

Books of The Bible

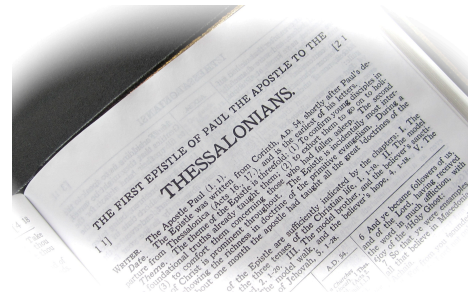
A Survey of First Thessalonians

Introduction

The book of First Thessalonians can be summed up in three words: “apologetic,” “instructional,” and “assurance”.

1) Apologetic

- a) The apologetic reasons for writing First and Second Thessalonians is distinctly different. In First Thessalonians it is Paul’s motives which are being questioned, whereas in the second epistle it deals with the correction of erroneous doctrine. Therefore, in First Thessalonians Paul will stress that which they knew of the ready reception given to him upon his arrival among them (1 Thess. 1:5, 9; 2:3-10) and the effectiveness of the gospel among them and from them (1 Thess. 1:6-8). He will remind them of these things by using the expressions: “Ye know” (ch. 1:5; 2:2, 5, 11; 3:4; 4:2); “Ye remember” (ch. 2:9); and “ye are witnesses” (ch. 2:10). In Second Thessalonians he correctively reminds them of that which he had taught and their need to live in the good of it (2 Thess. 2:13-15).



2) Instructional

- a) Starting in chapter four the apostle begins by the Holy Spirit to give instruction on how:
 - i) They ought to behave morally (ch. 4:1-8)
 - ii) To seek to increase in their love (ch. 4:9-10)
 - iii) To do an honest days work (ch. 4:11-12; 5:6-11)
 - iv) They ought to respond to the death of a believer (ch. 4:13-18)
 - v) They are to respect those who labour among them and are over them (ch. 5:12-13)
 - vi) To deal with the various “sorts” of saints in the assembly (ch. 5:14-15).

3) Assurance

- a) The difference between 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4 regarding the saints at the Lord’s return is that in 1 Corinthians the question was, “Since flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom of God what happens the living when the Lord comes?” (1 Cor. 15:50-57). In 1 Thessalonians 4 the concern was, “What about those who have died when the Lord comes, have they missed out?” (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Due to the different perspectives the closing comments are different. In 1 Cor. 15:58 they are told to be, “Stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord”; whereas in 1 Thess. 4:18 they are to, “Comfort one another with these words”.

The Place

Thessalonica was the ancient capital of Macedonia and like many of the ancient cities, most of the populous were Gentiles and Jews of previous dispersions. Interestingly Paul passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia (Acts 17:1) en route to Thessalonica, which poses the question, “Why did he not stop?” The pattern of Paul was to go to the major cities for he knew that by ministering in them, the gospel would be heard by more internationals and then spread by them to other people.

The History of The Thessalonian Church

The Biblical information concerning how the church at Thessalonica began is recorded in Acts 17:1-10. Paul was on his second missionary journey. When at Philippi a young woman was released from demonic possession (Acts 16:16-24). The city merchants had used this woman for financial gain and when she was released their incomes dropped. This resulted in an uproar which ended when Paul and Silas were cast into prison. Men had shut them up in prison but God was not curtailed. At midnight the jail was broken in pieces due to an earthquake. Matters became worse for the opposers of the gospel for ultimately Paul and Silas were released.

Bypassing minor towns (Amphipolis and Apollonia Acts 17:1) they came to Thessalonica and again began to preach the gospel. It is recorded that they spent three Sabbath days there and during that time people were saved

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and the assembly formed (Acts 17:1-10). However short the time was, it was sufficient for the Holy Spirit to convict of sin, individuals to hear, understand and receive the gospel, and be taught the basics of a local church, and matters of prophecy. It is evident much of the preaching was concerning the coming Kingdom, and on this Paul now concentrates in this letter.

