR WHAT YOU BELIEVE AND HOLD ON TO THAT WHICH IS PRECIOUS. (COMPARE 1 CORINTHIANS 15:58) THE BEST ILLUSTRATION OF THE WORD STAND CAN BE FOUND IN A STUDY OF DANIEL 3. THE HEBREW CHILDREN STOOD WHEN EVERYONE ELSE WAS BOWING. THEY WERE WILLING TO STAND FOR THEIR FAITH AND PAY THE PRICE THAT WAS REQUIRED FOR SUCH A STAND. THESE MEN WERE GIVEN THE SIMPLE CHOICE OF EITHER BOWING TO THE IMAGE OR BURING IN A FURNACE. CONFORMITY TO THE STATE RELIGION OR CONFINEMENT TO THE FURNACE. ONE IS IMPRESSED WITH THESE THREE YOUNG JEWS CONCERNING THEIR FAITH IN GOD AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO FACE WHATEVER WAS REQUIRED TO BE TRUE TO THEIR FAITH. IN A TIME OF GREAT SPIRITUAL COWARDICE AND COMPROMISE THE PATTERN OF THESE THREE JEWS SHOULD BE THE PATTERN OF GOD'S PEOPLE EVERYWHERE. THE WORD "HOLD" MEANS TO "LAY HOLD OR TAKE HOLD OR HOLD TIGHTLY." THIS EXACT WORD IS USED IN THREE DIFFERENT WAYS IN REVELATION 2:1, 13, 14, 15, 25.

AS THE BELIEVER HOLDS ON TO GOD'S TRUTH, IT WILL HOLD ONTO HIM. GET A GRASP OF THE BIBLE IF YOU WANT TO BE AN EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN. THE WEAK CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO IS IGNORANT OF THE SCRIPTURES. (COMMENT CONCERNING THE OPPORTUNITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EVENING TRAINING SESSIONS THIS FALL.) THE FACT THAT THE CHRISTIAN IS INVOLVED WITH THE ETERNAL GOD IN ETERNAL SALVATION SHOULD OFFER STABILITY AND TENACITY CONCERNING ONE'S FAITH EVEN IN THE MIDST OF SEVERE PERSECUTION.

### III. TO BE CHOSEN OF GOD IS A REASON FOR PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING - VERSES 16-17

(2 EXTREME) *1st & 2nd*

SOME BELIEVERS WHO ATTACH THEMSELVES TO THE DOCTRINES OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY HAVE A TENDENCY TOWARD FATALISM. IT BECOMES THE SPEARPOINT OF THEIR PREACHING AND DULLS THEIR INTERESTS IN EVANGELISM. AS A MATTER OF FACT, IT SEEMS TO BE THE SUBJECT OF EVERY SERMON OR BIBLE LESSON! THE BIBLE APPROACH TO THIS SUBJECT IS VERY PRACTICAL. NOTICE THAT THE SUBJECT OF GOD'S ELECTION OF BELIEVERS EXALTS GOD AND NOT MAN. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THIS WAS PAUL'S GREAT CONCLUSION WHEN HE DEALT WITH THE SUBJECT OF ELECTION AND ITS BEARING ON THE NATION OF ISRAEL IN ROMANS 9, 10, 11. ROMANS 11:23-36 IS ONE OF THE GREAT EXALTATIONS OF THE NAME OF GOD IN THE BIBLE. IN THE TEXT BEFORE US THE WORD LOVE, HOPE, GRACE, COMFORT, AND GOOD WORKS ARE ALL ATTACHED TO THIS GREAT SUBJECT. MULTIPLIED MILLIONS OF CHRISTIANS HAVE BEEN COMFORTED AND ENCOURAGED TO KNOW THAT GOD IS IN FULL CONTROL OF HIS UNIVERSE AS WELL AS OUR LIVES. NO GREAT MOVEMENT OF GOD IN HISTORY HAS EVER BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY GREAT EXALTATION OF MEN BUT RATHER THE HUMILIATION OF MEN BEFORE GOD AND THE EXALTATION OF HIS GREAT NAME. THE MEN OF THE REFORMATION ERA SUCH AS AUGUSTINE, CALVIN, LUTHER, AND THEIR FOLLOWERS SUCH AS JOHN KNOX AND JOHN WESLEY WERE MEN WHOSE LIVES HAD BEEN PROFOUNDLY PERFECTED BY THEIR DOCTRINE AND THESE MEN WERE AFRAID OF NO ONE! THIS GREAT DOCTRINE WHITTLES MAN DOWN TO SIZE AND UNDERCUTS MAN'S SELF SUFFICIENCY AND MAKES HIM UTTERLY AND COMPLETELY DEPENDENT UPON GOD FOR SALVATION!

Pre-  
1851

Seminary  
day  
1st  
semester

Dr. McClain's story - student days  
need a chart. Finally this truth - unbroken  
today.

Aug. 22, 1976  
A.M.See -  
Jy 1983GOD'S GRACIOUS COMMANDS

## II THESSALONIANS 3:1-18

WHAT GOD SAYS WE SHOULD DO, WE SHOULD DO! HIS COMMANDMENTS ARE BINDING UPON THE BELIEVER. FOUR TIMES IN THIS CONCLUDING CHAPTER OF THE THESSALONIAN EPISTLES THE WORD COMMAND IS USED. IT IS NOT A COMMAND LIKE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS BUT RATHER REFERS TO A "CHARGE". THE ORIGINAL IDEA OF THE WORD CARRIED THE SUGGESTION OF A WAGON THAT WAS LOADED TO CAPACITY. THE WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT A BURDEN OR RESPONSIBILITY IS INHERENT IN THE MEANING OF THE WORD COMMAND. JOHN REMINDS THE CHRISTIAN "FOR THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD, THAT WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS: AND HIS COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT GRIEVOUS." (1 JOHN 5:3) IN HIS CUSTOMARY FASHION, PAUL CONCLUDES TWO GREAT LETTERS DEALING WITH THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST WITH SOME SOUND PRACTICAL TEACHING CONCERNING CHRISTIAN LIVING.

I. A CHARGE CONCERNING PRAYER - v. 1-4

I AM IMPRESSED WITH THE FACT THAT A MAN OF PAUL'S SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE AND MATURITY RESORTED SO OFTEN TO THE REQUEST OF OTHER CHRISTIANS TO PRAY FOR HIM. PAUL WAS A THEOLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL GIANT. YET, HE ASKED A YOUNG CHURCH OF NEW BELIEVERS TO PRAY FOR HIM. PAUL RECOGNIZED THE WORTH AND POWER OF PRAYER AND SENSED HIS OWN WEAKNESS IN THE LORD'S WORK. I DO NOT THINK WE REALIZE HOW IMPORTANT AND DEPENDANT WE ARE UPON PRAYER. NO SPIRITUAL BATTLES ARE EVER WON APART FROM GREAT PRAYER. THE PRAYER MEETING IS THE LEAST ATTENDED MEETING IN THE CHURCH AND FOR TOO MANY CHRISTIANS IT IS EVERYTHING BUT A TIME OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER. IN 1974, LEHMAN STRAUSS WROTE A BOOK ENTITLED, SENSE AND NONSENSE ABOUT PRAYER. HE STATES IN THE PREFACE OF THE BOOK THAT MANY CHURCHES HAVE "THE LOW VIEW OF PRAYER." HE POINTS OUT THAT COSTLY BUILDINGS, PROGRAMS, AND PAID STAFF MEMBERS ARE NO SUBSTITUTE FOR SPIRITUAL POWER. THE TWO MAJOR WEAKNESSES IN THE AVERAGE FUNDAMENTAL CHURCH, ACCORDING TO STRAUSS ARE (1) WEAKNESS IN THE PULPIT MINISTRY. THAT IS, NOT ENOUGH SOUND BIBLE TEACHING AND

EXPOSITION. (2) PRAYERLESSNESS. HE STATES IN THE BOOK THAT MANY PUBLIC PRAYERS IN THE CHURCH ARE EMBARRASSING AND MEANINGLESS. HE USES SUCH PHRASES AS "SOFT-HEADED CHRISTIANS" WHO LOSE ALL COMMON SENSE WHEN THEY HEAR THE WORDS "OUR FATHER" AND "AMEN". HE SAYS SOME OF OUR PRAYING IS PRETTY THIN AND SHODDY STUFF. HE DESCRIBES SOME OF OUR PUBLIC PRAYING AS DULL, LIFELESS AND INCOHERENT. THE LORD'S PEOPLE NEED TO BECOME SERIOUS ABOUT PRAYER. IT IS NOT A LUXURY WE TACK ON TO OUR SERVICES; IT IS VITAL AND WITHOUT IT CHURCHES WILL FAIL IN THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY. SOMEONE HAS WELL SAID THAT OUR THEOLOGY IS PRETTY GOOD AND OUR DOXOLOGY IS O.K.; IT'S OUR "KNEEOLOGY" THAT IS LACKING. PAUL ASKED THE THESSALONIANS TO PRAY ABOUT TWO SPECIFIC MATTERS:

