

Thessalonica

Thessalonica was the largest and the most important city of Macedonia and was also the capital of the province. Unlike Philippi, Thessalonica had a strong Jewish community and its own synagogue. For three weeks Paul went to the synagogue and reasoned from the Scriptures that "the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead" (Acts 17:3), declaring that Jesus is the Christ. Paul's ministry in Thessalonica may have continued some weeks longer than may be initially apparent from the narrative in Acts¹.

The success of Paul's ministry, particularly in attracting God-fearers away from the synagogue, angered the Jews who stirred up a riot outside the home of Jason, a man with whom Paul and his companions had been staying. Not finding the missionaries, they dragged Jason and a number of other Christians before the city officials saying, "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus" (Acts 17:6,7). Two things are evident from this accusation:

- i) Paul's preaching had at its heart the affirmation that Jesus, the Messiah, God's promised King, had come and that his reign had commenced. From the content of the letter to the Thessalonians it is evident also that he also declared that Christ was to return and would then establish his kingdom in all its glory.
- ii) Paul's preaching was having no small effect upon the Jewish communities of the Diaspora. They viewed his ministry as a threat to their very existence, so much so that they were even prepared to use their own hope of the Messiah as an accusation against Paul before the Roman officials – as has the Jewish leaders at the time of Jesus' trial.

1 Thessalonians

The Christians at Thessalonica were facing opposition, probably chiefly from the Jews. One element of this campaign of opposition seems to have consisted in a personal attack upon Paul. His opponents suggested that he was just another fly-by-night wandering preacher who had no real concern for the Thessalonians – after all, had he not abandoned them when the going got tough? In writing to them Paul therefore emphasises the purity of his motives and his deep affection for them.

Apart from the external trials the church was troubled by erroneous views concerning the second advent. Imagining that the Parousia was imminent:

- i) Some were troubled concerning Christians who had died, fearing that they would miss out on the coming kingdom;
- ii) Some had abandoned their daily work on the supposition that further attachment to this present world is pointless.

In seeking to deal with these problems, the leaders in the church, lacking maturity, seemed to have caused further problems.

Paul addresses all of these issues in his letter, as well as encouraging the Thessalonians to keep away from the immoral behaviour so common in the Greek world, behaviour which may have formed part of their former lifestyle.

1 Thessalonians was probably written in the early part of AD 50.

¹ Ramsay suggested that it may have been as long as 6 months. Polhill, in his commentary on Acts writes, "It was long enough for a church to be established and leadership appointed (1 Thess 5:12). It was of sufficient duration that Paul received financial support from Philippi "time and again" while in Thessalonica (Phil 4:16). Evidently he took up his trade and supported himself as well during this period (1 Thess 2:9). Most of Paul's converts in Thessalonica seem to have come out of paganism, judging from 1 Thess 1:9, which would indicate a more extensive Gentile witness than one might gather from Luke's highly compressed account."

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Thessalonians

John Eadie

A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians, MacMillan, London, 1877

Leon Morris

The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1991

1 Thessalonians 1:1

Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ· χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη.

Silvanus is the Silas of Acts. Bruce suggests that the mention of Silas and Timothy is more than a courtesy and that they may have actively participated in the composition of the letter.

ἐκκλησία, ας f congregation, church

"This wording directs attention to the group of believers comprising the local church, whereas such a salutation as 'to the church of God in Corinth' (1 Cor 1:2) brings to our minds rather the great universal church as it is manifested in a particular place." Morris

πατήρ, πατρός m father

ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ is an unusual expression. "It is Paul's usual habit to speak about being 'in Christ,' though 'in God' does occur (Col 3:3; cf. Eph 3:9). But throughout these two epistles he constantly associates the Father and the Son in the closest of fashions (cf. v3; 3:11-13; 5:18; 2 Thess 1:1,2,8,12; 2:16-17; 3:5...). No higher view can possibly be taken of the Person of Christ. God is occasionally called 'Father' in the Old Testament, but Jesus taught his followers to see God as Father and it is a characteristic designation among the Christians." Morris

"The whole name ... *Lord Jesus Christ*, and the significance of each of its component parts and all of them in conjunction, was essentially pre-Pauline, the faith of the church from the beginning." Neill. Each element needs therefore to be understood firstly against its Jewish background.

χάρις, ἰτος f grace, unmerited favour
εἰρήνη, ης f peace

Reflects the Hebrew greeting *shalom*.

Many MSS add expressions such as the TR's ἀπο θεου πατρος ἡμων και κυριου Ἰησου Χριστου. Metzger, in his *Textual Commentary* on the UBS text writes, "Representatives of the Alexandrian and the Western types of text unite in supporting the shorter reading. Other witnesses expand the salutation by adding phrases familiar from the salutations in other Pauline letters. If any of these expansions had been original, there is no reason why it would have been deleted."

1 Thessalonians 1:2

Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν μνησίαν ποιούμενοι ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν ἡμῶν, ἀδιαλείπτως

Paul usually begins his letters with thanksgiving. Galatians is a "conspicuous exception." Morris

εὐχαριστεῶ thank, give thanks

The plural implying Paul, Silas and Timothy.

παντοτε always

μνησία, ας f remembrance, mention

ἀδιαλείπτως ceaselessly, without ceasing

Several commentators (such as Eadie and Hendriksen) argue that ἀδιαλείπτως belongs with what follows – so NIV. Morris thinks that it belongs with 'mentioning' rather than the 'remembering' of the following verse.

1 Thessalonians 1:3

μνημονεύοντες ὑμῶν τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως καὶ τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν,

μνημονεῦω remember, keep in mind

'work produced by faith, labour produced by love, patience produced by hope' Paul speaks of aspects of their character and conduct which have their origin and dynamic in these fundamental graces.

For a similar conjunction of ἔργου, κόπος and ὑπομονη cf. Rev 2:2.

For the conjunction of faith, hope and love, cf. 5:8; Rom 5:1-5; 1 Cor 13:13; Gal 5:5-6; Col 1:4-5; Heb 6:10-12; 10:22-24; 1 Pet 1:21-22.

κοπος, ου m work, labour trouble

ἀγαπη is the distinctive love that God has manifested towards us in Christ; love to the unworthy, love that acts at cost, love seen supremely in the cross.

ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance
ἐλπις, ιδος f hope, ground of hope, what is hoped for
ἐμπροσθεν prep with gen before, in front of

ἐμπροσθεν... Eadie argues that this phrase belongs with the opening participle μνημονευοντες. Morris thinks this unlikely and suggests that it either belongs with the whole of ἔργου ... Χριστου or perhaps simply with the last phrase concerning hope.

1 Thessalonians 1:4

εἰδότες, ἀδελφοὶ ἠγαπημένοι ὑπὸ θεοῦ, τὴν ἐκλογὴν ὑμῶν,

εἰδότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand

ἀδελφοὶ – fellow members of God's family.

ἠγαπημένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl ἀγαπαω

Their love is a reflection of the fact that they are loved.

ἐκλογη, ης f election, choosing, what is chosen

"Election protects us from thinking of salvation as dependent on human whims, and roots it squarely in the will of God... Nothing gives security to salvation like the concept of election." Morris

Paul is confident of their election because of the evidence of God's grace at work in them, as he indicates in the following verses.

1 Thessalonians 1:5

ὅτι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐγενήθη εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν λόγῳ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πληροφορία πολλῇ, καθὼς οἴδατε οἷοι ἐγενήθημεν ἐν ὑμῖν δι' ὑμᾶς:

εὐαγγέλιον, ου n good news, gospel
ἐγενήθη Verb, aor indic, 3 s γινομαι
μονος, η, ου i) adj only, alone; ii) adv monon only, alone

δυνάμει Noun, dat s δυναμις
ἅγιος, α, ου holy, consecrated, set apart to/by God

πληροφορια, ας f full assurance, conviction

πληροφορία πολλῇ – 'with deep conviction'

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου much, many

Some (e.g. Eadie and Morris) understand Paul to be speaking here of his subjective sense of the Spirit at work – he felt that the Spirit was at work through him as he preached. It is better to understand what he says in an objective sense – he was confident that the Spirit was at work because of the effect he observed in his hearers.

οἷος, α, ου relative pronoun such as, of what kind

οἴδατε οἷοι ἐγενήθημεν ἐν ὑμῖν δι' ὑμᾶς: 'You know how we were among you for your sake' Eadie argues that this refers to the manner of their preaching and not to their self-support which is dealt with in 2:7-9. However, it is probably best to see it as a reference to the missionaries' general conduct, particularly conduct in the face of opposition, of which the Thessalonians then became imitators (v.6).

1 Thessalonians 1:6

καὶ ὑμεῖς μιμηταὶ ἡμῶν ἐγενήθητε καὶ τοῦ κυρίου, δεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον ἐν θλίψει πολλῇ μετὰ χαρᾶς πνεύματος ἁγίου,

μιμητης, ου m imitator

See 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Phil 3:17

δεξάμενοι Verb, aor midd (dep) ptc, m nom pl δεχομαι receive, accept, welcome

"The word ... is that used for the reception of a guest (as in Luke 10:8, 10; Heb 11:31), and it includes the thought of a warm welcome." Morris

θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering

Cf. 3:3,7; 2 Thess 1:4,6 and the cognate verb in 3:4; 2 Thess 1:6,7.

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου much, many ii)πολλα many things

There had been opposition in Thessalonica from the beginning (Acts 17:5-9) and there was now persecution from local pagans (1 Thess 2:14).

χαρα, ας joy

Joy in suffering had been the hallmark of Paul and Silas in Philippi (Acts 16:25).

1 Thessalonians 1:7

ὥστε γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς τύπον πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐν τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ.

ὥστε so that, with the result that
τύπος, ου m pattern, example, type

"In the present passage the word is used in the singular. Paul is speaking of the church as a pattern community rather than of the individuals comprising it as so many individual patterns." Morris

πας, πασα, παν γεν παντος, πασης, παντος
without the article each, every (pl = all);
every kind of

"First they followed their preachers as a living pattern or example, μιμηται, and then they in turn became an example, τυπος, a pattern for the imitation of other churches." Eadie

1 Thessalonians 1:8

ἀφ' ὑμῶν γὰρ ἐξήχηται ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου οὐ μόνον ἐν τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ Ἀχαΐᾳ, ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ἢ πίστις ὑμῶν ἢ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐξελέλυθεν, ὥστε μὴ χρεΐαν ἔχειν ἡμᾶς λαλεῖν τι·

ἐξήχηται Verb, imperf pass indic, 3 s ἐξηχεῶ
sound out

"The verb ἐξήχηται is found only here in the New Testament. It is a vivid word, and expositors from Chrysostom on have often thought the imagery to have been derived from the sounding out of a trumpet, though some prefer to think of the rolling of thunder. Either way there is nothing apologetic about it! The perfect denotes the continuing activity, as does the use of ἐν rather than εἰς (though this cannot be pressed). The word is pictured as still sounding forth." Morris

μονος, η, ον i) adj only, alone; ii) adv μονον only, alone
τοπος, ου m place

προς τον θεον rather than the more usual εἰς τον θεον to imply how they had turned to God from idols, cf. the following verse.

ἐξελέλυθεν Verb, perf indic ἐξερχομαι go out

Reflecting the strategic position of Thessalonica on the Via Egnatia and with a harbour.

ὥστε so that, with the result that
χρεια, ας f need, want
λαλεω speak, talk

1 Thessalonians 1:9

αὐτοὶ γὰρ περὶ ἡμῶν ἀπαγγέλλουσιν ὅποιαν εἴσοδον ἔσχομεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ πῶς ἐπεστρέψατε πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων δουλεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ,

ἀπαγγελλω announce, proclaim

Continuous present, 'kept talking'.

ὅποιος, α, ον correlative pronoun of what sort, such as

εἴσοδος, ου f visit, reception, entrance

ἔσχομεν Verb, aor act indic, 1 pl ἔχω

πως how, in what way

ἐπιστρεφω turn back, return, turn round, turn

εἶδωλον, ου n idol

Most Thessalonian believers were Gentiles. "Becoming a Christian involves a very definite break with non-Christian habits. Whatever the believers' previous background, there must always be a turning from idols of some sort. The act of conversion involves a change of direction of the will. This is a decisive happening, a reorientation of the whole of life. This is so in every age, but especially was it true of Christians in the Greek world of the first century A.D." Morris

ζωω live, be alive

ἀληθινος, α, ον real, genuine, true

"The word Paul uses conveys the idea of 'genuine, real' (BAGD). Its opposite is not so much 'false' as 'unreal.' Moffatt says that it is 'real as opposed to false in the sense of counterfeit'." Morris

1 Thessalonians 1:10

καὶ ἀναμένειν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν, ὃν ἠγείρειν ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦν τὸν ῥυόμενον ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης.

ἀναμενω wait expectantly

Here alone in the NT.

ἠγειρω raise

νεκρος, α, ον dead

The mention of Jesus' resurrection from the dead is preceded and followed by eschatological references. This event is central to NT eschatology – Christ has been raised as the firstfruits of the new creation.

ῥυομαι save, rescue

Note the present participle ῥυόμενον 'Jesus who is delivering us...' expresses the full force of the present. Christ's saving or delivering work is ongoing and will be completed only when we are safe with him in glory.

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

"God's wrath lacks the imperfections that are bound up with the purest of human righteous indignation. But it gives strong expression to the active opposition of a holy God to all that is evil. We cannot do without this concept." Morris.

The present participle ἐρχομένης stresses that God's wrath is coming even now – it is on its way.

These truths must have occupied a prominent place in the preaching of Paul and his companions at Thessalonica.

1 Thessalonians 2:1-6

Paul seems to have been accused by some of insincerity – preaching to profit from his converts. Hence his defence in these verses.

1 Thessalonians 2:1

Αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἴδατε, ἀδελφοί, τὴν εἴσοδον ἡμῶν
τὴν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὅτι οὐ κενὴ γέγονεν,

οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present
meaning) know, understand
εἰσοδος, ου f see 1:9

By repeating the term εἰσοδος the thoughts here are linked back with 1:9. "You' here corresponds to 'they themselves' in 1:9. There Paul cited outsiders as witnesses; here he says that the Thessalonians needed no one else to bear witness, for they themselves knew what had happened." Morris

κενος, η, ον empty, to no purpose,
senseless

Morris suggests that the meaning is 'hollow, empty, wanting in purpose and earnestness.' "Paul is affirming as a well-known fact the purposeful manner of his visit."

γέγονεν Verb, perf act indic, 3s γινομαι

1 Thessalonians 2:2

ἀλλὰ προπαθόντες καὶ ὑβρισθέντες καθὼς
οἴδατε ἐν Φιλίπποις ἐπαρρησιασάμεθα ἐν τῷ
θεῷ ἡμῶν λαλῆσαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον
τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πολλῷ ἀγῶνι.

