

Paul has marked out a great dividing line. A line between the believer and the unbeliever. **Belief of the truth!** Not our nationality, social status, wealth, poverty, good deeds, bad deeds, race, not even what we say we believe. No, it is based upon what we do believe and who we trust. We are led to the truth by the Holy Spirit. He sanctifies (sets apart) those who are to believe and moves others to preach or give the gospel to them. He moves the hearts of the lost. He gives them faith to believe the good news of salvation, to repent of their sinfulness, to personally trust in the Lord Jesus as Saviour and to confess Him as Lord. Having believed unto salvation they are then sanctified (set apart as holy) by the Spirit, to live a clean and blameless and devoted life for the Lord. While many are called few are chosen. Many hear the gospel and refuse or neglect to receive it and believe it. God is greatly glorified in exposing these to the gospel even if they don't receive His Son. Paul tells us here that those who do receive salvation receive it because God specifically **chooses** them to be saved. What grace!. For if He didn't intervene, no one would be saved despite the unsurpassed grace offered through God giving His only begotten Son to die, Christ's death on the cross. Yet how much we owe to those whom God used to bring us the good news that saved us. And we owe all to Christ who voluntarily came from glory to become a man to die in our place. His death opens the way for God to present the gospel to every soul, even those who He knows, in His omniscience, will reject His beloved Son's death on the cross. God offers the gospel to those who will not believe. He sovereignly chooses (elects) some to save, out of those to whom He presents the gospel, albeit no more "deserving" and often less "deserving." than others.

Those who heed the gospel Paul preached, (which we also are to preach) become sanctified by the Spirit. They are destined to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. He receives glory in heaven as the risen Man who has ascended to heaven, and receives glory upon His public appearing to claim the earth as His. Of course we will be occupied giving Him glory but we will be glorified with Him as well.

Given these tremendous blessings, anticipating the awesome glory of the Lord's appearing, and seeing the awful fate of the unbelievers at His hands we have a THEREFORE. A "therefore" inspiring our attitude and conduct while we remain in this world which rejected Him. **Stand fast!** Stand fast and hold the traditions (the truth) received from Paul, whether spoken to them while he was among them or by these two letters (and others to follow). We have fourteen letters from Paul giving us "traditions" to learn and follow. Notice these are NOT the traditions of men. These are truths conveyed by Paul and others the Holy Spirit used to provide us the inspired scriptures now particularly known as the New Testament. "Stand fast and hold" indicates we have a solid,

unchanging basis upon which to stand, not something that varies with time, culture or traditions of men. But it is under attack. Since the scriptures were completed men have added many traditions, traditions that some even dare to hold as preempting the inspired word of God. Don't let them fool you! Heed Paul's exhortation and warning here and the many others throughout the New Testament. The Lord condemned the Pharisees of His time for holding the traditions of men to supercede scripture. The same thing has infected Christendom. Hang in there! Study! Stand! Hold! Live!

2Timothy 2:15 Strive diligently to present thyself approved to God, a workman that has not to be ashamed, cutting in a straight line the word of truth.
(JND)

Drop that which is not found in scripture. Retrieve that which is systematically being ignored. It can be done. It should be done. Seek and ye shall find. Seek by faith, with the power of the Holy Spirit, to rightly divide the word of truth. Get some good translations and compare them. Read some reliable commentaries. Study with seasoned men of God. Weigh all prayerfully against the scriptures.

While belief of the truth marks those whom He saves unbelief marks those whom He judges.

2Thessalonians 1:8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

2:12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Paul has quite a lot to say to us regarding sanctification, holy purity and separation. This is basic to the walk of the new disciples of Christ, and all of us.

1Thess. 3:13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

4:3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

4:7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are sovereignly chosen and **sanctified** to be saved, then positionally **sanctified** in the risen ascended Christ. Now we pursue a **sanctified** walk with God. So Paul blesses, both in the Lord and in the Father's love, and His gift of eternal comfort and good hope through grace. Our hearts are comforted and established in every good word and work until the Lord returns. By Ron Canner, Jan. 11, 2006.