

THE RECEPTION OF THE GOSPEL (1 Thessalonians 1:1-5)

- I. Their new position because of their reception of the gospel (vs. 1).**
 - A. Paul addressed this group of believers as being in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - B. Paul preached there for an unknown amount of time.
 - 1. What he preached is found in Acts 17:3.
 - 2. These people to whom Paul wrote believed what he preached and obeyed the gospel.
 - C. By their obedience to the gospel it placed them in God and in Christ.
 - 1. It is a special relationship that one who has obeyed the gospel has with God (John 1:12-13).
 - 2. This is a different relationship than the rest of the world has with God.
 - 3. Barclay wrote: Just as the air is in us, and we are in the air, and we cannot live without the air, so the true church of God is in God and God is in the true church, and there is no true life for the church without God.
 - 4. They were also in Christ which took place by their being baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27).
 - D. This position in which these believing Thessalonians found themselves was one of being in God and Christ.
 - E. By this they had access grace and peace that come from the Father and the Son.
 - 1. There is no grace outside of the divine.
 - 2. There is no peace outside of the divine.
 - 3. Grace is that unmerited favor of God that, when appropriated by faith (Ephesians 2:8), brings about peace with God.
 - 4. Christ makes that peace possible (Romans 5:1).
 - F. This exalted position of the Thessalonians opened the doors of heaven's blessings to them all because of their reception of the gospel message.
- II. Paul's prayer because of their reception of the gospel (vs 2-4).**
 - A. Because of the way they received the gospel Paul could thank God for them.
 - 1. This shows Paul's great care for them.
 - 2. It is a great feeling to know that you are brought before God's throne in the prayers of others and this would have given encouragement to these young Christians.
 - B. When he prayed for them it reminded him of some things.
 - 1. It reminded him of their work of faith.
 - a. Faith and work cannot be separated as James points out for us (James 2:17).
 - b. These two go hand in hand.
 - c. The Thessalonians worked for God because of their faith in God: their faith led them to work.

2. It reminded him of their labor of love.
 - a. Labor carries the idea the weariness that is experienced when work is done.
 - b. It is not the effort but the tiredness resulting from the effort.
 - c. The work they were doing for God was out of love.
 - d. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments (John 14:15).
3. It reminded him of their patience of hope.
 - a. Patience literally means to bear up under.
 - b. Their hope caused them not to give up in the face of trial.
- C. Faith, love and hope go hand in hand in adversity.
 1. The Jews that tried to take Paul were still in there.
 2. They still made life hard for these new converts.
 3. If any lacked faith, love or hope they would not have been able to withstand the pressures of their trials.
- D. These three attributes led to Paul and others knowing of their election by or from God.
 1. Election means chosen.
 2. God has elected a special group of people to be saved.
 3. It is that group that has shown and shows their faith, love and hope by obedience to the gospel.
 4. If they had not received the gospel in the manner they did, they would not be the elect.
- E. All of this holds true for us today.
 1. We are to show our faith, love and hope by receiving the gospel just as these Thessalonians did.
 2. When we do what they did, we enjoy the election they enjoyed.
- F. Paul could be thankful for them in prayer because of their reception of the gospel.

III. **The power that led to their reception of the gospel (vs. 5).**

- A. When the gospel was presented to them, it was done with power.
- B. This is similar to Paul's statement to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 2:4-5).
 1. Paul didn't just come and speak a message to them.
 2. He backed up his message with the miracles he performed by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- C. By doing this, he showed his message not to be from man but from God.
 1. This was the purpose of miracles.
 2. They confirmed to the hearer that the speaker was giving a divine message and that the message was approved by God.
 3. This is exactly what the Hebrews writer stated in Hebrews 2:3-4.
- D. When these miracles were performed for the purpose of confirming Paul's message, there was complete conviction in the hearts of those that obeyed.
 1. This is the meaning of the word assurance.
 2. The miracles caused belief in the message and the people were fully assured that what they believed was from God.

- E. When you and I read the inspired word of God and can see all that Jesus did it should bring about full conviction (John 20:30-31).
- F. There is power in the gospel message to change our lives if we allow it (Romans 1:16).