

8/31/25

1Thessalonians 1

We stated in our introduction to First Thessalonians that the epistle is believed to be the earliest and first of Paul's letters.

Secondly that it is written to a young church that was founded in three weeks and at the time of receiving this letter probably only months old. Acts 17:1-4

And in spite of First Thessalonians being the first of Paul's letters and they being so young in the Lord, it is amazing the amount of doctrine Paul touches on in First Thessalonians, as we can see just in Chapter one.

1. Doctrine of grace. vs. 1
2. Prayer. vs. 2
3. Faith. vs. 3
4. Election. vs. 4
5. Holy Spirit and Trinity. vs. 1, 3, 5
6. Suffering. vs. 6
7. Transformation. vs. 7-8
8. Repentance. vs. 9
9. The rapture coming for his saints, resurrection, God's wrath. vs. 10

As we noted before, each chapter deals with the Lord's coming, that is the central theme.

1. His coming in relation to salvation. 1Thess. 1
2. His coming in relation to service. 1Thess. 2

3. His coming in relation to sanctification. 1Thess. 3
4. His coming in relation to resurrection. 1Thess. 4
5. His coming in relation to God's wrath. 1Thess. 5

1:1 The salutation and greeting.

- 1) Three men are named, "Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy." vs. 1a-c
 - a) The writer is Paul.
 - 1)) The name Paul means "little" and could very well indicate the stature of Paul.
 - 2)) Prior to his conversion, he is known by Saul, which means "ask".
 - 3)) He usually identifies himself as an apostle, but not so in this letter, the second one and Philippians.
 - * Possibly because his apostleship is not yet being challenged, though he is being charged with wrong motives by the content of chapter two.
 - b) His co-laborer is Silvanus.
 - 1)) Silvanus is the Roman interpretation of the Jewish name Silas.
 - 2)) Luke calls him "Silas" through Acts. Acts 15:22, 27, 32, 34, 40; 16:19, 25, 29; 17:4, 15; 18:5
 - 3)) Paul calls him Silvanus". 2Cor. 1:19; 2Thess. 1:1
 - 4)) He was most likely a Jew, a prophet and recognized as one of the leading men among the Jerusalem Christians. Acts 15:22, 32

- 5)) He was chosen to deliver the Gentile decrees from the church council with Judas Barsabas and was a Roman citizen. Acts 15:27; 16:37
- 6)) He accompanied Paul instead of Barnabas in his second journey over the dispute of John Mark. Acts 15:36-41
- 7)) He suffered being beaten at Philippi and was there at the establishment of the church at Thessalonica. Acts 16:23-17:5
- 8)) He was preached at Corinth along with Paul. 2Cor. 1:19
- 9)) He became as co-worker with Peter later on. 1Pet. 5:12
- c) Paul's young apprentice Timothy Disciple of Paul in second journey, from Lystra. Acts 16
 - 1)) His mother was Jewish, named Eunice and his Grandmother Lois who were God-fearing with unfeigned faith. 2Tim. 1:5
 - 2)) His father was Greek. Acts 16:1
 - 3)) He had been left behind in Philippi when Paul was escorted out. Acts 16:40
 - 4)) He and Silas stayed at Berea when Paul was escorted to Athens and asked them to come to him. Acts 17:15
 - 5)) He was sent back to Thessalonica also and came to Paul at Corinth with the good news, along with Silas. Acts 18:5; 1Thess. 3:2

- 6)) Paul sent him to Corinth to put them in remembrance of Paul's ways in Christ. 1Cor. 4:17
- 7)) He was with Paul at Rome. Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1
- 8)) Paul said to the Philippians that he had no other man like-minded, who would care for their state. Phil. 2:20
- 9)) He later pastored the church at Ephesus. 1Tim. 1:3
- 2) The recipients are also named, "To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." vs. 1d
 - a) The word church "ekklisia" means the called out ones.
 - 1)) the term applied to many types of public assemblies and gatherings.
 - 2)) They could be civil or religious.
 - 3)) The term became the standard identity of those individuals who had been called out of darkness into the marvelous light of Jesus Christ, to comprise His church.
 - 4)) It can depict the church universal, a particular assembly, a local church or a house church.
 - 5) Jesus said, "I will build My church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it". Matt. 16:18
 - 6) James uses it as early as 47 A. D. Ja. 5:14
 - b) Their relationship was two-fold.

