Recapture the freshness of our Christian experience. The instruction of our fathers AFTER our love for Christ. Titus 2:11-15 “How We Should Live”

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**1 Thessalonians**

## **Introduction: *Events Leading Up to the Writing of this Epistle***

1 Thessalonians is Paul's first Biblical writing, probably written in A.D. 51 from Corinth during Paul's year and half ministry there. (Read Acts 17)

1. On Paul's second missionary journey, Paul and Silas fled from Thessalonica to Berea (Acts 17:10). Since Timothy is not mentioned, it is possible that he stayed in Thessalonica or went back to Philippi and then rejoined Paul and Silas in Berea (Ac 17:14).
2. Paul fled to Athens from Berean persecution, leaving Silas and Timothy in Berea (Acts 17:14).
3. Paul sent word back, instructing Silas and Timothy to come to him in Athens (see Ac 17:15).
4. Timothy rejoined Paul at Athens and was sent back to Thessalonica (see 3:1–5). Since Silas is not mentioned, it has been conjectured that he went back to Philippi when Timothy went to Thessalonica (3:1–2).
5. Paul moved on to Corinth (see Ac 18:1).
6. Silas and Timothy came to Paul in Corinth (3:6; Ac 18:5).
7. Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians and sent it to the church.
8. About six months later (a.d. 51/52) he sent 2 Thessalonians in response to confusion that had arisen concerning the second coming of Christ.

## **1: 1 From ... To ... Because ...**

1 Thessalonians 1:1 &mdash; *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

### From: Paul, Silas, Timothy

Paul wrote this epistle from Corinth shortly after the church was birthed there, earlier on his second missionary journey. We see from the first verse that Silvanus (Silas) and Timotheus (Timothy) were with Paul when he wrote 1 Thessalonians. This coincides with the book of Acts because we see that Silas was with Paul on this missionary Journey (Acts 15:22, 40; 16:19, 25, 27; 17:4, 10) as well as was Timothy for a portion of it (Acts 17:14-15; 18:4).

* **Paul** was once a persecutor of the church named Saul of Tarsus. Wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament.
* **Silas** was a prophet himself and selected by the elders as one of the delegates of the Jerusalem church to Antioch. When Paul and Barnabas had their personal disagreement, the missionary troop was disbanded. Barnabas and John Mark went their way and Paul and Silas went their own way. (Acts 15:36-41)
* **Timothy** was a young convert who Paul desired to continue with him in his missionary journey. (Acts 16:1-3) Note: Timothy isn't mentionaed again until until Acts 17:14 when he appears in Berea, but that may only because he was so young.

### To: The church of the Thessalonians

What kind of place was Thessalonica for the new converts? Thessalonica was a bustling seaport city at the head of the Thermaic Gulf. It was an important communication and trade center, located at the junction of the great Egnatian Way and the road leading north to the Danube. It was the largest city in Macedonia and was also the capital of its province.

The background of the Thessalonian church is found in Ac 17:1–9. Since Paul began his ministry there in the Jewish synagogue, it is reasonable to assume that the new church included some Jews. However, 1:9–10; Ac 17:4 seem to indicate that the church was largely Gentile in membership.

### Because: The Reason for Writing this Epistle

(READ Acts 17:1-10) Paul had to leave Thessalonica suddenly after being there only a short time. The new Christians had little to know support in Paul's departure. Paul’s purpose in writing this letter was to ENCOURAGE the new converts: - Do not be moved [to shake; disturbed; that is, be REMOVED from Christ] because of afflictions (3:3–5) - Instruction in how to live out their new Faith: walking to please God (4:1–12) - Both the Living and the Dead have Great Assurance in the Return of Christ (4:13–18).

The Letter Can be Divided in Half: 1) Chapters 1-3 Personal; Chapters 4-5 Doctrinal and Practical.

## **1: 2-5 What You Received Was Real**

Amidst the important exhortation and stirring of their memory, Paul's main theme seems to be to encourage the young Christians at Thessalonica. 1:2; 3:7; 4:9, 18; 5:2, 11, 27

1 Thessalonians 1:2—We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

How does he encourage them? 1) Appreciate You 2) Praying for you …

## **vs. 6-10 Your Testimony is Powerful**

Paul had not to date had the privilege to spend as much time with them as he would have liked especially after his abrupt departure and then further difficulty in trying to return.

1 Thessalonians 2:18—Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.