

1 Thessalonians 3

Before we begin tonight, I want to make a quick pitch for the ScriptureDoc web site that now contains 3 pages so far, 10 blog posts, spanning 5 categories (most posts have a spiffy picture to go with it, 126 tags, 10 comments, and some whizbang widgets. There's a flash gallery on each page, and everything feeds into Twitter, Facebook, and I'm working on LinkedIn.

Why the pitch? What's on the site that you don't get in these studies? Read a couple of posts and you'll see. Yesterday, I took a large Christian organization to task for what to me is a debate over a totally wrong question; that being whether accuracy or readability is better in bible versions.

More and more I see a crying need to make sense of God for people who depend on theologians and churches that are using Bibles that are mistranslated and produce the same misunderstanding and therefore misapplication of God's word that Christendom has suffered with for nearly 2,000 years! It's one of the big reasons I wrote the book, GO GOD! However, the confusion, contention, and division continues, and Gods kids are the victims. It's silly to me, but I'm only one guy.

Here's what I'd like you to do, if it bears witness in your spirits:

1. Jump on the ScriptureDoc web site and share the postings you like most with your friends, family and colleagues.
2. Follow ScriptureDoc on Twitter and retweet the posts from there, and link them to your Facebook account.
3. If we're not already Facebook friends, and networked through LinkedIn, let's do it and help me get the word out.

The more people get a grip on "correctly cutting" the word of the truth, the more healthy the members of the Body of Christ will be, and the better equipped, I believe to deal with life's challenges until He returns and we meet Him face to face. There is no need for anyone to live in the continuing dark ages of Christian mythology. The Renaissance is right there in the Scriptures. We just need someone to light 'em up...and that's what I've been preparing to do—and didn't even know it—since 1972!

Tonight is our 82nd "***Light Up the Scriptures***" study. There's already enough material to fill a book, and that's a project I believe is coming...but right now, I'm asking all who are led by the spirit to do so, to visit ScriptureDoc.com and share the truth with those you know, love and serve.

OK...We're back in Thessalonians tonight, after taking a side road into the area of obedience last week.

We looked into the beginning of Chapter 3 last time where, in verse 4, Paul recalled predicting the afflictions that came upon the Thessalonians. One of the big lessons from our last study was that God tests, but the Adversary tries. We looked at the different characteristics between the testing and trial, and the very different goals of each.

We'll pick up Paul's letter tonight in . . .

1 Thessalonians 3

6 Yet at present, because of Timothy's coming to us from you, and bringing us the evangel of your faith and your love, and that you have a good remembrance of us always, longing to see us even as we also you –

Remember that the word, “evangel” means “glad tidings,” and here, Paul writes of his delight in hearing the glad tidings of the Thessalonians’ faith, love, and their “good remembrance of him. I couldn’t find another place in the NT scriptures where the word evangel was applied to an ecclesia. It’s a term, usually rendered “gospel” in most Bibles, used to refer to Jesus Christ, the Kingdom, the evangel of peace or of God. Paul also refers to “my evangel,” because of its uniqueness. But in a quick search of 70 references for the word, this looks like the only time we have glad tidings associated with a group of people, the Thessalonians in this case who are now Christians when they were once pagans.

You can kind of see here too—in fact, throughout our study of this 1st letter to the Thessalonians—that Paul really thought well of these folks and wanted to be with them more...and no wonder—they were so receptive to him and his companions, and more importantly to the word of the Lord to them. Add to that his empathy with them in their persecutions, which Paul had also suffered.

7 therefore we were consoled, brethren, over you in all our necessity and affliction, through your faith,

8 for now we are living if ever you are standing firm in the Lord.

I thought this phrase in verse 8 was odd (re-read it), and I had to consult the commentaries. I found a bunch, some better than others. This one, by W.E. Vine, in his collected writings, made the most sense to me and it was perhaps the simplest too:

enjoy life; a vivid rhetorical description of the contrast between [Paul's] state of apprehension when he was in ignorance of their welfare, and the comfort and ease of mind produced by Timothy's good news. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson or Logos](#))

The word “if” in verse 8 is not written as a question, but as an indication that Paul KNOWS the Thessalonians are standing strong in the midst of persecution. “Stand” is the same word Paul used in Ephesians 6 when he described the Panoply of God. In writing about the panoply in my book, **GO GOD!**, I learned that the word “stand” meant to stand on one’s own two feet. It has the sense of conquering about it.

9 For what thanksgiving are we able to repay to God concerning you for all the joy with which we are rejoicing because of you in front of our God,
10 night and day superexcessively beseeching to see your face and to adjust the deficiencies of your faith?

The “deficiencies of your faith” in verse 10 – “deficiencies” comes from the Greek word, also rendered “want: to be without something needful” – the term does not indicate that the Thessalonians WERE deficient or wanting in a negative sense, but that so much more was needed than Paul could have imparted to them during his physical presence, or through another messenger...yet he did all he could through both letters to the group in Thessalonica...plus they would have undoubtedly read some of his other letters that were no doubt circulated throughout the ecclesias.

