



The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians

The Background of the Thessalonian Church

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

- I. THEIR BLESSINGS IN CHRIST (1 Thessalonians 1:1)
 - A. The Writers Named
 1. Their identities
 - a. Paul
 - b. Silvanus
 - c. Timotheus
 - d. Note: The involvement of these men is evident in the use of plural pronouns throughout the epistle. For a sampling, consider:
 - (1) **We** give thanks (1 Thessalonians 1:2)
 - (2) **Our** prayers (1 Thessalonians 1:2)
 - (3) **Our** gospel (1 Thessalonians 1:5)
 - (4) What manner of men **we** were (1 Thessalonians 1:5)
 - (5) Followers of **us** (1 Thessalonians 1:6)
 - (6) So that **we** need not to speak (1 Thessalonians 1:8)
 - (7) Of **us** what manner of entering in **we** had (1 Thessalonians 1:9)
 2. Their confirmation
 - a. According to the Postscript, Paul wrote this epistle from Athens.
 - b. Paul, Silas (Silvanus), and Timotheus were indeed together in Athens at the time of this writing (Acts 17:15).
 - c. Paul and Silas, at least, were together in Thessalonica (Acts 17:4, 10).
 3. Their explanation
 - a. Even though God gave Paul the words to be penned
 - b. Silvanus and Timotheus likely assisted with the penning of the epistle, with the exception of the salutation.
 - c. As has been stated previously in the notes, this was a common practice for the apostle Paul.
 - B. The Audience Named
 1. The church
 - a. The word *church* means congregation (compare Psalm 22:22 with Hebrews 2:12).
 - b. That this is a local body of believers is evident by the prepositional phrase “of the Thessalonians.”
 2. Of the Thessalonians
 - a. All the Thessalonians at this point belonged to one local assembly.
 - b. Imagine the unity enjoyed.



- C. The Position Stated
 - 1. The dual nature
 - a. The church...which IS in God the Father
 - b. The church...which IS in the Lord Jesus Christ
 - 2. The doctrine taught
 - a. Based upon context, this means that a local body IS IN the Lord.
Note: Consider the present tense of the statements above.
 - b. We have known this to be true of individual believers (Romans 16:7).

- D. The Practical Blessing
 - 1. The twofold blessing
 - a. Grace be unto you
 - b. Peace be unto you
 - c. Note: In Paul's greetings, grace always precedes peace.
 - 2. The twofold source
 - a. From God our Father
 - b. From the Lord Jesus Christ
 - c. The Spirit was also involved (2 Peter 1:21)

- II. THEIR FELLOWSHIP IN CHRIST (1 Thessalonians 1:2-5)
 - A. Paul's Thankfulness for the Saints (1 Thessalonians 1:2-4)
 - 1. The nature of his thankfulness (1 Thessalonians 1:2)
 - a. We give thanks to God always for you all.
 - (1) The thankful heart—"We give thanks to God"
 - (2) The inclusive nature—"for you all"
 - (3) The consistent mindset—"always"
 - b. Making mention of you in our prayers.
 - 2. The cause of his thankfulness (1 Thessalonians 1:3-4)
 - a. Remembering (1 Thessalonians 1:3)
 - (1) The manner of remembrance—"without ceasing"
 - (2) The content of remembrance
 - a) Their work of faith...turned from idols (1 Thessalonians 1:9)
 - b) Their labour of love...to serve the living and true God (1 Thessalonians 1:9)
 - c) Their patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father...to wait for His Son (1 Thessalonians 1:10)
 - i) Historically, the word *patience* is closely associated with the word *passion*.
 - ii) Passion, in turn, relates to suffering (*Acts 1:3*).
 - iii) Thus, patience involves suffering or enduring times of difficulty.



- iv) It is crucial to distinguish between *longsuffering* and *patience*. Patience is the quality of endurance; longsuffering refers to the quantity of the endurance.
 - v) In the face of extreme adversity, these believers maintained their *hope*. But what was their hope?
 - (a) Paul's other teachings consistently associated it with a future resurrection (Acts 23:6; Acts 24:15).
 - (b) For New Testament Church Age believers, this is what the Bible refers to as "that blessed hope" (Titus 2:13) that takes place when Christ returns for the Church (1 Corinthians 15:51-58).
 - vi) Christians can easily understand why the Devil would want to destroy such faith.
 - (a) Those who anxiously await the Saviour's return are deeply affected by that certain hope.
 - (b) According to John's epistle, "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he [Jesus] is pure" (1 John 3:3).
 - (c) Titus equated "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13) with "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts" (Titus 2:12), and living "soberly, righteously, and godly" (Titus 2:12), along with being "zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).
 - d) Note: As time progressed, faith, hope, and love (or charity) became the goal of the New Testament believer (1 Corinthians 13:13). Even though Paul visited them in the period of time in which signs were still prevalent, these Thessalonian believers still found spiritual success in each of these three virtues.
- b. Knowing (1 Thessalonians 1:4)
- (1) The title—brethren beloved
 - a) Brethren
 - b) Beloved
 - i) Definition
 - (a) Consider that the word *beloved* was interchanged with the word *elect* when speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 12:18; Isaiah 42:1).
 - (b) The first use suggests that one who is beloved is chosen to be loved in the stead of or above another (Deuteronomy 21:15-16).
 - (c) Christ is identified as the beloved on numerous occasions (Matthew 3:17; Matthew 12:18; Matthew 17:5; Luke 20:13).
 - (d) In the end, it would appear that one who is beloved is chosen to be loved above others.



