

## 1 THESSALONIANS 1:5–10 – THE GOSPEL’S POWER AND THE THESSALONIANS’ EXEMPLARY RESPONSE

Verses 5-8, see session 2

### 1 THESSALONIANS 1:9 – BLACK

- Turning from Idols to the Living God (v. 9)
  - Believers throughout the region reported how the Thessalonians had turned to God from idols.
- Historical Challenge
  - Acts 17 only records Jews and devout Gentiles responding—no mention of pagan idolaters.
  - Likely refers to previous conversion from paganism to Judaism prior to Paul’s arrival.
- Jewish Proselyte Language
  - “To serve the living and true God” echoes:
    - Jeremiah 10:10
    - Daniel 6:20
    - Acts 14:15
  - This is not typical Pauline gospel language (cf. Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 1:13; Romans 3:24).
- Problems with a Pagan-Conversion Reading
  - Paul’s brief three-week stay makes a large-scale pagan response unlikely.
  - Suggesting a separate group risks:
    - Divorcing this group from the Acts 17 audience (forcing a disconnect).
    - Assuming a dominant, undocumented group—an argument from silence.
- Theological Implication
  - Paul is describing their religious history in Jewish categories, not introducing mystery truth.

### 1 THESSALONIANS 1:10 – BLACK

- Waiting for the Son and Deliverance from Wrath (v. 10)
  - The Thessalonians also waited for God’s Son from heaven, reflecting Jewish Messianic expectation.
- Prophetic Expectation
  - Jewish hope included a coming Son (Psalm 2; Proverbs 30:4; Daniel 7:13; Hosea 11:1 / Matthew 2:15).
- Parenthetical Identification
  - “Whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus” is likely parenthetical.
  - Paul identifies the Son as Jesus without requiring that full understanding at the time of their initial turning.
- Wrath to Come
  - Likely refers to the Day of the LORD (Zephaniah 1:14–15), not hell or general suffering.
  - Deliverance is prophetic (Joel 2:32)—survival through wrath, not rapture out of it.
- Distinct from Mystery Deliverance
  - The mystery program (1 Thessalonians 4:17) promises rapture before wrath—not survival during it.
  - 1 Thessalonians 5:9 speaks of deliverance in the prophetic context, reinforcing the Jewish framework.
- Grammar of “Delivered Us”
  - ῥυόμενον – present-middle participle: “delivering us”
  - KJV renders it “delivered us” to reflect certainty and completed assurance, not necessarily timing.
  - Present participles in Greek often express timeless, settled truths:
    - Ephesians 2:8–9 – “by grace ye are saved”
    - 1 Peter 1:5 – “who are kept by the power of God”

## PAUL’S MINISTRY IN THESSALONICA (VV. 1–12)

### 1 THESSALONIANS 2:1 – BLACK

- Paul appeals to the Thessalonians’ personal knowledge of his visit.
- The word “vain” (**kenos**) means empty, ineffective—not poetic futility like Ecclesiastes.

- Despite only being there three weeks (Acts 17:2), his visit was fruitful and lasting.

## 1 THESSALONIANS 2:2 – BLACK

- Paul had just been beaten and imprisoned in Philippi (Acts 16:22–24).
- He still preached boldly in Thessalonica, despite recent persecution.
- The gospel came “with much contention,” referring to external opposition, particularly from the synagogue (Acts 17:3–4).
- The phrase “gospel of God” refers to the message about Jesus as Messiah, as in Romans 1:1–4—prior to the full revelation of the gospel of grace.

## 1 THESSALONIANS 2:3 – BLACK

- Paul’s exhortation was not from deceit (PLANĒ), impurity (AKATHARSIA), or guile (DOLOS).
- This likely responds to slander after his sudden departure (Acts 17:5–10).
- Jewish opponents may have accused him of being a fraud.
- Also responds to the Greco-Roman context of exploitative traveling speakers.
- Paul distances himself from manipulation and self-serving ministry.

## 1 THESSALONIANS 2:4 – BLACK

- Paul was entrusted with the gospel by God, not men—indicating divine authority.
- His ministry was governed by pleasing God, not man.
- This explains his freedom of movement and his pattern of going to the Jew first, out of love (Romans 9:1–3).
- Cross-references: Galatians 1:10, 2 Corinthians 5:9–11, Philipians 1:20–21.

## 1 THESSALONIANS 2:5 – BLACK

- Paul did not manipulate with words or hide greedy motives.
- “Clove of covetousness” = a pretext for personal gain.
- Traveling philosophers often exploited crowds; Paul was not one of them.
- Modern ministry can still face this temptation, though regular pastoral work often guards against it.
- Paul calls God as witness to his sincerity (cf. Romans 1:9; 2 Corinthians 1:23; Philipians 1:8).

## 1 THESSALONIANS 2:6 – BLACK

- Paul did not seek recognition from the Thessalonians or anyone else.
- He could have asserted apostolic privilege but chose not to.
- His apostolic authority was real but rarely emphasized—he led with gentleness, not status.

## 1 THESSALONIANS 2:7 – BLACK

- Paul uses the image of a nursing mother to describe his care and affection.
- This metaphor is intimate and relational, not doctrinal.
- Important interpretive caution:
  - **Metaphors illustrate**, but they do **not define doctrine or ecclesiology**.
  - Example: 2 Corinthians 11:2 is a metaphor of Paul as a matchmaker—not a basis for “bride of Christ” theology.

## 1 THESSALONIANS 2:8 – BLACK

- Paul and his team loved the Thessalonians so deeply they were ready to give their lives.
- “Souls” (*psyche*) here refers to their very lives.
- Remarkably, this bond formed in only three weeks—proving that spiritual trials can accelerate closeness.

## 1 THESSALONIANS 2:9 – BLACK

- Paul reminds them that he worked hard to avoid being financially burdensome.
- Likely continued his trade of tentmaking.
- This pattern (working while preaching) was his consistent practice (cf. 2 Thessalonians 3:8).
- Paul did not treat ministry as a business—he labored physically while preaching the gospel.

## 1 THESSALONIANS 2:10–12 – BLACK

---

### 10. HOLY, JUST, AND UNBLAMEABLE BEHAVIOR

- Paul appeals to both human and divine witness for the integrity of his conduct.
- His behavior was morally upright, spiritually sincere, and publicly blameless.

---

### 11. EXHORTING AS A FATHER

- Paul shifts from the nursing mother image to that of a father instructing his children.
- He exhorted, comforted, and charged each believer personally—individual discipleship, not impersonal messaging.

---

### 12. WALK WORTHY OF GOD

- The purpose of his exhortation: that they would live lives that reflect their divine calling.
- God had called them to “His kingdom and glory.”
- This kingdom refers to the **future, physical, fraternal kingdom of Israel**—not a spiritualized church-age reality.
- Especially relevant given that 1 Thessalonians is likely the **earliest New Testament book**, reflecting pre-mystery doctrine consistent with Old Testament expectation.