προπαθόντες Aor act ptc, m nom pl
προπασχω suffer previously
ὑβρισθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl
ὑβριζω treat shamefully, insult, mistreat

"On that occasion, when it had been suggested that the jailor should simply free Paul and Silas, the great apostle had refused to leave until the praetors themselves had come to make amends for their treatment of Roman citizens. In his insistence on upholding the dignity of Roman citizenship we see something of the deep hurt Paul had experienced in the indignities heaped on him. So now, as he recalls those days, he uses a word that evokes memories of the insolence of those who had ill-treated him." Morris

Φιλιπποι, ων Philippi, Proper name, plural in
form

παρρησιαζομαι speak boldly, speak freely,
have courage

"It denotes a state of mind when the words flow freely, the attitude of feeling quite at home with no sense of stress or strain, an attitude that includes both boldness and confidence (in fact the corresponding noun is sometimes translated 'boldness,' sometimes 'confidence'). When it is used in the New Testament the verb always has to do with the proclamation of the gospel." Morris

ἀγων, ωνος m struggle, fight, opposition

"The use of [this] ... word here reminds the Thessalonians that the opposition that Paul had met had been intense, and his preaching had not been easy. How, in the face of this, could it be urged that he preached only for what he could get out of it." Morris

1 Thessalonians 2:3

ἢ γὰρ παράκλησις ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐκ πλάνης οὐδὲ
ἐξ ἀκαθαρσίας οὐδὲ ἐν δόλῳ,

Paul is being accused of being just another peddler of religion. "There had probably never been such a variety of religious cults and philosophic systems as in Paul's day. East and West had united and intermingled to produce an amalgam of real piety, high moral principles, crude superstition and gross license. Oriental mysteries, Greek philosophy, and local godlings competed for favour under the tolerant aegis of Roman indifference. 'Holy Men' of all creeds and countries, popular philosophers, magicians, astrologers, crack-pots, and cranks; the sincere and the spurious, the righteous and the rogue, swindlers and saints, jostled and clamoured for the attention of the credulous and the sceptical." Neil

παακλησις, εως f encouragement, comfort,
appeal

"The appeal we make does not spring from ...' NIV. The reference here is to the preaching undertaken at Thessalonica.

πλανη, ης f error, deceit, deception
οὐδε neither, nor
ἀκαθαρσια, ας f impurity, immorality,
uncleanness

Sexual impurity was a regular feature of many of the cults of antiquity.

δολος, ου m deceit, treachery

Noting the change in the preposition from ἐκ to ἐν Morris comments, "The Greek ἐκ denotes origin; but ἐν rather signifies atmosphere, so that Paul is saying that his preaching did not spring from delusion or impurity, nor was it conducted in an atmosphere of craft [i.e. trickery]."

1 Thessalonians 2:4

ἀλλὰ καθὼς δεδοκιμάσαμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ
πιστευθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον οὕτως λαλοῦμεν,
οὐχ ὡς ἄνθρωποις ἀρέσκοντες ἀλλὰ θεῷ τῷ
δοκιμάζοντι τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν.

Not the strong adversative, ἀλλὰ, 'on the contrary.'

δεδοκιμάσαμεθα verb, perf pass indic, 1 pl
δοκιμαζω test, examine, approve,
prove, discern

The perfect here not only past approval but one that continues into the present, 'we stand approved.'

πιστευθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin πιστεῶ believe; pass be entrusted with

ἀρέσκοντες Verb, pres act ptc, m nom pl ἀρεσκῶ please, seek to please, serve

Though Paul's ministry was a service to men, he is first and always a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

της καρδιας ἡμων "Here the meaning is that God searches out the whole of our inner life. Nothing is hidden from him. In passing we might note that the plural, 'our hearts,' is unlikely to be an editorial plural. It associates Silas and Timothy closely with Paul in this great affirmation." Morris

1 Thessalonians 2:5

οὔτε γάρ ποτε ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας ἐγενήθημεν, καθὼς οἴδατε, οὔτε ἐν προφάσει πλεονεξίας, θεὸς μάρτυς,

οὔτε not, nor (οὔτε ... οὔτε neither ... nor) ποτε enclitic particle once, formerly, at one time

οὔτε ποτε 'at no time,' 'never'

κολακεια, ας f flattery

"We can use this English term of remarks that, although insincere, are directed to the pleasure of the person being flattered. The Greek term has rather the idea of using fair words as a means of gaining one's own ends. It is a matter of using insincerity as an instrument of policy, as a means of persuading another to do one's will." Morris

προφασις, εως f false motive, pretence

πλεονεξια, ας f greed, covetousness

πλεονεξια refers not just greed for money but also for influence, power etc. – seeking something for oneself, 'self-seeking'.

1 Thessalonians 2:6

οὔτε ζητοῦντες ἐξ ἀνθρώπων δόξαν, οὔτε ἀπ' ὑμῶν οὔτε ἀπ' ἄλλων,

ζητεῶ seek, look for

δοξα, ας f glory

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

The meaning may be of other Christians or other people more generally.

1 Thessalonians 2:7

δυνάμενοι ἐν βάρει εἶναι ὡς Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι· ἀλλὰ ἐγενήθημεν ἥπιοι ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν, ὡς ἐὰν τροφὸς θάλπη τὰ ἐαυτῆς τέκνα·

There is disagreement over whether the first clause belongs with v6 or v7.

βάρει Noun, dat s βαρος burden, weight εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

ἐν βαρει εἶναι 'make demands upon', i.e. look for financial support. "Paul insists that those who preach the gospel have the right to be maintained by the church as they preach (1 Cor 9:14). But he was sensitive to the accusation that he made money out of his converts, so he did not insist on his own rights (1 Cor 9:15-18)." Morris

ἥπιοι Adj, m nom pl ἥπιος α ον gentle, kind [νηπιος, α, ον baby, infant, child]

There is a textual variant here between νηπιος babes, and ἥπιος gentle. It is difficult to determine which of the two is the original reading. The UBS text favours νηπιος but Metzger and Wikgren dissent, arguing that ἥπιος alone suits the context (as in the SBLGNT text above). Having discussed the various argument, Morris concludes, "When the arguments are so nicely balanced it is not possible to be absolutely sure of the original text. In general the balance of probabilities seems to favour 'babies.' If we accept this reading, the meaning is that when they preached in Thessalonica the apostles spoke as simply as possible, as simply as babies. It is a strong expression for the extreme lengths to which they went to meet the needs of their hearers."

μεσος, η, ον middle; ἐν μ., εις μ. in the middle, among

Morris writes, "ὡς ἐὰν with the subjunctive is a fairly rare construction. It seems to be a case of the late use of ἐὰν for ἄν and to be distinguished from the ordinary use of the indicative as denoting contingency. Findlay speaks of it here as implying "a standing contingency – 'as it may be (may be seen) at any time.'" Milligan cites examples of the construction from the papyri."

τροφος, ου f nurse, nursing mother

θαλπω cherish, take care of

ἐαυτος, ἐαυτη, ἐαυτον reflexive pronoun, himself, herself, itself

τεκνον, ου n child; pl descendants

1 Thessalonians 2:8

οὕτως ὀμειρόμενοι ὑμῶν εὐδοκοῦμεν
μεταδοῦναι ὑμῖν οὐ μόνον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ
θεοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ψυχάς, διότι
ἀγαπητοὶ ἡμῖν ἐγενήθητε.

ὀμειρομαι yearn for, long for (with affection)

Here alone in NT. An unusual word of uncertain derivation but expressing deep affection.

εὐδοκεω be pleased, take delight/pleasure in

The imperfect expressing "no passing whim of the apostles but their habitual style." Morris

μεταδοῦναι Verb, aor act infin μεταδιδωμι
share, give, impart
μονος, η, ον i) adj only, alone; ii) adv μονον
only, alone
ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον reflexive pronoun,
himself, herself, itself
ψυχη, ης f self, inmost being, life, 'soul',
living being

'Themselves' – their whole being was given to
te care of the Thessalonians (cf. 1 Cor 12:15;
Phil 2:17).

διοτι because, for, therefore

Equivalent to δια τουτου οτι 'on this account', in
NT always means 'because.'

ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved

"... brings before us the specifically Christian
quality of love; its use brings to mind that that
love is essentially self-giving. It is not a desire
to possess the beloved, but a desire to give, a
desire inspired by the nature of the God whom
Christians worship. Paul had come to see the
Thessalonians as the objects of God's love, and
therefore as the objects of the love of God's
servants too." Morris

Paul presents us with a fine but demanding
model of Christian ministry.

1 Thessalonians 2:9

Μνημονεύετε γάρ, ἀδελφοί, τὸν κόπον ἡμῶν
καὶ τὸν μόχθον· νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας
ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαι τινα ὑμῶν
ἐκηρύξαμεν εἰς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ.

μνημονευω remember, keep in mind
κοπος, ου m work, labour trouble
μοχθος, ου m labour, hardship

These words are also found together in 2 Cor
11:27; 2 Thess 3:8. "The combination stresses
that the work that the preachers had done had
not been token work, something in the nature
of a public show meant only to demonstrate
their willingness. It had been laborious toil.
They had had to work hard." Morris

νυξ, νυκτος f night

ἐπιβαρῆσαι Verb, aor act infin ἐπιβαρεω be
a financial burden

κηρυσσω preach, proclaim

Paul had received some help from friends at
Philippi while he was at Thessalonica (Phil
4:16) but took nothing from those to whom he
preached.

1 Thessalonians 2:10

ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες καὶ ὁ θεός, ὡς ὁσίως καὶ
δικαίως καὶ ἀμέμπτως ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν
ἐγενήθημεν,

μαρτυς, μαρτυρος m witness
ὁσίως adv in a manner pleasing to God
δικαίως adv (from δικαιοσ) righteously,
justly
ἀμέμπτως Adv (from ἀμεμπτος)
blamelessly

The adverbs are rare, though their cognate
adjectives are common in the NT.

1 Thessalonians 2:11

καθάπερ οἶδατε ὡς ἕνα ἕκαστον ὑμῶν ὡς
πατὴρ τέκνα ἑαυτοῦ

The construction of the verse is difficult,
lacking a main verb. The NIV supplies 'dealt
with' which Morris thinks "as good as any."

καθαπερ as, just as

οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present
meaning) know, understand
ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every; ἕνα ἕκαστον
each and every one

Paul's ministry among them was not marked
by favouritism or partiality but by a fatherly
care for each and every one of them.

τεκνον, ου n child; pl descendants
ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον reflexive pronoun,
himself, herself, itself

1 Thessalonians 2:12

παρακαλοῦντες ὑμᾶς καὶ παραμυθούμενοι καὶ
μαρτυρόμενοι, εἰς τὸ περιπατεῖν ὑμᾶς ἀξίως
τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ
βασιλείαν καὶ δόξαν.

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge
παραμυθεομαι comfort, console
μαρτυρομαι testify, urge

"If Paul could be tender and considerate, he yet
never lost sight of the high demands Christ
makes on his followers." Morris

περιπατεω walk, walk about, live
ἀξίως adv (from ἀξιος) worthily

καλουντος the present participle is preferable to the variant reading καλεσαντος (aor). Morris notes, "On occasion Paul can use the aorist reminding us of the once-for-all nature of the call (e.g. Gal 1:6,15); and again he may even make use of the perfect to draw attention to the fact that those called remain in the position of called ones (e.g. 1 Cor 7:15,17). But here we see that God's call is always coming to us, and it calls us to nothing less than being worthy of Him."

δοξα, ας f glory

The lack of a separate definite article for δοξαν binds it closely with βασιλειαν as a single item. "'Paul holds out this glorious future as an incentive for the Thessalonians to live worthily here and now. They have been saved by a wonderful God. They have been brought into his kingdom. They face a glorious future. Let them so live here and now as to be worthy of such a God!" Morris

1 Thessalonians 2:13

Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ ἀδιαλείπτως, ὅτι παραλαβόντες λόγον ἀκοῆς παρ' ἡμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐδέξασθε οὐ λόγον ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ καθὼς ἀληθῶς ἐστὶν λόγον θεοῦ, ὃς καὶ ἐνεργεῖται ἐν ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν.

εὐχαριστεω thank, give thanks
ἀδιαλείπτως ceaselessly, without ceasing
παραλαβόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl
παραλαμβάνω take, receive, accept
ἀκοῆς Noun, gen s ἀκοῆ, ης f report, news, hearing

Paul "was conscious that ... [his theology] rested at bottom on the truth of God; and when he preached it ... he did not submit it to men as a theme for discussion. He put it above discussion. He pronounced a solemn and reiterated anathema on either man or angel who should put anything else in its stead. He published it, not for criticism, as though it had been his own device: but, as the word of God, for the obedience of faith." Denny

ἀληθῶς adv truly, in truth
ἐνεργεω work, be at work (in)

Morris argues that the ὃς of the verb ἐνεργεῖται refers back to λόγον, not θεοῦ. He follows the assertion of Lightfoot that when speaking of God Paul always uses the active voice of this verb, using the middle (or passive) when speaking of some other intermediary, "thus emphasising that it is God, and not some quasi-magical power in the word itself that works."

The word of God is active and powerful: it is not Paul and his team but the word of God which has transformed these Thessalonians. The present tense here πιστεύουσιν refers to "a continuous process of belief (rather than the single act of decision that would be more naturally expressed by the aorist)." Morris
The believing (present tense) and the inworking (present tense) are coordinate.

1 Thessalonians 2:14

ὁμοίως γὰρ μιμηταὶ ἐγενήθητε, ἀδελφοί, τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν οὐσῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ὅτι τὰ αὐτὰ ἐπάθετε καὶ ὁμοίως ὑπὸ τῶν ἰδίων συμφυλετῶν καθὼς καὶ αὐτοὶ ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων

μιμητης, ου m imitator
ἐκκλησία, ας f congregation, church
ἐπάθετε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl πασχω
suffer, experience
ἰδιος, α, ον one's own
συμφυλετης, ου m fellow-countryman

"An expression that may be in part geographical and include Thessalonian Jews, but that certainly points to a large Gentile element in the opposition. We are probably not far wrong in seeing the opposition as rooted in the hostility of the Jews, but as extending also to the Greeks who were so stirred up by the Jews that they took action on their own account. Incidentally, the expression reveals that the church was predominantly Gentile." Morris

Ἰουδαίος, α, ον a Jew, Jewish, Judean

1 Thessalonians 2:15

τῶν καὶ τὸν κύριον ἀποκτεινάντων Ἰησοῦν καὶ τοὺς προφήτας καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐκδιωξάντων, καὶ θεῶν μὴ ἄρεσκόντων, καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἐναντίων,

ἀποκτεινάντων Verb, aor act ptc, gen pl
ἀποκτείνω and ἀποκτενῶ, -ννω kill, put to death

On the mention also of the prophets, cf. Stephen's words in Acts 7:52. "The slaying of the Lord Jesus was the outworking of the same essential attitude as that displayed so often to the prophets. Jesus, of course, had himself denounced with some emphasis what his nation had done to the prophets (Matt 23:33-35)." Morris

ἐκδιώκω persecute harshly, drive out
ἄρεσκω please, seek to please
ἐναντίος, α, ον against, contrary to, opposed to

A term normally used of such things as winds (Mk 6:48; Acts 27:4), or deeds (Acts 26:9; 28:17). This is the only place in the NT where the word is used of people.

