“true God.” And second, that their false “idols” are dead, in contrast to the “true God” who is living. Now imagine going into a tolerant, pluralistic culture, steeped in the worship of hundreds of gods, who endorse and practice all manner of immoral behavior as a part of their religion, and telling them that what they worship are false and dead lifeless idols, and that how they worship is an offense against the true and living God who calls them to turn from their worthless vain religion in order to serve and worship Him. Furthermore, that for this activity the true God will judge and condemn them to everlasting punishment because their false worship is an abomination in the sight of the true God who is filled with indignation because of it. Here see what arouses the hostility of Greco-Roman people. And not only this, but the Christian message also excludes the Jews from whom it originated. The sacrificial system of Judaism has now been fulfilled in Christ and the form of worship practiced in Judaism is now an abomination in the site of God, who gave His only Son in sacrifice to fulfill all that Judaism represented for some 1500 years. This message is one that invokes much hostility and rage from devout Jews because being very proud and self-righteous about the own ability to please God through the Law, the Christian Gospel explains that all their self-righteous efforts are an abomination before God, and that the only means for them to be saved from God’s wrath is to “believe” in Jesus the crucified Jewish rabbi, who was murdered at the hands of their own religious leaders. In this matter, devout Jews sinfully reject their own Messiah who came to save them from sins and reconcile them to God. See here then what it is that summons such hostility from both Jews and Greeks, and also what courage the Thessalonians had in publishing their faith in much of the Greco-Roman world. Further, note that this type of pluralistic and immorally tolerant culture is very much like the culture of modern day America. The American moral decline of our day thrusts us deeper and deeper into a kind of pluralistic and pagan idolatry that moves us further and further from our once predominantly Christian culture. As this happens, our culture becomes increasingly hostile to the Christian Gospel as pluralism is always very tolerant of everything except that which restricts personal autonomy, especially in regard to moral issues. The banners that fly over the false gods of pluralism pronounce the message that personal freedom means that every person can do whatever is right in their own eyes, and no one can define right and wrong for us except ourselves or whatever the culture defines as acceptable. When you begin to tell a culture that is steeped in the worship of Hollywood icons, sexual immorality and divorce, drug addiction and drunkenness, murder and violence, and all the hedonistic pursuits of pleasure that engulf our country] that what they worship and how they worship is an offense against the true and living God who calls them to turn from their worthless vain religion in order to serve and worship Him, you will indeed invoke much hostility and opposition in what you seek to do. So then has the blood of martyrs been spilled, since our Lord and the Apostles first led us to this cross bearing duty of preaching the Gospel. These Thessalonians then were also an example to all believers of preaching the Gospel in every place, (being imitators of both the Lord and the Apostles), regardless of the opposition that it engendered. But consider their testimony of being saved from idolatry. They had turned from their own “idols” that are not God, but rather false gods in contrast to the “true God.”

Galatians 4:8 - 8 However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods NASB

1 Corinthians 12:2 - 2 You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led. NASB

1 Corinthians 10:20-22 - 20 No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. 22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? We are not stronger than He, are we? NASB

Moreover, their false “idols” are dead, in contrast to the “true God” who is living. Consider

Questions? shaansloan@att.net www.heavenslight.org