

I Thessalonians 5: 23-28

Conclusion to the Epistle: Paul's Prayer to
God, his Petition to the Thessalonians & concluding
Postscript

HHBC





I Thessalonians chapter 5: 23-28

Today's passage

23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

25 Brethren, pray for us.

26 Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. 27 I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren.

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.



I Thessalonians 5:23 - (1.)

23 **Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely;** and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

‘Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely’

- a) The use of ‘may God’ tips us off that Paul is reciting a prayer; or a prayerful hope that the Thessalonians be sanctified completely
- b) Paul’s Desire: nothing less than complete sanctification because the indwelling H.S. implies no less [F.W. Grant]
- c) The Interlineary reads: ***‘And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless....’***
- d) ‘Sanctify’: is in the aorist tense; a point-certain fact that the sanctifying be done. We have not been totally sanctified yet, but since our final sanctification (new body without the Sin Nature) is yet future; God’s Will is that it be done, and He can refer to it as a thing in the past tense at this moment in time (aorist)
- e) ‘Wholly’ or ‘Entirely’ = ***holotelēs*** = perfect, complete in all respects. McCalley: a compound word: ‘whole’ + ‘end’ = wholly reaching the goal of sanctification. ‘All-maturely’ [F.W. Grant]



I Thessalonians 5:23 – (2.)

23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; **and may your spirit and soul and body** *be preserved complete*, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

‘and may your spirit and soul and body *be preserved complete*’

- a) Body-soul-spirit = ***pneuma, psyche, sōma***. These are 3 distinct elements which make up mankind. Or 3 distinct ‘organs’ that comprise mankind. **THE WHOLE OF MAN**
- b) Keathley’s Commentary: presents theologians that do not think that Paul was teaching ‘trichotomy’ of man here, merely that Paul was being rhetorical and poetic to describe the whole man. Primarily because it’s the only use of the 3 terms in all of scripture
- c) McCalley: calls this the ‘tripartite’ of man
- d) My Commentary: I like the designation ‘tri-unity’ of man. It parallels God’s nature (F.W. Grant uses this term as well). I believe we can take the body, soul, spirit in this verse as a Doctrine
- e) In my opinion, the best resource of the makeup of Man as Body/Soul/Spirit is ‘*What is Man?*’ by T. Austin Sparks: find the book at:
https://www.austinsparks.net/english/books/what_is_man.html



I Thessalonians 5:23 – (3.)

23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body **be preserved complete**, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

... 'be preserved complete'

- a) Preserved = **tēreō** = [verb;aor;pass; & the *optative*: 'may']; to be kept from injury or loss by keeping your eye upon something. A new-born infant is properly 'preserved'
- b) **tēreō** is used in John 17's: *"I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep **tēreō** them in your name; "While I was with them, I was keeping **tēreō** them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled"; and: "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep **tēreō** them from the evil one.*
- c) Complete = **holoklēros** – no part lacking or unsound; entire, whole and without blemish
- d) **holoklēros**: "complete"- expresses QUANTITY; whereas **holotelēs** 'entirely' in the first part of v. 23— expresses QUALITY [F.W. Grant]



I Thessalonians 5:23 – (4.)

23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, **without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

... 'without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ'

- a) Without blame = **amemptōs** = [adv.]; without cause warranting any censure
- b) Complete & Blameless: are two words conveying the same meaning; Paul double-states this sanctifying quality of preserving and keeping
- c) At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: The theme of I Thessalonians. At the **Parousia**— the personal, bodily arrival of Jesus to receive the dead in Christ and take up the living into the air **at the Rapture**; but also entailing His **abiding presence** when He comes visibly to the unbelieving world to set up His earthly kingdom.
- d) By Way of Review: the Parousia of Christ occurs in: (1) I Thes. 2:19, (2) I Thes. 3:13, (3) I Thes. 4:15; and IT IS IMPLIED in I Thes. 1:10: "to wait for His Son from Heaven" ... And has Him delivering us from the wrath to come.



I Thessalonians 5:24 – (1.)

24 Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass'

- a) Faithful = **pistos** = [adj.]; the adjective form of the noun 'faith' **pistis**: He is absolutely and categorically trustworthy. He will and must discharge His official duties. We must not have even a shade or inkling of distrust in Him bringing His will to fruition. We can have no less than absolute reliance on His person and character.
- b) Can we add this to THE LIST' of the Essence/ Status Quo description of God?: adding to **Holy, Righteous, Infinite, Sovereign, Immutable, Love, Spirit.... Faithful?**
- c) *'We are upon the shoulders of the Good Shepherd; and IF THERE WERE final failure, it would be His strength that failed. That would be impossible for Him, as for us without Him success would be impossible'* [F.W. Grant]
- d) 'He will bring it to pass': is directly stated in the KJV: 'He will do it!'