- 1)) They were indebted to the Father for the Son who came to proclaim the Father, therefore were “in God the Father”.
 - * God and Father to oppose the pagan gods.
 - 2)) They were intricately related to the Father by the Lord Jesus Christ, Who reveals the father to people, in order to build His church.
 - 3)) The joining of the two persons of the Godhead by one preposition demonstrates equality and deity.
 - 4)) They were no longer heathens but sons, in Christ, their Lord “kurios”, Master and owner.
 - * Lord, to oppose the Jewish rejection of Jesus and the Roman deification of Caesar.
- 3) The regards is expressed, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” vs. 1e
- a) Grace was the means by which they were saved, unmerited favor.
 - 1)) Grace in this context is for living out the process of their salvation, a day at a time.
 - 2)) Grace was also the customary Greek greeting of favor and beauty.
 - b) Peace is the result of grace, it is never before Grace, but after it.

- 1)) At salvation they had received the peace of God, being forgiven for their sins, no longer being at odds with God.
 - * The word peace “eirene” means to join something separated or broken!
 - 2)) In this context, it depicts the benefits after being saved that is available to the believer for the situations of life and difficulties, from a relationship by grace.
 - 3)) Peace is also the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew greeting, Shalom.
- c) The source of their blessings were two-fold.
- 1)) From God our Father.
 - 2)) From the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 3)) The one preposition governs both persons as equals, Paul ascribes deity of Jesus, giving Him the title of Lord.

1:2-10 The thanksgiving to God for the Thessalonians.

- 1:2** The gratitude of Paul and his friends.
- 1) Paul as well as the other express their gratitude to God for the Thessalonians who were saved, “We give thanks to God always for you all.” vs. 2a
 - * Only in Galatians Paul does not mention thanksgiving, due to the reproving them strongly, in strong disappointment of them.

- 2) Paul and his friends were constantly praying for them, “making mention of you in our prayers.”
vs. 2b

a) Knowing they were babes.

1)) He gives thanks in prayer. 1Thess. 2:13

2)) He does it again. 1Thess. 3:9

3)) He command to give thanks in everything, for it is the will of God.
1Thess. 5:18

b) Knowing the pressure of their persecution.
1Thess. 2:14

1)) Paul is always thanking God and praying for the believers.

2)) Paul says, “Pray without ceasing”.
1Thess. 5:17

1:3 The things Paul remembered without ceasing or letting up, as he gave thanks in prayer for them. 1Thess. 2:13-16; 3:9-10, 11-13; 5:23

* “remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father.”

1) Their work “ergou” of faith, pointing to the past.

a) Their spiritual birth. 1Thess. 1:9

b) Their spiritual growth and development after salvation. 1Thess. 1:6

c) Their fruit of declaring the gospel and their faith to others.

d) Faith without works is dead. Ja. 2:17

* Not to merit salvation but as evidence of salvation! Eph. 2:8

2) Their labor “kopos” of love “agape”, referring to laborious painful exertion, in the present tense.

a) For the sinner. 1Thess. 1:8

b) For the saints. 1Thess. 4:9

c) The word labor “kopou” means laborious toil and hardship for love fake.

1)) The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Rom. 5:5

2)) Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. 1Jn. 3:18

3)) By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another. Jn. 13:35

* Love “agape” is the only expectable evidence and motivation that God will honor!

3) Their patience of hope, looking towards the future.

a) The word patience “hypomone” means to endure under, persistent.