1 Thessalonians 2:16

κωλύοντων ἡμᾶς τοῖς ἔθνεσιν λαλήσαι ἵνα σωθῶσιν, εἰς τὸ ἀναπληρῶσαι αὐτῶν τὰς ἀμαρτίας πάντοτε. ἔφθασεν δὲ ἐπ' αὐτοῦς ἡ ὀργὴ εἰς τέλος.

κωλυω hinder, prevent, forbid
ἔθνεσιν Noun, dat pl ἔθνος, ους n nation, people; τα ἑ. Gentiles

λαλέω speak, talk

σωθῶσιν Verb, aor pass subj, 3 pl σωζω
save, rescue, heal

"Paul probably had in mind the opposition that provoked the riot when he was at Thessalonica (Acts 17:5ff.), which is an excellent example of the conduct he is condemning." Morris

ἀναπληροω complete the full measure of
ἀμαρτία, ας f sin

πάντοτε always

ἔφθασεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s φθανω
come upon, attain, reach

Although the wrath spoken of here is eschatological, Paul uses the aorist to stress the certainty of its coming – a 'prophetic' aorist.

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger
τέλος, ους n end, conclusion, termination

εἰς τέλος may either mean 'to the uttermost', i.e. fully, completely, or it may mean 'at last', 'finally'.

"Paul's anger is the anger of a man with his own nation, his own people. He is very much part of them, and he sorrows at their fate. He is not gleefully invoking dire disasters on them, but grieving over the effects of their misdeeds. Phillips brings out something of this with 'Alas, I fear they are completing the full tale of their sins and the wrath of God is over their heads.' It is the anguish so poignantly expressed in Romans 9." Morris

1 Thessalonians 2:17

Ἡμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, ἀπορφανισθέντες ἀφ' ὑμῶν πρὸς καιρὸν ὥρας, προσώπω οὐ καρδίᾳ, περισσοτέρως ἐσπουδάσαμεν τὸ πρόσωπον ὑμῶν ἰδεῖν ἐν πολλῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ.

ἡμεῖς δε – in contrast with the Jews of the previous verse.

ἀπορφανισθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl ἀπορφανίζω separate from (literally, being orphaned)

Perhaps here the thought of a parent bereaved of children.

καιρος, ου m time, season

ὥρα, ας f hour, period of time

προσώπω οὐ καρδία Moffatt renders 'out of sight; not out of mind.'

περισσότερως adv. (from περισσότερος) all the more, especially

σπουδαζω be eager, make every effort

ἰδεῖν Verb, aor act infin ὄραω trans see

It seems that opponents of Paul may have suggested that his lack of real concern for the Thessalonians was demonstrated in that he had not returned to them.

ἐπιθυμία, ας f desire, longing

Paul uses a variety of terms to express the strength of his desire to see them and to know of their welfare.

1 Thessalonians 2:18

διότι ἠθελήσαμεν ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἐγὼ μὲν Παῦλος καὶ ἄπαξ καὶ δις, καὶ ἐνέκοψεν ἡμᾶς ὁ Σατανᾶς.

διότι because, for, therefore

θελω wish, will

ἐλθεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐρχομαι

ἄπαξ once, one time

δις twice

The expression καὶ ἄπαξ καὶ δις "seems to denote a plurality of occasions with no attempt at giving the exact number." – 'repeatedly'.

ἐνέκοψεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἐγκοπτο
prevent, hinder

The reference may be to the opposition Paul had faced which seemed to focus on him personally – Timothy could return (3:1-2) but Paul could not.

1 Thessalonians 2:19

τίς γὰρ ἡμῶν ἐλπίς ἢ χαρὰ ἢ στέφανος καυχίσεως – ἢ οὐχὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς – ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ παρουσίᾳ;

ἐλπίς, ἰδος f hope, ground of hope

στεφανος, ου m wreath, crown, prize

Suggests the joy of victory.

καυχησις, εως f boasting, ground for boasting

οὐχι (emphatic form of οὐ) not, no; used in questions expecting an affirmative answer.

ἔμπροσθεν prep with gen before, in front of
παρουσία, ας f coming, arrival, presence

The word παρουσία was used of Royal visits and becomes in the New Testament the accepted term for the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The first occurrence (chronologically) of this word in the NT. "Milligan maintains that, as distinct from other words for the second coming, it 'lays stress on the 'presence' of the Lord with his people, which, while existing now, will only at the return be completely realised.'" Morris

1 Thessalonians 2:20

ὕμεις γὰρ ἔστε ἡ δόξα ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ χαρά.

δοξα, ας f glory

'Yes, you are indeed our pride and joy' Phillips

1 Thessalonians 3:1

Διὸ μηκέτι στέγοντες εὐδοκήσαμεν καταλειφθῆναι ἐν Ἀθήναις μόνοι

διο therefore, for this reason

μηκετι no longer

στεγω endure, put up with

The separation was unendurable.

εὐδοκεω be pleased, take pleasure in

Here, 'we thought it best.'

καταλειφθῆναι verb, aor pass infin

καταλειπω leave, leave; pass remain

Ἀθήναις Proper name (always pl) Ἀθῆναι

"We must not think it was easy for him to stay and preach in Athens, the intellectual capital of the world. Many of its inhabitants were cultured people who would regard Paul's message as unacceptable in polite society, while not a few were cynical and ready to mock at the gospel Paul preached. Paul was not insensitive, and he did not relish the prospect of working alone in such a place. He realised that it was necessary for Timothy to go for the good of the work, but this verse gives us a glimpse of what it cost him." Morris

μονος, η, ον adj only, alone

The plural would seem here an 'epistolatory plural'. Paul sent Timothy and remained alone at Athens.

1 Thessalonians 3:2

καὶ ἐπέμψαμεν Τιμόθεον, τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλέσαι ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν

πεμπω send

συνεργος, ου m fellow-worker

The phrase συνεργον του θεου is subject to a number of textual variations. In his Textual Commentary on the UBS text Metzger writes, "Amid the variety of readings, the chief textual questions are whether συνεργον or διακονον should be read, and whether του θεου should be retained or omitted. Although on the basis of external evidence it may appear that the reading και διακονον του θεου... should be adopted, the reading which best accounts for the origin of the others is και συνεργον του θεου... In order to remove the objectionable character which the bold designation συνεργος του θεου appeared to have, some copyists deleted the words του θεου or transferred them to qualify του ευαγγελιου, while others substituted διακονον for συνεργον. Still later are the conflate readings which embody both διακονον and συνεργον, the latter sometimes qualified by ἡμων rather than του θεου." Morris prefers διακονον του θεου.

Paul's description of Timothy expresses his high regard for him.

εὐαγγελιον, ου n good news, gospel

στηριζω strengthen, establish

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge

ὑπερ means 'on behalf of'. Timothy's visit was to benefit the faith of the Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians 3:3

τὸ μηδένα σαίνεσθαι ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν ταύταις. αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἶδατε ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο κείμεθα·

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing

σαινομαι be disturbed, upset, moved

Morris suggests that the term means unsettled in the sense of being enticed away.

θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering

κειμαι lie, be laid, store up, be stored up

Trouble is part of the destiny of the Christian, see Jn 16:33; Acts 14:22 – "not the action of some blind fate, but as the portion God allots to his people." Morris

1 Thessalonians 3:4

καὶ γὰρ ὅτε πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἦμεν, προελέγομεν ὑμῖν ὅτι μέλλομεν θλίβεσθαι, καθὼς καὶ ἐγένετο καὶ οἶδατε.

ὅτε conj when, at which time

προλεγω say beforehand, warn in advance

The imperfect suggests they continually warned them.

θλιβω press hard, crush; pass experience difficulty/trouble

1 Thessalonians 3:5

διὰ τοῦτο κἀγὼ μηκέτι στέγων ἔπεμψα εἰς τὸ γνῶναι τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν, μή πως ἐπέιρασεν ὑμᾶς ὁ πειράζων καὶ εἰς κενὸν γένηται ὁ κόπος ἡμῶν.

Here Paul repeats the thought of verse 1.

κἀγὼ a compound word = καὶ ἐγὼ
μηκετι no longer
στεγῶ endure, put up with
πως i) interrog. particle how? in what way?
ii) enclitic particle somehow, in some way

"According to WD Chamberlain, this is one of only two places in the New Testament where μή πως is used with the aorist indicative, 'referring to a past event where the purpose is conceived as unfulfilled.'" Morris

πειράζω test, put to the test, tempt

Satan's chief work is to oppose the work and spread of the Gospel.

κενος, η, ον empty, to no purpose
γένηται Verb, aor subj, 3 s γινομαι
κοπος, ου m work, labour trouble

1 Thessalonians 3:6

Ἄρτι δὲ ἐλθόντος Τιμοθέου πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀφ' ὑμῶν καὶ εὐαγγελισμένου ἡμῖν τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ὑμῶν, καὶ ὅτι ἔχετε μνησίαν ἡμῶν ἀγαθὴν πάντοτε ἐπιποθοῦντες ἡμᾶς ἰδεῖν καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς,

ἄρτι now, at the present

"A new section begins at this point, and there is a real break in the sense. Paul has been speaking of what took place in the past, but here he comes virtually to the present moment. It is evident that he was writing very soon after Timothy's arrival, which he speaks of as having taken place 'just now.' We have seen how all the indications are that Paul had been rather depressed at the turn of events. But the coming of Timothy with news of the way in which the Thessalonian converts had not only stood firm, but had made progress in the faith, had acted on him like a tonic. He wrote immediately with a full heart. Which makes passages like 2:17-3:5 all the more poignant, for they were in fact written after Timothy's return." Morris

εὐαγγελίζω act. and midd proclaim the good news

This is the only place in the NT where this verb is used in the general sense of bringing good news rather than of preaching the Gospel. Paul's use of this verb here shows his depth of feeling on hearing news of the Thessalonian Christians.

Of πιστιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην Calvin writes, "In these two words he comprehends briefly the entire sum of true piety. Hence all that aim at this twofold mark during their whole life are beyond all risk of erring: all others, however they may torture themselves, wander miserably."

μνησία, ας f remembrance, mention
πάντοτε always
ἐπιποθεῶ long for, desire
ἰδεῖν Verb, aor act infin ὄραω trans see
καθάπερ as, just as

"The Thessalonians had not allowed hostile propaganda to distort their recollection of [Paul and his companions]." Morris

1 Thessalonians 3:7

διὰ τοῦτο παρεκλήθημεν, ἀδελφοί, ἐφ' ὑμῖν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ ἀνάγκῃ καὶ θλίψει ἡμῶν διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν πίστεως,

παρακαλεῶ encourage

The same preposition is used regarding the encouragement concerning the Thessalonians (ἐφ' ὑμῖν) and Paul's trials (ἐπὶ πάσῃ ...). This unusual construction aligns the two. Morris says that it conveys the thought that the new strength Paul received through news concerning the Thessalonians "enabled him to rise above the difficulties in which Paul found himself."

ἀνάγκη, ης f necessity, distress
θλίψις, εως f trouble, suffering

Until news came from Thessalonica, Paul was under great stress through outward opposition and the inward discouragement of little apparent success from his work (e.g. the mockery of the Gospel at Athens). Paul had begun his preaching at Corinth in a state of discouragement and trepidation. News of the Thessalonians clearly encouraged him greatly and gave him fresh heart for the work of the Gospel.

1 Thessalonians 3:8

ὅτι νῦν ζῶμεν ἐὰν ὑμεῖς στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ.

ζῶω live, be alive

ἐὰν Conjunction εἰ if

στήκετε Verb, perf act indicative, 2 pl, in pf stand, stand firm, hold ground.

1 Thessalonians 3:9

τίνα γὰρ εὐχαριστίαν δυνάμεθα τῷ θεῷ ἀνταποδοῦναι περὶ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ χαρᾷ ἣν χαίρομεν δι' ὑμᾶς ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν,

εὐχαριστία, ας f thanksgiving

ἀνταποδοῦναι Verb, aor act infin

ἀνταποδιδῶμι repay, return

Here 'render' – 'What thanksgiving can be rendered to God concerning you?' "That he asks this question with this verb shows that any thanksgiving he may offer is bound to be inadequate." Morris

ἐμπροσθεν prep with gen before, in front of

1 Thessalonians 3:10

νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ δεόμενοι εἰς τὸ ἰδεῖν ὑμῶν τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ καταρτίσαι τὰ ὑστερήματα τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν;

νυξ, νυκτος f night

ὑπερεκπερισσου adv. with all earnestness, exceedingly

His prayer is continual and fervent.

δεομαι ask, beg, pray

ἰδεῖν Verb, aor act infin ὄραω trans see

καταρτιζω mend, make complete

ὑστερημα, τος n what is lacking

"The time that the preachers had been able to spend with the Thessalonians when the church was established had been limited. It had been quite impossible to give them all the teaching that they needed, and defects were now showing up accordingly. Paul has dwelt with obvious delight on the state of the Thessalonians, but that did not mean he was blind to their failings. As a true pastor he knew that there was much that had yet to be done for them. Timothy's report doubtless brought Paul up to date on what was still lacking in this church. It was his aim to play some part in seeing that they were set forward on the right road. He cannot be there in person to do this, so he is writing instead, and perhaps we should see chapters 4 and 5 as directed to that end." Morris

1 Thessalonians 3:11

Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς κατευθῆναι τὴν ὁδὸν ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς·

πατηρ, πατρος m father

πατηρ ἡμῶν i.e. both of the authors and the recipients.

κατευθῆναι Verb, aor act opt, 3 s κατευθυνω direct, guide

Note that the double subject, God our Father *and* our Lord Jesus, takes a singular verb.

"Paul sees the two subjects as essentially a unity." Morris (Though cf. Matt 5:18; Jas 5:3.) Morris suggests that this construction, while not explicitly affirming the deity of Christ, arises naturally out of such an understanding of Christ's person. He continues, "In view of the early date of this writing it is important for the development of Christian doctrine. The deity of Christ was apparently accepted without question rather less than twenty years after the resurrection. It is not to be regarded as the culmination of a lengthy process of growth and reflection."

