

# The Power of the Gospel to the Elect

## 1 Thessalonians 1:5-7

### I. The Holy Spirit Empowers the Preaching of the Gospel to the Elect (vs. 5)

Paul mentions four things, from which we may derive four principles that apply to all of God's elect.

*First*, the Gospel does not come to the elect "in word only."

*Second*, the Gospel comes to the elect "in power." (See also Rom. 1:16-17)

*Third*, the Gospel comes to the elect "in the Holy Spirit." (See also John 3:5-8)

Our confession speaks well of the powerful working of the Holy Spirit through the Word in the first chapter entitled "Of the Holy Scriptures":

We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church of God to a high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scriptures; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, and the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, and many other incomparable excellencies, and entire perfections thereof, are arguments whereby it does abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts. [John 16:13, 14; 1 Cor. 2:10-12; 1 John 2:20, 27] (1.5)

*Fourth*, the Gospel comes to the elect "in much assurance." (See also Acts 17:1-10; 1 Cor. 1:18-24)

### II. The Holy Spirit Enables the Reception of the Gospel by the Elect (vss. 6-7)

Paul again mentions four things, from which we may derive four principles that apply to all of God's elect.

*First*, the elect receive the Gospel such that they become "followers of the Lord." (See also 1 Cor. 11:1)

The *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* says that *mimētēs* refers to "one who imitates another particularly by following one's example or one's teaching" (p. 587).

*Second*, the elect receive the Gospel in spite of "much affliction." (Acts 17:1-8; 1 Thess. 2:13-16a)

*Third*, the elect receive the Gospel "with joy of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 13:20-21; 2 Cor. 8:1-5)

Charles Wanamaker stresses that these words "... are particularly important. They remind the readers of the tangible proof of their election. It was not only that they received the word in distress that they became imitators of Paul and the Lord, but also in that they had a sense of joy in this situation that could not be accounted for in human terms." (NIGTC, p. 82).

*Fourth*, the elect receive the Gospel such that they become "examples" to others. (See also 1 Cor. 2:9-14)