

10. The task of the new believer is to begin the process of inhibiting established behavior patterns in the categories of sin, human good, and evil.
11. Those with legalistic wheel-tracks must orient to grace by the inculcation of doctrinal principles that denounce and condemn these trends. Similarly, the same process is required for those who possess lascivious wheel-tracks.
12. These transformations occur through orientation to the divine initiative of post-salvation grace and one's response by inculcation, retention, and application under doctrinal orientation.
13. Doctrinal orientation is the believer's response to the provision of post-salvation grace which converts γνώσις understanding of a biblical idea to επίγνωσις retention of divine thought in the *kardía*.
14. Some verses communicate these ideas:

2 Peter 3:18a Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 3:1 For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

v. 2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of God's grace that was given to me for you.

2 Thessalonians 2:16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope,

v. 17 encourage your hearts [καρδίας (*kardías*)] and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say.
(NET)

15. To emphasize the principle of antecedent grace, let's note some things in this passage. Verse 16 begins with Paul's plea to both Jesus Christ and God the Father. That plea is stated in verse 17: "encourage your hearts and strengthen you."
16. In between, there is a clause in verse 16 which confirms in eternity past that Christ and God "loved us and by grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope."

(End JAS1-16. See JAS1-17 for continuation of study on p. 161.)

17. The phrase, “who loved us,” refers back to “our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God or Father.” The verb “loved” is the aorist active participle of **ἀγαπάω (agapáō)**.
18. This verb is clearly antecedent since it occurred in eternity past. The denouement of this prehistoric love from eternity past is eternal life, the fact that this love will provide a way for us to live with Him forever in a perfect environment.
19. The culminative aorist refers to the love of God in its entirety, but regards it from the viewpoint of its existing results: eternal life.
20. This love is said to be “by grace,” the instrumental of means from the pronoun **ἐν (en)** and the noun **χάρις (chárīs)**, best translated, “by means of the grace policy of the integrity of God.”
21. This is followed by the verb, “to give,” the aorist active participle of **δίδωμι (dídōmi)**. When you have the words **ἀγαπάω** (loved), **chárīs** (grace), and **dídōmi** (gave) back-to-back, they confirm the prevenient impact of each based on the integrity of God.
18. The Members of the Trinity each have eternal life and, in relationship to the human race, existed “before the beginning of the world” (Ephesians 1:4).
19. The plan of God with regard to the human race was decreed in eternity past and implemented following Lucifer’s appeal.
20. Together, these words result in “eternal comfort.” The word “eternal” is the adjective **αἰώνιος (aiōnios)** followed by the noun “comfort”: **παράκλησις (paráklēsis)** which means, “encouragement.”
21. Prevenient grace is extended from eternity past to eternity future and all along the way of a believer’s spiritual life encouragement is constantly being provided by the guidance and encouragement of the Word of God.
22. Verse 16 ends with the phrase “good hope”: **ἀγαθός (agathós)**: “good of intrinsic value,” followed by the noun, **ἐλπίς (elpís)**: “confidence.”
23. The expanded translation of this verse reads this way:

2 Thessalonians 2:16 May the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, {who loved us with antecedent love by means of the grace policy of the integrity of God, and gave us eternal encouragement and good of intrinsic value confidence}, (EXT)

2 Thessalonians 2:17 ... encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say. (NET)

23. The noun **παράκλησις** (*paráklēsis*), translated “encouragement” in verse 16, is repeated in its verb form leading off verse 17 with the aorist active *optative* of **παρακαλέω** (*parakaléō*), translated “encourage” by the NET and NIV Bibles.
24. It is important to examine the meaning of the optative mood. Here’s why. Verse 16’s translation begins with the word “may,” which does not occur in the text but is required once we get to the two verbs in verse 17, each of which has an aorist tense, active voice, and optative mood. Dr. Daniel B. Wallace elaborates:

The Optative Mood. In general, it can be said that the optative is the mood used when a speaker wishes to portray an action as possible.