A. PRAY THAT THE WORD OF GOD MAY GO FORWARD UNHINDERED - V.1

PAUL USED THE THESSALONIANS AS AN EXAMPLE OF SUCH A MINISTRY. THE WORD OF GOD FLOURISHED AT THESSALONICA. SATAN DOES NOT WANT THE WORD OF GOD FREELY PREACHED OR DISTRIBUTED. IN THE SCRIPTURES, THERE ARE VARIOUS HINDRANCES OF SATAN TO THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD. (RELATE PARABLE OF THE SOWER, THE PARABLE OF THE TARES - MARK 4, MATTHEW 13) AS A CHRISTIAN, HAS IT EVER OCCURRED TO YOU TO PRAY FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD OF GOD. IN A LOCAL CHURCH, THERE ARE MANY DISTRACTIONS TO THE PREACHING OF THE BIBLE. FOR EXAMPLE, IN A GIVEN SERVICE A BABY CRYING, EXCESSIVE MOVEMENT IN AND OUT OF THE AUDITORIUM, TECHNICAL FAILURES OF EQUIPMENT, WHISPERING AND TALKING IN THE CONGREGATION ARE ALL PART OF THE DISTRACTIONS TO KEEP PEOPLE FROM HEARING THE BIBLE. NOTHING IN A CHURCH IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE PREACHING AND TEACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD - NOTHING! AS YOU SIT IN CHURCH FROM SUNDAY TO SUNDAY, WHISPER A PRAYER FOR THE EFFECTIVE DISSEMINATION OF GOD'S DYNAMIC WORD.

B. PRAY THAT PAUL WOULD BE DELIVERED FROM EVIL MEN - V.2

THE PRESENCE OF THE DEFINITE ARTICLE IN THE ORIGINAL TEXT WOULD SUGGEST THAT PAUL HAD A DEFINITE GROUP OF MEN IN MIND, NOT JUST EVIL MEN IN GENERAL. THE TERM "UNREASONABLE" IS

Ⓟ Acts 19:23 ff.  
2 Tim. 4:14

USED THREE TIMES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND IN ONE PLACE IN ACTS, THE WORD "HARM" IS USED TO DESCRIBE THE PEOPLE IN QUESTION. WHEREVER PAUL MINISTERED THE WORD OF GOD THERE WERE THOSE WHO OPPOSED, ACTIVELY OPPOSED HIS MINISTRY. FOR EXAMPLE, IN ACTS 16 PAUL WAS THROWN INTO PRISON, IN ACTS 18 AT CORINTH AND IN ACTS 19 AT EPHESUS RIOT OCCURRED BECAUSE OF PAUL'S STRAIGHTFORWARD PREACHING. IN II TIMOTHY 14 PAUL SAYS OF A MAN NAMED ALEXANDER, "ALEXANDER THE COPPERSMITH DID ME MUCH EVIL: THE LORD REWARD HIM ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS." ONE WOULD THINK IN LOCAL CHURCHES THAT THE PRIMARY REASON OF THE GATHERING OF CHRISTIANS BE FOR THE STUDY OF THE WORD OF GOD AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE GOSPEL. THIS IS NOT ALWAYS THE CASE. EVERY CHURCH HAS PEOPLE OR GROUPS OF PEOPLE WHO OBSTRUCT THE FORWARD PROGRESS OF THE WORD OF GOD. PAUL LONGED TO BE DELIVERED FROM THE CLUTCHES AND GRASP OF SUCH PEOPLE. HE RECOGNIZED THE FACT THAT PRAYER IS THE ANSWER TO OPPOSITION.

## II. A CHARGE CONCERNING WORK - v. 6-15

NOTICE PAUL'S USAGE OF THE WORD "DISORDERLY." V.6 THE UNDERLYING IDEA IS THAT OF IDLENESS OR LOAFING. SOME OF THE CHRISTIANS AT THESSALONICA HAD MISUNDERSTOOD THE DOCTRINE OF THE SECOND COMING. SINCE THE COMING OF THE LORD IS IMMINENT THEY HAD GIVEN UP THEIR JOBS AND WERE SITTING AROUND WAITING FOR THE LORD TO COME. THE WORD DISORDERLY IN VERSE 6 ALSO SUGGESTS THE IDEA OF "PLAYING TRUANT." THIS IS THE SAME IDEA OF WHAT SOME FOLK USED TO DO WHEN THEY WOULD PLAY HOOKEY OR SKIP SCHOOL. IT SUGGESTS AN UNDISCIPLINED OR LAZY APPROACH TO LIFE. PAUL ENCOURAGED OTHER CHRISTIANS TO STAY AWAY FROM A PROFESSING CHRISTIAN WHO IS A MEMBER OF WHAT WE MIGHT CALL THE I.O.F. "INTERNATIONAL ORDER OF FREELoadERS." PAUL'S OWN EXAMPLE OF WORKING WITH HIS HANDS TO FURTHER THE WORK OF CHRIST WAS HELD UP BEFORE THESE BELIEVERS. JESUS CHRIST NEVER CALLED A LAZY PERSON TO BE ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES! TO THE MAN THEY WERE ALL BUSY WORKING AT OTHER TASKS WHEN GOD CALLED THEM. WITHIN THIS PASSAGE, PAUL LAID DOWN SOME PRINCIPLES CONCERNING WORK. THE PRINCIPLE IS SIMPLY STATED IN VERSE 10: "IF ANY WOULD NOT WORK, NEITHER SHOULD HE EAT." PLEASE NOTICE THE WORD WOULD. PAUL IS NOT TALKING

Not  
Could!

ABOUT THE DISABLED, CHILDREN, WIDOWS, ETC. HE WAS TALKING ABOUT PEOPLE WHO SHOULD WORK AND COULD BUT WOULDN'T! THE JEWS BELIEVED IN THE DIGNITY OF HONEST WORK. REGARDLESS OF THE KIND OF LABOR A MAN MIGHT DO, EVEN IF HE WAS A SCHOLAR, HE NEEDED TO KNOW THE BENEFITS OF WORK. THERE IS AN OLD JEWISH SAYING THAT "A MAN WHO DOES NOT TEACH HIS SON A TRADE TEACHES HIM TO STEAL." AS A MATTER OF FACT, RABBIS WERE TAUGHT TRADES. PAUL WAS A TENTMAKER. THE JEWS WERE CONCERNED THAT ACADEMIC SCHOLARS DID NOT FORGET WHAT IT MEANS TO WORK WITH ONE'S OWN HANDS. I AM WEARY OF CERTAIN PEOPLE WHO MAKE FUN OF WHAT IS COMMONLY CALLED "THE PROTESTANT WORK ETHIC." I FIND THAT VERY SAD WHEN ONE LOOKS AT THE SPIRALING ESCALATION OF WELFARE COSTS IN AMERICA. THERE IS A WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT THE GOVERNMENT OWES PEOPLE A LIVING. TO THE CHRISTIAN, THE WORLD OWES US NOTHING! ON THE CONTRARY, THE CHRISTIAN OWES THE WORLD THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL. THE CHRISTIAN IS NOT TO EXPECT THE GOVERNMENT OR THE CHURCH TO PROVIDE HIM A LIVELIHOOD IF HE IS ABLE TO WORK. NOWHERE IN THE BIBLE ARE WE TAUGHT THAT THE CHURCH IS OBLIGATED TO HELP THE MAN WHO IS ABLE TO HELP HIMSELF. ACCORDING TO THIS PASSAGE, THE MAN WHO WILL NOT ENGAGE IN HONEST LABOR IS APT TO BECOME A "BUSYBODY" - v. 11. A BUSYBODY IS A PERSON WHO IS ACTIVE IN TRIFLES. HE DOES NOT HAVE SIGNIFICANT AFFAIRS OF HIS OWN, SO HE MEDDLES IN THE AFFAIRS OF OTHER PEOPLE. THIS MAY INVOLVE ENGAGING IN IDLE GOSSIP AND FRITTERING AWAY TIME MEDDLING IN OTHER PEOPLE'S BUSINESS. THE PERSON WHO IS ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN HONEST WHOLESOME TOIL WILL NOT HAVE TIME TO MEDDLE IN THE AFFAIRS OF OTHER PEOPLE. WHAT OTHER PEOPLE DO AND SAY IS NONE OF OUR BUSINESS! THERE IS GENUINE WHOLE-SOME THERAPY IN CONSTRUCTIVE WORK. (EVERY CHURCH MAY DISCOVER THE GENUINENESS OF THE APPEAL OF SOME FOR FUNDS. AT THE SUGGESTION OF WORK MANY FLEE FOR THEIR LIVES!) IN THIS PASSAGE, PAUL ALSO REMINDS THE CHURCH TO NOTE PEOPLE WHO WOULD NOT ENGAGE IN GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT AND HAVE NO FRIENDSHIP WITH THEM UNTIL THEY CORRECTED THE ERROR OF THEIR WAYS. VERSE 14 SUGGESTS THAT THERE SHOULD BE A CERTAIN "SHAME" TO THOSE IDLE LOAFERS WHO FEEL NO RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR FAMILIES AND TO MAINTAIN PROPER EMPLOYMENT. I DO NOT THINK PAUL WAS LOOKING FORWARD INTO THE FUTURE TO SEE ALL OF THE TECHNICAL AND DIFFICULT

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v. 11



11

v. 14

v. 14

RELATIONSHIPS EXISTING BETWEEN CAPITAL AND LABOR. HOWEVER, HE DID SET DOWN SOME VERY SIMPLE PRINCIPLES BY WHICH THE CHURCH COULD AND SHOULD OPERATE IN THIS MATTER OF EMPLOYMENT. IF EVERY CHRISTIAN IN AMERICA TOOK THIS PORTION OF SCRIPTURE SERIOUSLY, A LARGE MEASURE OF THE WELFARE PROBLEM WOULD BE RESOLVED.