While there is mention of three Sabbath days, we must be careful not to teach that Paul and his associates were only there for three weeks. There is nothing to indicate Paul had not spent time in Thessalonica before the first Sabbath, nor yet even after the 3rd Sabbath. Furthermore, the expression, “Whom Jason hath received” (Acts 17:7) does not indicate his activity before, during, or after the three Sabbath days, for it is not clear if the arrest of Jason was before or after the 3rd Sabbath. One thing is evident, the preaching had such an effect that it brought the ire of the Jewish leaders (Acts 17:13). Again, Paul and Silas were forced to leave Thessalonica (Acts 17:10).

The People Who Made Up The Thessalonian Church

It would appear the majority of the church were Greek for the expression: “Ye turned to God from idols” (1 Thess. 1:9) is a description which could more readily be said of Gentiles than Jews. This does not mean the Jews were not idolators for Ezekiel 20 makes it clear they had been such from before their exodus from Egypt. It was not exclusively a Gentile city for there was a synagogue (Acts 17:1). Some of the Jews did believe as well as a great number of devout Greeks (Acts 17:4). Furthermore, it says: “Ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen” (ch. 2:14) and it is set in similarity to that which the Jews had experienced, thus indicating a mixed company of Jews and Gentiles.

The saints were under persecution and erroneous teaching from people similar to those who had caused trouble in Philippi. We are not told specifically why they objected to the gospel (Acts 17:5) except that they were: “moved with envy” (Acts 17:5). It is in First Thessalonians we are told why. It was because the gospel was going out to the Gentiles (1 Thess. 2:16). This is what caused the anger. Like a spoilt child who refuses to play with a blue ball then is angry when it is given to another child.

The Author

Throughout the years there have been those who questioned the authorship of Paul, yet the arguments do not stand the tests of authenticity. The fact that Paul is the writer is endorsed by several facts.

- a) The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (Jn. 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 Jn. 4:6) and would not deceive the saints by giving them the understanding that Paul had written it if such was not the case (ch. 1:1), especially when in the next book he deals with those who had perpetrated such a deception (2 Thess. 2:2).
- b) If Paul did not write the epistles then the character of Silvanus and Timothy (ch. 1:1; 3:2-6) and their work for God would have been questioned. These men were well known and would not have let their reputation be tarnished by such deception.
- c) Finally, and by far the most serious, the gospel which they preached would have been questioned, for if one cannot trust the integrity of the speaker, how could one trust the message they proclaim?
- d) It was not Paul’s apostleship which was being questioned so no mention is made of it as in “Galatians” (Gal. 1:1). Therefore, he does not speak to them emphasizing apostolic authority, rather they are reminded that he was among them as a “nursing mother” (ch. 2:7); a “father” (ch. 2:11); a “brother” (ch. 2:9) who yearns for their spiritual development (ch. 5:23). He will speak in tenderness, constantly reaffirming his love for them as seen by his use of the following expressions: “Beloved of the Lord” (ch. 1:4); being “affectionally desirous of you” (ch. 2:8); “ye were dear unto us” (ch. 2:8); “being taken from you” (ch. 2:17, the word “aporphanizomai” is only used here and it means to be “bereaved”); “when I could no longer forbear” (ch. 3:1, 5); and “night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face” (ch. 3:10).

The Background To The Book Being Written

Chronologically

- a) Paul came to Corinth, and while testifying Jesus was the Christ, the Jews opposed themselves and blasphemed (Acts 18:6). Possibly Paul was getting downhearted and needed some encouragement therefore, the Lord knowing the need of His servant came encouraging him (Acts 18:9-10). Paul was also concerned about the Thessalonian saints and Timothy was sent back (1 Thess. 3:2) for two reasons:
 - i) To confirm, solidify, and encourage the saints concerning their faith (1 Thess 3:2), that is, to stabilize them in their faith amid the trials of the way.
 - ii) To know how they were standing up to the opposition (1 Thess. 3:5), for he was aware that when they were left amid the opposition there was the real possibility of the tempter coming in and damaging their faith. Paul was aware of Satan's devices.
- b) Having been made aware of the situation at Thessalonica Paul wrote this first epistle.

