

'WHILE WE WAIT'
(Final Preparations in These Last Days)
Studies in 2 Thessalonians

'Minga-la-ba!'

(Blessings upon you' from Myanmar)

Thanks so much to all of you who prayed for our mission trip to Myanmar (formerly Burma) these the past 10 days. Thanks, too, to the financial contributors at CBF who anonymously gave extra to make this trip possible. This important trip to **Berean Evangelical School of Theology** outside of the capital city of Yangon, was to officially dedicate the new academic center facility financed through CBF given by current and former CBF members. Former president and visionary of BEST, Henry Lyan, current president, Andrew Lyan, and his wife, Tutu, the faculty, staff and student body express their thanks to CBF for making this long anticipated day a reality. What a blessing it was to represent Christ's Bible Fellowship and our mission objective with BEST to train and prepare Burmese Christians for evangelism, discipleship, and church-planting in *'the Golden Land'*.

The one Burmese phrase we repeated many times, *'Minga-la-ba,'* is more than just 'hello' or 'good morning' or 'hafa dai' – the Burmese language really doesn't have a mere common greeting – *'Minga-la-ba'* is more of a blessing being conveyed upon another. We said it many times on behalf of CBF to the BEST faculty and staff, and everyone else we met at the hotel, in stores, and in places we toured on our last day in Myanmar. But we want you at CBF to know that we, BEST, and whoever we were able to minister unto along the way wish a very *'Minga-la-ba'* to all of you at CBF who gave and prayed for this blessed mission trip to Myanmar. May God bless you for your faithfulness! **PtL**

Biblical History & Background of Thessalonians

The Thessalonian church was begun by Apostle Paul and his associates, Silas and Timothy, on the second missionary journey in AD 49 or 50 (*Acts 17:1-8*). Following intense opposition from the religious and political groups there, Paul, Silas, and Timothy fled to Berea (*Acts 17: 10-13*). The new church there was also persecuted, causing Paul to leave again, this time for Athens (*Acts 17:14-15*) leaving Silas and Timothy in Macedonia. Shortly thereafter Silas and Timothy rejoined Paul in Athens (*1 Thessalonians 3:1*). Out of concern for the Thessalonians, Paul and Silas sent Timothy back to encourage and strengthen them (*1 Thess. 3:2-5*). Soon after Timothy's return to Thessalonica, Silas was sent to Macedonia as well (*Acts 18: 5*).

Just a few weeks (perhaps months) later, Timothy and Silas returned to Paul who had now moved on to Corinth (*Acts 18:5*). Timothy's report on the Thessalonian church was outstanding (*1 Thessalonians 3:6-10*), prompting Paul to write a letter to them. Timothy probably delivered the first letter, noted any questions the church had, and brought news back to Paul, who was still in Corinth (*Acts 18:11*).

After the first letter, Paul answered questions in a second letter and again sent it with Timothy (?) to the believers in Thessalonica. Both of the letters to the Thessalonians were written within a few months of each other in AD 50 or 51, making it difficult to know which was actually the first to be written. Although the longer letter comes first in the New Testament (due primarily to its length), it is possible that the smaller letter (called *2 Thessalonians*) was written first in order to quickly stabilize the church which was under severe persecution. If this theory is correct, it may have provoked questions from the Thessalonians about eschatology (last days prophecy) that Paul may have elaborated on in the longer letter (*1 Thessalonians*).

Either way, Paul's in-person teaching about the 'blessed hope' of the return of Christ was being undermined by false teachers who erroneously interpreted the persecution they were enduring as being in the Tribulation. The believers were apparently upset because Paul had taught them a pre-tribulation rapture eschatology (if he hadn't why then would they be worried?). Paul seeks to calm their fears about this and reaffirm the pre-tribulational evacuation of believers, called 'the blessed hope' (*Titus 2:13*).

‘Happy, Holy New Year!’
(An AD 2018 ‘The Year of the Lamb’ Forecast)
2 Thessalonians 1:1-5

Fellowship

(Commitment to a spiritually strong church family)

“Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” **1:1-2**

Fruitfulness

(Commitment to personal spiritual growth & church ministry involvement)

“We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith...” **1:3-4a**

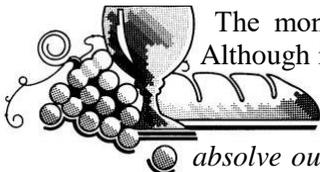
Faithfulness

(Commitment to endurance of suffering and trials with calm, dignity & grace)

“...your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, which are manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be accounted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer...” **1:4b-5**

Communion Meditation

(1 Corinthians 11:23-32)



The monthly observance of the Lord’s Table at CBF is not a mere traditional ritual. Although it does not convey grace, forgiveness, or any spiritual merit, the bread and cup are reminders of the Person (***unleavened bread*** - Jesus’ perfect holiness and deity) and His work (***the cup*** - resemblance of Jesus’ blood that was shed to cover and absolve our sin) (***1 Corinthians 10:16-17***). Partaking of the bread and cup doesn’t save or cleanse from sin, but reminds of the One Who did and His presence with us.

The Corinthian church was terribly disobedient so communion obviously didn’t save them or make them any better! In fact, they were warned to repent of sin or don’t partake. If they did partake of communion unworthily, sickness, weakness, or even death (***11:30***) could result as chastisement from God.

Communion is a sign of commitment and fellowship between highly committed disciples of Christ and their Lord (*please note that only Jesus’ faithful disciples partook of the Lord’s Supper, not just casual followers and certainly not Judas Isacariot whom Jesus excused before communion*).

If you truly know, love, are faithfully living for and serving Christ, we invite you to fellowship with Him in communion today as a loving token of your continuing dedication to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of your life. If this is not true of you, please refrain from taking communion until you have received Christ by faith (***John 1:12-13***) and are living for His glory! Thank you. **PtL**