### III. A CHARGE IN CLOSING - v. 16-18

IN THIS PARTICULAR PASSAGE, PAUL MENTIONS TWO OF THE GREAT DOCTRINAL WORDS IN THE BIBLE: PEACE AND GRACE. OUR COUNTRY IS UNDERGOING A GREAT CHANGE IN WHICH THE QUEST FOR PERSONAL PEACE AND TRANQUILITY IS GREAT. SENSIBLE PEOPLE ARE FLOCKING TO GURUS AND MAHARAJAS TO FIND PERSONAL PEACE. THE OCCULT MOVEMENTS IN AMERICA ARE AT AN ALL TIME RECORD HIGH. WHETHER IT BE WERNER ERHARD'S PROGRAM CALLED EST OR THE FOLLOWERS OF MR. MOON, PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR SOME KIND OF INNER TRANQUILITY. PAUL CONCLUDED THIS LETTER BY REMINDING HIS HEARERS THAT PEACE IS AVAILABLE TO THE BELIEVER BY VIRTUE OF HIS RELATIONSHIP TO JESUS CHRIST. HOWEVER, THE ONLY WAY A MAN CAN HAVE PEACE IN HIS HEART IS FULL SURRENDER TO CHRIST. THE GOD OF PEACE OF ABLE TO PROVIDE PEACE TO HIS OWN. (JOHN 16:33) THE SECOND TERM, GRACE IS OUT OF THE USUAL ORDER. THE GRACE OF GOD IS ABLE TO SAVE AS WELL AS SUSTAIN THE CHRISTIAN. ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL BIBLE PRINCIPLES IS THAT IT IS GRACE AND GOODNESS BY WHICH MEN COME TO KNOW THE PEACE OF GOD. IT IS A FITTING CONCLUSION TO A LETTER IN WHICH THE THESSALONIANS WERE TROUBLED AND PERSECUTED IN A HOSTILE WORLD.

→ Colson's testimony  
re Phillips

THE FALLING AWAY  
II THESS. 2:1-3

SEVERAL YEARS AGO A PASTOR WAS TALKING WITH A YOUNG THEOLOGICAL STUDENT WHO HAD RECENTLY BEEN GRADUATED FROM SEMINARY. THE YOUNG THEOLOGIAN SAID TO THE PASTOR, "I DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO. I HAVE BEEN CALLED TO PASTOR A CHURCH IN THE MIDWEST BUT IT IS ONE OF THOSE CONGREGATIONS THAT BELIEVES THE BIBLE. I NO LONGER BELIEVE THE BIBLE AND HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT WORKING WITH THIS KIND OF CONGREGATION." THE PASTOR REPLIED THAT HE COULD TELL THE YOUNG MAN WHAT TO DO. HE SAID WITH DEEP CONVICTION, "I WOULD QUIT THE MINISTRY!" FOR MANY YEARS NOW, THE THEOLOGICAL LIBERALS HAVE BEEN TRYING TO SAVE THE SHIP OF CHRISTIANITY BY THROWING CARGO OVERBOARD. WITH GREAT ENTHUSIASM, THEY HAVE BEEN TOSSING AWAY THE GREAT DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE, NAMELY, INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE, VIRGIN BIRTH OF CHRIST, THE BODILY RESURRECTION. NOW THEY ARE ATTEMPTING TO SAIL THE SEA WITH AN EMPTY SHIP. THE WATCHWORD OF MANY THEOLOGIANS IS THE WORD "DENIAL." THE PLACE TO LOOK FOR MEN WHO NO LONGER BELIEVE THE BIBLE IS NOT ON SKID ROW BUT IN A GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY WHERE, UNDER THE PRETENSE OF RELIGIOUS CONVICTION, THEY STEADFASTLY DENY THE WORD OF GOD. SPURGEON WROTE OF SUCH MEN, "JUDAS BETRAYED HIS MASTER WITH A KISS. THAT IS HOW APOSTATES DO IT; IT IS ALWAYS WITH A KISS. DID YOU EVER READ AN INFIDEL BOOK IN YOUR LIFE WHICH DID NOT BEGIN WITH PROFOUND RESPECT FOR TRUTH? I NEVER DID. EVEN MODERN ONES, WHEN BISHOPS WRITE THEM, ALWAYS BEGIN WITH THAT. THEY BETRAY THE SON OF GOD WITH A KISS." THE BIBLE WORD FOR THE SITUATION THUS DESCRIBED IS THE WORD APOSTASY. THE WORD APOSTASY MEANS TO "STAND AWAY FROM." IT REFERS TO SOMEONE WHO HAS PROFESSED TO BELIEVE THE BIBLE BUT HAS MOVED AWAY FROM THE GREAT TRUTHS OF THE FAITH. IT REFERS TO THOSE WHO HAVE DEFECTED FROM TRUE FAITH OF THE BIBLE, OR A DEPARTURE FROM BIBLICAL DOCTRINE. APOSTASY CANNOT HAPPEN TO A GENUINE BELIEVER, BUT RATHER IT IS CHARACTERISTIC OF THOSE WHO PROFESSED A LOVE FOR THE TRUTH BUT ARE, IN FACT, NOT BORN AGAIN. IT SPEAKS OF THOSE WHO READILY ABANDON OR REBEL AGAINST GOD'S WORD. AFTER THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH, THE APOSTASY OF CHRISTENDOM WILL BE COMPLETE. THERE IS WIDESPREAD APOSTASY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD TODAY BUT IT WILL REACH ITS COMPLETION SHORTLY AFTER THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH WHEN PEOPLE WILL ABANDON ALL PRETENSE OF ALLEGIANCE TO CHRIST. THE ELEMENTS OF SUCH A MOVEMENT ARE IN

SOCIETY TODAY BUT A GREAT FINAL WORLDWIDE APOSTASY IS YET FUTURE. IT WILL CULMINATE IN THE DEVIL'S DREAM, NAMELY, A GREAT WORLDWIDE SUPER CHURCH UNDER HIS CONTROL. A COUNTERFEIT CHRISTIANITY WHERE THE DOCTRINE IS LAWLESSNESS.

PAUL REMINDED THE THESSALONIANS WHO WERE BEING SHAKEN AND TROUBLED CONCERNING THEIR FAITH THAT AFTER THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH MENTIONED IN VERSE 1, TWO SIGNIFICANT EVENTS MUST TAKE PLACE ON EARTH: (1) THE APOSTASY AND (2) THE REVELATION OF THE ANTI-CHRIST. ULTIMATELY HE WILL DESTROY THE GREAT APOSTASY CHURCH (REV. 17:16-17) THIS CHURCH IN REV. 17 IS CALLED A HARLOT BECAUSE IT IS AN APOSTATE ORGANIZATION THAT HAS FORSAKEN ITS ORIGINAL PURPOSE. IT WILL BE DESTROYED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE 70TH WEEK OF DANIEL.