Spiritually

- a) False teachers had come among the saints and while in 1 Thessalonians their doctrines are scarcely mentioned, yet from the defense Paul makes for himself, the character of these individuals is revealed. While I am not sure if anything specifically can be said from what the false teachers taught, Paul does emphasize that:
 - i) His purpose for preaching was not for self gain, else he would not have reminded them of how he was not chargeable to any of them (1 Thess. 2:9).
 - ii) The sins of immorality, stopping work and sponging off others was not correct (ch. 4:1-12)
 - iii) There was a need to be awakened out of the lethargy of sleep (ch. 5:6)
 - iv) Being insubordinate to the elders ought not to be done (ch. 5:12-13)
 - v) Possibly being hard on other saints and retaliating in the flesh was not commendable to the gospel (ch. 5:14-15).

Having a concern for the saints, Timothy was sent to see how they fared (ch. 3:5). He returned with good and bad news. The good news was of their faith and love, and the dark news was that the evil one had caused their "hope" to be diminished. Satan had been able to:

- a) Cause concern over those who had died (ch. 4:13-18)
- b) Tempt them to return to the normal lifestyle of ancient Greece (ch. 4:1-6) which was immorality.
- c) Distort the thinking of those who still believed in the imminency of the Lord's return for they had stopped working and were "sponging" off other saints (ch. 4:11-12)
- d) Cause a rebellious spirit against those who were their spiritual guides (ch. 5:12)
- e) Promote an apathetic spirit toward each other (ch. 5:11, 14-18) which caused factions, destroying the fellowship between them (ch. 5:13)
- f) Raise questions concerning Paul and his apparent lack of concern because of how he left. This he responds to (ch. 2:2-10, 17-18) thus undermining the whole message.

Features Of The Epistle

It is an epistle of thanksgiving. The thought of thanksgiving is repeated four times:

- a) "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers" (ch. 1:2), thanking God always for all of them" (ch. 1:2)
- b) "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (ch. 2:13). Thanking God for their reception of the gospel.

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- c) “For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God” (ch. 3:9). Thanking God for the joy they had given him in their spiritual development, and praying to God for the blessedness of returning to them for their further spiritual enrichment.
- d) “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (ch. 5:18). Thanking God in everything.

Keys

Key Verses

This is dependent on which avenue of consideration an individual is looking at:

- a) If it is the response and changing power of the Gospel:
 - i) “They themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from wrath to come” (ch. 1:9-10).
- (b) If it is how an evangelist lives before others:
 - i) “We speak, not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth the hearts, for neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness: nor of men sought we glory . . . when we might have been burdensome . . . but we were gentle among you” (ch. 2:4-10)

Key Words and Clauses

- 1) Words:
 - a) “Wrath” (ch. 1:10; 2:16; 5:9); “comfort” (ch. 3:2; 4:18; 5:11, 14); “hope” (ch. 1:3; 2:19; 4:13; 5:8); “for” (this word is used in 37 verses, making the book cause and effect document. I am only giving one from each chapter (ch. 1:2; 2:14; 3:9; 4:3; 5:9).
- 2) Clauses:
 - a) “Could no longer forbear” (ch. 3:1, 5).

Aspects Of God

God is the Source of the Gospel (ch. 2:8); the Uniter of loved ones (ch. 4:14); and the Appointer for deliverance (ch. 5:9).

Doctrines Touched In 1 Thessalonians

There are expressions in 1 Thessalonians which can become springboards for the study of the doctrine of: “election” (ch. 1:4); “the kingdom of God” (ch. 2:12); “the church” (ch. 1:1); “Christ” (ch. 1:3); “the Holy Spirit” (ch. 1:5); “Satan” (ch. 2:18); “the Kingdom of God” (ch. 2:12); “sin” (ch. 1:9); “the gospel” (ch. 1:5); “faith” (ch. 1:3); “sanctification” (ch. 2:12); “the Lord’s coming, its intimated timing” (ch. 1:10); the happenings when He comes for His own and the resurrection (ch. 4:13-17). The doctrine of the coming of the Lord is major in this epistle, for not only is it mentioned in each chapter, but it is presented from various viewpoints (ch. 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:14-17; 5:23).

Greek Words Found Only In 1 Thessalonians

The following Greek words are found only in 1 Thessalonians. However, the English words by which they are translated are found in other places. For instance, the English word “countrymen” used in 2 Cor. 11:26 is a translation of the word “genos” which is used in twenty-one verses, but is not the translation of the Greek word “sumphuletes” used in this passage.