11 Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus, be directing our way to you!
12 Now may the Lord cause you to increase and superabound in love for one another and for all, even as we also for you,
13 to establish your hearts unblamable [deserving no censure, free from fault or defect] in holiness [your set apartness, your consecratedness to God] in front of our God and Father, in **the presence** of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

“**The** presence of our Lord Jesus” here is not a figure of speech. Paul is referring to the literal, physical presence of the Lord at His coming and at our apparent presentation before God, having been translated into bodies of glory, along with all His saints—praise is holy name! In all probability, Paul never saw the Thessalonians again himself and, if he did, the scriptures are silent about it. He obviously had every confidence in the Thessalonians’ faith, and clearly wanted to make certain that it was complete and sealed into the Day of the Lord. So, now let’s read this scene again and imagine that Paul is writing to you today, wherever you are right now in the world, and no matter what you are going through...

READ Verse 12-13 again. Doesn’t that have much more significance now than even a few minutes ago when we first looked at it? It is a wonderful prospect we face at His coming.

Chapter 4

1 For the rest, then, brethren, we are asking you and entreating in the Lord Jesus, that, according as you accepted from us how you must be walking and pleasing God

(according as you are walking also), that you may be superabounding yet more,

2 for you are aware what **charges** we give to you through the Lord Jesus.

“**charges**” = announcements, messages, proclamations...later Paul will use the word commandments

3 For **this is the will of God: your holiness.**

When Paul declares what the will of God is, we'd better sit up and pay attention. So, what does holiness look like? In answering the question, remember that Paul is talking to a group of people not long out of pagan ritual and idolatry, with all the abuses and excesses typical of people who live in the absence of the evangel of God. The Thessalonians were still surrounded by everything Paul is about to list. Come to think of it, so are we today!

You are to be abstaining from all prostitution;

4 each of you is to be aware of his own vessel, to be acquiring it in holiness and honor,

“**Vessel**” = “*an implement*” (Thayer) It's the same word as “*instrument*.” “*Vessel*” was a common Greek metaphor for “*body*” since Greeks thought of souls living temporarily in bodies” (Thayer). I think there's more here than a reference merely to bodies. Paul could easily have used the word, “*body*.” He referred to vessels of honor and dishonor in Romans 9:21, and Peter refers to a wife “*the weaker vessel*” in 1 Peter 3:7. The Concordant Commentary is silent about it, so I'll give you what I see: a vessel is what we are “poured into” like wine poured into bottles. Our vessel contains all of our awareness and it captures all our impressions, perceptions and experiences; and, to some extent, it is shaped by all of these. It's not just our bodies that will stand before the dais of Christ, but we who were once contained within these earthen vessels and have been freed from their constraints.

5 not in lustful passion even as the nations also who are not acquainted with God.

6 No one is to be **circumventing** and **overreaching** his brother in the matter,

No one is to be [getting the better of someone by stepping over him or her] and No one is to be [superior, excel beyond, surpass, or have an advantage over] anyone else

because the Lord is the **Avenger** [the one who punishes, or exacts a penalty] of all these, according as we said to you before also, and **certify**,

7 for God calls us, not for uncleanness, but in holiness.

8 Surely, in consequence, then, he who is repudiating [having no place for; do away with, to set aside, disregard; thwarting the efficacy of; nullifying, making void, or frustrating] is not **repudiating** man, but God, Who is also giving His holy spirit to you.

9 Now, concerning brotherly fondness, we have no need to be writing to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to be loving one another,

10 for you are doing it also to all the brethren who are in the whole of Macedonia. Now we are entreating you, brethren, to be superabounding yet more,

11 and that you be **ambitious to be quiet** [be fond of attaining quiet], and to be **engaged in your own affairs** [practice your own business with continued, habitual action], and to be **working with your hands**, according as we charge you, 12 that you may be walking **respectably** [decently] toward **those outside** and you may have need of nothing.

13 Now we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are **reposing**, lest you may sorrow according as the rest, also, who have no expectation.

Reposing = *sleeping* = a sweet term meaning “*those who are dead.*” Paul says here: “*There’s no need grieve about those who die, like others around you, who don’t know God and who have no expectation, i.e. resurrection.*”

14 For, if we are believing that Jesus died and rose, thus also, those who are put to repose, will God, through Jesus, **lead forth** together with Him.

15 For this we are saying to you **by the word of the Lord**, [we’re not making this up here!] that we, the living, who are surviving to **the presence of the Lord** [same expression as in 3:13], should by no means **outstrip** those who are put to repose, 16 for the Lord Himself will be descending from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of **the Chief Messenger**, and with **the trumpet of God**, and the dead in Christ shall be rising first.

17 Thereupon we, the living who are surviving, shall at the same time be snatched away together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And thus shall we always be together with the Lord.