A WORD SHOULD BE SAID ABOUT A POPULAR INTERPRETATION OF THE PHRASE "A FALLING AWAY FIRST" IN VERSE 3. ONE POPULAR INTERPRETATION IS THAT A TRANSLATION OF THIS PHRASE IS "A CATCHING AWAY" BEFORE THE DAY OF THE LORD MENTIONED IN VERSE 2 -(PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF TRANSLATION FROM DAY OF CHRIST TO DAY OF THE LORD.) MY REASON FOR NOT ACCEPTING E.S. ENGLISH'S INTERPRETATION, EVEN THOUGH IT DOES HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF INTEREST, IS THAT IT IS A FORCED INTERPRETATION. THE BASIC IDEA OF APOSTASY IS TO "FORSAKE." IT IS USED MOST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT OF A DEPARTURE FROM DOCTRINE.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THE FOLLOWING IDEAS ABOUT THE SUBJECT OF APOSTASY:

I. APOSTASY IS CHARACTERIZED BY A DEPARTURE FROM THE FAITH - I TIMOTHY 4:1-3

THESE VERSES ARE A CLEAR WARNING TO THE LORD'S PEOPLE. THE WARNING ORIGINATES WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD. GOD SPEAKS TO MEN WARNING THEM WITH CLARITY THAT IN THE LATTER TIMES, SOME SHALL STAND AWAY FROM THE FAITH. IN THE END OF THE AGE, SOME PEOPLE WILL "STAND AWAY FROM AN ORIGINAL POSITION" WITH REFERENCE TO CHRISTIAN FAITH. THE FACT THAT THEY DEPARTED IS INDICATIVE THAT THEY WERE NOT IN THE FAITH. IT IS ONE THING TO PROFESS FAITH IN CHRIST; IT IS ANOTHER THING TO POSSESS HIM. IN CHURCHES AND DENOMINATIONS WHERE DOCTRINE IS NOT IMPORTANT, APOSTASY IS INEVITABLE. IF MEN DO NOT ACCEPT THE CLEAR TEACHING OF GOD'S WORD THEY WILL BE DELUDED INTO ACCEPTING THE DEVIL'S LIE. WHEN MEN

ABANDON THE WORD OF GOD, THEY OPEN THEMSELVES UP TO ALL KINDS OF CULTS AND ISMS. WE ARE SEEING A RESURGENCE OF SPIRITISM AND THE OCCULT IN AMERICA. MEN WHO DENY GOD'S CLEAR TEACHING IN THE WORD ARE STANDING ON DANGEROUS GROUND. THERE IS WIDESPREAD DEPARTURE FROM THE FAITH TODAY. I AM UTTERLY AMAZED THAT PEOPLE COULD SIT IN A CHURCH, LET THEIR CHILDREN BE TAUGHT BY TEACHERS WHO DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD. THEY REMIND ME OF A MINISTER WHO WAS IN A BOOK SHOP WHEN A WOMAN CAME IN TO BUY A BOOK. WHEN ASKED WHAT KIND OF BOOK SHE WANTED SHE REPLIED, "OH, JUST ANYTHING." SO THE ASSISTANT HANDED HER A WORTHLESS STORY BOOK. SHE RAPIDLY GLANCED THROUGH IT AND SAID, "I'LL TAKE IT." A HALF-HOUR LATER, THE MINISTER WAS IN THE MEAT MARKET WHEN THE SAME WOMAN CAME IN DEMANDING STEAK. SHE SCORNFULLY REFUSED THE FIRST AND SECOND CUT THAT WAS OFFERED, INSISTING LOUDLY UPON "THE BEST THAT YOU HAVE." WHEN SHE FINALLY RECEIVED THE STEAK AND PAID FOR IT SHE ANNOUNCED FOR ALL TO HEAR, "I'M PARTICULAR ABOUT WHAT I EAT." ALL TOO OFTEN, MANY PEOPLE WHO ARE PARTICULAR ABOUT WHAT THEY FEED THEIR BODIES ARE NOT AT ALL PARTICULAR WHAT THEIR EARS HEAR WHEN THEY COME TO THE HOUSE OF GOD, "JUST ANYTHING" WILL DO. THIS IS THE WAY APOSTASY SETS IN. OFTEN, THE REASON FOR DEPARTING FROM THE FAITH IS BECAUSE OF ITS RESTRAINING AUTHORITY IN THE LIFE. THE STAGE IS BEING SET FOR THE "LAWLESS ONE." LAWLESSNESS IS CHARACTERISTIC OF THIS AGE. THE CHRISTIAN, HOWEVER, IS BOUND BY SOME AUTHORITY AND STANDARDS. (IN 1972, A MAGAZINE CARRIED AN ARTICLE BY THE LATE J. EDGAR HOOVER, IN WHICH HE TOLD OF SOME OF THE INFLUENCES UPON HIS EARLY LIFE WHICH MADE HIM THE KIND OF MAN HE BECAME. HE MENTIONED A PRESBYTERIAN PASTOR WHO WORKED WITH YOUNG PEOPLE OF WHOM HOOVER WAS ONE. HE SPOKE OF AFTERNOON VISITS OF THE PASTOR AT THE BALL PARK, WHO WHEN THE TEAMS WERE SHORTHANDED WOULD HAVE HIM PLAY. WHEN THERE WERE ENOUGH PLAYERS HE WOULD UMPIRE. THERE WAS NOTHING SLIP-SHOD IN HIS DECISIONS. HOOVER SAYS, "WHEN HE WAS ON THE DIAMOND, YOU PLAYED BY THE RULES, YOU PLAYED FAIR, AND YOU CAME AWAY WITH A CODE OF GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP." AS HE LOOKED BACK ON HIS EARLY LIFE, HE SAID THERE WAS THE BEGINNING OF SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES IN MY LIFE, NAMELY, THAT ALL WHO PLAYED IN THAT SAND LOT GAME LEARNED TO RESPECT THE AUTHORITY OF THE UMPIRE. THE WORD OF GOD IS OUR AUTHORITY AND WE EITHER PLAY BY GOD'S RULES OR WE WIND UP JUNKING THE FAITH.

II. APOSTASY IS CHARACTERIZED BY A DISPOSITION TOWARD FABLES - II TIMOTHY 4:1-4

THE APOSTATE IS NOT INTERESTED IN HEARING THE "HEALTHFUL TEACHING" OF THE WORD OF GOD. SOUND DOCTRINE TURNS HIM OFF, HE PREFERS TO HEAR SOMETHING ELSE. HOWEVER, NO CHURCH IS HEALTHY WHERE THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT DISPENSED REGULARLY. (ILLUSTRATE THE ATTITUDE OF APOSTATES WITH HOBART FREEMAN AND HIS EXPERIENCE AT SOUTHERN SEMINARY.) THE APOSTATE ACCUMULATES AN ABUNDANCE OF TEACHERS WHO PAY ATTENTION ONLY TO WHAT HE WANTS TO HEAR. IF A MAN WANTS ENTERTAINMENT, FALSE TEACHERS WILL MAKE SURE IT IS IN ABUNDANCE. HOWEVER, IN VERSE 4, THE APOSTATE TURNS AWAY FROM THE TRUTH TO FABLES. THE WORD FABLES IS A "NARRATIVE OR FICTITIOUS TALE, THE INVENTION OF THE MIND." (ILLUSTRATION OF THE COMMENCEMENT SERVICE AT CLAYPOOL HIGH SCHOOL IN WHICH THE SPEAKER TOOK 20 OR 25 MINUTES TO TALK ABOUT A LITTLE TRAIN WITH ITS ENGINE AND CABOOSE. IF MEN DO NOT HEAR GOD'S WORD, THEY WILL BE TURNED TO SILLY TALES. MEN NEED TO BE WARNED ABOUT THE DANGER OF PLAYING FAST AND LOOSE WITH GOD'S WORD. OUR COUNTRY NEEDS TO TAKE HEED TO THESE SCRIPTURAL WARNINGS AS THE SHADOWS OF APOSTASY DEEPEN ACROSS OUR LAND. IT IS POSSIBLE TODAY TO ATTEND ON THE LORD'S DAY A CHURCH WHERE THE BIBLE IS PREACHED BUT THEY ARE FEWER AND FEWER. BIBLE-BELIEVING CHRISTIANS ARE INDEED A MINORITY IN AMERICA TODAY!

THE BOOK OF AMOS IS WELL-KNOWN FOR ITS ABUNDANCE OF EVANGELISTIC TEXTS. AMOS WARNED ISRAEL ABOUT THEIR LOOSE ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD. AMOS 8:11 - THERE IS A STARTLING WARNING TO THE NATION. (ILLUSTRATION OF JACK KADEY'S FRIEND WHO TRAVELED FOR THE GOVERNMENT, WAS A HARVARD GRADUATE, AND VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN EXPOSITORY PREACHING AND TEACHING. HIS OBSERVATION CONCERNING THE GREAT DECLINE IN AMERICA, THE EMPHASIS IS ON ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATION AND LESS AND LESS UPON SATURATION WITH THE WORD OF GOD. OUR COUNTRY NOW SEES A GENERATION THAT KNOWS LITTLE OR NOTHING ABOUT GOD'S WORD. EVEN THOSE WHO PROFESS TO BELIEVE IT ARE ABANDONING THE WORD OF GOD RAPIDLY. NOT ONLY DO WE SEE THE ABANDONMENT OF DOCTRINE, THERE IS AN ABANDONMENT OF MORALS WHICH CHARACTERIZES APOSTASY. (II TIMOTHY 3:1-5) "BUT YOU MUST REALIZE THAT IN THE LAST DAYS THE TIMES WILL BE FULL OF DANGER. MEN WILL BECOME UTTERLY SELF-CENTERED, GREEDY FOR MONEY, FULL OF BIG WORDS. THEY WILL BE PROUD AND

