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# Words of Truth

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## I Thessalonians 2:4

By: Brian A. Yeager

*“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts”* (I Thessalonians 2:4). How were Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel? In the first century, men did not grab a Bible and go preach the Gospel. While these men are writing this letter to the saints in Thessalonica; the New Testament was not complete. That should be an obvious point. So, they were not standing in front of audiences and preaching from the New Testament as Gospel preachers can today. What we will see in this study is that the Spirit was directly involved in these men preaching the Gospel. That will show us how they were put in trust with the Gospel.

In the first century, Christians received gifts directly from the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:13-24, Acts 19:1-7, and I Corinthians 12:3-11). In contexts concerning spiritual gifts, we see that God chose those set in certain positions within the body of Christ in the first century. Notice: *“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way... But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.). And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ”* (I Corinthians 12:27-31 and Ephesians 4:7-13).

In both of the contexts above, it was clearly stated that those things were temporary. We know that spiritual gifts continued until, *“that which is perfect is come”* (I Corinthians 13:8-13). We know we have the complete, perfect word of God now. We also know there are no Apostles today walking about and laying hands on individuals to give them the Spirit of God. So, being allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel does not apply today.

We do not know much about Silvanus, but there is plenty revealed in the New Testament about Paul and Timotheus. Paul was hand-picked by the Lord to be an Apostle (Acts 9:1-20). He was given what to teach by our Lord (I Corinthians 2:1-16 and Galatians 1:11-16). Apostles did not have to study the Scriptures and prepare a lesson. They did not have to prepare to stand before men and teach. Jesus said this to His twelve Apostles: *“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you”* (Matthew 10:16-20).

Timotheus was chosen by Paul (Acts 16:1-4). He was aided by the Holy Spirit in teaching (II Timothy 1:6-14). So, he was not like preachers of today. However, he was not moved in the same manner that Paul was. Timothy was limited to teaching what he had been taught by Paul (I Corinthians 4:17 and II Timothy 2:1-4). For example, the Holy Spirit told Paul where and when to go (Acts 16:5-10). Timotheus was told by Paul where to go and when to go to that place (I Timothy 1:3-7).

What does still apply today in this verse we are looking at in this article is that we are to please God as He tries our hearts. We know how to please God in much of the same way the Thessalonians did. Notice: *“Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus”* (I Thessalonians 4:1-2). Like men and women of all times, we are to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing (Colossians 1:10). We will receive our eternal reward or punishment based on whether or not we obeyed the will of our Lord (John 5:28-29 and Revelation 22:14).

The judgment of our Lord is not based solely upon what can be seen outwardly. When David was chosen to be the king of Israel, this was said: *“But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart”* (I Samuel 16:7). So, we should understand that whatever it is man may think is hidden from God, they are mistaken (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, Isaiah 29:15, and Jeremiah 23:24). The fact that God tries the heart is a truth that has long been taught. In fact, it was even sung in times past by the children of Israel. Notice: *“The LORD shall judge the people: judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me. Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins”* (Psalms 7:8-9). So, let us all be sure we are clean within and without (Matthew 23:25-26)!