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Word	Greek word	Reference	Word	Greek word	Reference
Sounded out	Execheomai	Ch. 1:8	To wait for	Anemeno	Ch. 1: 10
Flattering	Kolakeia	Ch. 2:5	A nurse	Trophos	Ch. 2:7
Affectionately desirous	Himeiromai	Ch. 2:8	Blameably / blameless	Amemptos	Ch. 2:10; 5:23
Countrymen	Sumphuletes	Ch. 2:14	Being taken	Aporphanizo	Ch. 2:17
Should be moved	Saino	Ch. 3:3	Taught of God	Theodidaktos	Ch. 4:9
A Shout	Keleuma	Ch. 4:16	Remain	Perileipo	Ch. 4:15, 17
Unruly	Ataktos	Ch. 5:14	Feebleminded	Oligopsuchos	Ch. 5:14
Wholly	Hollteles	Ch. 5:23			

The Purpose Of The Book

When Timothy returned to Paul from Thessalonica he was able to report that there was much in their favour (ch. 1:7-10; 3:6-10), but there were dark shadows crossing their paths. Paul had preached the coming of the Lord and one of the major issues was the Lord had not come. Were they in the Day of the Lord and what about those who had died?

It is a fact that any work of God is, or will be, under attack by Satan. He was behind the discord which resulted in the council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:4-21), the riot at Philippi (Acts 16:19-22), and the disturbing of the saints at Thessalonica. From what Paul wrote in this epistle the truths would be meaningless had false teachers not accused them of:

- a) Being “fair weather preachers” therefore, when trouble erupted Paul and Silas escaped by night (Acts 17:10). His response was that they were not there exhorting out of deceitfulness (ch. 2:3), but only came there after they had suffered at Philippi (ch. 2:2).
- b) Being preachers who lived off the generosity of the people. In his response to this accusation Paul reminds the saints how he, “Laboured night and day, because they would not be chargeable to them” (ch. 2:9)
- c) The Day of the Lord had come and this error could not be ignored. Carefully he explains that day cannot come until certain happenings take place (2 Thess. 2:2-8)

Paul wanted to encourage the saints in the comforting of each other in the dark hours of bereavement (ch. 4:18); to exhort the saints relative to moral principles (ch. 4:1-12; 5:6--24); and alert the saints to the need for watchfulness (ch. 5.6). He yearned for the saints to develop spiritually and with resultant unity. This was not the end goal, it was to show to the unsaved people of the world the major truths the Lord had spoken about.

- a) “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (Jn. 17:21)
- b) “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (Jn. 17:23)

The result would then be that the unity of the saints begotten from a Spirit, begotten love for each other, would demonstrate to the unsaved world that the Father had sent the Son, and that the Father loves those who are one with Him. When reminding them of the love there was bestowed on them, he will remind them also of their

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obligations. “As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children” (ch. 2:11; 3:2; 3:7; 4:1, 10, 18; 5:11, 14).

When The Book Was Written

While we may try to put dates on various books, the fact is that it cannot be said with certainty when First Thessalonians was written. From what we can gather, the evidences point to it being written at Corinth during the second missionary journey. From the following table the reader can see when the epistles were written.

Journey No. 1	Journey No. 2	Journey No. 3	1st Imprisonment	Journey No. 4	2nd Imprisonment
Begins: Acts 13:1-14, 26	Begins: Acts 15:36-18:22	Begins: Acts 18:23-21:2	Acts 20:16 For 2 years	Unknown	
Companions: Barnabas John Mark	Companions: Silas Then Timothy at Lystra and Luke	Companions: Timothy Erastus Luke	In his own hired house	Not told of any	
No epistles written	1 & 2 Thessalonians	1 & 2 Corinthians Galatians Romans	Ephesians Philippians Philemon Colossians	1 Timothy Titus	2 Timothy

Suggested Outlines Of The Book

- 1) 1 Thessalonians can be viewed in two broad sweeping sections:
 - a) In the first section it is retrospect as Paul considers how the gospel came to them and has flowed out from them (ch. 1:1-4:12).
 - b) The second section is prospect in which there is considered how the Lord will come for them and that which flows out from it (ch. 4:13-5:28)
- 2) Since the coming of the Lord is mentioned in each chapter, it can be viewed from that perspective:

Reference	Attitudes and responses concerning His Coming	Aspect	It is linked with:	The truth indicated
Ch. 1:10	Waiting for His coming	It separates	The One who is coming v. 10	His Son from Heaven
Ch. 2:19	Rejoicing at His coming	It stimulates	The servants of God v. 19	We are before Him
Ch. 3:11	Preparation for His coming	It sanctifies	The children of God v. 13	We are with Him
Ch. 4:17	Comforted by His coming	It soothes	The Departed saints v. 16	The Lord from Heaven
Ch. 5:23	Ready for His coming	It stirs	The world left behind v. 3	The coming day of the Lord

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- 3) The coming of the Lord is mentioned several times by our Lord when he said: “I come”, and each has a different emphasis.
- a) The emphasis is on our reception (Jn. 14:3)
 - b) The emphasis is on readiness, to live or die, as best determined by the Lord (Jn. 21:22)
 - c) The emphasis is on our responsibility to hold fast the truth given (Rev. 22:7)
 - d) The emphasis is on the day of evaluation (Rev. 22:12; also 1 Cor. 4:5)
 - e) The emphasis is on the Lord’s promise (Rev. 22:20)
 - f) The emphasis is on our response (Rev. 22:20)
- 4) Another viewpoint considers how the sections begin and the main truths within them:

Chapters 1 - 3	Chapters 4 - 5
<p><u>The section begins with:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They had received the gospel (ch. 1:6) • How the gospel effected them spiritually (ch. 1:10) 	<p><u>The section begins with:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They had received His teaching (ch. 4:1) • How the gospel ought to effect them morally (ch. 4:3-6)
<p><u>The section ends with:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration for each other (ch. 3:12) • Being unblameable in holiness (ch. 3:13) • The coming of the Lord (ch. 3:13) • The Lord comes with all His saints (ch. 3:13) 	<p><u>The section ends with:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration for each other (ch. 5:14-16) • Being unblameable in holiness (ch. 5:23) • The coming of the Lord (ch. 5:23) • The Lord comes and will enable you to be kept (ch. 5:23-24)
<p><u>The Concepts:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The coming of Paul among them (ch. 2:1-2) • The results of willful rejection (ch. 2:16) • How the gospel of Christ came to them (ch. 1:5) • Because of this, consider the past and present • It is retrospective • It deals with that which they did know • Salvation is the theme 	<p><u>The Concepts:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The coming of the Lord for them (ch. 4:17) • The results of willful rejection (ch. 5:3) • How Christ will come for them (ch. 4:16-17) • Because of this, consider the present and the future • It is prospective • It deals with that which they needed to know • Sanctification is the theme

The Dangers

One of the “bones of contention” is on the role of the church and the tribulation. The question is often debated, sadly at times with more heat than light, and much un-Christlike attitudes have been manifested concerning it. To my understanding, the Lord will come and take us to Himself before the beginning of Daniels 70th week. I know many men at whose feet I have sat and learnt many truths, see things entirely different. It is very easy to be selective of those verses which seem to support my viewpoint. Worse still is viewing those who see differently as “ignorant brethren” who have failed to differentiate the things which differ. I have seen many papers taking scriptures and making them say what they do not say to endorse ones point of view. Whither I see the church as going through the tribulation or not must never permit me to despise and speak in a belittling manner about “the other side”.

Texts Which Can Be Misunderstood

- 1) The difference between 1 Cor. 15 and 1 Thess. 4 regarding the effect of the saints when the Lord returns.
 - a) While a large portion of 1 Cor. 15 is the resurrection, it is oftentimes taken that the entire chapter is taken up with that. Such is not the case. Paul writes: “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be

changed” (v. 51), and then, “we shall be changed” and yet again “this mortal must put on immortality” (v. 53). The saints in Corinth were concerned about those who would be alive when the Lord comes, what will happen them since, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (v. 50). The saints of Thessalonica were not concerned about those who would be alive when the Lord comes, but what will happen those who have died? With that in view Paul wrote: “I would not have you to be ignorant (untaught), concerning them which are asleep” (1 Thess. 4:13). With reassurance he informs them that: “the dead in Christ shall rise first” (v. 16) and the living will not “prevent them which are asleep” (v. 15). Thus, the main distinction is:

- i) 1 Cor. 15 deals with those who are alive when the Lord comes
 - ii) 1 Thess. deals with those who have died.
- 2) The difference between “sleeping” in 1 Thess. 4 and 5.
- a) One major difference is that 1 Thess. 5:6 informs the saints: “let us not sleep”. Clearly, if this was speaking about the sleep of death as in 1 Thess. 4:13, 14, 15, and it clearly says they are “dead in Christ” (v. 16); it would be an impossibility for them not to die or fall asleep. The “sleep” in 1 Thess. 5 is the sleep of unconsciousness, of the true conditions around us. The teaching is that saints can adopt the same lifestyle as the “others”, that is the unsaved (v. 6).
- 3) The Lord “bringing with Him” in 1 Thess. 4:14.
- a) It is normally stated that when the Lord returns He will bring with Him the spirits of those who have died, but “sleep” never refers to the spirit but to the body, and the Lord does not bring that back with Him. Furthermore, the context is resurrection for the passage reads: “If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep, in Jesus will God bring with Him” (1 Thess. 4:14). The words “even so” indicate a distinct relationship between the death and resurrection of the Lord and that of the saint. It is not dealing with the spirit of the Lord returning to His body in the tomb. Again, the saints are never “asleep in Jesus”, they are asleep in Christ (1 Cor. 15:18).
 - b) Finally, the clause “in Jesus” is better “through Jesus” so that the expression is: “If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep, through Jesus will God bring with Him”. That is just as God brought the Lord from the dead, at the Lord’s return He will bring the dead saints out of death with Him. In Rom. 6:5 we were “planted together”, that is Christ and I, for in Rom. 6 Christ does not die for sin, but “unto” sin (Rom. 6:10). At the moment of salvation we died “with Christ”; were “buried with Christ”; and “raised with Christ” (Rom. 6:4). At the coming of the Lord we shall be raised with Jesus with glorified bodies.
- 4) The apparent contradiction between 1 Thess. 2:3, 5 when Paul speaks of not using “guile” or “flattering words” with 2 Cor. 12:16 when he wrote: “I caught you with guile”.
- a) Part 1 in answering:
 - i) There is not a difference in the word used in both passages and means trickery. Neither is there a difference in the context. Both deal with Paul and his motives for the presentation of the gospel. When Paul and his associates preached the gospel it was not with an ulterior motive of pleasing men (1 Thess. 2:4); gaining glory for me (1 Thess. 2:6); nor seeking that which they had (1 Thess. 2: 6; 2 Cor. 12:14, 16) being a burden to them. In both epistles Paul:
 1. Preached for the glory of God and was done in genuine love and care (1 Thess. 2:7-8).
 2. In neither case was it because of what He could get from them, but would be financially independent of them (1 Cor. 9:15; 2 Cor. 11:9, 12).
 3. He had a tender love for both of them (2 Cor. 6:11, 12; 7:2-3)
 4. He longed for their reciprocal love toward him and each other (2 Cor. 6:13; 12:15; 1 Thess. 4:9; 5:13)

- b) Part 2 in answering:
- i) Having said all that, what is the difference? The saints at Corinth had been led to understand that Paul was crafty in that, while he himself worked for the Lord and not taking any financial assistance from the saints, yet he had others who collected money for him. He was being accused of “sleight of hand”, and for him to have used such deceit would have been a contradiction to that which he had said the apostles do not do (2 Cor. 4:2) and have partaken of the character of Satan (2 Cor. 11:3). Paul is not saying he “caught them by guile”, but it is what he is being accused of, and so he answers this accusation by three questions:
 1. Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent to you? (2 Cor. 12:17)
 2. Did Titus make a gain of you? (2 Cor. 12:18)
 3. Did we not have the same spirit and steps? (2 Cor. 12:18)
- c) Summary
- i) In contrast to that which a casual reading would seem to indicate, Paul is revealing the accusations made against him and declaring by their own answering that he never did anything by craft and guile. Therefore, while the context is slightly different, there is no contradiction, for in neither case did Paul or his associates act with deceit.

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

Rowan Jennings, Abbotsford, British Columbia