# SATAN'S MAN

## II THESS. 2:3-12

OF

ON FEBRUARY 5, 1962, JEAN DIXON WAS GAZING OUT <sup>OF</sup> HER BEDROOM WINDOW TOWARD THE EAST. AS SHE DID SO, ACCORDING TO HER TESTIMONY, SHE SAW QUEEN NEFERTITI AND A PHARAOH STEP OUT OF THE RAYS OF THE SUN. IN HER VISION SHE SAW A BABY IN THE ARMS OF THE QUEEN. ON ONE SIDE, JEAN DIXON CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF A PYRAMID. THE PHARAOH AND THE QUEEN CAME TOWARD HER AND THRUST THE BABY FORWARD INDICATING THAT HE WAS BEING OFFERED TO THE WHOLE WORLD. FROM THIS BABY CAME FORTH BRIGHT RAYS OF LIGHT. THE PHARAOH AND THE QUEEN THEN DEPARTED AND, AS THE QUEEN PAUSED FOR A DRINK OF WATER, SHE WAS STABBED IN THE BACK WITH A KNIFE. WHEN MISS DIXON'S ATTENTION SHIFTED BACK TO THE BABY, HE HAD ALREADY ATTAINED MANHOOD. A SMALL CROSS MATERIALIZED ABOVE HIS HEAD AND KEPT GROWING LARGER. PEOPLE FROM ALL NATIONS, RACES AND COLORS CAME TO WORSHIP HIM. THEY WERE ALL ONE. CONTINUATION OF ANOTHER VISION INDICATED TO HER THROUGH THIS CHILD BORN IN THE MIDDLE EAST ABOUT 7:00 A.M., FEBRUARY 5, 1962, THIS ONE BORN OF HUMBLE PEASANT ORIGIN WOULD RISE TO BECOME A WORLD LEADER, BEGINNING TO RECEIVE HIS POWER IN THE 1980's AND HE WOULD CONTINUE TO GROWN UNTIL 1999, AT WHICH TIME THE WORLD WOULD BE AT PEACE. HE WOULD SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF WAR.

I PUT NO FAITH IN THIS KIND OF PSYCHIC PHENOMENON. I MENTION IT SIMPLY AS A BASIS TO REMIND YOU THAT, EVEN IN THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE BIBLE PREACHING CHURCHES OF AMERICA, THERE IS A FEELING THAT THERE WILL RISE TO POWER A SUPER MAN TO DELIVER THE WORLD FROM ALL OF ITS PROBLEMS. THE BIBLE DOES TEACH THAT THE STAGE OF HUMAN HISTORY IS BEING SET FOR THE MOST AMAZING PERSON EVER TO SET FOOT ON EARTH WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. HE WILL BE AN EVIL GENIUS, SPECTACULAR AND SUPERNATURAL IN HIS METHODS. THE WORLD WILL STAND IN AWE AND THEN IN FULL WORSHIP OF HIM. (REV. 13:1-8) THIS PERSON WILL BE SATAN'S MAN. HE WILL PUT ALL OF THE CHARACTERISTICS WHICH MEN ADMIRE MOST INTO ONE IMPRESSIVE, INTELLIGENT, CLEVER, POLITICAL GENIUS, OUTSTANDING ORATOR - EVERYTHING THE WORLD OF MEN HAD DESIRED IN A HUMAN BEING WILL BE LATENT IN THIS END TIME PERSON. JESUS PREDICTED THE COMING OF SUCH A PERSON, "I AM COME IN MY FATHER'S NAME AND YE RECEIVED ME NOT: IF ANOTHER SHALL COME IN HIS OWN NAME, HIM YE WILL RECEIVE." (JOHN 5:45) THERE ARE EIGHT SPECIFIC TERMS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WHICH REFER TO THIS PERSON. HE WILL BE THE WONDER OF THE WORLD,

HEAD AND SHOULDERS ABOVE ANYONE ELSE AROUND, YET BENEATH THIS APPEALING EXTERIOR WILL BE THE NATURE OF A WILD BEAST WHO KNOWS NO LAW BUT THAT OF HIS OWN SELFISH, DRIVING AMBITION. HE WILL BE THE MAN OF THE WORLD, ALL THAT MEN DESIRE IN A HUMAN BEING, THE PERSONIFICATION OF HERO WORSHIP - THE DEVIL'S MAN! ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF DANIEL, HE WILL ARISE OUT OF THE WESTERN BLOCK OF NATIONS IN THE MIDST OF SOCIAL CHAOS WHICH WILL PROVIDE THE PLATFORM FOR HIS RISE TO WORLD POWER. AS THE KINGDOM OF GOD DRAWS NEAR IN HUMAN HISTORY, SATAN WILL MAKE ONE LAST DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH HIS COUNTERFEIT KINGDOM WHICH WILL FIND ITS HEADSHIP IN THE EMBODIMENT OF A MAN WHO IS THE GREAT REPRESENTATION OF FALLEN HUMANITY, NAMELY A FALSE CHRIST.

### 1. THE IDENTITY OF SATAN'S MAN - VERSE 3

THE PHRASE "MAN OF SIN" LITERALLY MEANS THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS. THE WORD SIN IS THE WORD "ANOMIAS," THE CHIEF CHARACTERISTIC OF THE ANTI-CHRIST WILL BE THAT OF LAWLESSNESS. WALVOORD SAYS, "JUST AS WE REFER TO CHRIST AS THE 'MAN OF SORROWS' BECAUSE HE WAS A MAN WHO HAD ENDURED MUCH SORROW, SO THIS PERSON IS A MAN OF SIN, HIS VERY LIFE IS CHARACTERIZED BY BLASPHEMOUS SIN AGAINST GOD." ~~LAST~~ IN HISTORY, THE SPIRIT OF LAWLESSNESS WHICH IS CHARACTERIZED THOSE IN OPPOSITION TO GOD WILL FIND ITS EXPRESSION IN A MAN WHO WILL BE INTOLERANT OF ALL RESTRAINT EXCEPT THAT WHICH COINCIDES WITH HIS OWN SINFUL SELFISH INTERESTS. THIS MAN WILL BEGIN HIS CAREER AS A HIGH-HANDED TYRANT OBLIVIOUS TO THE NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF ANYONE EXCEPT HIMSELF. WE ARE SEEING IN OUR GENERATION, THE BEGINNING OF A SPIRIT OF LAWLESSNESS WHICH WILL COME INTO FULL BLOOM AFTER THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH. THEN SATAN'S LAWLESS SYSTEM WILL SWEEP THE WORLD. AT NO TIME IN OUR HISTORY HAVE SO MANY LAWBREAKERS GONE UNPUNISHED. MANY, MANY CRIMES IN AMERICA ARE COMMITTED WITH NO THOUGHT OF INVESTIGATION, LET ALONE ARREST AND TRIAL FOR THE CRIMES. THIS ATMOSPHERE IS THE BREEDING GROUND FOR A KIND OF LAWLESSNESS WHICH EVENTUALLY WILL BECOME UNCONTROLLABLE WHEN GOVERNMENT GIVES UP ITS GOD-GIVEN FUNCTION OF PUNISHING EVIL DOERS AND REWARDING THE GOOD. THE PICTURE IS NOT VERY BRIGHT FROM THE BIBLE SIDE FOR THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT THIS LAWLESSNESS, WHICH WILL FIND ITS FRUITION IN THE LAWLESS ONE WILL BE REVERSED. THE ONLY HOPE FOR THE SPIRIT OF LAWLESSNESS IS PERSONAL FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. IN THE DECADE OF THE 60'S, CRIME INCREASED AT A PERCENTAGE RATE OF 122% AS COMPARED TO AN 11% INCREASE IN

POPULATION. THIS LAWLESSNESS MANIFESTS ITSELF SPECIFICALLY IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER. IN AMERICA, A MURDER EVERY 36 MINUTES, A RAPE EVERY 15 MINUTES, AGGRAVATED ASSAULT EVERY 2 MINUTES, A ROBBERY EVERY 2 MINUTES, 9 SERIOUS CRIMES EVERY MINUTE OF EVERY DAY, AN AUTO THEFT EVERY 36 SECONDS, A LARCENY EVERY 21 SECONDS, A BURGLARY EVERY 16 SECONDS. THE ANTI-CHRIST WILL CAPITALIZE ON THE SPIRIT OF THIS AGE. THE ANTI-CHRIST IS ALSO CALLED THE "SON OF PERDITION."<sup>(2)</sup> SOME HAVE THOUGHT THIS PHRASE REFERS TO THE IDEA THAT JUDAS ISCARIOT WILL BE THE ANTI-CHRIST BECAUSE THE SAME PHRASE IS ASCRIBED TO BOTH. "WHILE I WAS WITH THEM IN THE WORLD, I KEPT THEM IN THY NAME; THOSE THAT THOU GAVEST ME I HAVE KEPT, AND NONE OF THEM IS LOST, BUT THE SON OF PERDITION; THAT THE SCRIPTURE MIGHT BE FULFILLED." (JOHN 17:12) THE FACT THAT THE SAME TERM IS USED FOR THE ANTI-CHRIST AND JUDAS ISCARIOT, PUTS THEM IN THE SAME CATEGORY BUT DOES NOT NECESSARILY MAKE THEM THE SAME PERSON. BOTH OF THESE PERSONS WILL GO TO THEIR OWN PLACE OF DOOM. THE ANTI-CHRIST IS ALSO CALLED THE "WICKED ONE"<sup>(3)</sup> IN VERSE 8. HE WILL BE THE VERY INCARNATION OF HUMAN PRIDE, ARROGANCE, REBELLION AND AMBITION. WICKEDNESS WILL BE PART AND PARCEL OF HIS NATURE.