I Thessalonians 5: 25 - 28 – (1.)

25 **Brethren, pray for us.** 26 Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. 27 I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren.
28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

‘Brethren, Pray for us’

- a) ‘Brethren’: this is the **16th** time Paul has used this term in the epistle. It occurs 18 times total. This is Paul’s warm, ‘you are of the same family as me’ term to these beloved fellow believers.
- b) Compare to Romans (16 chapters): ‘brethren is used 13 times / I Thessalonians is 1/3 the volume of Romans.
- c) ‘Pray for us’: Myself, Timothy and Silas. In chapters 2-3, Paul recounts in detail ‘How we came to bring the Gospel to you Thessalonians’; including all of the drama, beatings, setbacks and accusations of graft that the Judiazers accused Paul of.
- d) Now, the Thessalonians were ‘identified’ / seeped into Paul’s ministry. He pleads for their personal participation in his ongoing ministry and struggles.
- e) One commentator points to the tremendous privilege and responsibility it is for them to pray for the ‘Paul the Great’ Apostle, Missionary



I Thessalonians 5: 25 - 28 – (2.)

25 Brethren, pray for us. 26 **Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.** 27 **I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren.**

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

‘Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss’ & ‘I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren’

- a) ‘Holy Kiss’: is a ‘brotherly’ or ‘sisterly’ kiss among family members but now extended to brothers and sisters in the Lord. Brother to Brother and Sister to Sister. Back then it was the customary way to greet people, as today a handshake.
- b) ‘I adjure you’ to have this letter read...”: adjure is *horkizō* is an exceptionally strong word. To force to take an oath, to solemnly swear. Used only here in the Epistles. Only 2 other times *horkizō* is used by demons saying to Jesus, “I implore by God not to torment me!” and the Jewish exorcists trying to (unsuccessfully) cast out demons saying, “*I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches...*” come out. So basically saying, “*Swear to me by the Lord that you will have this read to all*”
- c) Verse 28: Paul’s usual letter closing salutation



I Thessalonians: REVIEW, (1.)

- The overarching theme of I Thessalonians is the pending Coming of Christ and how it should affect believers' lives.

H.A Ironside has this outline:

- **The Lord's Coming: A Saving Truth- 1:1-10**
- **The Lord's Coming: A Stimulating Truth – 2:1-20**
- **The Lord's Coming: A Stabilizing Truth – 3:1-13**
- **The Lord's Coming: A Strengthening Truth – 4:1-18**
- **The Lord's Coming: A Sanctifying Truth – 5:1-28**
- Paul held the Thessalonians in tender regard because they received him so joyously after being run out of Philippi
- They had enthusiastically turned to God from their former idols to serve a living a true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven (1:9-10)
- Chapters 2-3 He gives them a lengthy, detailed defense of how he came to them and how contrary to false reports, he lived among them in an exemplary way, not seeking his own interests
- He expresses joy that they received the gospel at face value, and they became imitators of Paul, Timothy and Silas and the Lord Himself, and the persecuted churches in Judea.



I Thessalonians: REVIEW, (2.)

- Emphasizing his affection for the Thessalonians, he tells them more than once that he had tried very hard to get back to see them face to face.
- One of the reasons Paul wrote the epistle is to express his joy (and perhaps amazement) that after a year or so, they were a going concern as a local body in Christ, they were persevering and growing
- In Chapter 4, he comforts them by explaining how their loved ones who had since died would not miss out on the Lord's imminent coming, they would be resurrected and the living will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air.
- He ends the epistle by fixing them on this hope, but tells them that the wrath of God is coming as well. Remain sober, be of the day, encourage one another, live in peace with one another and help each other.
- He closes with a prayer of sanctification, that they may be entirely, in mind, body and spirit set apart and separated, completely blameless when Christ appears in the air
- It's a prayer of practical/conditional sanctification, but also it stresses the absolute fact that their sanctified in their position because Jesus Christ has called them to it and He has done it consistent with His own nature. He can do no less.



IF MY BODY IS NOT INSIDE
THIS SHIRT
YOU MISSED
THE RAPTURE