ὁδος, ου f way, path, road, journey

1 Thessalonians 3:12

ὑμᾶς δὲ ὁ κύριος πλεονάσαι καὶ περισσεύσαι τῇ ἀγάπῃ εἰς ἀλλήλους καὶ εἰς πάντας, καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς,

The δε has the sense of 'but whatever the case', i.e. 'whether I come or not.'

πλεονάσαι Verb, aor act opt, 3s πλεονάζω cause to grow, make increase

περισσεύσαι Verb, aor act opt, 3s περισσεύω cause to increase, cause to abound

Morris argues that these two verbs together refer to the love they are to demonstrate, "As for you, may the Lord make your love grow and abound for each other ..." The two verbs are similar in meaning though the second is the stronger of the two. They are used together for emphasis.

"Do you see the unchecked madness of love which is indicated by the words? He says πλεονασαι and περισσευσαι instead of αὐξησαι." Chrysostom

ἀλλήλων, οἰς, οὐς reciprocal pronoun one another

καὶ εἰς παντας Their love is first of all to be evident towards one another as the family of God: it is to be a distinctive characteristic of the children of God. But it is not to end there. It is to be a love which embraces "the whole human race" (Jerusalem Bible).

καθαπερ see v.6

1 Thessalonians 3:13

εἰς τὸ στηρίζαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἀγίωσύνῃ ἐμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ.

"The prayer here is that God will so supply the needed buttress that the Thessalonians will remain firm and unmoved whatever the future may hold." Morris

στηρίζω strengthen, establish

Notice the role of love, and perhaps particularly love one for another, in the process of sanctification.

ἀμεμπτος, ον blameless, faultless
ἀγιωσύνη, ης f holiness

This is the goal towards which they must grow. "Nothing less than the very highest standard will do for the Christian." Morris

ἐμπροσθεν see v.9

παρουσία, ας see 2:19

ἅγιος, α, ον holy, set apart to/by God

These 'holy ones' may include both angels and those believers who are already with Christ in glory.

ἀμην is included in many ancient MSS. In the Textual Commentary on the UBS text, Metzger writes, "Was ἀμην dropped by copyists who thought it inappropriate in the body of a Pauline epistle (just as ἀμην was omitted by a scattering of witnesses at the close of Rom 15:33 and 16:24), or was it added as liturgically appropriate in the context, especially when verse 13 came to a conclusion of an ecclesiastical lection? ... it is very difficult to reach a confident decision."

1 Thessalonians 4:1

Λοιπὸν οὖν, ἀδελφοί, ἐρωτῶμεν ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα καθὼς παρελάβετε παρ' ἡμῶν τὸ πῶς δεῖ ὑμᾶς περιπατεῖν καὶ ἀρέσκειν θεῷ, καθὼς καὶ περιπατεῖτε, ἵνα περισσεύητε μᾶλλον.

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other: (το)
λοιπον adv. finally, henceforth, from now on

λοιπον οὖν 'finally then'. An expression signifying "that the main section of the letter is concluded though the subsidiary section it introduces may be rather lengthy and very important." Morris

ἐρωτάω ask, request, beg, urge

The two verbs, 'ask' and 'urge' "reinforce one another, and the combination gives emphasis to the apostle's request." Morris

παραλάβετε Verb, aor act ind, 2pl

παραλαμβάνω take, receive, accept

This verb "had something of the technical sense of accepting the tradition handed on in Christian circles." Morris

παρα preposition with gen from, of, with
πως how(?) in what way(?)

δεῖ impersonal verb it is necessary, must, should, ought

περιπατεῶ walk, walk about, live

ἀρέσκω please, seek to please

Pleasing God is not an option for the Christian, it is the imperative of grace. "Christians do not 'walk' with a view to obtaining the maximum amount of satisfaction for themselves but in order to please their Lord." Morris

περισσεύω increase, abound, excel
μᾶλλον adv more

Paul praises them for their current conduct but urges them to further endeavour – to 'abound more and more.'

1 Thessalonians 4:2

οἴδατε γὰρ τίνας παραγγελίας ἐδώκαμεν ὑμῖν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ.

οἶδα know, understand

παραγγελία, ας command, instruction

παραγγέλια was used of military commands passed down the ranks. Paul passed on the commands of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 4:3

τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶν θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, ὁ ἁγιασμός ὑμῶν, ἀπέχεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς πορνείας,

θέλημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

The absence of a definite article indicates that this is *part* of God's will, not all of his will.

ἁγιασμος, ου m sanctification, holiness

The process of growing conformity to Christ. The behaviour of the Christian is to be moulded by what is pleasing to God and not by the fashions of contemporary society.

ἀπεχω midd. abstain from, avoid

This infinitive is also governed by the first part of the verse – this also is an expression of God's will for his people.

πορνεία, ας f sexual immorality

"The noun strictly means fornication, but it is used of all forms of illicit sexual intercourse." Morris

1 Thessalonians 4:4

εἰδέναι ἕκαστον ὑμῶν τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι ἐν ἁγιασμῷ καὶ τιμῇ,

εἰδέναι here in the sense of to learn.

ἕκαστος, η, ον see 1:11

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον see 1:11

σκευος, ους n object, vessel, one's body
κταομαι acquire, take a wife or exercise self-control

The phrase το ἑαυτου σκευος κτασθαι is ambiguous and could mean either 'take a wife for himself' or 'exercise control over his own body'. Eadie and Hendriksen favour the former, Eadie arguing that the phrase cannot mean anything other than acquiring a wife. Morris (following Bruce in drawing attention to 1 Sam 21:4-5 where David speaks in similar terms of his young men), inclines to the latter.

ἀγιασμος, ου m sanctification, holiness
τιμη, ης f honour, respect, price

1 Thessalonians 4:5

μη ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας καθάπερ και τὰ ἔθνη τὰ μη εἰδότα τὸν θεόν,

πάθει Noun, dat s παθος, ους n lust,
passion
ἐπιθυμια, ας f desire, longing, lust,
passion

The phrase παθει ἐπιθυμίας indicates a person's surrender to their passions – 'not in the grip of uncontrollable sexual drives.'

καθαπερ as, just as
ἔθνη Noun, nom & acc pl ἔθνος, ους n
nation, people

τὰ ἔθνη which is normally used to mean Gentiles, is here used to mean those who are not Christians.

εἰδότα Verb, perf act ptc οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand

Cf. Rom 1:24,26,28. In the Roman society of Thessalonica, fornication was not viewed as a serious wrong but rather as part of the normal pattern of life.

1 Thessalonians 4:6

τὸ μη ὑπερβαίνειν και πλεονεκτεῖν ἐν τῷ πράγματι τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, διότι ἔκδικος κύριος περὶ πάντων τούτων, καθὼς και προεἶπαμεν ὑμῖν και διεμαρτυράμεθα.

ὑπερβαινω do wrong, sin against

Here in the sense of 'defraud.'

πλεονεκτεω take advantage of, cheat
πραγμα, τος n matter, thing, event, deed

The definite article τῷ πράγματι indicates that Paul is still speaking of the same subject of sexual immorality.

διοτι because, for, therefore
ἐκδικος, ου m avenger, one who punishes
προεἶπαμεν Verb, aor act indic, 1 pl προλεγω
say beforehand
διαμαρτυρομαι declare solemnly

"Paul is referring primarily to the sins of which he has just been speaking and says people who commit them will render account to God in due course... the full requital for wrong will not be exacted until the last day. It is likely that Paul is glancing at the great Assize." Morris

1 Thessalonians 4:7

οὐ γὰρ ἐκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἐπὶ ἀκαθαρσία ἀλλ' ἐν ἀγιασμῷ.

The call of God is the foundation of the Christian life.

ἀκαθαρσια, ας f impurity, immorality,
uncleanness
ἀγιασμος, ου see v.3

1 Thessalonians 4:8

τοιγαροῦν ὁ ἀθετῶν οὐκ ἄνθρωπον ἀθετεῖ ἀλλὰ τὸν θεὸν τὸν και διδόντα τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ τὸ ἅγιον εἰς ὑμᾶς.

τοιγαροῦν inferential particle therefore,
then, for that reason
ἀθετεω reject, set aside, refuse

To set on one side. To put out of the frame of one's decision and immediate concerns. To treat as of no account.

διδόντα Verb, pres act ptc, m nom s διδομι
ἅγιος, α, ον holy

The unusual construction το πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον lays stress upon the Spirit as holy.

Note here the present participle (though some manuscripts, followed by the AV have the past participle). The Spirit is continually given; we need continually to be careful not to grieve him or quench his work. "Anyone who carries on an act of impurity is not simply breaking a human code, nor even sinning against God who at some time in the past gave him the gift of the Spirit. He is sinning against the God who is present at that moment, against the one who continually gives the Spirit. The impure act is an act of despite against God's good gift at the very moment it is being offered." Morris

1 Thessalonians 4:9

Περὶ δὲ τῆς φιλαδελφίας οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχετε γράφειν ὑμῖν, αὐτοὶ γὰρ ὑμεῖς θεοδίδακτοὶ ἐστε εἰς τὸ ἀγαπᾶν ἀλλήλους·

φιλαδελφια, ας f brotherly love

Outside of the New Testament φιλαδελφια is used only of love between sons of one father. In the New Testament it is used exclusively of the love Christians are to show to each other. Love for fellow members of God's family is a hallmark of vital Christianity, cf. 1 John 3:14.

χρεια, ας f need, want

θεοδιδάκτος, ον taught by God

This word occurs here only in the New Testament, though compare 1 Jn 2:26,27 for the same thought. Cf. also John 6:45; 1 Cor 2:13.

ἀλλήλων, ος, ους one another

1 Thessalonians 4:10

καὶ γὰρ ποιεῖτε αὐτὸ εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς τοὺς ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ. παρακαλοῦμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, περισσεύειν μᾶλλον,

The present tense ποιεῖτε implies continuous action.

ὅλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire

We know of two other churches in Macedonia, those at Philippi and Berea. There may well have been others of which we are unaware.

παρακαλεῶ exhort, encourage, urge
περισεύειν μᾶλλον see v.1.

Paul will not allow them to rest on their laurels. Though commending them for their conduct, he urges them to abound even more.

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

"This is the first indication we have had in this epistle that some of the Thessalonians were so excited by all the wonderful things in the Christian faith that they were not bothering to earn their living. But there are a number of indications in the Thessalonian correspondence that this was so (cf. especially 2 Thess 3:11). A number of possible reasons for this have been suggested, but it is most likely that it arose out of second advent speculations. The Thessalonian believers had learned very well that the Lord would be returning in mighty power, and evidently some of them felt that it would be very soon. Accordingly there was no point in continuing in some steady job. It was much more realistic, they evidently reasoned, to be about the business of proclaiming the near end of the world. If they had need of this world's goods in the meantime, why, there were others, Christian brothers, who could be relied on to come to their rescue (it may be no accident that verses 11-12 follow a section in which Paul stresses brotherly love). This kind of thing can be done from a sense of serious purpose, but, human nature being what it is, it can easily degenerate into downright laziness and idleness. People can be so taken up with the spectacular, with excitement over the near approach of the Lord, that they pass over the important things of everyday life. So Paul gives attention to such matters, and counsels these brothers to mend their ways." Morris

1 Thessalonians 4:11

καὶ φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ἡσυχάζειν καὶ πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια καὶ ἐργάζεσθαι ταῖς χερσὶν ὑμῶν, καθὼς ὑμῖν παρηγγείλαμεν,

φιλοτιμεομαι make it one's ambition,
endeavour, strive eagerly

The meaning here is 'fix one's aim on.' Cf. Rom 15:20; 2 Cor 5:9.

ἡσυχάζω be silent, cease, live a quiet life

Means tranquillity, not inactivity.

πρασσω practice, do

ἴδιος, α, ον one's own

πρασσειν τα ἴδια be occupied in one's own business

χειρ, χειρος f hand, power

Morris says, "This unashamed advocacy of manual labour in a letter to a community in a Greek city must be remarked. The typical Greek attitude was that slaves did this sort of work, but that freemen would not stoop to it. It was degrading. Here, as in so many other ways, the Christians refused to take their standards from the community in the midst of which they lived. Rather, they held that all things they did should be done as service to Christ (Col 3:17), and they specifically held that manual labour was good (Eph 4:28). Doubtless they remembered that Jesus himself had been a carpenter (Mark 6:3). How could the followers of the Carpenter do other than welcome manual work?" Though he then adds that it probably also indicates that the majority of the believers came from the lower social classes and were poor rather than rich.

παραγγελλω command, instruct

Neil quotes from Patterson Smyth a story from New England "of a day during one of those times of excited expectancy of the end of the world when a sudden darkness at noon interrupted the session of the Assembly. Some cried fearfully: 'It is the coming of Christ: It is the end of the world.' But the old President ordered lights to be produced: 'Bring in candles,' he said, 'and get on with your work. If the Lord is coming, how better can he find us than quietly doing our duty?'"

1 Thessalonians 4:12

ἵνα περιπατῆτε εὐσχημόνως πρὸς τοὺς ἔξω καὶ μηδενὸς χρεῖαν ἔχητε.

περιπατεω walk, walk about, live
εὐσχημονως properly, respectably

"Believers must always bear in mind the impact of their conduct on those who are without faith." Morris

ἔξω adv. out, outside, away; ὁ ἔξω
outsider, unbeliever

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing

Here either, 'need of nothing' or 'need of no man'

χρεια, ας f need, want

"This whole section on earning one's living is closely connected with the previous one on brotherly love, and that not only in syntax. Those who imposed on the generosity of their fellows were not living in love. Or, to put the same thing the other way around, the exhortation to brotherly love carries with it the necessity for providing for one's own needs, so that undue strain may not be placed on the brother." Morris

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

"The Parousia ... is a difficult topic. Within the short space of the mission it would have been impossible for the apostolic band to have given anything like complete teaching about it. Clearly they had given it a good deal of attention, for the Thessalonian correspondence gives evidence of as lively interest in the whole subject... We get the impression that the Thessalonians had understood Paul to mean that the Parousia would take place within their lifetime. They had become perplexed when some (or even one) of their number died. Did this mean that they had lost their share in the events associated with that great day?" Morris

1 Thessalonians 4:13

Οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, περὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων, ἵνα μὴ λυπησθε καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα.

θελω wish, will

ἀγνοεω not know, be ignorant, fail to understand

κοιμαομαι sleep, fall asleep, die

λυπεω pain, grieve, injure; pass be sad, sorrowful, grieve

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other

ἐλπις, ιδος f hope, what is hoped for

Hope is used in an objective sense. Cf Eph 2:12.

"When the apostle counsels the Thessalonians not to sorrow as the pagans do, he is not urging them to endure with a deep Stoic calm the buffetings of fortune that they cannot avoid. Nor is he counselling a callous indifference. Rather, he is rejoicing in the complete victory that Christ has won. Those who have died have simply fallen asleep in Christ, and they will wake with him. Clearly, in the face of this prospect there is no reason for despair." Morris

1 Thessalonians 4:14

εἰ γὰρ πιστεύομεν ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἀπέθανεν καὶ ἀνέστη, οὕτως καὶ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἄξει σὺν αὐτῷ.

