

Lest by Some Means the Tempter Had Tempted You

1. Paul's Deep Anxiety for the Thessalonians - 1 Th 3:1-5

A. Historical background:

1. Paul had to leave Thessalonica prematurely; the city was in an uproar - Ac 17. Paul and Silas escaped to Berea but were followed by the Thessalonian Jews who proceeded to throw Berea into turmoil (Ac 17:13-15).
2. Though Paul desires for Silas and Timothy to join him in Athens, he is worried about the new Christians in Thessalonica being shaken by afflictions (3:3).
3. He had wished to return personally but "*Satan hindered us*" (2:17-18) .

B. Persecution of the Thessalonians - 1 Th 2:14.

1. They imitated Judean churches in alienation from countrymen.
2. "**For you yourselves know** that we are appointed to this ..." (3:3). The Thessalonians are in need of reassurance. See "you know" phrases: (1:5; 2:1-2, 5, 9, 11; 3:3-4; 4:2; 5:2).

C. Persecution can come in many forms: family/marital stress, ridicule, black-balling at work, even from believers who hold differing views. Persecution can pressure us into apostasy or make us stronger. We *will* have to deal with it in some way.

2. Can "Chosen Ones" Be Lost?

A. Paul refers to their "election by God" (1 Th 1:4) and elaborates further in 2 Th 2: 13-14. But what does he say *exactly*? Will **individuals** be chosen or doomed?

B. The process of election:

God chose you ...	<i>from the beginning</i>	to which He	<i>by our</i>
	<i>for salvation</i>	called you ...	<i>gospel</i>
	<i>through</i> 1) sanct. by Spirit		
	2) belief in truth		

C. Election is not arbitrary selection of individuals but the method, character and relationship God desires with those who will be saved. **Man participates in this process.** The Thessalonians must "*stand fast and hold the traditions*" (2:15) because they can, in fact, be subverted by the tempter.

3. Paul's Relief in the Thessalonians' Steadfastness - 1 Th 3:6-10

A. Timothy has come to Corinth and informed Paul of the Thessalonians' continuing love for the great apostle. He has not become odious to them. He was worried that he would be perceived as abandoning them in the time of crisis.

B. Summation of our love for brethren: *"For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord."*

C. Paul's ceaseless prayers for the Thessalonians: 3:10; cf. 1:2; 2:13; 2 Th 1:3-4.

Conclusion: Our society has become self-centered, exclusive. We build walls with our busy schedules, answering machines, computers, etc. We are not as concerned with the spiritual needs of others as we should be. We all need encouragement at times, and others need edification from us. Let us not neglect brotherly affection and concern.

2 Th 3:3 - *"But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one."*