

Through the Bible Course

May 23, 1948

1 Thessalonians

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Key Thought: Christ's Second Advent

Key Verse: 5:1, 2

Time: Written from Corinth in 52 or 53 AD. This is considered by many to be the first epistle Paul wrote of which we have any record.

Thessalonica was founded in 315 BC by Cassander and named for his wife, who was a half-sister of Alexander the Great. It was a large and important city on the northern part of the Aegean Sea. It had a large Jewish population. It exists today under the name of Solonika.

The Church was established by Paul on his second missionary journey and a record of this can be found in Acts 17.

Occasion: Paul had remained only a short time in Thessalonica and had to depart in haste. He hoped to return shortly but was prevented from doing so (2:18). So he sent Timothy to them. When Timothy returned he brought the report that there was continued persecution of the church but that they were remaining loyal to Paul and faithful to Christ. He also reported that there was confusion in their minds about the return of Christ and that they did not understand about their loved ones and friends who had died. Paul wrote to encourage them in their sufferings and instruct them concerning the coming of Christ.

I. 1:1-10 – Commendations

1. 1:1 – Salutation
2. 1:2-4 – Commended their faith and service
3. 1:5, 6 – Commended for their reception of Gospel
4. 1:7, 8 – Commended for exemplary influence
5. 1:9, 10 – Commended for abandoning idols and awaiting Christ from heaven

II. 2:1-20 – Historical

Here Paul reminds them of his coming and of the characteristics of his ministry.

1. 2:1-6 – He came out of suffering at Philippi. He preached the Gospel courageously, sincerely and unselfishly, fearing God not man.
2. 2:7-12 – He was gentle and affectionate; chargeable to home; lived exemplary life before them; exhorted as a father.
3. 2:13-16 – They received this preaching and it worked effectually in them.
4. 2:17-20 – He desired to visit them but was hindered; however he still bore them in his heart because they were his glory and joy.
5. 3:1-5 – When he did not return immediately he sent Timothy to strengthen them.

6. 3:6-9 – Timothy's report brought comfort and joy to him.
7. 3:10-13 – He prayed for them and that he might visit them.

III. 4:1-12 – Exhortations

1. 4:1-8 – Exhortation to sanctification and purity
2. 4:9-12 – Exhortation to an increasing brotherly love and industry

IV. 4:13 – 5:11 – The second advent of Christ

1. 4:13-18 – Comfort for bereaved to be found in return of Lord and events which will accompany this.
2. 5:1-8 – Time of advent is unknown, and so will be unexpected. Believers should be ready at all times.
3. 5:9-11 – Believers can be assured of their safety.

V. 5:12-28 – Duties

1. 5:12-22 – Obligations of believers concerning the practical duties of the Christian life:
 - a. Esteem leaders
 - b. Be at peace among yourselves
 - c. Attitude toward those in need
 - d. Rejoice, pray, give thanks
 - e. Quench not spirit and abstain from all appearance of evil
2. 5:23-28 – Closing charge and benedictions