Voluntative Optative: This is the use of the optative in an independent clause to express an *obtainable wish* or a *prayer*. It is frequently an appeal to the *will*, in particular with used in prayers. (480, 4)

The use of the volitive optative in the New Testament seems to fit into one of three nuances [We will observe only the one pertinent to our study]: *Polite request* without necessarily a hint of doubting what the response will be.

The voluntative optative seems to be used this way in the language of prayer. The prayers offered to him [God] depend on His sovereignty and goodness. Thus, although the *form* of much prayer language in the New Testament has the tinge of remote possibility, when it is offered to the God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead, its *meaning* often moves into the realm of expectation. If uncertainty is part of the package, it is not due to questions of God’s ability, but simply to the petitioner’s humility before the transcendent one.¹

25. Thus, when the voluntative optative mood is used in a prayer, it indicates respect for divine authority while, at the same time, expresses confidence that the prayer will be heard and answered.

¹ Daniel B. Wallace, “The Optative Mood,” in *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 480, 481.

26. The first of the two verbs is *parakaléō* which means, “to encourage” while the second is **στηρίζω (*stērizō*)**: “to strengthen.” Why is Paul praying for Jesus Christ and God the Father to encourage and strengthen the members of the church at Thessalonica? Anyone? Anyone?
27. Answer: Because of their misunderstanding regarding the timing of the Rapture which Paul resolves in 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12.
28. What Paul desires to be strengthened are the hearts of the Thessalonian believers. The word “hearts”—**καρδίας (*kardias*)**—refers to the stream of consciousness and problem-solving devices of the soul where biblical truths are retained as **ἐπίγνωσις (*epignōsis*)**.
29. It is from this inventory that these believers are to use these assets “in every good thing they do and say” (“work and word” NASB).
30. The word “work” is the locative of sphere of the noun **ἔργον (*érgon*)** and the word “word” is the locative of sphere of the noun **λόγος (*lógos*)**.
31. “Work” refers to the production the believer deploys from his inventory of doctrinal ideas into the scrum of the Angelic Conflict.
32. “Word” has to do with maintaining an honorable lifestyle that measures every word spoken from personal integrity rather than motivation from the sin nature.
33. Here are the two verses in expanded translation:

2 Thessalonians 2:16 May the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, {who loved us with antecedent love by means of the grace policy of the integrity of God, and gave us eternal encouragement and good of intrinsic value confidence},

v. 17 ... **encourage and strengthen**² your inventory of doctrine in the sphere of every good work you do and word you say. (EXT)

² These two verbs are in the voluntative, optative mood showing respect and deference to those addressed, the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father, in verse 16. The optative mood requires the Subjects to be approached by use of the word “may.” This does not reflect doubt, but rather the confident belief the prayer will be answered. See The Optative Mood on p.162 above.

Summary:

1. Antecedent grace initiates the believer's grace response. However, it requires grace orientation for the believer to respond to God's grace initiative.
2. The divine initiative occurs in two spheres of divine function: (1) Antecedent grace which occurred in eternity past and (2) eschatological grace which occurs in the experiences of the individual believer: dying, resurrection, and eternal grace.
3. Grace orientation is the fourth problem-solving device and the policy of the integrity of God or the love of God.
4. Grace orientation cannot efficiently function unless the believer understands prevenient or antecedent grace. God initiates His policy of grace, the believer responds with grace orientation.
5. When grace orientation properly responds to the grace initiative of God, the believer is functioning under the filling of the Holy Spirit, an advancing inventory of doctrinal ideas in the *kardía*, and adherence to the protocol plan of God.
6. All three of these responses pay homage to the antecedent grace of God. The filling of the Spirit is designed to maximize God's grace policy by providing divine thought to the positive believer's soul.
7. The ever-enlarging inventory in the soul is the product of the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit provided in grace.
8. The way that the divine system is graciously regulated is by the believer's willing adherence to the protocol plan of God which is stated as follows:

A rigid, long-established code [New Testament canon], prescribing complete deference to superior rank and authority [of the integrity of God and plenipotentiary of man], followed by strict adherence to due order of precedence [doctrinal orientation for application], coupled with precisely correct procedure [the filling of the Holy Spirit].

9. Precedence for the Church Age believer is based on the grace policy associated with the Incarnation of Christ, His person, His work, and His resurrection.