

Bible Thoughts

with
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1 Thessalonians

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Introduction

1 Thessalonians

WRITER. The Apostle Paul.

This Thessalonica church was the result of the second missionary journey by Paul and Silas. [Acts 17:1-9](#). It was not an easy place to work, the Jews in the area opposed the message. [Acts 17:5-13](#).

Paul was forced to go to Athens and became concerned for his converts back in Thessalonica and Berea. He decided to send Timothy to give encouragement to the church which was being exposed to severe persecution, [1 Thess 3:1-3](#). Following the return of Timothy to Paul at Corinth and his report of a growing church Paul writes his first letter to the church, to encourage the faithful brethren to continue in Christ, growing in love for Jesus and the fellowship.

Where Written and Date. It is believed that Paul arrived in Corinth during A.D. 50. Soon after this Silas and Timothy joined him from Macedonia, [Acts 18:5](#). The first letter was probably written soon after their return, between A.D. 50 and 54.

Timothy's report had encouraged Paul and his letter contains practical encouragement and some warnings of problems for a church in a very pagan area, impurity and false teaching.

Paul's teaching when in Thessalonica had included the second coming and this had caused two problems in the church.

- 1) Because many of the believers thought that the return of Christ was very soon, they felt it was a waste of time to work.
- 2) What would happen to any believers who had died before the return of Christ, some thought that these people would not go into the glory of Christ kingdom.

The letter is broken up as follows:

Introduction. 1 Thess 1:1

Paul looks back on his visit. 1 Thess 1:2 to 3:13 a) Paul praises the church. 1 Thess 1:2-10

b) For their acceptance of the Gospel. 1 Thess 1:2-5

c) For their witness to the area. 1 Thess 1:5-10

The formation of the church. 1 Thess 2:1-16

Timothy's visit to the church. 1 Thess 2:17-3:13

Practical encouragement for the church. 1 Thess 4:1-5:22

Closing prayers and thoughts. 1 Thess 5:23-28

Chapter 1

Paul and his missionary team, who were known by the Macedonian churches, sent their greetings. Silvanus (Silas), who had replaced Barnabas on this second missionary outreach. [Acts 15:39,40](#) and Timothy. Paul mentions them because they were involved in the starting of the church in that area, [Act 17:1-9](#).

v2 Because of the way the fellowship accepted the Gospel Paul has prayers of thanks for them "always," whenever he prayed. There does not seem to be any members who were causing problems as he does not pray for them.

v3 Paul is full of joy and remembrance of the time he was with them and their growth in the Lord Jesus since their faith, hope and love are remembered. 'Faith,' in the past. A 'Love' for each other - the present. And 'Hope' for the future and the Second coming.

v4-5 Paul is full of thanks for the "election" by God.

"Election" comes from the love of God, because of His attributes of knowing all things, God can see which people will accept His offer of salvation. *For knowledge* [1 Peter 1:2](#). Paul was certain of their election not just because of his words but by the action and power of the Holy Spirit, v5. The "word" was preached by men and then confirmed by the Holy Spirit, this made those who accepted it know that it was the word of God.

"know what manner of men." The apostles practiced what they preached because the Holy Spirit had changed their lives.

v6 This encouraged the fellowship believers to become "followers" or copiers and responded to the message, even though under pressure and attack from the world which opposed Christ. [John 16:33](#); [Gal 5:22](#); [1 Peter 2:19-21](#).

v7,8 As a result this church became a pattern or model for the believers in the Macedonia area, affecting the whole of Greece.

v8 They were like a trumpet sending the message out to the area. Paul had great joy over this church and wanted to report their faith, but where ever he went he often found the news had already gone before him.

v9,10 A church which was serving and waiting. Wherever Paul went on his ministry the local church told him how the Thessalonian church members had spread the message and how they had looked after Paul and his team, seeking to follow their teaching, turning away from idols to serve the living God.

Not only serving, like a slave in complete subjection, but looking and waiting, with patience, for the return of Jesus from heaven, [Matt 24:42](#); [Matt 25:13](#); [Acts 1:11](#); [Phil 3:20,21](#). Looking for the Jesus who had died for them and saved them from the anger of God, [John 3:16](#); [Acts 17:31](#); [Rom 5:9](#); [Rom 9:22](#).

Chapter 2

v1,2 Paul and his preaching team had been through a tough time in Philippi where they had received beatings and a time in prison, [Act 16:12-40](#). but on arrival in Thessalonica Paul was so grateful for their response to the message, They were able to give the message of salvation with great confidence, feeling safe from persecution. As a result the

message produced great spiritual fruit and as always happens when the Gospel is preached, spiritual struggles and fighting. Paul was not silenced by this opposition but encourage to preach even more.

v3,4 This encouragement was not due to pride, or a desire to give false (deceit) information. Each word was spoken without any bad motive or desire. They did nothing to trap people into a bad life.

v4 Faith and Responsibility. Allowed by God to take the message, based on that only God knew and test his heart and examine his desires and why he brought this message, his motives, [1 Cor 4:4](#). The Jews accused Paul of preaching an 'easy' message by taking away the 'yoke' of the Law, Paul said the message was not easy just to please men. [Gal 1:10](#).

v5 Paul's message did not contain "Flattering words," often used by the false teachers, neither was there any greed due to selfish desires, these facts were all witnessed as true by God.

v6,7 They never looked for glory from men, neither did they expect financial help from the fellowship as was normal for the apostles, [1 Cor 9:1-14](#); [Gal 6:6](#). Instead they behaved like nursing mothers looking after their own children with great love, children they had been able to bring into a new birth with eternal life.

v8 Because of this great love for the Thessalonian fellowship Paul, Silvanus and Timothy took great pleasure in being able to share not only the gospel but also their lives with these people.

