

## LESSON TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

### INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

**“PERHAPS TODAY!”** Preacher *par excellence*, Bible College teacher, author, publisher, evangelist, and one of this writer’s mentors, Don DeWelt, posted those words on large signs around the walls of his Bible College classrooms. He lived his life and conducted his multiple ministries focused on the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

About 1 of every 8 verses in 1 Thessalonians refers to the Lord’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming (it’s 3 of 8 in 2 Thess.). 1 Thessalonians has a total of 89 verses and 11 of these verses (1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:1,2,3,4,23) refer to Christ’s return. The apostle Paul lived each day of his life in the hope of Christ’s Second Coming.

It is the first and oldest epistle of the apostle Paul. First Thessalonians was written about A.D. 53 during his 1½ year stay in Corinth. Thessalonica was a great metropolis and the capital of the whole province of Macedonia. It was originally named “Therma” because of the warm mineral springs there. The Roman road *Via Egnatia* ran through Thessalonica. It was the overland, military highway from Rome to the countries at the eastern end of the Mediterranean. Octavian (Caesar Augustus) had rewarded the city’s loyalty to Rome by declaring it a “free city” (so long as it paid taxes to Rome). It was governed by a people’s assembly and “politarchs” (i.e., “rulers of the city” (see Acts 17:1-8). The excellent harbor and highway connections made Thessalonica an ideal center from which the gospel could be “sounded forth.” (1 Thess. 1:8) Joplin doesn’t have an harbor, but it does have a significant highway intersection! Joplin has numerous gospel-preaching churches and para-church ministries. The gospel has been “sounded forth” from Joplin to many places in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world! But what about Joplin itself? Could the believers in Joplin be doing a better job of “sounding forth” the good news here? Maybe if we were more consciously “waiting for his (God’s) Son from heaven....Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come” (1 Thess. 1:10), we would. Maybe if we awoke every morning thinking, **PERHAPS TODAY!** we would. Anticipating the return of Jesus at any moment will be our theme as we study through 1 Thessalonians.

### QUESTIONS:

1. Locate Macedonia and Thessalonica on your Bible map. What country are these two places in today? 1:1 Is the Gospel sounded forth from there?
2. Do you think Paul prayed for all the people he said he did? 1:2-3 By name? Corporately? **Always?**
3. Why had the “gospel” come to the Thessalonians “with full conviction (“assurance” KJV)? 1:5. What has conviction to do with getting the gospel?
4. What kinds of “affliction” do you think the Thessalonians suffered for “receiving the word?” 1:6
5. How did the Thessalonians become an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Acaia? 1:7 (see 2 Cor. 8:1-5)
6. How do you think the Thessalonians “sounded forth” the word of the Lord? 1:8 Everywhere? Of course they had advantages we do not have today!
7. Why was it such *big news* that someone had turned to God from idols? 1:9
8. Would that be big news anywhere today?
9. Why does Paul connect the second coming of Christ to his resurrection? 1:10 (See Acts 17:30-31)

“One far-off divine event toward which the whole creation moves.”  
An inscription announcing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Christ engraved in the dome of the U.S. Capitol Building, Washington D.C.

Around the dial of a clock in a church in  
Strasburg, Germany, are these words:  
“One of these hours the  
Lord is coming.”

## LESSON TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-20

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

### INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

At Dresden, NY, in 1833, there was born into a clergyman's home two remarkably precocious boys, greatly attached to each other. The mother was overly indulgent; the father, dictatorial and unsympathetic. He was fully engaged with his ecclesiastical responsibilities and neglected his own children. The result was that as they neared manhood they left home. The mother grieved greatly. Search was made, but in vain, till a farmer found a large pile of leaves raked up in his woodland, and in that pile of leaves he found the two boys. They had hidden there, determined to remain until they starved to death. When the farmer invited them to his home to get something to eat, they would not go until assured that it was not the home of a preacher. This is chapter one of the history of the illustrious skeptics, Robert G. and Ebon C. Ingersoll. The nation has seldom had more fascinating orators and writers, nor two with more destructive beliefs, than Robert G. and Ebon C. Ingersoll. Two very capable lives, were ruined by destructive parenting. By their atheism, they in turn, ruined countless others.

