

Paul's Ernest Prayer For The Thessalonian Christians

3:11-13

Lesson 3b

1TH 3:11 Now may our God and Father Himself [personally] and Jesus our Lord direct [clear, prepare] our way to you;

- This verse follows Paul's statement they had been praying day and night that they might see them. (1 Thess. 3:10).
- IEB "prepare a way for us to come to you"... NIV "clear the way for us to come to you"
- The "Father" and "Jesus" are always one in purpose and Paul is asking they "clear" or "prepare" the way for them to come to Thessalonica.
- God and the Lord can do things that man could never do.

1. "Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord"

- a. Paul and his travel companions had an intense desire to be with these brethren at Thessalonica and to have fellowship with these loving and faithful brethren who had only been Christians for about 2 years.
- b. He also wanted the Father and Jesus [the Son] to prepare or clear the way for them to return to Thessalonica.

1) Satan had hindered Paul and others from coming to Thessalonica. (1 Thess. 3:12).

2) The name "Jesus" means "Savior." (Matt. 1:21).

Matt 1:21 "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

3) "Lord" means Jesus was their "King, Ruler."

4) Jesus is the "Lord of lords and the King of kings." (Rev. 17:14; 19:16).

Rev 17:14 "These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him {are the} called and chosen and faithful."

Rev 19:16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

- c. This direction [the opportunity] would come through "revelation of Jesus Christ" and the Holy Spirit. (Jn. 16:13; Gal.1:10-12; Acts 16:6).

John 16:13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, **He will guide you into all the truth;** for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to

come.

Gal 1:10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

Gal 1:11 For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.

Gal 1:12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, **but {I received it} through a revelation of Jesus Christ.**

Acts 16:6 They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been **forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia;**

d. The Holy Spirit gives us saving directions today not by direct revelation, but through the written word.

1) The written word is inspired by the Holy Spirit. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

2 Tim 3:17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2 Pet 1:20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is {a matter} of one's own interpretation,

2 Pet 1:21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will [of human origin], but men moved [borne along] by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

2) God's word is complete and lacking in nothing in regard to salvation. (2 Tim. 3:17).

e. Many falsely claim the Holy Spirit directs them apart from His word.

1) This claim makes the Holy Spirit the source of confusion and error and division.

2) This is clear by the fact that those who claim the Holy Spirit directs them apart from His written word frequently contradict one another and teach doctrines that contradict each other and conflict with the written word.

2. "direct our way to you"

a. Paul knew the physical directions to Thessalonica, and was not seeking physical directions.

b. He was prayerful God would give them the opportunity to return to these beloved and faithful brethren.

1TH 3:12 and may the Lord cause you to increase [grow] and abound [overflow] in love for one another, and for all men [everyone else], just as we also do for you;

1. "and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another"

a. "Increase and abound" are nearly synonyms, but "abound" [overflow] seems to be a little stronger than even "increase [grow]."

b. The Lord expects our love to grow for one another and to be known for our love of brethren. (Jn. 13:34, 35).

John 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you

also love one another.

John 13:35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

c. This love for one another does not occur by accident, but it is a deliberate and constant prayer and action.

d. It takes frequent worshiping and working together.

e. It takes having fellowship with one another. See Acts 2:44-46.

f. It takes treating others as we want to be treated. (Matt. 7:12).

2. "and for all men, just as we also do for you"

a. The Christian's love is not limited to other Christians, but it is manifested to everyone. (Matt. 22:39).

b. The Christian is to "do good to all men." (Gal. 6:10).

Gal 6:10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

c. The Christian has, however, a special obligation "to the household of faith." See again Gal. 6:10.

3. The Christian must even learn to love his enemies. (Matt. 5:43-48; Rom. 12:18-21).

Matt 5:43 "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.'

Matt 5:44 "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Matt 5:45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on {the} evil and {the} good, and sends rain on {the} righteous and {the} unrighteous.

Matt 5:46 "For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

Matt 5:47 "If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing {than others?} Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

Matt 5:48 "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Rom 12:18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

Rom 12:19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath {of God,} for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.

Rom 12:20 "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD."

Rom 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

a. Love for enemies is not an emotional attachment nor is it easy, but it is the commandment of the Lord.

b. It is doing good even to those who despise and hate us. (Rom. 12:18-21).

1TH 3:13 so that He may establish [strengthen] your hearts unblamable]without guilt, blameless] in holiness before [in the sight of] our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints [holy ones].

• "establish" is from "stay ree zoh" means "to strengthen, make firm."

- “amemptos” [ah mehm ptahs] - “blameless, faultless.”
1. “so that He may establish [strengthen] your hearts unblamable [without guilt, blameless] in holiness before our God and Father”
 - a. He wants “the Lord” to bring about “hearts” that were blameless “in holiness.”
 - b. Being blameless comes by walking in the light and confessing sin. (1 Jn. 1:7, 9).
 - c. It comes by emerging from the waters of baptism to walk “in the newness of life.” (Rom 6:3,4).
 - d. They were [as we are] to be holy as God is holy. (1 Pet. 1:16).
- 1 Pet 1:16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."
- e. God is sinless (Jas. 1:13). but man can never be sinless. (Rom. 3:23; 1 Jn.1:8, 10).
 - f. “Holiness” requires Christians to live transformed lives.