1)) The endurance of Christ’s Spirit in and through me by the Holy Spirit.

2)) In present afflictions. 1Thess. 1:6

3)) In persecution. 1Thess. 2:14

- b) This endurance is in view of a certain hope.
 - 1)) The return of Christ's for his church. 1Thess. 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:16-17; 5:23
 - 2)) Looking for the blessed hope. Tit. 2:13
 - 3)) And hope makes not ashamed. Rom. 5:5a
 - * It is the evidence of expectation, with certainty!
 - 4)) This is the first mention of these three graces. 1Cor.13:13
 - * The preacher Campbell Morgan outlined the entire epistle by these three graces! 1Thess. 5:8
- c) Their enduring hope was in the sight of God, He alone sees if it is genuine or not by the Thessalonians!
- d) Paul gives to us evidence and characteristics of three things.
 - 1)) People who are born-again.
 - 2)) A healthy church.
 - 3)) A church truly anticipating Christ's return.

1:4 The reason for this three-fold evidence is their election, for which Paul also gives thanks to God.

* "knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God."

- 1) The Thessalonians were beloved brethren, identifying them as part of the family of God.
 - a. This is a perfect passive participle, indicating God's continuous love as the source of our election. "Williams"
 - b. Having repented of their sins, becoming sons and daughters of God.
- 2) The word election "eklogen" means the act of picking out or choosing by God based on His foreknowledge! Rom. 9:11; 11:5; 2Pet. 1:10
 - a. Peter says we are elect according to the foreknowledge of God, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ. 1Pet. 1:2
 - 1) The word Foreknowledge "prognosis", means knowledge beforehand, God knows who is going to repent or not at the preaching of the gospel, continue or not, depart or abide.
 - 2) Any teaching on Predestination not based on the foreknowledge of God will misinterpret the believers predestination.
 - b. On this basis God predestined us, He initiates and at the hearing of the gospel man responds of his own free will by the illumination of the Holy Spirit and conviction of sin, for faith comes by

hearing and hearing by the word of God.
Rom. 10:17

- 1) “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, **you welcomed** it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.” 1Thess. 2:13
 - 2) The amazing thing to me is that the Thessalonians after three weeks did not need any great explanation about election, yet Calvinist and Reformed theology teach God Predestined some to salvation “the Elect” and Predestined the rest to damnation, but that is not taught in the Bible!
- c. The Thessalonians as us had been chosen in him before the foundation, based on His foreknowledge. Eph. 1:4
- 1) Paul thanked God knowing their election by the three-fold evidence mentioned, their work of faith, labor of love and patience of hope. vs. 3
 - 2) God is sovereign in His choosing by His foreknowledge, it is never unfair nor compulsory against one’s personal will!
 - 3) In the Old Testament election is also applies to the nation of Israel and in

the New Testament to individuals saved!

- 4) Jesus told the disciples they had not chosen Him, but He had chosen and ordained them that they should go and bring forth fruit, but the context is to be His apostles. Jn. 15:16
- 5) Predestination and free-will seem to be irreconcilable truths from our human perspective, but perfectly clear to God!
* It has been said that they are two parallel lines on this side of heaven that never cross, but when we are in heaven we will see how they do cross!

1:5 The evidence of their election from Paul’s perspective.

- * and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.”
- 1) The preaching of the gospel, the good news came to them in word, “For our gospel did not come to you in word only.” vs. 5a
 - a) Our gospel.
 - b) God’s gospel. 1Thess. 2:2
 - c) My gospel. Rom. 2:6
 - d) Christ’s gospel. 1Thess. 3:2
 - 2) The gospel came not only in word, no simply hollow words, “but also in power.” vs. 5b

