

A Study of 1 & 2 Thessalonians

Introduction - Thessalonica



Introduction - Thessalonica



Introduction - Thessalonica

- The History of Thessalonica can be traced back to the time of the Greek empire.
- The city flourished under both the Greeks and Romans.
- Under the Romans, the city was a very important sea port city and today an important city for Greece.

Introduction – The church at Thessalonica

- The church at Thessalonica was established while Paul was on his second missionary journey
- Visited Thessalonica after leaving Philippi
- Paul was accompanied by Silvanus and Timothy
- Paul labored in the Jewish Synagogue for about 3 weeks explaining and reasoning from the scriptures Jesus is the Christ. See Acts 17:1-4
- Paul had some success but was eventually driven out of the synagogue

Introduction – The church at Thessalonica

- Paul spent the rest of his time in Thessalonica mainly with the Gentiles.
- He had good success and many were converted. See Acts 17:4-9; 1 Thess 1:9
- However, the unbelieving Jews stirred up trouble causing Paul and Silas to leave Thessalonica and go to Berea
- Even though this was the case, the church at Thessalonica flourished and it's fame spread through Macedonia and Achaia. 1:6-8

Introduction – The church at Thessalonica

- Persecution from the unbelieving Jews in Thessalonica most likely continued after Paul and Silas left. Chapter 2:14
- The converts at Thessalonica apparently lacked the knowledge they needed to deal with some of the problems they were facing as Christians.
- The first letter addresses one of the main problems in that the Thessalonians believed that Christ's return was imminent in the near future.

Introduction – The church at Thessalonica

- Some Christians had left their jobs and became busy bodies.
- The first letter also addresses other issues that arose due to their lack of knowledge in the gospel.

Introduction – Thessalonica – Paul’s accompaniment

- Silas and Timothy accompanied Paul
- Most likely Timothy was left in Thessalonica while Paul and Silas went on to Berea. See Acts 17:10
- However, at some point Timothy joined them at Berea and Paul apparently left both companions at Berea, going alone to Athens.
- Paul did send a message to both men to quickly join him in Athens. See Acts 17:15

Introduction – Thessalonica – Paul’s accompaniment

- We do not hear about them joining Paul in Athens but in Corinth in Acts 18:5
- The first letter to the Thessalonians is written with all three names, so the letter could not have been written until after Silas and Timothy joined Paul.
- Some time had passed between their departure from Thessalonica and the writing of the letter:
 - Chapter 2:18 , Paul states he intended twice to visit them.
 - Their fame had had time to spread across the region.

Introduction – Thessalonica – Paul’s accompaniment

- Paul heard about their issues and sent Timothy back to them to establish and encourage them. Chapter 3:2
- Timothy returned to Paul with a good report which comforted him. Chapter 3:6
- Time of writing can be narrowed to approximately A.D. 52-53.
- Roughly 6 months after the establishment of the church at Thessalonica.

Introduction – Thessalonica – Theme

- Main theme of both letters written is the second coming of Christ
- Chapters 1-3
 - Paul reflects on the conversion of the brethren in Thessalonica
 - Paul reflects on the way he and his companions worked with them teaching the gospel
 - Paul reflects on the care and concern he has towards the new Christians.

Introduction – Thessalonica – Theme

- The last two chapters Paul discusses how they should live now that they have obeyed the gospel
 - Chapter 4:1-12 Paul speaks of their conduct and calling
 - 13-18 Paul shows the Lord's coming should be a comfort to Christians
 - Chapter 5:1-11 Paul issues a challenge
 - 12-24 Paul encourages harmony and consistency

1 Thessalonians – Chapter 1

- Verse 1

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

 - Why are three names listed in this verse?
 - Is this letter written to christians or non christians?
 - Is it a requirement when mentioning one part of deity to mention all 3 parts?
 - What is grace?
 - What is peace?
 - Why does Paul wish these two things on the readers?

1 Thessalonians – Chapter 1

- Verse 2: We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,
 - Is it proper to thank God for other christians?
 - How often did Paul give thanks to God for these folks?
 - Why would Paul tell them he thanks God and constantly prays about them?
 - What effect would knowing the apostle Paul is constantly praying about you have on you?

1 Thessalonians – Chapter 1

Verse 3: remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

- Faith and works -- why are they mentioned together here?
- What is a labor of love?
- What does steadfastness mean?
 - In this context what are they to have steadfastness of ?
 - In who?
 - Explain what steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ means

1 Thessalonians – Chapter 1

- Verse 4:knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.
 - Does God individually love christians?
 - Does God love groups of christians?
 - If you really believe God loves you, what does that make you want to do?
 - In what way has God chosen the readers of this letter?
 - Did they have a choice in whether to obey God?
 - Were they predestined before they were born?

1 Thessalonians – Chapter 1

- Verse 5: For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.
 - What does “gospel” mean in a general sense?
 - How about in the Biblical sense?
 - What does “in word” mean here?
 - In power?
 - In Holy Spirit?

1 Thessalonians – Chapter 1

- Verse 5: For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.
 - How would Paul and others demonstrate “full conviction”?
 - What power does it bring when we are fully convicted?
 - Is this the same as “fully committed”?
 - Are most great things in life accomplished by being partially committed or by going 100% in?
 - Why would the apostle Paul have to “prove” himself?
 - How could he?
 - What did he and the others prove themselves to the readers?

1 Thessalonians – Chapter 1

- Verse 6: And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,
 - Is it ok to “model” or “imitate” others?
 - What are some examples in the Bible of this?
 - Think older men or older women are to do what for the younger ones?
 - Are we to imitate Christ?
 - What benefits do we get when we imitate others who are living right?
 - Why does Paul say they received the word in much affliction?

1 Thessalonians – Chapter 1

- Verse 7: so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.
 - Should we ever look at other christians for an example?
 - How were they examples?
 - What are some examples in how we might look at other Christians' examples?

1 Thessalonians – Chapter 1

- Verse 8: For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.
 - What does Paul mean about “the word of the Lord sounded forth”?
 - How could their “faith” go forth, especially “everywhere”?
 - Why does Paul feel the need to say he won’t say anything?

1 Thessalonians – Chapter 1

- Verse 9: For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,
 - Who is the “they themselves”?
 - What did they report?
 - Did they just change from one idol to another or did they go from idols to the real God?

1 Thessalonians – Chapter 1

- Verse 9: For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,
 - Why does Paul describe God as “living”?
 - Compared to idols who are?
 - Why say “true”?
 - Compared to what?

1 Thessalonians – Chapter 1

- Verse 10: and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.
 - How should we view our waiting for Jesus?
 - In a hurry for Him to come?
 - Dreading His return?
 - Why does Paul bring up the resurrection?
 - How important is this to christianity?
 - To the Gospel?
 - Who delivers us?

1 Thessalonians – Chapter 1

- Verse 10: and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.
 - From what in the future?
 - Why describe it as wrath?