

1 Thessalonians

Lesson 1: Introduction

The Apostle Paul was a gentle shepherd who cared for his sheep. Like a mother who tenderly cares for her own children and like a father who trains and instructs his children, so was Paul with the Thessalonians. He had a special bond with them and wrote to encourage them in the faith. Although they struggled to understand the second coming of Christ, Paul wrote to correct their understanding and bring comfort to their soul. The church at Thessalonica was an exemplary church to the other churches around them as they proclaimed the word of the Lord. May we learn from the Thessalonians and imitate their faith as they imitated Christ.

➤ The Author of 1 Thessalonians

- Paul is the author of 1 and 2 Thessalonians.
- Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy are mentioned in his greeting to the church as those who participated in the ministry with him.

➤ Place and Date of 1 Thessalonians

- Paul traveled to Thessalonica on his second missionary journey when the church was founded.
- This letter was written while Paul was in Corinth in A.D. 51.

➤ The Setting of Thessalonica

- The city of Thessalonica was an urban center of the Roman Empire.
- It was located on a main east-west trade route, Via Egnatia, that led to Rome.
- It had a strong Greek culture.
- It had a large Jewish population.
- The population was about 200,000.
- It was the capital of Macedonia.
- It was a booming political and commercial center.
- Many merchants lived in the city.
- It was ethnically and culturally diverse.



1. Based upon the information above, why would Paul want to stop at Thessalonica on his second missionary journey?

Purpose and Context

When studying a book of the Bible, we must consider the purpose and context. It is helpful to understand the purpose of a book by asking, “Why was this book written to its original audience?” We must also study the context of a book. It is helpful to remember this phrase: “Context is king!” The purpose and context help us to grasp the truth of God’s Word and apply it to our lives.

➤ The Purpose of 1 Thessalonians

2. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3. According to these verses, what did Paul pray? Why does he want the Thessalonians to know this?
3. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-18 and 3:10-11. What do these verses tell you about Paul’s purpose in writing to the Thessalonians?
4. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1, 10, 13; and 5:12, 14. Paul says, “We _____ you.” What words does Paul use? What does this tell you about Paul’s purpose in writing his letter?
5. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:11; 3:2, 7; 4:18; 5:11, 14. What key word does Paul use in all these verses? What does this tell you about Paul’s purpose in writing and his relationship with this church?

Application: What are ways you can encourage other believers in the church?

➤ Context of 1 Thessalonians

6. Read Acts 17:1-10. What did Paul do when he first arrived in Thessalonica? Why did he do this?

7. How did the Jews respond to Paul's message in Thessalonica?

8. What were Jason and the believers charged with?

Application: Paul went into Thessalonica with boldness to preach the gospel. What things cause you to be timid in sharing the gospel with others? How can your timidity be overcome?

9. Read Acts 17:10-15. What happened to Paul and Silas after leaving Thessalonica?

10. How did the Thessalonian Jews respond when they heard about Paul's preaching in Berea?

a. What does this tell you about the reception to the gospel in Thessalonica?

Application: Acts 17:11 gives us a description of the Bereans. What lessons can we learn from them?

11. Compare Acts 17:15-16 with 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2. Where did Paul, Silas, and Timothy meet after their separation?

12. According to 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2, what did Paul do with Timothy? Why?

13. Read Acts 18:1 and 18:5. After Timothy was sent to Thessalonica, where did he meet Paul?

- NOTE: it was from this location that Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians.

Application: Read 1 Thessalonians 1:6. Understanding the context of Thessalonica, what can we learn from the Thessalonians considering persecution and the gospel?

Application: What one verse that you studied above impacted you the most? Why?