



A Study in 1 Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians 2.13-3.10

¹³ And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. ¹⁴ For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, ¹⁵ who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind ¹⁶ by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved-- so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them at last!

¹⁷ But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, ¹⁸ because we wanted to come to you-- I, Paul, again and again-- but Satan hindered us. ¹⁹ For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? ²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.

3:1 Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone, ² and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith, ³ that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. ⁴ For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know. ⁵ For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.

⁶ But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you-- ⁷ for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. ⁸ For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. ⁹ For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, ¹⁰ as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?

Imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea (2.14-16)

¹⁴ For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, ¹⁵ who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind ¹⁶ by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved-- so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them at last!

1. Paul's prophetic word of judgment against the Jews
 - a. "who killed both the Lord Jesus¹ and the prophets"²
 - b. "drove us out" (cf. Acts 8, 17.iff, etc.)
 - c. "displease God³ and oppose all mankind"
 - i. "by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved"⁴

¹ Acts 2:23; Acts 3:13-15.

² **1 Kings 19:9-10** There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁰ He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." **Luke 11:47-51** Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed. ⁴⁸ So you are witnesses and you consent to the deeds of your fathers, for they killed them, and you build their tombs. ⁴⁹ Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,' ⁵⁰ so that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, ⁵¹ from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation. **Matthew 23:31-37** Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. ³² Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. ³³ You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? ³⁴ Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, ³⁵ so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. ³⁶ Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. ³⁷ "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!

³ Cf. 1 Thess 2.3-4: sincere Gospel preaching pleases God.

⁴ **Isaiah 42:5-10** Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it: ⁶ "I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, ⁷ to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. ⁸ I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols. ⁹ Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them." ¹⁰ Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from the end of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants. **Isaiah 49:5-6** And now the LORD says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him-- for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength -- ⁶ he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." **Luke 2:27-32** And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, ²⁸ he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, ²⁹ "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; ³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation ³¹ that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel." **Acts 26:14-18** And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' ¹⁵ And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?'

- d. “so that they always fill up the measure of their sins”⁵
- e. “but wrath has come upon them at last”⁶

Paul’s eager desire to see them (2.17-18)

¹⁷ But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, ¹⁸ because we wanted to come to you-- I, Paul, again and again-- but Satan hindered us.

- 1. “we were torn away from you” (lit. “we were made orphans”)
- 2. “in person not in heart”
- 3. “Satan hindered us”

Paul’s Crown (2.19-20)

¹⁹ For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?
²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.

- 1. “our hope or joy or crown of boasting”⁷

And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶ But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, ¹⁷ delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles – to whom I am sending you ¹⁸ to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’ **Philippians 2:14-16** Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. (Cf. 1 Tim 2.1-4)

⁵ **Genesis 15:16** “And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” (Cf. Daniel 8.23-25; Luke 11.50; Matt 23.32)

⁶ **Romans 11:7-10, 25** What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, ⁸ as it is written, “God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day.” ⁹ And David says, “Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them; ¹⁰ let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and bend their backs forever.” ... ²⁵ Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

⁷ **Philippians 2:14-16** Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. **Philippians 4:1** Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. **Hebrews 13:17** Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. **Colossians 1:28** Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

2. “before our Lord Jesus at his coming”⁸

The Visitation of Timothy and Tribulation (3.1-5)

Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone, ² and we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith, ³ that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. ⁴ For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know. ⁵ For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.

1. “we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s coworker⁹ in the gospel of Christ” (3.2a)
2. “to establish and exhort you in your faith, that no one be moved by these afflictions” (3.2-3)
3. “for you yourselves know that we are destined for this” (3.4)¹⁰

⁸ **2 Corinthians 5:10-11** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. ¹¹ Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. (Cf. Matt 7.15-23) **2 Timothy 4:8** Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing. **Romans 15:17-19** In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God. ¹⁸ For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience-- by word and deed, ¹⁹ by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God-- so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ. **Philippians 1:6** And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. **Philippians 2:12-13** Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. **1 Thessalonians 5:23-24** Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. **Ephesians 2:8-10** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

⁹ **1 Corinthians 3:5-9** What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ⁷ So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. ⁸ He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. ⁹ For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s field, God’s building. **Philippians 2:25** I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need.

¹⁰ **John 16:33** I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” **Acts 14:21-22** When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, ²² strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. **2 Corinthians 1:3-4** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. **Romans 5:3-5** Not only that, but we rejoice in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. **2 Corinthians 4:16-18** So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed

4. “I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain” (3.5)¹¹

Timothy’s Good News (3.6-10)

⁶ But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you-- ⁷ for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. ⁸ For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. ⁹ For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, ¹⁰ as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?

1. “Good News”
 - a. “your faith and love”
 - b. “you always remember us kindly and long to see us” (3.6)
2. “in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith” (3.7)
3. “for now we live” (3.8a)
 - a. “if you are standing fast in the Lord” (3.8b)
4. “for what thanksgiving can we return to God for you?”¹²
 - a. “for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God”
 - b. “as we pray most earnestly night and day
 - i. that we may see you face to face
 - ii. and supply what is lacking in your faith”

1 Thessalonians 3:11-14 Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, ¹² and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all (cf. 4.9-12), as we do for you, ¹³ so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father (cf. 4.1-8), at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints (cf. 4.13-5.11).

day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. (Cf. Rom 8.18ff) **1 Peter 4:12-14** Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

¹¹ **2 Samuel 24:1** Again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, “Go, number Israel and Judah.” **1 Chronicles 21:1** Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.

¹² **Psalm 116:12** What shall I render to the LORD for all his benefits to me?