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Biblica Study Notes

1 Thessalonians 1:1–10

Paul, Silas and Timothy had preached about Jesus in Thessalonica. That was during the second of Paul's journeys. The story about this is recorded in Acts chapter 17.

Some Jews and many Gentiles believed the message about Jesus. They welcomed the good news with joy. They were like the seed that fell on good soil that Jesus talked about (Matthew 13:8 and 23).

The truth about Jesus wasn't just words Paul spoke out loud. The truth came with the power of the Holy Spirit. This power changed the lives of the Thessalonian believers. They turned away from worshipping false gods. They grew strong in faith, love and hope. They became a model for other believers.

1 Thessalonians 2:1–16

When Paul, Timothy and Silas preached to the Thessalonians, they had been sincere. They didn't do it to be praised by anyone. They didn't do it to gain control or power over anyone. They were gentle and humble like children. They were caring like mothers who love their children. They were like fathers who give their children hope and show them how to live.

They worked hard to make money so that the Thessalonians didn't have to support them. Many Thessalonians accepted the good news. It changed their lives. Yet others in their city weren't happy about this. These were certain Jews who opposed anyone who preached the good news.

Paul and his companions had been treated badly by them in Philippi and in Thessalonica. These Jews were also treating the Thessalonian believers badly.

1 Thessalonians 2:17–3:13

Paul, Timothy and Silas had cared for the Thessalonians like loving parents. But then they had to leave because they were in danger. This was very difficult for Paul and his companions.

Paul said that they felt like children who had lost their parents. That is how close the relationships between believers can be in God's family.

Paul couldn't travel back to see them so he sent Timothy. Timothy encouraged the Thessalonians. The news he brought back from them encouraged Paul.

Paul was full of joy because the Thessalonians were staying faithful to Jesus. They had strong faith. They were full of love even though they were going through hard times.

Paul longed to see the Thessalonians again. Paul's prayer was that their love for God would continue to grow. He also prayed for their love for one another and for all people to grow.

1 Thessalonians 4:1–12

Paul described ways that believers are to be holy and gave instructions for holy living.

Believers are to be holy in how they use their bodies. They are to honour their bodies and the bodies of other people. They do this by controlling their sexual desires and never taking advantage of another person's body. They stay away from sexual sins.

Believers are to be holy in the ways they act in their cities or towns. Wherever they live, they are to help things be peaceful.

Believers are also to be holy in the way they work. They must work hard so that they can have what they need. This way they can also share with others.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

Paul comforted the Thessalonian believers who were sad about people who had died. He taught that even the way they mourn should set them apart. Being set apart is what it means to be holy. The difference between believers and unbelievers who mourn is hope.

Jesus' followers have hope that death isn't the end of life. God's people will be raised from the dead. He will give them life that can't be destroyed. That will happen when Jesus returns to earth.

To describe this, Paul used pictures and words from the Old Testament. The loud command and trumpet blast were what happened when God appeared to Moses (Exodus 19:16–19).

Being in the air and clouds happened in the vision that Daniel saw (Daniel 7:13). This vision was a prophecy about Jesus and about the start of his kingdom.

Believers have the comfort that all of Jesus' followers will live with him for ever.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

No one knows when Jesus will return to earth. Paul called that time the day of the Lord.

To describe it, Paul used Jesus' words about birth-pains and robbers at night (Matthew 24:8 and 43). Paul talked about Jesus' return as the end of the time of darkness and night.

He also described Jesus' return as the start of light and day. Paul wanted the Thessalonians to wait for that time with hope.

Their hope must be strong and protect them like a helmet. Their faith and love were spiritual armour.

The Thessalonians were to encourage one another through their hope, faith and love.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

Paul described the help that believers receive for living a holy life. They receive help from church leaders. Leaders are to work hard and to care for believers like Paul did.

Believers also receive help from the entire community of believers. The whole group is to care for one another. They must warn those who are doing wrong and be patient with one another. They must help and encourage one another. These and many more things are included in doing what is good for each other.

Believers also receive help from God. Believers can't make themselves holy. God's Spirit does the work inside of them. Believers can trust God to do his work in them. God is faithful to his people and fills them with his peace and grace.