ἀπέθανεν Verb, aor act indic, 3s ἀποθνησκω die

ἀνέστη Verb, 2 aor act indic, 3s ἀνίστημι rise, come back to life

The διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ could belong either with the preceding or following words – either 'those sleeping through Jesus' or 'he will bring through Jesus'. Moffatt argues the latter but Morris says that the parallelism of the verse and the awkwardness of 'through Jesus with him' favours the former. Paul is indicating that death has been transformed into sleep *through Jesus*. So also Bruce who writes, "Death 'through Jesus' is but the prelude to resurrection 'with Jesus'."

ἄξει Verb, fut act ind, 3s ἄγω

"Jesus will bring the faithful departed with him when he comes back. Their death does not mean that they will miss their share in the Parousia." Morris

1 Thessalonians 4:15

τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου, ὅτι ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρίου οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν τοὺς κοιμηθέντας·

The form ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου seems to imply that what follows is based on a saying of Jesus. The closest recorded saying is in Mat 24:31. The various suggestions regarding this verse are that:

- i) It represents an otherwise unrecorded saying of Jesus;
- ii) It represents a prophecy given in the name of Jesus in the early church;
- iii) It reports a direct revelation Paul had received from the Lord;
- iv) It represents the apostle's thinking under the guidance of the Spirit.

Morris thinks the first of these the best solution and cites J Jeremias' work *Unknown Sayings of Jesus*.

ζωω live, be alive

This expression may mean no more than 'those Christians who will be alive at that time.'

περιλειπομαι remain, be left behind

Note the emphatic use of οὐ μὴ

φθάσωμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl φθάνω precede

κοιμαομαι sleep, fall asleep, die

1 Thessalonians 4:16

ὅτι αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος ἐν κελεύσματι, ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ, καταβήσεται ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ, καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται πρῶτον,

"This verse makes us reflect on the very little that the New Testament has to say about the manner of the Parousia. Nowhere else do we have as full a description of what is to happen as here, but the details are few and do not paint a very full picture for us. The point of it all is that Scripture is intensely practical in this matter, as in others. There are many things that we would like to know, but the Bible was not written to gratify our curiosity. Rather, it is intended to help us in our Christian lives, and for that the important thing is that we should be ready when the Lord comes. Thus we are often warned to prepare, and told that the coming will be unexpected." Morris

κελευσμα, τος f shout of command, command

"The word is found often. It is the cry made by the ship's master to his rowers, or by a military officer to his soldiers, or by a hunter to his hounds, or by a charioteer to his horses. When used of military or naval personnel it was a battle cry. In most places, then, it denotes a loud, authoritative cry, often uttered in the thick of great excitement." Morris
O Cullmann thinks of the κελευσμα as pointing to God's sovereignty. He speaks of the time "when God, as in the first creation, will decide in his sovereign act (κελευσμα, 1 Thess 4:16) to constitute the *new creation* by means of the spirit of life."

σάλπιγγι Noun, dat s σαλπιγξ, ιγγος f trumpet, trumpet blast

Associated in OT with triumph or the call to festival.

καταβαινω come or go down, descend
νεκρος, α, ον dead

ἀναστήσονται Verb, fut midd indic, 3 pl
ἀνιστημι rise, come back to life

1 Thessalonians 4:17

ἔπειτα ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι ἅμα σὺν αὐτοῖς ἄρπαγησόμεθα ἐν νεφέλαις εἰς ἀπάντησιν τοῦ κυρίου εἰς ἀέρα· καὶ οὕτως πάντοτε σὺν κυρίῳ ἔσόμεθα.

ἔπειτα then, afterwards

περιλειπομαι remain, be left behind

ἅμα adv. at the same time, together

"There is a minor problem in that the faithful departed will be coming with Jesus (v.14), but the point made here is not so much the order of events as the truth that the Lord's people will be united at the Parousia." Morris

ἄρπαγησόμεθα Verb, fut pass indic, 1 pl

ἄρπαζω take by force, carry off

νεβηλη, ης f cloud

ἀπαντησις, εως f meeting

ἀηρ, ερος m air, space

παντοτε always

The description hardly fits a *secret* rapture.

1 Thessalonians 4:18

ὥστε παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους ἐν τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις.

ὥστε so that, with the result that

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage

ἀλλήλων, ος, ους one another

What God has revealed is for our encouragement.

1 Thessalonians 5:1

Περὶ δὲ τῶν χρόνων καὶ τῶν καιρῶν, ἀδελφοί, οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχετε ὑμῖν γράφεσθαι,

καιρος, ου m time, appointed/proper time

"With regard to the second advent ... the χρόνων are the chronological epochs that must elapse, time considered simply with regard to its duration, while the καιρων focus our attention rather on the nature of the time, on the critical events which will take place heralding the coming of the Lord." Morris

χρεια, ας f need, want

γράφεσθαι Verb, pres pass infin γραφω

"There is abundant evidence from the two letters that he had spoken a good deal about the Parousia during his initial preaching... It is widely accepted in modern theology that early Christian teaching was thoroughly eschatological." Morris

1 Thessalonians 5:2

αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκριβῶς οἶδατε ὅτι ἡμέρα κυρίου ὡς κλέπτῃς ἐν νυκτὶ οὕτως ἔρχεται.

ἀκριβῶς accurately, completely (in the sense of needing no further instruction)

οἶδα know, understand

ἡμερα κυριου – a very ancient expression. Cf. Amos 5:18-20.

κλεπτης, ου m thief

νυξ, νυκτος f night

The event is certain but the timing unfathomable. In this sense it will be totally unheralded.

1 Thessalonians 5:3

ὅταν λέγωσιν· Εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια, τότε αἰφνίδιος αὐτοῖς ἐφίσταται ὄλεθρος ὥσπερ ἡ ὠδὴν τῆ ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχούσῃ, καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐκφύγωσιν.

ὅταν when, whenever, as often as
εἰρηνη, ης f peace
ἀσφαλεια, ας f security, safety

They imagine their situation unshakable.

τοτε then, at that time
αἰφνίδιος, ον sudden, unexpected
ἐφιστημι come up to, approach, appear
ὄλεθρος, ου m destruction, ruin
ὥσπερ as, even as
ὠδιν, ινος f birth-pains, suffering
γαστρὶ Noun, dat s γαστηρ, τρος f womb;
ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχω conceive or be pregnant

The comparison of a woman in labour focusses not merely on the pain but also on suddenness and inevitability.

ἐκθευγω escape

1 Thessalonians 5:4-11

The themes of night and day continue but are now supplemented by those of darkness and light. "It is not a difficult step from the idea of the day of the Lord to that of walking in the light, from that of the coming of Christ to that of the character of Christian people as 'sons of the light.' The coming of that Day must inspire God's people to live lives appropriate to their calling." Morris

1 Thessalonians 5:4

ὁμεις δέ, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐν σκότει, ἵνα ἡ ἡμέρα ὑμᾶς ὡς κλέπτῃ καταλάβῃ,

σκότει Noun, dat s σκοτος, ους n
darkness, evil

κλεπτης see v.2

καταλάβῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s

καταλαμβανω obtain, seize

Not that it will be heralded for them but that they will be prepared.

1 Thessalonians 5:5

πάντες γὰρ ὁμεις υἱοὶ φωτός ἐστε καὶ υἱοὶ ἡμέρας. οὐκ ἐσμέν νυκτός οὐδὲ σκότους·

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας
φως, φωτος n light

υἱοὶ φωτος is a Semitic idiom: to be a 'son' of something is for that thing or quality to be characteristic of the person. The added 'sons of the Day' must refer to the Day of the Lord. "Believers find in the Day of the Lord a situation in which they are perfectly at home." Morris – A Day in which they live now.

νυξ, νυκτος f night

οὐδε neither, nor

σκοτος, ους n darkness, evil

1 Thessalonians 5:6

ἄρα οὖν μὴ καθεύδωμεν ὡς οἱ λοιποὶ, ἀλλὰ γρηγορῶμεν καὶ νήφωμεν.

ἄρα οὖν expresses a "logical inference and introduces an inescapable conclusion." Morris

καθευδω sleep, be dead

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other

"Unbelievers may well 'sleep'; they are spiritually insensitive. But the believer should not take his standards from them... 'Sleep' is natural enough for the sons of the night, but is entirely out of place in the sons of light." Morris

γρηγορεω be or keep awake, be alert

Cf. Mk 14:38.

νήφω be sober, be self-controlled

The senses not clouded or drowsy through drink.

1 Thessalonians 5:7

οἱ γὰρ καθεύδοντες νυκτός καθεύδουσιν, καὶ οἱ μεθυσκόμενοι νυκτός μεθύουσιν·

μεθυσκομαι get drunk

μεθυω be drunk, drink freely

Sleep and drunkenness are characteristic of the night.

1 Thessalonians 5:8

ἡμεῖς δὲ ἡμέρας ὄντες νήφωμεν, ἐνδυσάμενοι θώρακα πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης καὶ περικεφαλαίαν ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας·

νήφω see v.6

The stress is not merely on not getting drunk but on the self-control and alertness that should mark a soldier on duty.

ἐνδυω dress, clothe; midd put on, wear

The aorist may suggest the idea of a definitive act. On Christian armour, see Rom 13:12f; 2 Cor 6:7; 10:4; Eph 6:13f.

θωραξ, ακος m breastplate, chest

περικεφαλαια, ας f helmet

ἐλπις, ιδος f hope, what is hoped for

σωτηρια, ας f salvation

Note here the three 'graces' of faith hope and love occupy a central place in the Christian life as is expressed also in 1:3. Here they are the defensive armour of the Christian.

1 Thessalonians 5:9

ὅτι οὐκ ἔθετο ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ὀργὴν ἀλλὰ εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,

ἔθετο Verb, 2 aor midd indic, 3 s τιθημι
midd put place, set, appoint

Cf. Jn 15:16; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11; 1 Peter 2:8.

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

Cf. 1:10. To appreciate the greatness of our salvation we need to appreciate what we have been saved *from* as well as what we are saved to.

περιποιησις, εως f obtaining, gaining
σωτηρια, ας f salvation

1 Thessalonians 5:10

τοῦ ἀποθανόντος περὶ ἡμῶν ἵνα εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν ἅμα σὺν αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν.

ἀποθανόντος Verb, aor act ptc, m gen s
ἀποθνησκω die

εἴτε if, whether

γρηγορεω see v.6

καθευδω see v.6

The sense here is 'whether we are living or have died'

ἅμα adv. at the same time, together
ζωω live, be alive

"Paul is maintaining that the death of Jesus has brought about a new relationship between God and sinners. Those who are Christ's live with him. There is the thought of that close union which elsewhere is expressed in the pregnant phrase 'in Christ.' This relationship is not disturbed by even such a final and decisive happening as death." Morris

1 Thessalonians 5:11

διὸ παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους καὶ οἰκοδομεῖτε εἰς τὸν ἕνα, καθὼς καὶ ποιεῖτε.

διο therefore, for this reason

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge

The present tense implies continuous action.

ἀλλήλων, οἰς, οὐς one another

οἰκοδομεω build, build up, encourage

Implies growth.

εἰς τὸν ἕνα 'one (to) one' is equivalent to ἀλλήλους but emphasises the distributive nature of the task – each one is to do it – and also that it is to be a one-to-one activity as well as communal.

καθὼς καὶ ποιεῖτε "He knows the way in which the Thessalonians were assisting one another, and he commends them for it. But he urges them to go forward on this way. Christians may never relax on the grounds that they have made sufficient progress." Morris

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

Morris suggests that the first groups of Christians would have been organised on the model of the synagogue (cf. Jas 2:2) and would have included a group of elders exercising oversight. Such elders at Thessalonica may have been unused to responsibilities of leadership – most of the believers seem to have been from the lower strata of society. Yet they were being required to deal with members who, in the heat of apocalyptic fervour, had given up work and were expecting to live off others. In such a situation there may well have been tension between the leaders and some of the congregation.

1 Thessalonians 5:12

Ἐρωτῶμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, εἰδέναι τοὺς κοπιῶντας ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ προϊσταμένους ὑμῶν ἐν κυρίῳ καὶ νουθετοῦντας ὑμᾶς,

ἐρωταω ask, request, beg, urge

εἰδέναι infin οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know

Here 'know the worth of', respect

κοπιαω work, work hard, labour

The single definite article indicates a single group – the elders in the church who may not yet have formally borne that title. The following participles may expand and explain the first.

προῖστημι be a leader, have authority over

The NT is not shy of speaking of *leadership* within the church, though it does offer a distinctive Christ-centred model.

νουθετεω instruct, teach, warn

A distinctively Pauline word, cf. Acts 20:31; 1 Cor 4:14. J Behm says that strictly the verb means "to impart understanding (a mind for something)" and further, "It denotes the word of admonition which is designed to correct while not provoking or embittering."

1 Thessalonians 5:13

καὶ ἡγεῖσθαι αὐτοὺς ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ διὰ τὸ ἔργον αὐτῶν. εἰρηνεύετε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς.

ἡγεομαι think, regard, consider, esteem

ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ adv. exceedingly

"Hold them in special esteem and affection"

Moffatt

εἰρηνεῶ live or be at peace
 ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον reflexive pronoun,
 himself, herself, itself

Both leaders and followers are to be peacemakers (cf. Mk 9:50; Rom 12:18; 2 Cor 13:11).

1 Thessalonians 5:14

παρακαλοῦμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, νουθετεῖτε τοὺς ἀτάκτους, παραμυθεῖσθε τοὺς ὀλιγοψύχους, ἀντέχεσθε τῶν ἀσθενῶν, μακροθυμεῖτε πρὸς πάντα.

"The address 'brothers' shows that these words are addressed to the whole of the membership and not simply to the leaders... The content of this charge is to look to the needs of certain people in the church. While this would be in a special measure the responsibility of those holding office, it was also something that lay on the shoulders of all (perhaps it was something the leaders should lead others to do). It was (and is) characteristic of the Christian understanding of life that the entire brotherhood is charged with responsibility for all. For Christians care for others is not to be left to any special class of believers." Morris

παρακαλεω see v.11

νουθετεω see v.12

ἀτακτος, ον idle, unruly

The word is a military term meaning a soldier who is out of step. It came then to mean one who is idle – a slacker.

παραμυθεομαι comfort, console
 ὀλιγοψυχος, ον fainthearted, discouraged

"The word is well adapted to expressing a tender concern, quite in the spirit of 'a bruised reed he will not break' (Is 42:3)." Morris

ἀντεχομαι be loyal to, support
 ἀσθενης, ες sick, weak, helpless

On the responsibility of the strong towards the weak, see esp Rom 14 and 1 Cor 8.

