

8/29/99

1Thessalonians 1

As we begin our study of I Thessalonians, keep in mind that it is believed to be the earliest and first of Paul's letters.

Secondly, 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 that Paul touches on in I Thessalonians, just in Chapter one.

-vs. 1 Doctrine of grace

-vs. 2 prayer

-vs. 3 faith.

-vs. 4 election

-vs. 5 Holy Spirit and Trinity. 1, 3, 5

-vs. 6 suffering,

-vs. 9, repentance.

-vs.10, coming for his saints, resurrection, God's wrath.

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.

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
- b) 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 bided them to come to him. Acts 17:15
 - 5)) He was sent back to Thessalonica to 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 the Church of the Thessalonians.
- 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 “kyrio”, Master and owner.
 - * Lord, to oppose the Jewish rejection of Jesus and the Roman deification of Caesar.
- 3) The regards is grace and peace.
- 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 govern 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.

* Only in Galatians he does not mention thanksgiving, due to the reproving them strongly, in strong disappointment of hem.

- 2) Paul and his friends were constantly praying for them.

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

- 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 he 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 peregution. 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! 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.
- 1) They had been chosen in him before the foundation. Eph. 1:4
 - a) Paul thanked God knowing their election by the three-fold evidence mentioned.
 - b) They were beloved brethren, identifying them as part of the family of God, a perfect passive participle, indicating God’s continuous love as the source of our election. “Williams”
 - c) God is sovereign in His choosing and it is never unfair nor compulsory against one’s personal will!
 - d) Election “eklogen” God’s Choice! Rom. 9:11; 11:5; 2Pet. 1:10
* In the Old Testament it applies to the nation of Israel, in the New Testament it applies to individual people!
 - 2) You have not chosen me but I have chosen you and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit. Jn. 15:16
 - a) Yet our choosing to be in Christ confirms we have been predestined and chosen by God.
 - b) Predestination and free-will are irreconcilable truths from our human

perspective that are 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!

3) 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

* The amazing thing to me is that the Thessalonians after three weeks did not need any great explanation about election yet there are so many who make that a point of argument and even divisive!

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

- 1) The gospel, the good news came to them in word, the preaching of the gospel.
 - a) Our gospel.
 - b) God's gospel. 1Thess. 2:2
 - c) My gospel. Rom. 2:6
 - d) Christ's gospel. 3:2
- 2) The gospel came not only in word, no simply hollow words but also in power.

a) The word power "dynamai" enabled power sensed by the proclaimer and the recipient persuasion.

b) Possibly in some miraculous ways? Heb. 2:4

3) The gospel came in the Holy Spirit, the illuminator and convictor of sin, the third person of the Trinity.

* 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 came in much assurance "plerophoria" carries the sense of being convinced about a matter.

a) Some thinks it refers to the assurance the Thessalonians had about the gospel being from God and the men. 2:13

b) Others think it refers to Paul's assurance but the context is the Thessalonians.

a) They knew the potential and effectiveness, full confidence of the gospel they were preaching, there was no one it could not save but so did the Thessalonians have this assurance!

b) 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

c) Paul's confession to the Corinthian assurance. 1Cor. 2:1-4

- 5) The gospel had changed the apostles first, they endured suffering and they loved the Thessalonians, they were evidence of what the Thessalonians could expect, "You know what kind of men we were among you for your sake."

1:6 The effect by the decision of the Thessalonians in view of the preaching and the preachers.

- 1) You became followers of us and of the Lord.
- 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) You received "dechomai" meaning they welcomed the word and continued 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) You received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.
- a) They were a genuine work of God.
* In the world you shall have tribulation... 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 two preceding verses.

- 1) They became ensamples “typos” a type, forms, pattern or model of something, like the image on a coin.
 - a) Originally it denoted a mark left by a blow.
 - b) The word is used for the nail prints of Jesus. Jn. 20:25
 - c) The word is also used for the pattern of the tabernacle. Heb. 8:5
- 2) To all in Macedonia.
 - * The northern province.
- 3) To all in Achaia.
 - * The southern province.
- 4) Those who believe, present tense, continuing faith!

1:8 The manner in which they modeled their Christianity to all.

- * This is the work of faith!
- 1) They shared their faith, the word of God sounded forth “execheo”, like a trumpet blast, reverberating. 1Thess. 4:15; 2Thess. 3:1
 - * The only appearance in the New Testament.
 - 2) Macedonia and Achaia would of been amazing enough but also in every place, implying, far a wide, far reaching!
 - 3) Their faith towards God had gone out and continued to go out.

- 4) The result was that the missionaries did not need to say a thing. 2Thess. 1:4
 - 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 eight explains verse seven and verse nine and ten, explain verse eight!

1:9 The result of their witness.

- * This is the labor of love!
- I) People were talking about how Paul and the others had come into Thessalonica, the kind of men and kind of proclamation. 1Thess. 2:1-12
 - 2) People were talking about how they had embraced the gospel and turned, aorist, once and for all, to God from idol. Acts 17:4
 - * Their work of faith!
 - 3) People were talking about how they served the living God who was true or genuine, in contrast to the dead false idols.
 - * Their labor of love!
 - a) The goal of salvation is to serve the living God “douleuo” by one’s own free-will for life!

- b) In him we live and move and have our being. Acts 17:28
- b) The Psalmist declares that idols are nothing. Ps. 96:5; 115:4-8

1:10 The expectation of their witness.

- 1) To wait for his Son from heaven.
 - * 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) The evidence is that the Father raised Him from the dead, as He will each of us. Acts 17:22-31
 - a) He will change our vile or lowly bodies. Phil. 3:20
 - b) No believer will miss out on His coming. Thes.4:13-18
 - c) This is called the blessed hope. Tit. 2:3
 - d) Christ is our hope of glory. Col. 1:27 (patience of hope)
- 3) The reason they were waiting, was to be delivered, “ruomenon”, a present tense participle, indicating timeless, from the wrath to come!
 - a) We will be saved from “ek” our from the wrath to come. Rom. 5:9
 - b) God has not appointed us to wrath. 1Thess. 5:9

- c) 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
- d) It is God's wrath from the throne of God. Rev. 6:16-17
 - 1) The hope draws attention to the danger that sinners are under.
 - 2) The hope is focus on the human Jesus who will return!
 - * They were known by
 - a) Our work of faith.
 - b) Our labor of love.
 - c) Our patience of hope.
 - d) Our followers in afflictions.
 - e) Our joy of the Holy Spirit.
 - f) Our sharing of our faith.
 - g) Our turned from idols.
 - h) Served the living God
 - i) Our waiting for the Son.