Paul reminds the Thessalonians that he treated them as a "nursing mother" (Gr. *trophos*) 1 Thess. 2:7, and an "exhorting father" (Gr. *pater*) 2:11. He was neither tyrannical nor overly indulgent. That is clear from the record of his ministry among them (Acts 16 & 17 and 1 & 2 Thess.). A wise man once said, "All growing is at the same time a dying away from that which lived yesterday." These Europeans (many of them Gentiles) had been so well **nurtured in the apostolic word of God** they had "sounded forth the gospel everywhere" and they had "become a model" to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

And why was Paul so **bold** in teaching the Thessalonians the gospel of Christ? He did so to save them from the "wrath of God" that is to come. The goal for Paul's "toil and hardship" was to "**nurse them**" in the truth that Jesus was coming again in glory (1 Thess. 2:19).

"...the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect..."  
Matthew 24:44

### QUESTIONS:

1. What was the "great opposition" Paul boldly faced in order to preach the gospel to the Thessalonians? 2:2 Is there **opposition** to the gospel today in the USA? Where? Are you bold?
2. Paul never spoke to **please** people 2:4. Wasn't that unchristian? Are you afraid you will offend people if you speak to them the word of God?
3. What kind of personality must Paul have been? He says he never used words of **flattery**, didn't do anything out of greed, and did not seek glory from men? 2:5-6 Didn't Paul ever have time for a little frivolity?
4. How shall we reconcile "**nursing**" people in the faith, 2:7, with telling them to be "dependent on nobody" 4:12? Does your faith need "nursing?"
5. Should we have any preachers today who support themselves from another job? 2:9-12 In the 1940-50s the Disciples of Christ closed down most churches too small to support a preacher & family. Will that eventually happen to small "Independent" Christian churches?
6. How is the "word of God at **work** in...believers"? 2:13 Have you ever seen words "work" inside a person? When? How did you know?
7. What had the "churches of God in Judea" suffered? (see the Acts and Hebrews). 2:14 Any churches suffering the same way today?
8. Did the Jews kill Jesus? It is not "politically-correct" to say that today! 2:15-16. **When** was God's wrath to come "completely" (Gr. *eis telos*, "unto the end") upon the Jews?
9. What will Paul "boast" of concerning the Thessalonians at the Second Coming of Christ? 2:19-20

### Jesus is coming---nurture the saints!

"We are not primarily put on this earth to see through one another,  
but to see one another through."  
---Peter DeVries

## LESSON TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

### INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

From 1929 to 1941 during blood purges and manipulated famines, tens of millions of Russians died by order of Joseph Stalin. Their suffering was brutal almost beyond description. Hundreds of thousands were jammed like cattle into unheated unventilated railway cars and sent to prison camps from which they never returned. Villagers were called to mass meetings and asked: "Are you with the godless (the Marxists) or the believers?" Those who signified they stood with the "believers" were marched to loading places and shoved into the cattle cars for shipment to Siberia. A survivor described a trip of horror for a missionary who translated his diary into English:

"At Omsk ten thousand believers and others were brought on five hundred sledges...in temperatures forty degrees below centigrade. Priests, preachers, and ministers of other denominations were driven thus, but the majority were innocent peasants...The first night was spent under the open sky. Many of the aged and women and children froze that night. Others had frozen hands, feet, or faces. There were screams and sobs that cannot be described. One father could not stand it any longer. Snatching a rifle from a Red soldier, he shot his family and himself. The howling of the wolves awaiting their prey was terrible to hear. In this way we marched four days. The dead were not buried but the wolves devoured them. Only on the tenth day did we arrive at our destination. Snow and interminable forests surrounded us. Many never reached the place, especially the children. The erection of barracks was begun.

The food was unfit to eat...The dying were not cared for nor taken away---we did not know what became of them. Daily we turned to our Savior. Those who had no hope in Christ sank into a state of depression."

from *By Their Blood*, by James & Marti Hefley, 1996, Baker pub.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonian Christians (3:3) that suffering was their "lot" (RSV) or it was what they were "destined" for (NIV). Peter wrote that Christians should not think it strange that they suffer because that is their "calling" (1 Pet. 4:12; & 2:20-21). Jesus warned all his disciples that they would suffer simply because they belonged to him (John 15:18-27). And God's reason for this is that Christians may have their "hearts **established**, unblamable in holiness...at the **coming of our Lord Jesus...**" Paul also wrote, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Rom. 8:18).  
**Christians—believe that and long for Jesus to come!**

### QUESTIONS:

1. Why could Paul hardly bear being separated from the Thessalonians? 3:1 He had plenty of other Christian brethren around him?
2. Do we need "Timothys" (i.e., preachers) to establish us in the faith? 3:2
3. Are you "moved" by afflictions? 3:3 Which way are you "moved"?
4. Why does a good God allow evil (affliction on good people) to occur? 3:4 (see Rom. 5:1-5)
5. Does anyone you know have a problem with this question? How would you help them with it?
6. Is our faith in vain if we are tempted? 3:5 I thought Jesus said "temptations are sure to come." Why are we held responsible if they are "sure to come"?