μακροθυμεω be patient, wait patiently

1 Thessalonians 5:15

ὄρατε μὴ τις κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ τινὶ ἀποδῶ, ἀλλὰ πάντοτε τὸ ἀγαθὸν διώκετε εἰς ἀλλήλους καὶ εἰς πάντα.

ὄραω trans see, observe; intrans make sure, see to

κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm

ἀντι prep with gen for, in place of

ἀποδῶ Verb, 2 aor act subj, 3 s ἀποδιδωμι
 give back, repay

Cf. Matt 5:44-45; Rom 12:17. "Revenge is the most natural and instinctive of vices." Denny

παντοτε always

διωκω seek after, pursue, follow

ἀλλήλων, ος, ους one another

"Our Master, for our salvation, endured patiently the insults and injuries of wicked men. He, the Just, died for the unjust. In both these ways his example is important for his people. As the servant is not greater than his Lord, we must expect the same kind of treatment, and therefore we must expect to be called on to show the same kind of patience under provocation. And since he came to die for sinful people, we must expect that our meekness is to be by way of ministering to the needs of the sinful also." Morris

1 Thessalonians 5:16

πάντοτε χαίρετε,

"The New Testament does not give us a picture of believers as people who are always screwing themselves up to the point of doing unpleasant things in the service of their God but rather those who are glad to live out the implications of their faith... He is not writing about a joy that Christians produce by their own efforts. It is natural for people to be happy when things go well for them. But it is not this natural joy, dependent on circumstances, that is the special characteristic of Christians. It is the joy that comes from being 'in Christ.' Thus it is that the New Testament contains so many exhortations to joyful living – startlingly many, if we fix our attention on the outward circumstances of the early Christian communities. Persecution was always threatening and often actual. Believers were usually in straitened circumstances and compelled to work hard for their living. Their lot can rarely have been other than hard. But if we fasten our attention on these things, we put our emphasis in the wrong place. They thought more of their Lord than of their difficulties, more of their spiritual riches in Christ than of their poverty on earth, more of their glorious future when their Lord should come again than of their unhappy past. So the note of joy rings through the New Testament, and so Paul, who himself knew what it was to rejoice in difficult circumstances (Acts 16:25; Rom 5:3; Col 1:24), can say 'Be joyful always' (cf. Phil 4:4), and speak of Christians as 'sorrowful, yet always rejoicing' (2 Cor 6:10)." Morris

1 Thessalonians 5:17

ἀδιαλείπτως προσεύχεσθε,

ἀδιαλείπτως ceaselessly, without ceasing
 προσευχομαι pray

"Continuing prayer is the continuing expression ... of dependence... Again and again in Paul's letters (and especially in these two letters to the Thessalonians) the apostle interjects little prayers into his argument. Prayer was as natural to Paul as breathing. At any time he was likely to break off his argument or to sum it up by a prayer. In the same way he looks for the Thessalonians to live lives with such an attitude of dependence on God that they will easily and naturally move into the words of prayer on all sorts of occasions, great and small, grave and festive" Morris

1 Thessalonians 5:18

ἐν παντὶ εὐχαριστεῖτε· τοῦτο γὰρ θέλημα θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς.

εὐχαριστεω thank, give thanks

"When we come to realise that God's hand is in all things, we learn to give thanks for all things." Morris

θέλημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

Cf. 4:3. "For this is the will of God ..." almost certainly refers to the three injunctions" [of vv 16-18] Morris

1 Thessalonians 5:19

τὸ πνεῦμα μὴ σβέννυτε,

σβεννυμι extinguish, put out

"The use of the Greek negative μὴ with the present imperative here denotes a command to cease from doing something already in process and not simply a warning to avoid this kind of thing in the future." Morris

Morris suggests that the reference is to the behaviour Paul has written to them about, which quenches the Spirit and results in loss of spiritual power and joy.

1 Thessalonians 5:20

προφητείας μὴ ἐξουθενεῖτε·

προφητεια, ας f prophecy, preaching, the gift of prophecy

ἐξουθενεω despise, treat with contempt

1 Thessalonians 5:21

πάντα δὲ δοκιμάζετε, τὸ καλὸν κατέχετε,

δοκιμάζω test, examine, prove

κατεχω hold fast, keep, restrain

"The point of this injunction, then, is that the Thessalonians are asked to apply tests. There are things that appear on the surface to be good. There are manifestations that claim to come from God. Such are not simply to be accepted at their face value, for it is not part of Christian simplicity to be credulous. All things must be tested. And not simply tested, but accepted wholeheartedly or rejected decisively as a result of the test. 'Hold on to' denotes the firm acceptance of the good. There must be no half measures." Morris

1 Thessalonians 5:22

ἀπὸ παντὸς εἶδους πονηροῦ ἀπέχεσθε.

εἶδος, ους n visible form, appearance

πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

πονηρου here can be either a noun or an adjective, the phrase meaning either 'every appearance of evil' or 'every evil appearance'. In either case the meaning is the same.

ἀπεχω midd. abstain from, avoid

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἀγιάσαι ὑμᾶς ὀλοτελεῖς, καὶ ὀλοκληρον ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀμέμπτως ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τηρηθεῖη.

εἰρηνη, ης f peace

ἀγιάσαι Verb, aor act opt, 3 s ἀγιαζω

sanctify, make holy

ὀλοτελης, ες wholly, in every part

The work carries the sense of completeness, 'to perfection'.

ὀλοκληρος, ον sound, whole, complete
ψυχη, ης f self, inmost being, life, 'soul'
σωμα, τος n body

Sanctification involves the whole person.

ἀμέμπτως Adv (from ἀμεμπτος)

blamelessly

παρουσια, ας see 2:19

τηρηθεῖη Verb, aor pass opt, 3 s τηρεω

keep, observe, maintain

1 Thessalonians 5:24

πιστὸς ὁ καλῶν ὑμᾶς, ὃς καὶ ποιήσει.

πιστος, η, ον faithful, reliable

Paul is confident that his prayer will be answered. "Because he is the faithful One, and because he is the One who has called them, the Thessalonians may know that he will do perfectly all that is involved in their call. It is profoundly satisfying to the believer that in the last resort what matters is not his feeble hold on God, but God's strong grip on him (cf. John 10:28-29)." Morris

1 Thessalonians 5:25

Ἀδελφοί, προσεύχεσθε περὶ ἡμῶν.

προσευχομαι pray

Paul needed their prayer as much as they needed his.

1 Thessalonians 5:26

ἀσπάσασθε τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς πάντας ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ.

ἀσπάζομαι greet, welcome

φιλημα, τος n kiss

ἅγιος, α, ον holy

The meaning is 'give everyone a kiss from me.'

1 Thessalonians 5:27

ἐνορκίζω ὑμᾶς τὸν κύριον ἀναγνωσθῆναι τὴν ἐπιστολὴν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς.

ἐνορκίζω place (someone) under a solemn charge (in the name of)

Morris links this strong term to such passages as 2:17-18. "Apparently some of the Thessalonians had said that he had no real love for them, and if he had wished to do so, he would have been able to return. That he had not done so showed him to have his affections elsewhere. In this situation the ideal thing would have been for Paul to have returned. But his circumstances made this impossible; he had to use this letter as a substitute. Accordingly it was important not only that it should come before the notice of all, but also that it be seen plainly to be intended to come before the notice of all. In this way his care for them all would be manifest." Morris

The first person singular may suggest that this is the point where Paul himself took up the pen.

ἀναγνωσθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin

ἀναγινωσκω read, read in public

worship

ἐπιστολη, ης f letter

1 Thessalonians 5:28

ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν.

χαρις, ιτος f grace, unmerited favour

Introduction to 2 Thessalonians

Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians seems to have been written shortly after the first (see introduction to 1 Thessalonians).

It would seem that Paul's first letter was mistakenly understood by some to imply that the second coming of Christ had already occurred. Hence Paul writes to correct this misunderstanding. Most of the letter is taken up with instruction concerning the Second Coming and with how to deal with those who remain idle.

2 Thessalonians 1:1

Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ·

The opening address is practically identical with that of 1 Thessalonians.

ἐκκλησια, ας f congregation, church

πατηρ, πατρος m father

On the close conjunction of the Father and the Lord Jesus as the source of grace and peace Wilson comments, "That such a construction could be used without comment not only implies the writer's belief in the deity of Christ, but also takes the reader's acknowledgment of it for granted."

2 Thessalonians 1:2

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

χαρις, ιτος see 1 Thess 5:28

εἰρηνη, ης see 1 Thess 5:23

2 Thessalonians 1:3

Εὐχαριστεῖν ὀφείλομεν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί, καθὼς ἄξιόν ἐστιν, ὅτι ὑπεραυξάνει ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν καὶ πλεονάζει ἡ ἀγάπη ἐνὸς ἐκάστου πάντων ὑμῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους,

Verses 3-10 are one sentence in the Greek – they are the complex expression of a single thought.

εὐχαριστέω thank, give thanks
ὀφείλω owe, ought, be bound or obligated
πάντοτε always
ἄξιος, α, ον worthy, fitting
ὑπεραυξανῶ grow abundantly

Implies vigorous growth.

πλεοναζῶ intrans increase, grow

Compare 1 Thess 3:10 & 12. Paul's concerns had been answered.

ἐκαστος, η, ον each, every
ἀλλήλων, ος, ους see 1 Thess 5:15

2 Thessalonians 1:4

ὥστε αὐτοὺς ἡμᾶς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐγκαυχᾶσθαι ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τοῦ θεοῦ ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑπομονῆς ὑμῶν καὶ πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς διωγμοῖς ὑμῶν καὶ ταῖς θλίψεσιν αἷς ἀνέχεσθε,

ὥστε so that, with the result that
ἐγκαυχᾶσθαι Verb, pres midd/pass dep infin
ἐγκαυχασομαι boast
ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance

Cf. 1 Thess 1:3.

διωγμος, ου m persecution
θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering
ἀνεχομαι endure, be patient with

The present tense here highlights the continuing nature of the persecution.

2 Thessalonians 1:5

ἐνδειγμα τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ καταξιωθῆναι ὑμᾶς τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ, ὑπὲρ ἧς καὶ πάσχετε,

ἐνδειγμα, τος n evidence, proof

Morris argues that it is not their suffering of persecution but rather their faith in the face of such persecution which is the demonstration of the righteous judgment of God by which they will attain to eternal life – though suffering is also a means by which God prepares his people for glory.

It may, however, be better to understand the righteous judgment of God as that judgment by which he accounts these Thessalonians to be among his people – worthy of his kingdom not by some act of theirs (worthiness) but by God's own judicial act. The fact that they are included among the children of God is made evident also in that they are facing suffering for the sake of the kingdom. The judgment of God by which they are accounted his people will also be manifest in the punishment of those who persecute them (cf. v6f, also Phil 1:28).

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just
κρισις, εως f judgement, act of judgement
καταξιωθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin καταξιῶ
count worthy, make worthy
πάσχω suffer, experience

2 Thessalonians 1:6

εἴπερ δίκαιον παρὰ θεῷ ἀνταποδοῦναι τοῖς θλίβουσιν ὑμᾶς θλίψιν

εἴπερ since, if it is true that, seeing that
παρὰ preposition with dat with, in the presence of
ἀνταποδοῦναι Verb, aor act infin
ἀνταποδιδῶμι repay, return
θλίβουσιν Verb, pres act ptc, m & n dat pl
θλιβῶ press hard, crush
θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering

2 Thessalonians 1:7

καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς θλιβομένοις ἄνεσιν μεθ' ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ μετ' ἀγγέλων δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ

ἀνεσις, εως f relief
ἀποκαλυψις, εως f revelation

Emphasises that the Lord is currently hidden from the world but that he will, on that day, be revealed in glory.

ἀγγέλων δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ "Possibly the expression implies that they are to be the agents of the divine will. But the main idea is that they are angels that belong to his power." Morris

2 Thessalonians 1:8

ἐν φλογὶ πυρός, διδόντος ἐκδίκησιν τοῖς μὴ εἰδόσι θεὸν καὶ τοῖς μὴ ὑπακούουσιν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ,

πυρ, ος n fire
φλοξ, φλογος f flame

The phrase 'in flaming fire' probably belongs with the words that precede it, i.e. v.7, rather than with v.8. It is part of the picture of the Lord's glory cf. Ex 3:2; Is 66:15; Rev 1:13,14.

διδῶμι give

ἐκδικησις, εως f retribution, rendering of justice, punishment

Cf. Rom 12:19 where Dt 32:35 is quoted but applied to Christ. "It is yet another example of the ease with which the church, from the very first, assigned to Christ the functions that the Old Testament reserved for Yahweh." Morris

εἶδοδιν ptc οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand
ὕπακουω obey, be subject to
εὐαγγελιον, ου n good news, gospel

The use of two definite articles could suggest that two different groups may be in mind. Some think that Paul refers separately to Gentiles and Jews. Morris thinks that Paul is using poetic parallelism and that there is no clear distinction between two groups.

2 Thessalonians 1:9

οἵτινες δίκην τίσουσιν ὄλεθρον αἰώνιον ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ κυρίου καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ,

οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἡτις, ὁ τι who, which, whoever, whichever
δικη, ης f punishment, divine justice
τίσουσιν Verb, fut act indic, 3 pl τινω undergo, suffer

ὄλεθρος, ου m destruction, ruin

ὄλεθρον αἰώνιον "Does not signify so much annihilation as the loss of all that is worthwhile, utter ruin... It indicates that separation from the Lord which is the final disaster." Morris

ἰσχυς, υος f strength

2 Thessalonians 1:10

ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐνδοξασθῆναι ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ καὶ θαυμασθῆναι ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν, ὅτι ἐπιστεύθη τὸ μαρτύριον ἡμῶν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς, ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ.

ὅταν when, whenever, as often as
ἐνδοξασθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin
ἐνδοξαζομαι receive glory, be honoured

An infinitive of purpose.

ἅγιος, α, ον holy, consecrated, set apart to/by God

"It seems that he is saying that those who are in Christ and in whom Christ dwells will by virtue of that fact share in his glory. On the great day it is not only the Lord himself who will be glorious, but his glory will also be seen in the saints." Morris

θαυμασθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin θαυμαζω wonder, be amazed

ἐπιστεύθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s πιστεωω
μαρτυριον, ου n testimony, witness

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that, he, she, it

Morris suggests that prefixing the words ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ with such words as 'you will be among them' brings out Paul's sense.

