

# 1 THESSALONIANS

**Author: Paul**

**Date: A.D. 50-51**

The Apostle Paul came through Thessalonica on his second missionary journey. Many people in this city believed Paul's teachings about the Lord Jesus Christ. There was some opposition stirred up against him, however, and he did have to leave town hastily (Acts 17:1-10).

Thessalonica was an important seaport city of about 200,000 people and the capital of the province of Macedonia. It was also located on the Egnatian Way, the main highway connecting Rome and the east. Thessalonica was very cosmopolitan and one of the wealthiest trade centers in the Roman Empire. It became an instrumental city for spreading the gospel throughout Macedonia and Greece. After leaving the city, Paul traveled on to other cities including Berea, Athens and Corinth. While in Corinth, Paul sent Timothy back to check on the young church at Thessalonica. Timothy reported back that the church was growing and doing well. A few problems and questions had appeared, but no serious ones.

Writing with joy and gratitude, Paul sends this letter. It was written to encourage believers, exhort them to godly living, assure them about the eternal state of believers that had died, and defend the integrity of his ministry. He praises the believers for their growth and he addresses some of their problems. They were facing persecution and temptation. They also had some problems understanding the Second Coming of Christ. Some of those who thought His return would be soon saw little reason to work at their regular jobs. They wanted to spend time praying, doing good works, and waiting on Jesus to return. Other believers were concerned about Christian relatives and friends who had died. They wanted to know what would become of them when Christ returns.

Paul challenges the Thessalonians to please God in their daily lives by avoiding immorality, loving others, and being good citizens in a sinful world. He comforts them with the hope of the Resurrection. He encourages them to look to the future and to always be prepared for the return of Jesus Christ.

**Theme:** Encouragement in the faith and assurance of the return of Jesus.

**Key verses:** "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you," 5:16-18.

## OUTLINE

- I. Faithfulness in the Lord (1:1 – 3:13)
  - A. Paul's Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians (1:1-10)
  - B. Paul's Founding of the Church in Thessalonica (2:1-16)
  - C. Timothy's Strengthening of the Church (2:17 – 3:13)
- II. Watchfulness for the Lord (4:1 – 5:28)
  - A. Instructions for Personal Spiritual Growth (4:1-12)
  - B. The Return of Christ (4:13-18)
  - C. The Day of the Lord (5:1-11)
  - D. Paul's Concluding Exhortations (5:12-28)