Does hearing about the faith of others undergoing affliction help you endure your afflictions? 3:6-8

How could Paul "supply what was lacking" in their faith? 3:10

How does "love to one another and to all men" **establish our hearts unblamable**? 3:11-13

Do you think we will be "unblamable in holiness" immediately upon facing the Lord Jesus at his coming? 3:13 or will we have all our sins exposed at the final judgment?

### PERHAPS TODAY!

In 1241, the Tatars invaded Poland's old city of Krakow. It was the custom there for the hours to be marked, not by a bell, but by a trumpeter. One day an arrow cut short his song right in the middle. To this day, you can still hear the trumpeter, his song never finished, ending in the middle. At noon each day, the same haunting call is broadcast on Polish radio. The end of the world will come with the sound of Gabriel's trumpet. But no one will stop him. *He will finish* his song!

---from *1000 Windows*, by Robert C. Shannon, 1997, Standard pub.

## LESSON TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-18

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

### INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Paul writes in this chapter that the will of God for the Christian is **sanctification**. "Sanctification" literally defined is, "To separate for a holy use." Our "separation unto a holy use" is both the work of God and our work. The great theologian, Edward John Carnell, wrote, "Sanctification is the immediate work of God by his Spirit (through the Word) upon our whole nature, proceeding from the peace made for us by Jesus Christ, whereby, being changed into his likeness, we are kept entirely in peace with God, and are preserved unblamable, or in a state of gracious acceptance with him, according to the *terms* of the covenant, unto the end." Indeed, God provided for mankind the opportunity to be set apart (sanctified) unto him through the vicarious death of Christ. But since human beings were created in the image of God, with the awesome power of choice, they have a part to play in their **sanctification** unto their Creator. First, they must choose Christ's death in their place by faith and obedience in baptism. Then they must surrender to the work of the Holy Spirit through God's revealed word (the Bible) to be "conformed to the image of Christ" (Rom. 8:28-29; 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 3:18, etc.) by keeping Christ's commandments.

The old TV serial, "*The Untouchables*," vividly illustrates what it means to be "sanctified." Elliot Ness and his cadre of "special agents" were **set apart** by the U.S. government for a particular purpose. They were chosen because they could not be bribed, corrupted or intimidated. They were dedicated, loyal, and fearless. Christians are God's "*Untouchables*."

Paul says in this chapter that the Christian's motivation for his ongoing sanctification is **The Second Coming of Jesus Christ!** (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Paul put it succinctly at Athens: "...now he (God) commands all men everywhere to repent, because he has **fixed a day** on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead." (Acts 17:30-31). **PERHAPS TODAY!**

### QUESTIONS:

1. How does one "learn" from Paul the bachelor to "know how to take a wife"? 4:1,4
2. If "sanctification" is the will of God for us, where do we learn what "sanctification" is and how to do it? 4:3
3. Was Paul saying that all Christians should marry? 4:4-5
4. How could a man "wrong his brother" in the matter of marriage? 4:6
5. What has "minding one's own affairs and working with one's hands" to do with "loving the brethren"? 4:9-11
6. Are Christians really not to be "dependent on **anybody**"? 4:12
7. What does Paul's statement in 4:15 (that those who are alive shall not precede those who have fallen asleep at Jesus' 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming) do to the "secret rapture" theory?
8. How many "comings" will Jesus make to earth to take his people to heaven? 4:13-17
9. If we are to "comfort one another with these words," could we use more preaching and teaching on the Second Coming of Christ? 4:18

A model must be a **perfect** size something. It matters little what size, but the dress, the shoe, the suit, the hat, must fit him/her **perfectly**. When it comes to the "garment" of human "sanctification" or "godliness," Christ is our model. He lived human life as it ought to be lived. Humanness fitted him **perfectly**. He was totally "set apart" to the Heavenly Father's will. Does it sometimes seem that our godliness is two sizes too small and pinches in places? Or does it sometimes seem a size too large, all baggy and wrinkled?

Let's not alter the "garment," let's alter ourselves!