2 Thessalonians 1:11

εἰς ὃ καὶ προσευχόμεθα πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἵνα ὑμᾶς ἀξιώσῃ τῆς κλήσεως ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν καὶ πληρώσῃ πᾶσαν εὐδοκίαν ἀγαθωσύνης καὶ ἔργον πίστεως ἐν δυνάμει,

εἰς ὃ 'with this in mind.' Morris thinks loosely attached to the whole of the previous section.

προσευχομαι pray
παντοτε always
ἀξιοω consider worthy
κλήσις, εως f call, calling

"We must bear in mind that when people are called they are completely unworthy of this call (Gal 1:13-15 is perhaps a classic instance of this). But God does not intend that they should continue in such a state. They are to walk worthily of the calling wherewith he calls them (Eph 4:1). It is this that Paul has in mind here." Morris

πληρωω fulfill, bring about, accomplish
εὐδοκία, ας f good will, pleasure, desire
ἀγαθωσύνη, ης f goodness

καὶ πληρωσῃ πᾶσαν εὐδοκίαν ἀγαθωσύνης 'and fulfilling every good purpose.' Morris thinks "Paul is praying that God will produce a goodness of will in his friends. The parallelism with 'work of faith' indicates that the meaning is 'resolve proceeding from goodness,' rather than 'a resolve after goodness' or 'a resolve to do good.' Parallel is 'act prompted by your faith.' 'Every,' which precedes 'desire of goodness,' is rightly taken with this phrase also... Faith is always busy. A true faith will clothe itself in works."

δυνάμει Noun, dat s δυναμις

2 Thessalonians 1:12

ὅπως ἐνδοξασθῇ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν αὐτῷ, κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

ὅπως (or ὅπως ἂν) that, in order that
ἐνδοξαζομαι see v.10
ὄνομα, τος n name, title, reputation

'Name' stands for the whole person. The intent is that "The Thessalonians will be such a bright and shining testimony to the reality of their salvation that the Saviour will be seen to be the wonderful Being he is." Morris

καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν αὐτῷ "On that day, just as he will be glorified in them on account of what they have become, so they will be glorified in him on account of what he is... The language is that of Isa 66:5 (LXX), but there 'the Lord' is Yahweh. This is another example of the tendency of the New Testament writers to speak of the Lord Jesus in language used of Yahweh in the Old Testament." Morris

χαρις, ιτος f grace, unmerited favour

2 Thessalonians 2:1

Ἐρωτῶμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡμῶν ἐπισυναγωγῆς ἐπ' αὐτόν,

2 Thess 2:1-12 is one of the most obscure passages in the New Testament. Paul is writing to supplement what he had taught them when present with them (v.5). Our ignorance of what Paul had taught them earlier makes it difficult for us to be certain of the meaning of these verses which are so full of references to his earlier teaching. For one treatment of this see G Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, 1953) pp. 94-133.

ἐρωτῶ ask, request, beg, urge

The single definite article indicates that one event is being spoken of.

παρουσία, ας see 1 Thess 2:19

ἐπισυναγωγή, ης f assembling, gathering

Cf. 1 Thess 4:13-18.

2 Thessalonians 2:2

εἰς τὸ μὴ ταχέως σαλευθῆναι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ νοῦς μηδὲ θροεῖσθαι μήτε διὰ πνεύματος μήτε διὰ λόγου μήτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ὡς δι' ἡμῶν, ὡς ὅτι ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου.

ταχέως adv. (formed from ταχυς) quickly, at once, soon

The thought here is 'precipitately' cf. 1 Tim 5:22.

σαλευθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin σαλευῶ shake, disturb

νοῦς, νοος, νοί, νοῦν m mind, thought, reason, purpose, understanding

Here stands for the whole mental balance of the person.

μηδε negative particle nor, and not, not even; μηδε ... μηδε neither ... nor
θροεομαι be alarmed, startled

Cf. Mk 13:7.

μητε and not; μητε ... μητε neither ... nor

"He speaks of three possible ways in which they may be affected. 'Spirit' ... must be understood in the light of the fact that the early church expected supernatural communications from time to time, for example, through the ministry of prophets (cf. 1 Cor 14:29-30; 1 John 4:1). It means some revelation divinely communicated. Paul, of course, encouraged the right use of prophecy (1 Thess 5:19-20), but here the content of the supposed prophecy showed that it could not have come from God. 'Report' ... may refer to a sermon, though the term is broad enough to cover all sorts of oral communications." Morris

ἐπιστολή, ης f letter

"It indicates that Paul feared that a communication of some kind had been reputed to have come from him (and his assistants?). But he writes in general terms, and we are probably justified in inferring that he was not quite sure of exactly what had happened. Either that, or else he felt it not wise to refer to it too directly. But he is making quite clear that he accepts no responsibility whatever for the report. However it had come, and however it had been attributed to him, he had had nothing to do with it. He does not want his friends to be worried by these speculations, and he completely renounces them." Morris

ἐνέστηκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s ἐνίστημι be present, perf had come

"To say that the day of the Lord had come did not mean that it was completed and that all the glorious events associated with it had occurred. That was so obviously untrue that it needed no refutation. What it did mean was that the day had dawned. They were even then living in it. This being so, the climax must infallibly be reached, and that within a short space of time." Morris

2 Thessalonians 2:3

μή τις ὑμᾶς ἐξαπατήσῃ κατὰ μηδένα τρόπον· ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ ἔλθῃ ἡ ἀποστασία πρῶτον καὶ ἀποκαλυφθῇ ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας,

ἐξαπατήσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3s ἐξαπαταῶ deceive, lead astray

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing
τροπος, ου m way, manner; κατα μηδενα τ. in no way

ἐὰν μὴ unless

Requires the addition of some such phrase as 'that day will not come unless ...'

ἀποστασία, ας f apostasy, rebellion

The inclusion of the definite article implies that Paul is referring to *the* rebellion about which he had already spoken to them. "Paul's thought is that in the last times there will be an outstanding manifestation of the powers of evil arrayed against God ... It is as though Satan were throwing all his forces into one last despairing effort." Morris

ἀποκαλυφθῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s

ἀποκαλύπτω reveal, disclose

ἀνομία, ας f wickedness, lawlessness, sin

Concerning the rival readings ἀνομίας and ἁμαρτίας (so TR), Metzger writes, "Despite the broader external testimony supporting ἁμαρτίας, on the whole it appears that the early Alexandrian witnesses preserve the original reading, ἀνομίας, a word rarely used by Paul, which was altered by copyists to the much more frequently used word, ἁμαρτίας. Furthermore, γαρ ... ἀνομίας in v.7 seems to presuppose ἀνομίας here."

ἀπωλεία, ας f destruction, utter ruin

It is not clear who this individual might be but it will be an outstanding manifestation of the powers of evil – Antichrist. "All attempts to equate the Man of Lawlessness with historical personages break down of the fact that Paul was writing of someone who would appear only at the end of the age; the Man of Lawlessness is an eschatological figure. Paul wrote that he will appear just before the Lord comes again, and therefore it seems futile to try to identify him. Scripture tells us that there are many Antichrists (1 John 2:18), and it does not surprise us accordingly that through the ages of history many have appeared whose evil lives remind us of this or that trait of the Man of Lawlessness. But that does not give us grounds for identifying the supreme embodiment of evil with any of Satan's lesser lights along the way." Morris

2 Thessalonians 2:4

ὁ ἀντικείμενος καὶ ὑπεραιρόμενος ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον θεὸν ἢ σέβασμα, ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσει ἀποδεικνύντα ἑαυτὸν ὅτι ἔστιν θεός.

ἀντικεῖμαι oppose, be against

ὑπεραιρομαι be puffed up with pride; rise in pride (ἐπὶ) against

σεβασμα, τος n sacred thing, object of worship, place of worship

ὥστε so that, with the result that

ναος, ου m temple, sanctuary, inner part of Jewish Temple

"While the temple is not easy to identify, the best way to understand the passage seems to be that some material building will serve as the setting for the blasphemous claim to deity that the Man of Lawlessness will make as the climax of his activities." Morris

καθίζω intrans sit down, sit

ἀποδεικνύντα Verb, pres act ptc, m acc s

ἀποδεικνυμι claim, set forth

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

Satan's great desire is to dethrone God. "Most commentators draw attention to the attempt by Caligula to set up an image of himself in the temple at Jerusalem, an attempt that was frustrated only by his death. This took place in AD 40. The attempt aroused widespread horror among the Jews. It may well be that Paul has this incident in mind in writing these words, but we should bear in mind that what he says goes beyond anything Caligula attempted. The Man of Lawlessness is not pictured as setting up a statue of himself but as taking his seat in person (cf. Ezek 28:2)." Morris

2 Thessalonians 2:5

οὐ μνημονεύετε ὅτι ἔτι ὦν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ταῦτα ἔλεγον ὑμῖν;

μνημονεῦω remember, keep in mind

ἔτι still, yet, moreover

ἐλεγον – the imperfect suggests repeated teaching on this subject.

2 Thessalonians 2:6

καὶ νῦν τὸ κατέχον οἴδατε, εἰς τὸ ἀποκαλυφθῆναι αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ καιρῷ·

κατέχον Verb, pres act ptc, n nom/acc s

κατεχω hold fast, keep, restrain

Conventionally thought here to mean 'hold back' or 'restrain,' though the verb can also mean 'hold fast.' It is difficult for us to be certain of Paul's meaning.

οἶδα know, understand

At present there is something that restrains the manifestation of the Man of Lawlessness. It is difficult for us to know what Paul was referring to here though clearly he had told the Thessalonians. It is wise for us to avoid dogmatic assertions since they can only be speculative.

ἀποκαλυφθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin

ἀποκαλύπτω see v.3

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

καιρος, ου m time, appointed time

What is clear is that God is in control. The Man of Lawlessness will only be revealed at the time of God's appointment.

2 Thessalonians 2:7

τὸ γὰρ μυστήριον ἤδη ἐνεργεῖται τῆς ἀνομίας· μόνον ὁ κατέχων ἄρτι ἕως ἐκ μέσου γένηται.

μυστηριον, ου n secret, mystery

"The use of the term here reminds us that there are secrets as well as sin. We can never, by our own reasoning, plumb the depths of iniquity, the reason for its existence, or the manner of its working. Paul points out that even as he writes there is a secret activity of lawlessness at work. The explanation of it all is not open to us, but the fact of its being in operation is clear enough." Morris

ἤδη adv now, already
ἐνεργεω work, be at work (in)
ἀνομια, ας f see v.3

The forces of Satan are clearly already at work in opposition to the work of God, though they are restrained.

μονος, η, ον i) adj only, alone; ii) adv μονον only, alone

κατεχω see v.6

ἄρτι now, at the present

ἕως until

μεσος, η, ον middle

γένηται Verb, aor subj, 3 s γινομαι

2 Thessalonians 2:8

καὶ τότε ἀποκαλυφθήσεται ὁ ἄνομος, ὃν ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἀνελεῖ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ καὶ καταργήσει τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ,

τοτε then, at that time

ἀποκαλυφθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s

ἀποκαλυπτω see v.3

ἀνομος, ον lawless, outside the law

ἀνελεῖ Verb, fut act indic, 3 s ἀναιρεω do

away with, kill, destroy

στομα, τος n mouth, utterance

Emphasises the ease with which Christ destroys the final rebellion – with a word.

καταργεω render ineffective, do away with
ἐπιφανεια, ας f appearing, appearance
παρουσια, ας see 1 Tess 2:19

What is clear from this passage is the outcome of this final unrestrained rebellion.

2 Thessalonians 2:9

οὗ ἔστιν ἡ παρουσία κατ' ἐνέργειαν τοῦ Σατανᾶ ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει καὶ σημείοις καὶ τέρασιν ψεύδους

οὗ refers to the lawless one who, in many ways, counterfeits Christ.

παρουσια, ας f coming, arrival, presence
ἐνεργεια, ας f (supernatural) working, power
δυναμει Noun, dat s δυναμις
σημειον, ου n miraculous sign, sign

τερας, ατος n wonder, object of wonder
ψευδος, ους n lie, untruth, that which is false/imitation

The signs and miracles will be real enough but they are part of a plan of deception, a show designed to lead people astray.

2 Thessalonians 2:10

καὶ ἐν πάσῃ ἀπάτῃ ἀδικίας τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, ἀνθ' ὧν τὴν ἀγάπην τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἐδέξαντο εἰς τὸ σωθῆναι αὐτούς·

ἀπατη, ης f deception

ἀδικια, ας f wrongdoing, evil, sin

ἀπολλυμι destroy, kill, lose; midd be lost, perish, die

ἀνθ' ὧν because, therefore

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality; ἐν ἀ. truly

The truth of the Gospel is not an abstract philosophy but a revelation of the purposes of God to be embraced in love.

σωζω save, rescue, heal

2 Thessalonians 2:11

καὶ διὰ τοῦτο πέμπει αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς ἐνέργειαν πλάνης εἰς τὸ πιστεῦσαι αὐτοὺς τῷ ψεύδει,

πεμπω send

The present tense may express the certainty of the future event or it "may also carry a hint that what will take place on the grand scale when the Man of Lawlessness comes is even now at work in principle in the case of lesser people Whenever people refuse the truth, God sends the working of error." Morris

ἐνεργεια, ας see v.9

πλανη, ης f error, deceit, deception

ψευδος, ους see v.9

Even in the deception suffered by many, God remains sovereign, yet (v.12) man remains responsible and answerable. "Men start by rejecting the Gospel voluntarily; they then reach the stage when they are unable to tell what is gospel and what is fallacy. This is the powerful 'delusion' which Paul rightly regards as an Act of God." Neil

2 Thessalonians 2:12

ἵνα κριθῶσιν πάντες οἱ μὴ πιστεύσαντες τῇ ἀληθείᾳ ἀλλὰ εὐδοκῆσαντες τῇ ἀδικίᾳ.

κριθῶσιν Verb, aor pass subj, 3 pl κρινω

judge, pass judgement on, condemn

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

εὐδοκῆσαντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl

εὐδοκεω be pleased, take pleasure in

They are not passive agents in the rebellion against God.