## II. THE ACTIVITY OF THE MAN OF SIN IN THE RELIGIOUS WORLD - VERSE 4, 9

THE ANTI-CHRIST WILL PUBLICLY SET HIMSELF AGAINST GOD AND PROCLAIM HIMSELF A DIVINE BEING. HE WILL BACK UP THIS PRONOUNCEMENT WITH SUPERNATURAL POWERS MENTIONED IN VERSE 9. THIS ONE IS AN ADVERSARY OF THE GOD OF THE BIBLE AND HISTORY. HE WILL DECLARE HIMSELF TO BE THE ONLY GOD WHOM MEN SHOULD WORSHIP. THIS CORRESPONDS TO THE PICTURE IN REV. 13. THE FACT THAT HE POSSESSES SUPERNATURAL POWERS WILL CONVINCE SOME THAT HE IS A DIETY. THE ABILITY TO DO SUPERNATURAL THINGS IS NO SIGN OF DIETY. THE FALSE PROPHET, ACCORDING TO REV. 13:13 HAS POWER TO CALL FIRE DOWN FROM HEAVEN! VERSE 14 SAYS THAT THRU THIS POWER, "AND DECEIVETH THEM THAT SWELL ON THE EARTH, BY THE MEANS OF THOSE MIRACLES WHICH HE HAD POWER TO DO IN THE SIGHT OF THE BEAST;...." THE MAGICIANS OF EGYPT COULD DUPLICATE THE TURNING OF A ROD INTO A SERPENT. THE ACID TEST WAS WHEN AARON'S ROD SWALLOWED UP THEIR RODS! (EXODUS 7:12-13) ISRAEL WAS WARNED IN DEUT. 13:1-3 THAT THEY WERE NOT TO BELIEVE THE FALSE PROPHETS EVEN IF THEIR PREDICTIONS CAME TO PASS. THE TEST WAS THE WORD OF GOD NOT THE ABILITY TO DO THINGS. ALL OF THIS IS PART OF

SATAN'S PLAN AND DESIRE AS INDICATED IN ISAIAH 14:13-14.  
 "FOR THOU HAST SAID IN THINE HEART, I WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN, I WILL EXALT MY THRONE ABOVE THE STARS OF GOD: I WILL SIT ALSO UPON THE MOUNT OF THE CONGREGATION, IN THE SIDES OF THE NORTH: I WILL ASCEND ABOVE THE HEIGHTS OF THE CLOUDS; I WILL BE LIKE THE MOST HIGH."

### III. THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY AND THE DIVINE RESTRAINT VERSES 6-7

THE MYSTERY OF LAWLESSNESS WAS ALREADY IN PROGRESS IN THE TIME OF THE THESSALONIANS. LAWLESSNESS WAS ALREADY IN OPERATION. THE STREAM HAD ALREADY STARTED WHICH WOULD EVENTUALLY TERMINATE AT THE OCEAN OF UNBOUNDED LAWLESSNESS. THERE ARE MANY MYSTERIES MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE. THE WORD MYSTERY DOES NOT REFER TO SOMETHING WHICH CANNOT BE KNOWN BUT RATHER TO A TRUTH WHICH HERETOFORE HAS BEEN UNREVEALED. TO THIS POINT IT HAS NOT BEEN FULLY KNOWN. THE LAWLESSNESS WHICH HAS BEEN GAINING MOMENTUM THROUGH HUMAN HISTORY WILL RESULT IN A KIND OF MASS LAWLESSNESS AND INIQUITY WHEN THE ANTI-CHRIST COMES UPON THE SCENE. HE WILL RISE TO POWER ON THE WAVES OF THIS KIND OF MOVEMENT. ALL OF THIS IS A WAY OF SPEAKING OF SATAN'S ATTEMPT TO RESIST GOD. LAWLESSNESS IS SIMPLY THE RESULT OF DISOBEDIENCE EITHER TO GOD OR MEN. GODLINESS AND LAWLESSNESS ARE MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE TERMS. IN THESE VERSES, PAUL GIVES US A HINT OF WHY THE WORLD HAS NOT DISINTEGRATED THROUGH WICKEDNESS. THE WORD "WITHHOLDETH" AND "LETTETH" ARE BOTH WORDS WHICH SUGGEST RESTRAINT OR HOLDING BACK. THE PERSONAL PRONOUN "HE" IN VERSE 7 SUGGESTS THAT THIS RESTRAINING INFLUENCE IN THE WORLD IS INDEED A PERSON. THERE IS A RESTRAINING FORCE IN THE WORLD WHICH WILL CONTINUE IN OPERATION UNTIL THE RESTRAINER IS REMOVED. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE DIVINE RESTRAINER IS THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HE WILL BE TAKEN AWAY AT THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH. AFTER THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH THE LAWLESS NATURE OF THE ANTI-CHRIST WILL BE REVEALED AND THERE WILL BE TO THWART HIS MOVEMENT, THIS VERSE HAS A SIMILAR APPLICATION AS DID GENESIS 6:3 IN THE DAYS PRIOR TO THE FLOOD. IT WAS THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD WHO WAS RESTRAINING SIN IN THE DAYS OF NOAH. GOD PREDICTED THAT THIS WOULD NOT CONTINUE FOREVER. THE REMOVAL OF THE CHURCH FROM THE WORLD WILL SIGNAL AN ERA OF LAWLESSNESS UNPRECEDENTED IN HUMAN HISTORY. I AM GLAD I WON'T HAVE TO BE HERE! THE ACTIVITIES OF SUCH LAWLESSNESS CAN BE READ IN CHAPTERS 6-19 OF REVELATION. THIS WORLD WOULD NOT BE A PLEASANT PLACE IF ALL THE CHRISTIANS WERE SUDDENLY TAKEN AWAY. THE

BIBLE TEACHES THAT BELIEVERS ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH WHICH IS PRESERVING THE WORLD FROM MORAL ROT AND DECAY. I ALSO THINK THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD IS THE ONLY REASON GOD HAS NOT MOVED IN JUDGMENT TO DEAL WITH THE SINS OF MANKIND. THE DAYS OF NOAH AND SODOM AND GOMORRAH CANNOT COMPARE TO OUR DAY. THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THAT MUCH OF OUR SINFULNESS IS DONE BEHIND CLOSED DOORS AND IN PLUSH SURROUNDINGS BUT THE SIN IS THERE NEVERTHELESS! WHEN THE RESTRAINT IS TAKEN AWAY, ALL HELL WILL BREAK LOOSE ON THE EARTH. *God - apologize to them*

#### IV. THE TRAGEDY OF BELIEVING SATAN'S LIE VERSES 10-12

THE DEVIL SEEKS TO DECEIVE MEN WITH LIES. THE LIE HAS BEEN ONE OF HIS FAVORITE TOOLS FROM THE DAWN OF CIVILIZATION. HE DECEIVED EVE WITH A WELL-CHOSEN LIE. IN VERSE 10, SALVATION IS LINKED TO TRUTH. MEN CANNOT BE SAVED UNLESS THEY HEAR THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD. THE ANTI-CHRIST WILL TELL THE WORLD A LIE AND LEAD THEM AWAY FROM GOD. GOD WILL THEN SEND THE FULL FORCE OF EVIL'S DELUSION UPON MANKIND SO THAT THEY WILL PUT THEIR FAITH IN AN UTTER FRAUD AND MEET THE FATE OF ALL WHO PLAY WITH EVIL. THERE IS NO OTHER ANSWER FOR THE NEED OF THE HUMAN HEART APART FROM THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST AND HIS REDEEMING GRACE. EVERYTHING ELSE IS A LIE--EVERYTHING!! IF MEN CHOOSE TO BELIEVE THE PHILOSOPHIES OF MEN RATHER THAN THE WORD OF GOD, THEY WILL BE ETERNALLY LOST AND WITHOUT HOPE. MEN HAVE A SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITY TO HEAR THE WORD OF GOD AND TO RESPOND--NOW.