---1000 Windows, Robert C. Shannon

*"Every day, no matter what I'm doing, I say, Lord,  
I'll do the best I can, and You do the rest."*

---Loretta Young, motion picture actress

## LESSON TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-28

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

### INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

The nuclear submarine, *USS Thresher*, disappeared on April 10, 1963, carrying 129 Navy men to a watery grave. Poor workmanship and sloppy testing led to the loss. Probable cause of the sinking has been pinpointed as the failure of the salt-water piping system that cooled the nuclear propulsion machinery. Such a failure would have flooded the submarine and knocked out all electrical power.

Before sinking in 8000 feet of water, the *Thresher* had undergone extensive overhaul at the Naval Shipyard in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. But only *five percent* of the *Thresher's* salt-water piping system was inspected by the shipyard. Even in that small sampling one of seven inspections showed piping or fittings "below standard." This tragedy was the result of **slothfulness** on the part of inspectors.

Solomon the wise wrote, "He who is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys" (Prov. 18:9), and, "Through sloth the roof sinks in, and through indolence the house leaks" (Eccl. 10:18). We are instructed in the NT also that **idleness, lethargy, and indolence** are prohibited in the Christian. When Jesus was teaching about his Second Coming he said, "You wicked and **slothful** servant....you ought to have invested my money...and at my **coming** I should have received what was my own with interest" (Matt. 25:26-27). Christ is going to come on a day when the indifferent, lazy servant does not expect him and at an hour he does not know. (Matt. 24:45-51).

So, the apostle Paul warned the Thessalonians, and us, to "keep awake and be sober" (5:6) because the Lord is going to "come like a thief in the night" (5:2). Thieves don't announce their "coming" ahead of time. They don't give "signs of the times." They **slip up on people**. The Lord is going **slip up on** this wicked world. But Christians, who are **ready**, working in the Lord's vineyard every day, keeping themselves in holiness, **will not be surprised!**

### PERHAPS TODAY!

### QUESTIONS:

1. Wouldn't it be better, at least for Christians, **to know when** the Lord is coming back? 5:1-3 Why not a few "signs" here and there?
2. If Jesus is coming "as a thief in the night" why won't Christians be surprised? 5:4
3. So who's "asleep"? 5:5-6 Why are "they" asleep?
4. What kind of "sobriety" is Paul talking about in 5:7-8? Aren't there some non-Christians who never get drunk?
5. What is the Christian's protection against being unprepared for Jesus' return? 5:8-9
6. What has Jesus' death to do with "encouraging and building one another up"? 5:10-11
7. Is it "work" to be someone who "admonishes" in the Lord? 5:12
8. Why admonish the "idle"? 5:14 Does that mean Christians can't ever take a moment and do nothing?
9. Who ever prays "constantly" and rejoices in "all circumstances"? 5:16
10. Does "test everything" mean Christians are to do things they think *might* be wrong just to see if they are or not? 5:21

"What is life's heaviest burden?" asked a youth to a sad and lonely old man. He answered, "To have nothing to carry."

"Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labor wears, while the used key is always bright." ---Benjamin Franklin

"No mill, no meal. An idle brain is the Devil's workshop."  
---English proverb

## LESSON TEXT : 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

Thessalonica was located in the province of Macedonia. Philip "of Macedon," and Alexander the Great, his son, were famous rulers of Macedonia nearly 400 years before Paul took the Gospel there. The Romans had a naval station there; it became a commercial and travel gateway from Europe to Asia. Its populace was cosmopolitan, and, with the exception of the Jews and Christians mostly idolatrous and immoral---much like many modern cities throughout today's world. It is still a major city of Greece called Thessaloniki, population 800,000.

A Jewish rabbi, Saul of Tarsus, premier persecutor of the Christian Church, was converted to Christ about two years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. Saul became "Paul" and was called by Christ to become an "apostle to the Gentiles." Twenty years later, on his second missionary journey, he set foot on European soil and in A.D. 51, founded the Christian Church in Thessalonica by preaching in one of the city's Jewish synagogues (see Acts 17:1-9). According to his enemies, "he turned the world upside down!" Paul went from there to Athens and then to Corinth to preach.

