

# Visible to God

**Key Verse:** “Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.”  
—*I Thessalonians*

1:6

**Selected Scripture:**  
*I Thessalonians 1*

**WE MAY VIEW THIS SCRIPTURE** initially with a comprehensive view that shows the divine favor and care manifested in God’s providential overruling for the welfare of his sheep. It is pointed out to us in the text, “The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.” (Ps. 23:1) Of all of the beautiful pictures which the Lord gave us through the Prophet David, perhaps none seems more forceful. It is true that our dear Redeemer was sent forth as the Good Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep, and by his death opened the door into the sheepfold of divine love, favor, rest, and peace. This was a favorite picture that our Lord Jesus gave us of himself: “[I] know my sheep, and am known of mine” (John 10:14); “My sheep hear my voice, . . . and they follow me” (vs. 27); “A stranger will they not follow, . . . for they know not the voice of strangers.” (vs. 5) The Apostle Peter followed the same thought when speaking of our Lord’s return. He refers to him as the Good Shepherd of the flock, saying, “Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” (I Pet. 2:25) The same thought is maintained when the elders of the church are referred to as pastors and “overseers, to feed the church of God.”—Acts 20:28

But, while it may be refreshing for us to take the viewpoint of the divine favor and care manifested in provisions made for our welfare as the Lord's sheep, it is also good that we keep in mind that the undershepherds do not own the flock. Their value to the flock as 'overseers' consists in their faithfulness in making known to the sheep the message of the Great Shepherd and, to the extent of their ability, communicating his attitude or spirit with his Word. The faithful of these, like Paul, may urge, as 'Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord.'

A key to understanding the point of our scripture is to come to the realization that the apostles and their experiences were recorded as examples for us. Their lessons of sacrifice and suffering were not provided as exceptions, but were given to us to follow. These important lessons from their teachings help to point out to us by means of various evidences that we are the children of God. We are referring also to the begetting, quickening, and sealing of the Holy Spirit by which it may be discerned that we are followers of our Lord Jesus, just as the apostles were. It is through our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus that we are able to hear the voice of the Heavenly Father, and follow him with joy. We are reminded of the verse, "The disciples were filled with joy." (Acts 13:52) Along with this joy in knowing that we are walking in the Lord's footsteps, we will also have trials, and the same types of testings as the apostles and our Lord Jesus had. But we should be especially glad to know that the 'little flock' which the Lord is selecting during this present Gospel Age is promised to be granted an entrance into the divine fold. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, . . . Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ."—Heb. 13:20,21 ■