- ii) Application
 - (a) Christ is the beloved (Matthew 12:18).
 - (b) Believers are identified as the beloved only because they are accepted in “the beloved” (Ephesians 1:6).
 - (c) This is not to be confused with Calvinistic teaching; a man becomes beloved when he is in the beloved, at salvation (2 Thessalonians 2:13).
- (2) Your election of God
 - a) Among those saved in Thessalonica were Jews (Acts 17:4). Even the Greeks were either proselytes or Greek Jews. This is obvious when one considers that these believers heard the word in the synagogue.
 - b) Paul spoke about the elect, believing Israel, in Romans 11.
 - i) A remnant according to the election of grace (Romans 11:5)
 - ii) The election obtained that which he seeketh for (Romans 11:7).
 - iii) The election are beloved for the fathers’ sakes (Romans 11:28).
 - c) The word *elect* references believing Israel in both the past and the future.
 - i) Israel past—Isaiah 45:4 “For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect,”
 - ii) Israel future—Matthew 24:31 “And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other”

B. Paul’s Preaching to the Saints (1 Thessalonians 1:5)

- 1. The fourfold deliverance of the gospel
 - a. In word—the actual preaching
 - b. In power—the implementation of signs and wonders
 - c. In the Holy Ghost—the supplier of the signs and wonders
 - d. In much assurance—confirming the word preached
- 2. The communicators of the gospel
 - a. Ye know what manner of men we were among you
 - (1) See also, “they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you” (1 Thessalonians 1:9).
 - (2) See also “For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you” (1 Thessalonians 2:1).
 - (3) What was Paul’s emphasis concerning his entrance among the Thessalonians?
 - a) He entered and reasoned with them out of the scriptures (Acts 17:2).



- b) He opened and alleged that Christ had to suffer and be risen again from the dead; and that Jesus was Christ (Acts 17:3).
- b. For your sake; Note: Paul's ministry focused a great deal on doing things for the sake of others.
 - (1) Teaching men not to think of others above what they ought (1 Corinthians 4:6)
 - (2) Forgiveness of others (2 Corinthians 2:10)
 - (3) All things (2 Corinthians 4:15)

III. THEIR TRANSFORMATION IN CHRIST (1 Thessalonians 1:6-10)

A. Their Ensample to Others (1 Thessalonians 1:6-7)

- 1. Their dual following (1 Thessalonians 1:6)
 - a. Of us
 - b. Of the Lord
- 2. Their reception of the word (1 Thessalonians 1:6)
 - a. In much affliction
 - (1) They suffered at the hands of their own countrymen (1 Thessalonians 2:14-15).
 - (2) They endured "persecutions and tribulations" (2 Thessalonians 1:4).
 - (3) They suffered for the kingdom of God (2 Thessalonians 1:5).
 - (4) Remembering that there was much hatred for the truth among those who rejected it (Acts 17:5).
 - b. With joy of the Holy Ghost
- 3. Their effect on others (1 Thessalonians 1:7)
 - a. The nature of those affected
 - (1) Ye were ensamples
 - (2) To all that believe
 - b. The location of those affected
 - (1) Macedonia; Thessalonica was a city in Macedonia (Acts 27:2).
 - (2) Achaia; borders Macedonia
 - (3) Some have suggested that, at this point, all of Greece was divided into Macedonia and Achaia indicating that this body of believers influenced all of Greece.

B. Their Assistance to the Apostles (1 Thessalonians 1:8)

- 1. The spread of their influence
 - a. Not only in
 - (1) Macedonia
 - (2) Achaia
 - b. Also in every place; This seems to confirm the truth above that this body of believers impacted regions and beyond with their testimonies and preaching.
- 2. The object of their influence



- a. The word of the Lord
- b. Their faith to God-ward
- 3. The outcome of their influence
 - a. So that we—Paul, Timotheus, and Silvanus (Silas)
 - b. Need not to speak any thing
 - (1) Both then and now, the work of spreading the gospel was a process. Some planted and others watered what had been planted, but ultimately God gave the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6).
 - (2) It would seem that the Thessalonians had planted and the apostles merely had to water that which had been planted.

C. Their New Life in Christ (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10)

- 1. Their turn (1 Thessalonians 1:9)
 - a. From idols
 - b. To God—“to serve the living and true God”
 - c. Note: It should be remembered that idolatry was and is more than a religion. Oftentimes, the anger was not that people believed the truth, but that they rejected the idols causing others to suffer the loss of income (Acts 19:24-25). Even today, the salvation of souls should negatively affect the income of those involved in immoral business.
- 2. Their wait (1 Thessalonians 1:10)
 - a. The expectation of some
 - (1) Death
 - (2) The Holy Ghost
 - (3) The kingdom
 - (4) Israel’s return to the land
 - (5) The Antichrist
 - b. The expectation of these saints
 - (1) For His Son from heaven
 - a) Whom He raised from the dead
 - b) Even Jesus
 - (2) Which delivered us from the wrath to come (see 1 Thessalonians 5:9)
 - a) Either in Daniel’s Seventieth Week (Revelation 6:16-17)
 - b) Or in eternity (John 3:36; Romans 5:9)

Chapter 1: Patience of Hope Waiting for God's Son	
1 Thessalonians 1:3	<i>"patience of hope"</i>
1 Thessalonians 1:10	<i>"wait for his Son from heaven"</i>
1 John 3:3	this hope causes a purifying of self
Titus 2:12-13	<i>"Looking for that blessed hope" causes us to "live soberly, righteously, and godly"</i>
Titus 2:13-14	<i>"Looking for that blessed hope" causes us to become "a peculiar people, zealous of good works"</i>