Timothy came to Corinth and brought Paul word that the brethren in Thessalonica were enduring extreme suffering and death and the faith of some was beginning to waver. From Corinth in early 52 A.D. Paul wrote a "first epistle" to remind them that he told them suffering was "to be their lot" (1 Thess. 3:1-11) until Jesus returns. Trying to encourage them, Paul wrote zealously of the Second Coming of Christ. The brethren at Thessalonica misunderstood his eschatology and anticipated that they should expect the event momentarily. That was causing some kind of problems within the church. So, quickly, "on the heels" of his first letter, Paul wrote "Second Thessalonians" to instruct them that the Second Advent of Christ would not occur until the one who was "restraining" the coming "great apostasy" was "out of the way."

SO HERE'S YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY "THE GREAT APOSTASY" "THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS" AND THE "SECOND COMING OF CHRIST." Is there anything else more important!? BE IN BIBLE SCHOOL!

### QUESTIONS:

1. Should we boast that brethren in our modern world are remaining steadfast in their persecutions? What good does "boasting" do? 1:4
2. How would the growing faith of the Thessalonians, be "evidence" of the righteous judgment of God? 1:5 (see Heb. 11:7)
3. Can you think of God "repaying with affliction those who afflict you?" 1:6. Isn't that malicious and intolerant? How can you believe that about God?
4. Is "knowing God" and "obeying the gospel of the Lord Jesus" equivalent? 1:8 (see Jn. 14:21-23; 15:10; 17:3,17,20; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Jn. 3:24; 5:2-3)
5. Is "hell" going to be "forever"? 1:9 Isn't "eternal destruction" an oxymoron? What will hell be like? (see Rev. 14:9-11; 20:7-10; Mt 25:41,46, etc.)
6. What will "saints" contribute to the glorification of Jesus when he returns? 1:10 Doesn't Jesus have all the glory he needs now?
7. How would God make the Thessalonians "worthy" of his call? 1:11
8. Isn't it one thing to "resolve" to do a "work of faith" and another thing to *do* it? 1:11 (see Rom. 7:15-25) How, then, will God fulfill "resolutions"?

This is the apostle's Paul's definition of "apostasy"

"Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have swerved from the truth, by holding that the resurrection is past already. They are upsetting the faith of some."—2 Tim. 2:17-18

The book of Hebrews (6:1-8) and Galatians (4:5) defines "apostasy" as seeking justification by the works of the law of Moses.

## LESSON TEXT : 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

In today's lesson we will be studying, *ho anthropos tes anomias*, "the man of lawlessness." This is **not** the so-called Anti-Christ---because there is not **one** Antichrist, there were **many** and they had already gone out into the world in the apostle John's day (1 Jn. 2:18). As Paul was writing 2 Thess. the "man of lawlessness" was being restrained temporarily. History seems to have established beyond a reasonable doubt that the "rebellion" (Gr. *apostasia*, "apostasy, falling away") was the Papacy and the Roman Catholic Church.

*Roman Catholicism*, by Dr. Loraine Boettner, pp. 138-139 (quoting the book, *The Glories of Mary*, by Cardinal Alphonse de Ligouri, whose writings were accepted as from *the church herself*.) "Mary is called...the gate of heaven because no one can enter that blessed kingdom without passing through HER" (p. 160) "'All power is given to thee in Heaven and on earth' so that 'at the command of MARY all obey---even God...and thus...God has placed the whole Church...under the domination of MARY" (pp. 180,181). "Mary is also the Advocate of the whole human race...for she can do what she wills with God" (p. 193).

Canon Law 870 says, "In the confessional the minister (priest) has the power to forgive all crimes committed after baptism." And a book, *Instructions for Non-Catholics*, for use by those who are joining the Catholic Church says: "The priest does not have to ask God to forgive your sins. The priest himself has the power to do so in Christ's name. Your sins are forgiven by the priest the same as if you knelt before Jesus Christ and told them to Christ Himself" (p. 93). Boettner, *ibid*, p. 197

The Vatican Council of Rome, 1870, declared, "We teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*...in the discharge of the office of pastor...of all Christians...is possessed of...infallibility...and...therefore such definitions of the Roman Pontiff...are irrefragable." Boettner, *ibid* pg. 235