I HAVE BEEN CONFUSED BY LISTENING TO THE WATERGATE HEARINGS. I DO NOT KNOW WHO IS TELLING THE TRUTH BECAUSE I HAVE NO STANDARD TO GO BY. GOD HAS GIVEN US A STANDARD OF COMPARISON. WE CAN KNOW WHAT IS TRUE AND WHAT IS FALSE. UPON THE BASIS OF THAT STANDARD, GOD REQUIRES ALL MEN TO DECIDE.

GRACIOUS COMMANDS  
II THESS. 3:1-18

THE THEME OF BOTH THESSALONIAN LETTERS IS THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST. IN THIS BOOK, AS WELL AS OTHER NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS, THE SECOND COMING IS SHOWN TO BE MORE THAN AN ABSTRACT DOCTRINE. IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO KNOW THE TRUTH OF THE LORD'S SECOND COMING AND BELIEVE IT, BUT THE BELIEVER MUST PRACTICE CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN LIVING IN THE LIGHT OF THIS DOCTRINE. IT MUST BE A LIFE-CHANGING DOCTRINE OR IT IS NOT REALLY BELIEVED. (COMPARE I JOHN 3:3) SOME BELIEVERS AT THESSALONICA WERE ABUSING THE DOCTRINE OF THE SECOND COMING BY THE WAY THEY WERE LIVING. THEIR REFUSAL TO WORK WAS WRONG AND PAUL REBUKED THEM FOR IT. FOUR TIMES IN THE CHAPTER PAUL USES THE WORD "COMMAND." THIS WORD WOULD BE BETTER UNDERSTOOD WITH THE WORD "CHARGE." IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING, THE BELIEVER HAS DEFINITE RESPONSIBILITIES.

I. A DOUBLE-BARRELLED PRAYER REQUEST - vs. 1-2

THIS PAST WEEK, AFTER HAVING RETURNED FROM VACATION, WE RECEIVED SOME VERY STARTLING AND HEART-BREAKING NEWS. IT HAD TO DO WITH THE FAMILY OF TWO FORMER CLASSMATES AND FRIENDS. RELATE THE STORY OF THE EPISODE OF MR. EMORY AT LANSING. OUR PHONE CALL TO CAROL AND OUR OFFER TO HELP. HER RESPONSE WAS CLEARLY AND SPECIFICALLY, "PRAY FOR US." I AM IMPRESSED WITH THE FACT THAT A MAN OF PAUL'S SPIRITUAL STATURE, THIS THEOLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL GIANT, ASKED A GROUP OF YOUNG, IMMATURE BELIEVERS TO PRAY FOR HIM. PAUL RECOGNIZED THE WORTH OF PRAYER AND HIS OWN WEAKNESS IN THE LORD'S WORK. I DO NOT THINK THE AVERAGE CHURCH ATTENDER REALIZES HOW MUCH WE ARE DEPENDENT UPON THE PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE. NO PERSON CAN FIGHT THE SPIRITUAL BATTLES OF A LOCAL CHURCH ALONE. PAUL WAS SENSITIVE TO HIS OWN NEEDS, AND CONSTANTLY ASKED CHRISTIANS TO PRAY FOR HIM. THIS IS VITAL AND NOT OPTIONAL. (I REMEMBER HEARING THE STORY OF A WELL-KNOWN MISSIONARY WHO RETURNED TO THIS COUNTRY AND REQUESTED PRAYER FOR A NUMBER OF MISSION STATIONS. OF THE SPECIFIED NUMBER, AND I THINK IT WAS APPROXIMATELY 20, HE RECEIVED THE PROMISE FROM VARIOUS CHURCHES TO PRAY FOR APPROXIMATELY ONE-HALF OF THE NUMBER HE REQUESTED. WOULD YOU BELIEVE, ON HIS NEXT TOUR OF DUTY, THAT THE 10 OR SO THAT RECEIVED SPECIFIC ASSURANCE FOR PRAYER PROSPERED - THE OTHERS FLOUNDERED!)

*Flourished*

A. THAT GOD'S WORD WOULD GO FORWARD UNHINDERED -  
VERSE 1

*2 young people*  
 PAUL WAS LITERALLY ASKING THAT THE WORD OF GOD RUN FREE. PAUL'S PRIMARY CONCERN WAS THE SPREAD OF THE WORD OF GOD. HIS PRAYER WAS FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD. THE ONLY WAY TO COUNTERACT SATAN'S WORK AND HIS LIES IS WITH THE TRUTH OF THE WORD OF GOD. (DO YOU AS A CHRISTIAN PRAY FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD?) WHENEVER THE WORD OF GOD IS PROCLAIMED, THE ONE WHO PROCLAIMS THE WORD IS ENGAGED IN A SPIRITUAL WARFARE. THE DEVIL WILL DO EVERYTHING IN HIS POWER TO DISRUPT THE PREACHING OF THE WORD. IT MAY INVOLVE A BABY CRYING, EXCESSIVE MOVEMENT AND DISTRACTIONS, TECHNICAL FAILURES OF EQUIPMENT, WHISPERING AND TALKING IN THE CONGREGATION, MENTAL DISTRACTION ON OTHER THINGS. OUR CHURCH NEEDS TO PRAY THAT THE WORD OF GOD MIGHT RUN FREELY IN OUR CITY, THAT IT MIGHT BE SPREAD ABROAD, BEGINNING HERE AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, THAT MEN MAY HEAR THE GOSPEL AND BE SAVED AND GOD GLORIFIED THROUGH THIS ACTIVITY. NOTHING IN A CHURCH IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE PREACHING OF GOD'S WORD.

B. THAT PAUL WOULD BE RESCUED FROM EVIL MEN -

*DR. Savage*  
VERSE 2  
*"Get that foot back in there"...*

WHEREVER GOD'S WORD IS PREACHED, THE DEVIL WILL RAISE UP MEN WHO ACTIVELY OPPOSE THIS MINISTRY. IN EVERY CHURCH, THERE ARE PEOPLE WHOSE PRIMARY INTEREST IS NOT THE DISSEMINATION OF THE WORD OF GOD. THEY ARE BIGOTED, OPINIONATED AND DEVOID OF FAITH. THEIR INTERESTS ARE NOT SPIRITUAL IN NATURE AND CHARACTER. THEY WORK AT OBSTRUCTING THE FORWARD PROGRESS OF THE WORD OF GOD. THEY SEEK TO SILENCE THE SPEAKER IN A THOUSAND DIFFERENT WAYS. PAUL'S DESIRE WAS TO STAY OUT OF THEIR CLUTCHES. THE DEVIL USES MEN AS WELL AS CIRCUMSTANCES TO DISRUPT THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL. THE WEAPON OF THE BELIEVER AGAINST SUCH MEN IS NOT RESISTANCE BUT PRAYER. GOD HAS A WAY OF DEALING WITH PEOPLE WHO OPPOSE THE GOSPEL. PAUL'S MINISTRY WAS FILLED WITH PEOPLE OF THIS KIND BUT TIME WILL PERMIT US TO MENTION BUT ONE. (COMPARE II TIMOTHY 4:14) ALEXANDER OPPOSED THE PREACHING OF PAUL. IT MAY BE THAT PAUL PREACHED SOMETHING THAT TOUCHED A NERVE IN ALEXANDER'S LIFE, AND HE SET OUT TO DISRUPT PAUL'S MINISTRY. IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN THROUGH GOSSIP OR LYING. PAUL DOES NOT MENTION THE PROBLEM, BUT HE DOES SUGGEST THAT GOD WOULD DEAL WITH ALEXANDER. WE MAY BE ASSURED OF GOD'S ACTIVITY WITH MEN WHO OPPOSE THE MINISTRY OF

THE WORD OF GOD. THE ONLY REFERENCE TO ALEXANDER IN THE BIBLE IS ONE OF A NEGATIVE RESISTANCE TO THE THINGS OF GOD. NOTE IN II TIMOTHY 4:10 - DEMAS RETURNED TO THESSALONICA WHEN HE FORSOOK PAUL. I WONDER WHAT WAS SO ATTRACTIVE IN THESSALONICA.)