- a) The word power “dynamei” enabled power sensed by the proclaimer and the recipient persuasion.
- b) Possibly in some miraculous ways? Heb. 2:4
- 3) The gospel came through the comforter, “and in the Holy Spirit”. vs. 5c
 - a. The illuminator and convictor of sin, the third person of the Trinity.
 - b. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes.... Rom. 1:16
- 4) The gospel also came “and in much assurance.” vs. 5c
 - a) The word assurance “plerophoria” carries the sense of being convinced about a matter in many different ways.
 - b) This refers to the assurance the Thessalonians had about the gospel being from God and the men. 1Thess. 2:13
* Some think it refers to the assurance of Paul, but the context is the Thessalonians.
 - c) The apostles knew the potential, effectiveness and full confidence of the gospel they were preaching, there was no one it could not save, and it saved the Thessalonians, they had this assurance!

- d) Paul in his boldness and authority to speak forth, calls them witnesses. 1Thess. 2:1, 2, 5, 11; 3:3, 4; 4:2; 5:2
 - e) Paul expressed his confession to the Corinthian assurance. 1Cor. 2:1-4
 - 5) The gospel had changed the apostles first, being examples to the Thessalonians, “as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.” vs. 5d
 - a) Being godly.
 - b) Being persecuted and runned out.
- 1:6** The result of the Thessalonians for repenting of their sins by the preaching of the gospel is stated.
- 1) First, they were transformed, “And you became followers of us and of the Lord.” vs. 6a
 - a) The word followers “mimetai” means imitators or mimics.
 - b) Paul told this often to believers.
 - 1)) “I beseech you, be you **followers** of me.” 1Cor. 4:16
 - 2)) Be you **followers** of me, even as I also am of Christ. 1Cor. 11:1
 - 3)) Be **followers** as dear children. Eph. 5:1
 - 2) Second, they were persecuted, “having received the word in much affliction.” vs. 6b
 - a) The word received “dechomai” meaning they welcomed the word in the middle

voice, each person for themselves and continued.

- b) The manner was “in much affliction” “thlipsis” meaning pressure and is used of crushing grapes. 1Thess. 1:6; 3:3; 2Thess. 1:4, 6, 7
- a) Like Paul, Silas and their Lord.
- b) Paul told the converts of the first missionary journey, “We must enter the kingdom of God through much tribulation.” Acts 14:22
- c) Those who will live Godly shall suffer persecution. 2Tim 3:12
- d) If we suffer according to the will of God, we are to commit our souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. 1Pet. 4:19
* 1Pet. 2:19-21; 4:12-13
- e) We are promised not to be tried by God beyond what we are able to endure, but always to have the way of escape. 1Cor. 10:13
* I must not blame God for my own temptations brought on by my own doing!
- 3) Thirdly, they were empowered, “with joy of the Holy Spirit.” vs. 6c
 - a) They were a genuine work of God.
* Jesus said, “In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” Jn. 16:33

- b) They were enabled by the Spirit of God. Eph. 5:18
* Our faith overcomes the world. 1Jn. 5:4

- 1:7** The outcome and product of what the Thessalonians had become as the result of the gospel in the two preceding verses is stated.
- 1) The proclamation, “so that you became examples.”
 - a) They became ensamples The word examples “tupos” a type, forms, pattern or model of something, ensamples, like the image on a coin.
 - b) Originally it denoted a mark left by a blow.
 - c) The word is used for the nail prints of Jesus. Jn. 20:25
 - cd The word is also used for the pattern of the tabernacle. Heb. 8:5
 - 2) The extent “to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.”
 - a) All of those who believe, present tense, continuing faith!
 - b) Macedonia was the northern province.
 - c) Achaia was the southern province.
- 1:8** The manner in which they modeled their Christianity to all.
* This is the work of faith!
- 1) They shared their faith, “For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth.” vs. 8a