## QUESTIONS:

1. Why would Paul have to reiterate his teaching on the 2nd Advent of Christ? 2:1-2 Why would some think Jesus had **already** come?
2. What is this "**rebellion**" and **who** is the **man of lawlessness**? 2:3-4
3. Some teach that the church is supposed to be "raptured" before the "tribulation." But doesn't chapters 2 & 3 indicate Christians will have to endure some of the "rebellion" **before** they meet Jesus? 2:5
4. What was "**restraining**" this "mystery of lawlessness"? 2:6-7 How did they know that this was **already at work**? (see Acts 20:28-30; 1 Tim. 4:1-5; 2 Pet. 2:1-22; 3 Jn. 9; Jude 4).
5. The "man of lawlessness" was to come with **pretended** signs to **deceive** with **delusion** and **falsehood**. Would God permit the "man of lawlessness" or any contradictor of the Bible to work "real" miracles? 2:8-11
6. **When** will the Lord destroy the "man of lawlessness?" 2:8
7. **Why** do people believe **pseudo, cheating, false, erroneous, lying** miracles of the "man of lawlessness?" or any other "rebel?" 2:12
8. How did God **call** people to himself according to the apostle Paul? 2:13-14
9. What are the "**traditions**" mentioned by Paul? 2:15 Were they different than what we have in the New Testament today?

Paul Blanchard, in his book, *American Freedom and Catholic Power*, 1958, p. 291: "Catholicism conditions its people to accept censorship, thought control, and ultimately dictatorship"

Count Coudenhove-Kalergi (former Catholic), in his book, *Crusade for Pan-Europe*, p. 173: "The Catholic hierarchy rests fully and securely on the...principle with the infallible pope in supreme command for a life time."

## LESSON TEXT: 2 Thessalonians 3:1-18

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

Advertising to sell his book, Rev. Colin Deal wrote, "*Christ Returns By 1988 - 101 Reasons Why*---This book is beautifully researched, well documented, and is a must for a student of prophecy. You may receive it for a donation of \$5.00." Predictions of the time of Christ's 2nd Advent would be *laughable* if they weren't so contrary to the Bible and didn't so often produce such tragic results.

Here is a classic example: "*2000 Koreans expecting Rapture*...Seoul, South Korea---Kwon Tae-yung, seated cross-legged on the white linoleum floor, gestured excitedly as he explained; at midnight on Oct. 18 (1992), trumpets will blare and white-robed angels will carry him, his wife and three sons to heaven...Hundreds or possibly thousands of Koreans who believe the beginning of the end of the world is at hand reportedly have sold property, abandoned their families, quit schools and jobs, deserted military posts, and even had abortions...One group says the Rapture could occur as early as Oct. 10 (1992). At least three have already committed suicide...Lee (the leader of this group of at least 20,000) was charged with swindling followers of up to \$4 million. Prosecutors also said he had \$380,000 worth of bonds with maturities as late as next May, indicating he did not believe his own preaching that the world was coming to an end." (AP wire item in the Lexington Herald Leader, Lexington, KY, Oct. 6, 1992).

Apparently something similar to this had occurred in Thessalonica because some false teacher there was claiming to speak with apostolic authority (2 Thess. 2:2; 3:11) about the **time** of the Lord's return and had turned some brethren away from normal Christian priorities. **Jesus** said he would come again but no one would know the time, and furthermore, it would be *when no one expected* it! Christian priorities are **(1)** preaching the gospel and saving souls; **(2)** maturing the church in the Scriptures; **(3)** and healing as many ills of society as it can. Let the Church fulfill those challenges and it will not have time to meddle in what the Lord does not want it to know and, thus, cannot know!

### QUESTIONS:

1. What had **triumphed** among the Thessalonians? 3:1
2. How could Paul have the audacity to say the Thessalonians should be doing the things which **he commanded** them? 3:4
3. What is the apostolic command for the Church concerning brethren living in **idleness**? 3:6 How do we **define** "idleness"?
4. Paul **worked** for a living while preaching the gospel at Thessalonica--- shouldn't all preachers do the same? 3:7-9
5. Isn't Paul's **command** that those who will not work should not be allowed to eat quite contrary to Christian compassion? 3:10 What about Matt. 25:31-46; James 2:15-16; 1 Jn. 3:17-18, etc.?
6. How does one become a **busybody**? 3:11 (see 1 Thess. 4:9-12) Are there any "busybodies" in today's Church?
7. What about a church member who is truly incapacitated and **unable** to "earn their own living?" 3:12 How shall they "eat?"
8. What does "**have nothing to do with** (the idle brother) **him**" mean? 3:14-15 How would you feel if you were the one to be "isolated?"

Jesus said, "Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Mt. 24:44). Jesus warned over and over (some 10-12 times) in various expressions that there would be no "signs" and no one knows (except the Father in heaven) when the Second Coming will be.

Both the apostles, Peter and Paul, said Jesus's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming would be like a "thief's" coming (1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10)

PERHAPS, TODAY!