



Greetings

“Men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God,” stated the apostle Peter concerning the Old Testament writings (2 Peter 1:21). The Holy Spirit had these men speak, and insured the preservation and collection of their selected writings (writing and speaking being equivalent as far as scripture is concerned) as the Old Testament scrolls. The apostle Peter also regards the writings of the apostle Paul as scripture. “Our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,” stated the apostle with the keys of the kingdom of heaven, noting that the untaught and unstable distorted Paul’s words, “as they do also the rest of the scriptures” (2 Peter 3:16). It is clear, then, that the Holy Spirit inspired Paul in his writings as preserved in the sacred writ, as well as the other

men whose messages ended up in the collection of New Testament scrolls. Thus, in this second epistle to the Thessalonian brethren, we find some special nuggets of information and exhortation not found in any other writings, and preserved and published for the benefit of modern saints as well as those to whom it was originally written.

- ◆ **Paul and friends** — When the apostle Paul wrote to a congregation, he often included his co-laborers in his greeting. “Paul and Silvanus and Timothy,” he says in his greeting, identifying his companions. Writing from Corinth as he did in his first epistle, this second letter from the same brethren who had worked amongst the saints in Thessalonica follows soon upon the heels of the first. Silvanus is the “Silas” of the book of Acts, Roman citizen, new covenant prophet, and originally one of the leading men in the congregation in Jerusalem. Timothy is the young man converted in Lystra on Paul’s first missionary journey, circumcised and thus permitted to speak in the Jewish synagogues on the second missionary journey, Paul’s faithful companion from thenceforth, and of “kindred spirit” with the apostle himself.

- ◆ **The church** — The apostle and his co-laborers write, then, “to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:1). Increasingly, the idea of “church” is being denigrated in Western society due to the destructive actions of false/denominational “churches,” and the portrayal in the entertainment

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industry of church people’s being a bunch of hypocrites. Many of the denominations, sensing this and wanting to keep their “market share” increasing, have rebranded themselves using names other than that containing the word “church.” However, the church — the *ekklesia* — is what Jesus started, saying that the bedrock truth that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God,” is the foundation upon which His *church* would be built (Matthew 16:16-18). Therefore the church in Thessalonica consisted of those who were *in* God the Father and *in* Christ Jesus the Lord. This is a result of their being *immersed into Christ* (Romans 6:3), and in consequence being *immersed into the body of Christ* (1 Corinthians 12:13). The church, of course, “is His body” (Ephesians 1:22,23).

- ◆ **Grace and peace** — What a beautiful greeting and prayer: “Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 1:2)! Saints need God’s abundant grace to sustain them as well as grant them compassion as they work through their challenges and sufferings. And certainly the peace that passes understanding is to be desired greatly, and actually is available to the faithful saint.

Jesus’ advice is to “seek first” the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). If the saint will do these two things, then the guarantee is that all that is necessary for earthly life will be added to him. But as long as the “kingdom of God” remains the church at large in the mind of the believer, his commitment is ethereal and he is actually noncommittal. But, as in Thessalonica, the local congregation is the tangible expression of the kingdom. When a disciple of Christ makes the church where he regularly assembles his foremost commitment, then structure is provided for his life, and God can start adding the blessings.