## II. A DOUBLE-BARRELLED BIBLE PRINCIPLE - vs. 6-15

### A. A WORD ABOUT IDLENESS

*Union  
D.O.F.*

SOME CHRISTIANS HAD MISUNDERSTOOD THE DOCTRINE OF THE SECOND COMING. THEY HAD GIVEN UP THEIR JOBS AND WERE LOAFING. IN VERSE 6 THE WORD "DISORDERLY" COMES FROM A WORD THAT MEANS TO "PLAY TRUANT." IT CARRIES WITH IT THE IDEA OF WHAT SOME PEOPLE USED TO DO WHEN THEY WOULD PLAY HOOKEY OR SKIP SCHOOL. THESE WERE PEOPLE WHO LIVED AN UNDISCIPLINED LIFE. THEY WERE THE "CHRISTIAN HIPPIES" OF THEIR DAY. THEY LIKED TO BE DETACHED FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT AND GO ABOUT "DOING THEIR OWN THING." THEY WERE DOWNRIGHT LAZY AND USED A MISINTERPRETATION OF DOCTRINE TO FURTHER THEIR OWN DESIRE TO LOAF AND DO NOTHING. PAUL ENCOURAGED OTHER BELIEVERS TO STAY AWAY FROM SUCH A PROFESSED BROTHER. ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE, HE IS OUT OF STEP WITH THE REST OF GOD'S PEOPLE AND NEEDS TO BE CORRECTED. PAUL USES HIS OWN EXAMPLE OF WORKING WITH HIS OWN HANDS TO FURTHER THE WORK OF CHRIST. GOD HAS NO PLACE IN HIS WORK FOR THE IDLE LOAFER. OUR LORD NEVER CALLED A LAZY PERSON TO BE ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES. THEY WERE ALL BUSY PEOPLE, WORKING WHEN THE LORD CALLED THEM. *(1 Cor. 6:19-20) "Not our own"*

*"Dropouts"*

### B. A WORD ABOUT WORK - vs. 10-12

*"Protestant work ethic"  
Bible work ethic*

THE JEWS BELIEVED IN THE DIGNITY OF HONEST WORK. REGARDLESS OF WHAT KIND OF LABOR A MAN MIGHT DO, INCLUDING THAT OF BEING A SCHOLAR, A FATHER WOULD TEACH HIS SON A TRADE. THERE WAS AN OLD SAYING THAT "A MAN WHO DOES NOT TEACH HIS SON A TRADE TEACHES HIM TO STEAL." EVEN THE RABBIS WERE ALSO BAKERS, BARBERS, CARPENTERS, MASONS AND MANY OTHER TRADES. THE JEWS WERE CONCERNED THAT ACADEMIC SCHOLARS DID NOT FORGET HOW TO WORK WITH THEIR HANDS. MANY PEOPLE TODAY BELIEVE THE PHILOSOPHY THAT THE GOVERNMENT OR THE WORLD OWES THEM A LIVING. THIS CANNOT BE FOUND IN THE BIBLE. THE WORLD OWES THE CHRISTIAN NOTHING. ON THE CONTRARY, THE CHRISTIAN OWES THE WORLD THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL. THE CHRISTIAN IS NOT TO EXPECT THE GOVERNMENT, THE CHURCH OR ANYONE ELSE TO PROVIDE HIS LIVELIHOOD. WE

ARE EXPECTED TO DO SO OURSELVES! IN VERSE 10, PAUL LAYS DOWN AN IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE. HE IS NOT TALKING ABOUT THE WEAK OR INFIRMED, BUT RATHER THE ABLE-BODIED PERSON WHO REFUSES TO WORK. NOWHERE IN THE BIBLE ARE WE TAUGHT THAT THE CHURCH IS OBLIGATED TO HELP THE MAN WHO IS ABLE TO WORK BUT REFUSES TO DO SO. THE MAN WHO DOES NOT ENGAGE IN HONEST TOIL IS APT TO BECOME, ACCORDING TO VERSE 11, A BUSYBODY. A BUSYBODY IS A PERSON WHO IS ACTIVE ABOUT TRIFLES. THEY DO NOT HAVE BUSINESS OF THEIR OWN, SO THEY MEDDLE IN OTHER PEOPLE'S AFFAIRS. THEY ENGAGE IN IDLE GOSSIP AND FRITTER AWAY THEIR TIME MEDDLING IN OTHER PEOPLE'S BUSINESS. THE MAN OR WOMAN WHO IS ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN HONEST AND WHOLESOME TOIL WILL NOT HAVE TIME TO BUSY HIMSELF WITH THE PERSONAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER PEOPLE! THE BIBLE WOULD WARN US TO KEEP OUR NOSE IN OUR OWN AFFAIRS AND LET OTHER PEOPLE TAKE CARE OF THEIR OWN BUSINESS. IN GENESIS 3:19, GOD LAID DOWN A PRINCIPLE AFTER HE HAD PRONOUNCED A CURSE UPON THE EARTH. HE SAID "IN THE SWEAT OF THY FACE SHALT THOU EAT BREAD, TILL THOU RETURN UNTO THE GROUND; FOR OUT OF IT WAST THOU TAKEN: FOR DUST THOU ART, AND UNTO DUST SHALT THOU RETURN." PART OF GOD'S PENALTY, WITH REFERENCE TO MAN'S SIN AGAINST GOD, WAS THE BURDEN OF WORK. PART OF WOMAN'S PENALTY WAS PAIN IN CHILD BEARING. AS LONG AS MAN IS UPON THE FACE OF THE EARTH, HE MUST EARN HIS BREAD BY THE LABOR OF HIS OWN HANDS. THIS IS NOT NECESSARILY A BURDEN, BUT CAN BE BLESSING. THERE IS WHOLESOME THERAPY TO PRODUCTIVE WORK. (PART OF OUR PROBLEM IN AMERICA MAY BE THIS VERY THING. RELATE OUR DISCUSSION WITH RAY BOWEN WITH REFERENCE TO THE DISAPPEARANCE OF CRAFTSMEN IN THE FURNITURE BUSINESS.) TO THOSE WHO WERE FAITHFUL IN THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES, BOTH AT HOME AND IN THE CHURCH, PAUL INTERJECTS SOME NOTES OF ENCOURAGEMENT. IN VERSE 13, HE ENCOURAGES MEN NOT TO LOSE HEART. EVERY CHRISTIAN KNOWS WHAT IT IS TO BE PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY WEARY IN THIS LIFE. THERE IS THE TEMPTATION TO GROW DISCOURAGED WHEN WE SEE OTHERS WHO ARE NOT WORKING NEARLY SO HARD BUT APPEAR TO BE ACCOMPLISHING FAR MORE. THE TENDENCY IS TO GIVE UP OR QUIT OR SAY "WHAT'S THE USE?" THERE WERE SOME IN THE THESSALONIAN CHURCH WHO, IN THE MIDST OF THEIR TROUBLES AND PERSECUTIONS, FELT JUST EXACTLY THIS WAY. PAUL ENCOURAGED THEM TO KEEP ON KEEPING ON. ALSO, IN VERSES 13-15, HE CONTINUES THIS IDEA OF NOTING PEOPLE WHO DO NOT OBEY THE WORD OF GOD AND DO NOT KEEP COMPANY WITH THEM. PAUL KNEW THAT FRIENDSHIPS ARE VITAL. WE SHOULD CHOOSE OUR FRIENDS AMONG THE LORD'S PEOPLE. THIS WILL SAVE US

MANY HEARTACHES AND HEADACHES. IT MAY CUT DOWN THE CIRCLE OF OUR FRIENDSHIPS, BUT OUR FRIENDSHIPS WILL BE WHOLESOME AND WORTHWHILE. IN THE LONG RUN, IT WILL SAVE US FROM MANY, MANY DISTRESSES IN LIFE. I WANT MY ~~CLOSE FRIENDS~~ TO BE THOSE WHO HAVE COME UNDER THE DISCIPLINE OF THE WORD OF GOD! (REFERENCE TO BOB TURLEY'S COMMENT CONCERNING THE DISCIPLINE OF A BIBLE-PREACHING CHURCH AND ITS WHOLESOME EFFECT IN THE LIFE.)

### III. A DOUBLE-BARRELLED BENEDICTION - VERSES 16-18

#### A. PEACE - VERSE 16

IN THE CLOSING BENEDICTION, PAUL DEALS WITH TWO GREAT DOCTRINAL WORDS IN THE BIBLE, PEACE AND GRACE. IN THE MIDST OF GREAT PERSECUTION AND DISTRESS, WHERE MANY HAD DIED AND SOME WERE LIVING DISORDERLY LIVES, PAUL GAVE TO THE CHURCH THE BENEDICTION OF PEACE. THE ONLY WAY A MAN CAN HAVE PEACE IN HIS HEART IS TO SURRENDER TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. THE GOD OF ALL PEACE ALONE CAN GIVE US THE PEACE OF GOD. IN OUR RESTLESS TROUBLED WORLD, NOTHING IS MORE NEEDED AND MORE DESIRED THAN CALM WITHIN. (MY OWN TESTIMONY AFTER HAVING RECEIVED CHRIST AS SAVIOUR, GOING HOME AND SLEEPING A SLEEP OF PEACE FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER!)

#### B. GRACE - VERSE 18

IF EVER A MAN IS GOING TO KNOW GOD, HE WILL BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH THIS WORD. BY GRACE GOD SAVES US, BY GRACE GOD KEEPS US, AND BY GRACE WE ARE ENABLED TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE TILL WE SEE HIM. IF YOU AS A CHRISTIAN ARE GOING TO LIVE BY GOD, IT WILL BE BY HIS GRACE. IF YOU ARE UNSAVED AND OUTSIDE OF CHRIST, GOD ASKS YOU TO GET SAVED BY GRACE AND NOT BY YOUR OWN WORKS. COME TO CHRIST AND PLEAD HIS GRACE AND NOT YOUR GOODNESS.