18 So that, console one another with these words.

Read the commentary for this section:

The resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee that all who are His will likewise be raised. Until Paul received this revelation, the only resurrection of the saints was the "resurrection of life" (Jn.5:29)

those who do good shall go out into a resurrection of life, yet those who commit bad things, into a resurrection of judging.

called the "former" resurrection (Un.20:5), at the beginning of the thousand years, after the judgment period.

And I perceived a messenger descending out of heaven, having the key of the submerged chaos and a large chain in his hand.

2 And he lays hold of the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the Adversary and Satan, and binds him a thousand years.

3 And he casts him into the submerged chaos and locks it, and seals it over him (lest he should still be deceiving the nations) until the thousand years should be finished. After these things he must be loosed a little time.

4 And I perceived thrones, and they are seated on them, and judgment was granted to them. And the souls of those executed because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who do not worship the wild beast or its image, and did not get the emblem on their forehead and on their hand- they also live and reign with Christ a thousand years.

5 (The rest of the dead do not live until the thousand years should be finished.) This is the former resurrection.

6 Happy and holy is he who is having part in the former resurrection! Over these the second death has no jurisdiction, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will be reigning with Him the thousand years.

*Then the Lord comes down to earth. The saints are not snatched into the air [in “the resurrection of life” that Jesus spoke about in John 5, and which we just read about in Revelation 20]. But **this** resurrection [—the one Paul is referring to—] follows the Lord's presence in the air long before His coming to the earth. It precedes the great judgment era which ushers in the day of Jehovah. Being justified in the blood of Christ, we shall be saved from God's indignation through Him (Rom.5:9 - **being now justified in His blood, we shall be saved from indignation, through Him**). God has not assigned us to indignation but to the procuring of salvation ([that's coming up in 1st Thessalonians] 5:9).*

*This new revelation is further unfolded to the Corinthians (1Co.15:51 - **Lo! a secret to you am I telling! We all, indeed, shall not be put to repose, yet we all shall be changed, 52 in an instant, in the twinkle of an eye, at the last trump. For He will be trumpeting, and the dead will be roused incorruptible, and we shall be changed.53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality.**), Here, Paul discloses the secret is that the living, as well as the dead, will be changed. Both will be given incorruptible, spiritual, celestial bodies, without which, indeed, they could hardly meet Him in the air. The crowning glory of this blessed expectation was made known to the Philippians. **“our realm is inherent in the heavens, out of which we are awaiting a Saviour also, the Lord, Jesus Christ, 21 Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation, to conform it to the body of His glory, in accord with the operation which enables Him even to subject all to Himself.”** (Phil.3:21)*

These bodies of humiliation will be transfigured to conform them to that glorious body which blinded Paul when first he beheld Him.

Chapter 5

1 Now concerning the times and the eras, brethren, you have no need to be written to, 2 for you yourselves are accurately aware that the **day of the Lord is as a thief in the night -- thus is it coming!**

3 Now whenever they may be saying "**Peace and security,**" then **extermination** is standing by them unawares, even as a pang over the pregnant, and **they may by no means escape.**

4 Now you, brethren, are **not in darkness**, that the day may be overtaking you as a thief,

5 for you are all **sons of the light and sons of the day.** We are not of the night nor of the darkness.

6 Consequently, then, **we may not be drowsing**, even as the rest, but **we may be watching and be sober.**

7 For those who are drowsing are drowsing at night, and those who are drunk are drunk at night.

8 Yet we, being of the day, may be sober, putting on the **cuirass of faith and love, and the helmet, the expectation of salvation,** [an early “panoply”]

9 for **God did not appoint us to [the] indignation**, but to **the procuring of salvation** through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Procuring is “preserving; possession; obtaining). God didn’t set us up for the time when He unleashes His stored-up anger! No! Praise God, He set us up to obtain, possess and preserve fully that which, up until the Day we meet Him in the air, we have only enjoyed as an earnest of the allotment by faith in Him.

10 Who died for our sakes, that, whether we may be watching or drowsing, **we should be living at the same time together with Him.**

11 Wherefore, console one another and edify one the other, according as you are doing also.

Be careful Verse 10 – is

12 Now we are asking you, brethren, to **perceive those** who are toiling among you and **presiding** over you in the Lord and **admonishing** you,

13 and to deem them **exceedingly distinguished** in love, because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.

14 Now we are entreating you, brethren; **admonish the disorderly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the infirm, be patient toward all.**

15 See that no one may be rendering evil for evil to anyone, but always **pursue** that which is good for one another as well as for all.

16 Be rejoicing always.

17 Be praying **unintermittingly.**

18 **In everything be giving thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**

19 **Quench not the spirit.**

20 **Scorn not prophecies.**

21 **Yet be testing all, retaining the ideal.**

22 From everything wicked to the perception, **abstain.**

23 Now may the **God of peace** Himself be hallowing you wholly; and may your **unimpaired** spirit and soul and body be kept blameless in **the presence of** our Lord Jesus Christ!

24 Faithful is He Who is **calling** you, Who will be doing it also.

25 Brethren, pray concerning us also.

26 Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.

27 I am adjuring you by the Lord, that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren.

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