



Step by Step

52. 1 Thessalonians



Author // Paul

Original Recipients // The church in Thessalonica, a leading city in the Roman province of Macedonia. With an estimated population of 200,000 people, it had a long and illustrious history as an important part of the Greek and Roman world. As a harbor city, it would become a strategic location for the spread of the gospel throughout the Empire, but it would also prove to be a challenging backdrop to serve and follow Christ.

Date of Writing // First Thessalonians is one of Paul's earliest writings, written shortly after the church was planted circa 51 AD

Type of Literature // Didactic

Major Themes // A Model for Ministry; Practical Christian Living; The Imminent Return of Christ

Occasion for Writing // The origin story of the church in Thessalonica is found in Acts 17. After their release from prison in Philippi, Paul and his team traveled south to the city of Thessalonica. Upon arrival, they preached the gospel in the local synagogue until hostility drove them out. As this hostility grew it was necessary for the team to depart from the city, and Timothy was left behind to care for the church. Later, when Timothy met up with the team he reported the condition of the church in Thessalonica. This letter is in response to the update Paul received.



Simple Summary // After receiving an update from Timothy regarding the condition of the church in Thessalonica, Paul wrote to them to address some of the challenges they were facing. It seems from the content of the letter that the believers were facing a common challenge: how to live for and serve Christ in the midst of an increasingly hostile and ungodly culture. Paul will provide simple instruction for Christian living and use the imminent return of Christ to motivate godly living.

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Outline // One helpful outline for Thessalonians:

1-3 // *Origin Story*

4-5 // *Instruction for Living*



Key Verses

1:5 // For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

1:8 // For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.

4:1 // Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God.

4:16-17 // For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

5:2 // For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

5:4 // But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

5:19-21 // Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good.



Jesus in Thessalonians

Christ is depicted not only as the one who saves but as the one who will soon return for His saints and execute judgment upon the world. The imminence of His return should stir us to godliness.