ἀδικια, ας f wrongdoing, evil, sin

"The stark contrast reminds us that ultimately we must belong to one or other of two classes, namely, those who love God's truth and those who take their pleasure in wickedness. Those who begin by failing to accept God's good gift end by setting forward unrighteousness. Notice the way in which they become perverted. These people are not described as sinning through force of circumstance or any form of compulsion. They now find their pleasure in sin. They delight in wrong. For them evil has become good." Morris

2 Thessalonians 2:13

Ἡμεῖς δὲ ὀφείλομεν εὐχαριστεῖν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί ἠγαπημένοι ὑπὸ κυρίου, ὅτι εἴλατο ὑμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἀπαρχὴν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐν ἀγιασμῷ πνεύματος καὶ πίστει ἀληθείας,

ὀφείλω owe, ought, must

εὐχαριστεῶ thank, give thanks

παντοτε always

ἠγαπημένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
ἀγαπαω

εἴλατο Verb, aor midd indic, 3 s αἰρεομαι
choose

ἀπαρχη, ης f firstfruit, first portion

The variant readings ἀπ ἀρχης and ἀπαρχην are both well supported in MSS, versions and patristic citations. The UBS committee favoured ἀπαρχην on the grounds that ἀπ ἀρχης occurs nowhere else in Paul who generally uses ἀρχη in the sense of 'power.' Bruce also favours this reading, understanding it as a title for the church of God. Morris, however, believes that transcriptional probabilities favour ἀπ ἀρχης for the very reason that it is not a typical Pauline expression. He adds, "Moreover, while Paul employs the concept of firstfruits on a number of occasions, he never elsewhere connects it with election. On the other hand, he often associates election with some expression rooting it in the beginning. A further point militating against ἀπαρχην is the absence of a qualifying genitive, which, as Frame points out, is usual in Paul's use of that noun."

σωτηρια, ας f salvation

ἀγιασμος, ου m sanctification, holiness

πίστει Noun, dat s πιστις

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

Morris suggests that the final expression may be intended to highlight the divine and human aspects of salvation.

2 Thessalonians 2:14

εἰς ὃ ἐκάλεσεν ὑμᾶς διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἡμῶν, εἰς περιποίησιν δόξης τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

εὐαγγελιον, ου n good news, gospel
περιποιησις, εως f obtaining, gaining

2 Thessalonians 2:15

ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί, στήκετε, καὶ κρατεῖτε τὰς παραδόσεις ἃς ἐδιδάχθητε εἴτε διὰ λόγου εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν.

στήκετε Verb, perf act imperat, 2 pl ἰστημι
intrans (in 2 aor, pf & pluperf; all midd & pass) stand, stop, stand firm

κρατεω hold, hold fast, sieze, hold back

παραδοσις, εως f tradition

διδασκω teach

εἴτε if, whether

ἐπιστολη, ης f letter

What Paul had delivered to them, whether in preaching or by letter, had been the word of God.

2 Thessalonians 2:16

Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς καὶ θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν, ὁ ἀγαπήσας ἡμᾶς καὶ δοὺς παράκλησιν αἰωνίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα ἀγαθὴν ἐν χάριτι,

Cf. 1 Thess 3:11-13. The highest possible position is given to the Lord Jesus Christ.

ἀγαπήσας Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s
ἀγαπαω

It is not clear whether Paul is speaking of both persons or of the Father only. Morris thinks probably the latter.

δοὺς Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s διδομι
give

παρακλησις, εως f encouragement,
comfort

ἐλπις, ιδος f hope, ground of hope

χάριτι Noun, dat s χαρις, ιτος f grace,
unmerited favour

2 Thessalonians 2:17

παρακαλέσαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας καὶ στηρίζαι ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ ἀγαθῷ.

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge

I.e. strengthen the whole inner life.

στηρίζω strengthen, establish

"The prayer is for inner strengthening ... with a view to faithful Christian service." Morris

2 Thessalonians 3:1

Τὸ λοιπὸν προσεύχεσθε, ἀδελφοί, περὶ ἡμῶν,
ἵνα ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου τρέχη καὶ δοξάζεται
καθὼς καὶ πρὸς ὑμᾶς,

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other: (το)
λοιπον adv. finally
προσευχομαι pray

The verb is in an emphatic position. Cf. 1
Thess 5:25.

τρέχω run, exert oneself

For the imagery, cf. Ps 147:15.

δοξάζω praise, honour, glorify, exalt

Paul is writing from Corinth where there was
opposition and difficulty.

2 Thessalonians 3:2

καὶ ἵνα ῥυσθῶμεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀτόπων καὶ
πονηρῶν ἀνθρώπων, οὐ γὰρ πάντων ἡ πίστις.

ῥυσθῶμεν Verb, aor pass subj, 1 pl ῥυομαι
save, rescue

ἀτοπος, ον improper, evil, harmful
πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

"Both the use of the aorist tense in the verb
'delivered' and the article with 'wicked and evil
men' point to a definite situation. Paul is not
asking for prayer that he might be kept safe in
his constant journeys and preaching. He writes
in the light of his particular situation. He writes
knowing that his friends are aware of his
difficulty. He looks to them to join him in
prayer that he may be delivered out of it. It
seems most natural to understand his enemies
as those Jews who opposed his preaching...
We know that they dogged his steps at Corinth
as they did in other places (Acts 18:5; 12ff.).
His request reminds us of similar words
elsewhere (Rom 15:31)." Morris

οὐ γὰρ πάντων ἡ πίστις either 'not all people
believe' or 'not all have embraced the faith.'
The former leads perhaps more naturally to the
contrast of the following verse.

2 Thessalonians 3:3

πιστὸς δὲ ἐστὶν ὁ κύριος, ὃς στηρίζει ὑμᾶς καὶ
φυλάξει ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ.

πιστος, η, ον faithful, reliable

The inclusion of ἐστὶν is emphatic.

στηρίζω see v.17

Cf. 1 Thess 3:2.

φυλασσω keep, guard, defend
πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

Could be either 'from the evil one' or 'from
evil.'

2 Thessalonians 3:4

πεποιθᾶμεν δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ ἐφ' ὑμᾶς, ὅτι ἂ
παραγγέλλομεν καὶ ποιεῖτε καὶ ποιήσετε.

πεποιθᾶμεν Verb, perf act indic, 1 pl πειθω
persuade, convince perf act & pass
have confidence, be confident
παραγγέλλω command, instruct

"Paul is putting his trust basically in the Lord.
But he is expecting the Lord so to work in the
lives of his friends that they will respond to the
commands laid on them." Morris

2 Thessalonians 3:5

ὁ δὲ κύριος κατευθῆναι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας εἰς
τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ εἰς τὴν ὑπομονὴν τοῦ
Χριστοῦ.

κατευθῆναι Verb, aor act opt, 3 s κατευθυνω
direct, guide

"Paul is about to deal with certain people who
are idle and insubordinate. He never shirks an
issue, and his directions when he comes to
them are blunt enough. But it is not part of his
plan to give needless offense, and the reference
to the love of God is timely. It reminds them
that Paul speaks of one who himself owed
everything to the love of God and who loved
God himself, and also that they are in the same
position. There should be no resentment
among people whose thoughts are fixed on
God's love. Similarly the reference to 'Christ's
perseverance' is in point when people's
idleness is about to be rebuked." Morris

ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance

"There is some difficulty in knowing exactly
what the following expressions signify. An
expression like 'the love of God' might mean in
Greek either God's love for us (which NIV
chooses) or our love for God... [It is probable
that] the primary idea will be that of God's
love to us, but there will also be the secondary
idea of our love for him. Paul's prayer, then,
will be that the inner life of his friends be so
concentrated on God's love for them that that
this will evoke an answering love for him.
Conformably to this, 'the perseverance of
Christ'... will denote first the attitude of Christ,
and then the answering attitude on the part of
the Thessalonians." Morris

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

"In the First Epistle Paul had mentioned that
some people would not work but were
disorderly (4:11-12; 5:14), but it is evident that
his brief exhortations had not produced the
desired effect. He felt strongly on the matter,
as we see from the fact that in this letter he
devotes so much space to this problem."
Morris

2 Thessalonians 3:6

Παραγγέλλομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ στέλλεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ παντὸς ἀδελφοῦ ἀτάκτως περιπατοῦντος καὶ μὴ κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν ἣν παρελάβοσαν παρ' ἡμῶν.

παραγγελλω see v.4

ὄνομα, τος n name, person, authority
στελλομαι try to guard against, avoid; σ.
ἀπο keep away from, shun

"In view of verse 15 this does not mean 'abstain from all interaction,' but it stands for the withholding of intimate fellowship."

Morris

ἀτακτως in idleness, in lazyness

Compare 1 Thess 5:14

περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

παραδοσις, εως see 2:15

παραλάβοσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s

παραλαμβανω take, receive, accept

The weight of textual evidence is fairly evenly divided between *παρελαβοσαν* and *παρελαβετε*. UBS prefers the former as the 'harder' reading and the one more likely to explain the origin of the other. Morris prefers the latter saying that it is possible that the former "arose by what Westcott and Hort call 'an ocular confusion' with the ending *παραδοσιν* in the corresponding place in the line above." He adds, "Moulton thinks it 'more than doubtful' that *παρελαβοσαν* can be accepted, since the termination is so very rare at this period."

2 Thessalonians 3:7

αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἶδατε πῶς δεῖ μιμεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς, ὅτι οὐκ ἠτακτήσαμεν ἐν ὑμῖν

πῶς how(?), in what way(?)

δει impersonal verb it is necessary, must, should, ought

μιμεομαι imitate, follow another's example

Cf. 1 Thess 1:5-6.

ἀτακτεω be lazy, idle

2 Thessalonians 3:8

οὐδὲ δωρεὰν ἄρτον ἐφάγομεν παρά τινος, ἀλλ' ἐν κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαι τινὰ ὑμῶν·

οὐδε neither, nor

δωρεαν without cost, freely, for nothing

ἄρτος, ου m bread, a loaf, food

ἐφάγομεν Verb, aor act indic, 1 pl ἐσθιω and ἐσθω eat, consume

"To eat bread' is evidently a Semitism for 'get a living,' not simply 'get a meal,' or even 'meals' (cf. Gen 3:19; Amos 7:12, etc.). Paul does not mean that he had never accepted a hospitable invitation, but that he had not depended on other people for his means of livelihood." Morris

κοπος, ου m work, labour trouble

μοχθος, ου m labour, hardship

νυξ, νυκτος f night

ἐπιβαρῆσαι Verb, aor act infin ἐπιβαρεω be a financial burden

Cf. 1 Thess 2:9

2 Thessalonians 3:9

οὐχ ὅτι οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἑαυτοὺς τύπον δῶμεν ὑμῖν εἰς τὸ μιμεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς.

ἐξουσια, ας f authority, right

Compare 1 Corinthians 9:3-14 for a fuller statement concerning the rights of an apostle and Paul's attitude toward such rights.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

τυπος, ου m pattern, example, type

Cf. 1 Thess 1:7; 2:8.

δῶμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl διδομι give μιμεομαι see v.7

2 Thessalonians 3:10

καὶ γὰρ ὅτε ἤμεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, τοῦτο παρηγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν, ὅτι εἴ τις οὐ θέλει ἐργάζεσθαι μηδὲ ἐσθιέτω.

ὅτε conj when, at which time

παραγγελλω see v.4

θελω wish, will

The injunction applies to those who *will not* (do not want to) work, not to those who cannot. "Paul is giving the clearest expression to the thought that the Christian cannot be a drone. It is obligatory for him to be a worker." Morris

μηδε negative particle nor, neither

ἐσθιέτω Verb, pres act imperat, 3 pl ἐσθιω and ἐσθω eat, consume

2 Thessalonians 3:11

ἀκούομεν γὰρ τινὰς περιπατοῦντας ἐν ὑμῖν ἀτάκτως, μηδὲν ἐργαζομένους ἀλλὰ περιεργαζομένους·

ἀκούομεν It is not clear how Paul heard this news – it may even have been by letter. The present tense could suggest 'we keep hearing' or may simply mean 'we have heard.'

τινας Pronoun, m & f acc pl τις

ἀτακτως see v.6

Cf. 1 Thess 5:14.

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing

περιεργαζομαι be a busybody

Perhaps busying themselves in encouraging others also to be idle.

2 Thessalonians 3:12

τοῖς δὲ τοιοῦτοις παραγγέλλομεν καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ ἵνα μετὰ ἡσυχίας ἐργαζόμενοι τὸν ἑαυτῶν ἄρτον ἐσθίωσιν.

τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pronoun and adjective such, of such kind

παραγγελλω see v.4

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge

Adds a softer note to the command.

ἡσυχια, ας f silence, quietness

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον see v.9

ἄρτος, ου see v.8

2 Thessalonians 3:13

ὁμοῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, μὴ ἐγκακήσητε καλοποιῶντες.

Ὑμεῖς δέ i.e. the majority of the church.

ἐγκακήσητε Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl ἐγκακεω become discouraged, tire of

καλοποιεω do what is good

Part of this doing good is for them to seek to win over the idle.

2 Thessalonians 3:14

Εἰ δὲ τις οὐχ ὑπακούει τῷ λόγῳ ἡμῶν διὰ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς, τοῦτον σημειοῦσθε, μὴ συναμιγνύσθαι αὐτῷ, ἵνα ἐντραπή·

ὑπακουω obey, be subject to

ἐπιστολη, ης f letter

σημειομαι take note of

συναμιγνυμι associate with

The injunction is to withdraw from close fellowship but (v.15) not to exclude the brother completely. The same verb is used in 1 Cor 5:9-13.

ἐντραπή Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s ἐντρεπω make ashamed

2 Thessalonians 3:15

καὶ μὴ ὡς ἐχθρὸν ἠγεῖσθε, ἀλλὰ νοουθετεῖτε ὡς ἀδελφόν.

ἐχθρος, α, ον enemy, one hated

ἠγεομαι think, regard, consider

"Throughout this whole section he aims at having the dissident reclaimed in a spirit of love. The actions enjoined in verse 14 are just as kindly intentioned as those in this verse." Morris

νουθετεω instruct, teach, warn

Cf. 1 Thess 5:12,14.

2 Thessalonians 3:16

Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ κύριος τῆς εἰρήνης δόξη ὑμῖν τὴν εἰρήνην διὰ παντὸς ἐν παντί τρόπῳ. ὁ κύριος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.

εἰρηνη, ης f peace

δόξη Verb, aor act opt, 3 s διδομι give

διὰ παντὸς 'continually'

τροπος, ου m way, manner

"Has within it the idea of the manner in which conditions alter. No change in that which is outward can interfere with the Christian's deep-seated peace... The Christian's peace is never independent of the Lord. It is the gift of the Lord, and it is impossible apart from him; indeed, it is the very presence of the Lord. It is only as the Lord is in the heart of the believer day by day that he knows this peace." Morris

2 Thessalonians 3:17

Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῆ ἐμῆ χειρὶ Παύλου, ὃ ἐστὶν σημεῖον ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ· οὕτως γράφω.

ἀσπασμος, ου m greeting

ἐμος, η, ον 1st pers possessive adj my, mine

χειρ, χειρος f hand, power

Paul's practice would seem to have been to dictate his letters to an amanuensis who wrote them down (see particularly Rom 16:22). Paul would add the closing words of greeting in his own hand. This practice seems to have been not uncommon at that time.

σημειον, ου n sign

ἐπιστολη, ης see v.14

Paul's words may have been prompted by the uncertainty alluded to in 2:2.

2 Thessalonians 3:18

ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.

Note the inclusion of 'all.'

χαρις, ιτος f grace