1) Rom.12:1-2; 1 Jn. 2:15-17.

Rom 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, {which is} your spiritual service of worship.

Rom 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

1 John 2:17 The world is passing away, and {also} its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

2) See also Col. 3:1-17 - This passage clearly describes Christian conduct.

2. “at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints” - Jn. 14:3; 2 Pet. 3:10-13; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 1:7; Rev. 1:7).

3. The Greek word “hagios” is plural here and means [holy ones].

a. It is used in the Old Testament to refer to godly people. (Psa. 16:3; 34:9)/

Ps 16:3 As for the saints who are in the earth, They are the majestic ones in whom is all my delight.

Ps 34:9 O fear the LORD, you His saints; For to those who fear Him there is no want.

b. It is used by Matthew to refer to godly people who lived before Christianity began. (Matt. 27:52).

Matt 27:52 The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;

c. It is used to refer to Christians. (Acts 9:13; Rom.1:7; 8:27; 12:13; 15:25).

Acts 9:13 But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem;

Rom 1:7 to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called {as} saints:

Rom 8:27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to {the will of} God.

Rom 12:13 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

Rom 15:25 but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints.

See also Acts 9:32, 41; 26:10; Rom. 15:26, 31; 16:2, 15; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:1,2; 14:23; 16:1, 15; 2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; 4:22; Col. 1:2; Jude 1:3 Rev. 5:8; 8:3,4; 11:18.

- d. The word "saints" is not used in the New Testament to refer to angels, but they too are God's holy ones created before the world began. (Psa. 148:2,5).
- e. Angels are God's "ministering spirits" working on behalf of God's people. (Heb. 1:14).

Heb 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?

- 4. Bible students differ on the meaning of this verse making it either refer to Christ coming with His angels or Christ coming with the redeemed who are now in Abraham's bosom.
- 5. It is hard to decide in this verse, but it seems to refer to the dead spirits who died in Christ and now reside in Abraham's bosom [also called Paradise in Lk. 23:46].
 - a. The word "saints" is always used to refer to God's redeemed (Christians).
 - b. It is true that Christ is coming with His holy angels. (Mk. 8:38; Matt. 25:31).

Mk. 8:38 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the **holy angels**."

Matt 25:31 "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.

- 1) Angels are mentioned in regard to Christ's coming in 2 Thessalonians 1:7 - "revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire."
- 2) "The archangel" [Michael] will come when Christ returns. (1 Thess. 4:16).

1 Thess 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of {the} archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Michael is the archangel. (Jude 1:9; Rev.12:7).

- 3) Christ will also come with "all" His angels. (Matt. 13:49; 16:27; 25:31; Mk. 8:38).

Matt. 13:49 So it will be at the end of the age; **the angels** will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous,

Matt. 16:27 For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father **with His angels**, and will then repay every man according to his deeds.

Matt. 25:31 "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and **all the angels with Him**, then He will sit on His glorious throne.

Mk. 8:38 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the **holy angels**."

4) The angels of heaven are innumerable. (Rev. 5:11).

Rev. 5:11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,

Note:

- A "myriad" was 10,000 and "myriads of myriads" would be 10,000 times 10,000 plus "thousands of thousands" that is a number exceeding 100 million.
 - "Myriad" is from "murias" [moo ree **ahs**] literally meaning "ten thousand," but it can have the meaning of "innumerable."
 - As already mentioned, Revelation 5:11 is affirming that the angels of heaven are innumerable.
 - More details on this subject will be discussed when 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 is examined.
- b. Christ is also coming with the righteous departed spirits who are now in "Abraham's bosom" [Paradise].
- c. Paul stresses this fact in chapter 4 of this epistle. (1 Thess. 4:13,14).

1 Thess 4:13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

1 Thess 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, **even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.**

1) The righteous are not now in heaven. (Jn. 3:13).

John 3:13 "No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.

2) They are now in "Abraham's bosom." (Lk. 16:19-25).

Luke 16:19 "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day.

Luke 16:20 "And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,

Luke 16:21 and longing to be fed with the {crumbs} which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.

Luke 16:22 "Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.

Luke 16:23 "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and *saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.

Luke 16:24 "And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may

dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.'

Luke 16:25 "But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.

- (3) The righteous spirits [departed spirits] will return with Jesus since they are not now in their resurrected transformed bodies. Their bodies have decayed in their graves, but they will be raised when Christ comes. (Jn. 5:28-29).
- (4) It is then, at Christ's coming, they [the righteous] will receive their new spiritual bodies along with those who are still alive at Christ's coming. (1 Thess. 4:13-18).
- (5) The details of how the departed souls are reunited to their bodies is not revealed in the Scriptures.
- (6) God knows and that is all that counts!
- (7) What a glorious day resurrection day will be!

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