- a) The phrase sounded forth “execheo”,
meand like a trumpet blast, reverberating.
1Thess. 4:15; 2Thess. 3:1
- b) The only appearance in the New
Testament.
- 2) They shared their faith beyond their city,
“not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also
in every place. Your faith toward God has
gone out.” vs. 8b-d
 - a) Macedonia and Achaia would have been
amazing enough, but preached the word
in every place, implying, far a wide, far
reaching.
 - b) Their faith towards God had gone out and
continued to go out.
- 4) The result was that the ground was prepared
for missionaries for the gospel, “so that we
do not need to say anything.” vs. 8e
 - a) Remember the Egnatian Road extended
from Asia to the east being an important
trade route
 - b) This is one of the greatest evidences of
true repentance and true transformation.
* Verse 8 explains verse 7 and verse 9
and 10 explain verse eight!
 - c) Paul said to them, “so that we ourselves
boast of you among the churches of God
for your patience and faith in all your
persecutions and tribulations that you
endure.” 2Thess. 1:4

1:9 The result of the witness of the
Thessalonians.

- 1) People were talking about how Paul and the
others had come into Thessalonica, the kind
of men and kind of proclamation, “For they
themselves declare concerning us what
manner of entry we had to you.” vs. 9a
* This is the labor of love! 1Thess. 2:1-12
- 2) People were talking about how the
Thessalonians had experienced a radicle
change, “and how you turned to God from
idols.” vs. 9b
 - a) The word turned “epistrophe”, means to
one’s self about “to God from idols” by
embracing the gospel.
 - b) The aorist indicative, once and for all.
 - c) The Psalmist declares that idols are
nothing. Ps. 96:5; 115:4-8
 - d) Acts records those saved, “And some of
them were persuaded; and a great
multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a
few of the leading women, joined Paul
and Silas.” Acts 17:4
* Their work of faith!
- 3) People were talking about how they served
God, “to serve the living and true God.” vs. 9b
 - a) The goal of salvation is to serve “douleuo”
the living God by one’s own free-will for
life!

- b) The living God who was true or genuine, in contrast to the dead false idols. vs. 9b
* Their labor of love!
- c) In him we live and move and have our being. Acts 17:28

1:10 The witness of the Thessalonians expectation.

- 1) They were waiting for Jesus to come for them, “and to wait for his Son from heaven.” vs. 10a
* The word wait “anamenein” implies patient and confident expectation, always being on the look out, with an absolute certainty! Rom. 8:19, 23, 25; 1Cor. 1:7; Phil. 3:20; 2Thess. 1:7
- 2) They were waiting for a living Messiah, “whom He raised from the dead.” vs. 10b
 - a) The evidence that the Father raised Him from the dead, as He will each of us. Acts 17:22-31
 - b) He will change our vile or lowly bodies. Phil. 3:20
 - c) No believer will miss out on His coming. Thess. 4:13-18
 - d) This is called the blessed hope. Tit. 2:3
 - e) Christ in us is our hope of glory. Col. 1:27 (patience of hope)
- 3) The reason they were waiting for Jesus is given, “even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.” vs. 10c

- a) The word delivers, “ruomenon”, a present tense participle, indicating timeless, from the wrath to come!
- b) We will be saved from “ek” out from the wrath to come.
- c) God has not appointed us to wrath, but obtains salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. 5:9; 1Thess. 5:9
- d) Because we have kept the word of his patience, He will keep us from “the hour of temptation”, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that “dwell” on the earth. Rev. 3:10
- e) It is God’s wrath from the throne of God that is indicated. Rev. 6:16-17
 - 1) The hope draws attention to the danger that sinners are under.
 - 2) The hope is focus on the human glorified Jesus who will return!
- f) The Thessalonians were known for their:
 - a) Turning to God from idols.
 - b) Work of faith.
 - c) Labor of love.
 - d) Patience of hope.
 - e) Followers in afflictions.
 - f) Joy of the Holy Spirit.
 - g) Sharing their faith.
 - h) Turned from idols.
 - i) Serving the living God.
 - j) Waiting for the Son.
 - k) So are we in our in our lives!