Ministry for others.

v9-12 A devoted attitude to the ministry, marked by four areas:-

1) Sacrifice, being prepared to work for their support and accommodation, Paul was a tent maker by trade, [Acts 18:3](#) and probably did it during the early morning, 'labouring night and day,' so that he could spend the day preaching.

v10 2) A blameless personal life. The Thessalonians were able to judge the team's actions and God was judging the teams motives, the reason, the purpose for their work.

v11 3) A devotion and love for their children, instructing and comforting.

v12 4) Worthy of God and his glory who had called them to the task.

v13-20 Result of this devoted work.

v13 This kind of service will always be blessed by God, the Thessalonians were pleased to receive the Word preached and accepted as from God and not from man.

v14-16 They became imitators, copying the churches of God in Judea, as a result of this behaviour they were also persecuted by the Jews who did not believe.

v17 As a result the apostle and his team were wanting to return and see the Thessalonian fellowship again. However, this was being prevented by the action of Satan.

v19,20 They were Paul's 'hope,' 'joy,' and 'crown' at the coming seat of Christ, to give Him the glory and joy of the reward when He returns, [1 Cor 3:12-15](#); [1 Cor 4:5](#); [2 Cor 5:10](#).

Chapter 3

v1,2 Paul had arrived in Athens, [Acts 17:13-15](#) but while there he became so concerned for the Thessalonians fellowship that he decided to send Timothy to the church

to help in the spiritual warfare occurring, and prepare them for further prosecution expected, see [2 Tim 3:12](#). This meant that Paul was left alone at Athens.

v3,4 When Paul had been at Thessalonica he had given them a warning of coming suffering as part of the coming tribulation. Because of this Paul is now concerned and wants to know how they are dealing with the situation and the actions of Satan, [2 Cor 11:3,4](#), this could have destroyed all their preaching and the teaching of salvation through Jesus. Consider [Gal 4:1-11](#).

v6-8 Timothy has now returned and brought Paul a very good report of the Thessalonians faith and love, still having a very happy memory of the Apostle Paul's visit, and looking forward to a further visit by him. Paul is very pleased to get this report and it has calmed down his concern for them, they were "standing fast in the Lord," [Eph 6:10-18](#).

v9-13 Paul asks a question, "how can we thank God enough for all that has happened to the Thessalonians, for the joy that has been given to Paul for their spiritual growth." Paul is praying "day and night" for them and the chance to visit them, so as to increase their faith and knowledge.

v11-13 Paul is making a petition, a request, in his prayers to God, to arrange a visit to the Thessalonians. In addition Paul is asking God to increase the love that exists in the fellowship, so that as a result of this their hearts may become holy (separated) and blameless before God. Looking forward and being ready for the coming return of Jesus, when He comes with any who have died in Christ.

Chapter 4

v1-3 We have received a divine call to be holy. Paul's request is made with the authority of Jesus. God commands us to keep our self clean and set apart for Him, to live a holy life. We must keep away from evil fornication, any sexual relationships are to only be with our married partner.

v4-8 What is involved with this call?

v4,5 That we should all know how to look after the body we have been given, not desiring and deliberately arranging to live a life which could damage the body, as is so common amongst those who do not know God. Our life should be set apart, kept clean just for God.

v6 We must make sure that we do not upset other brothers and sisters of the fellowship by our actions. God will make sure that any who hurt or upset the fellowship are dealt with.

v7 God did not call us to a life of evil but to holiness, set apart for Him alone.

v8 If you ignore this instruction then you are not upsetting other people, you are hurting God who gave to you, as a gift, His Holy Spirit, [1 Cor 6:19](#).

v9 But concerning how to love and live with each other, I do not have to teach you that, God has already been able to teach you how to love each other, [John 15:12](#); [James 2:8](#); [1 John 3:11-18](#).

v10 This love has already been shown to all those in the area around you, but we would encourage you to increase this love so that it becomes even more obvious.

v11 Your aim should be to live a quiet life, to live at peace with others, minding your

own business in other peoples lives.

The Greeks did not normally like manual work, they were quite happy to lay about and let others do all the physical work, so here Paul is encouraging the Thessalonians to make sure they do their share of the physical work, not be lazy or living off of others work.

v12 A Christian should also be honest in all areas of their life, especially with those who were not believers as this is a good witness for the Lord.

v13-18 Death for unbelievers and believers is a great obstacle, to the believer it is a time of faith. It appears that the Thessalonians were concerned for the believers who had already died (asleep), the Thessalonians were worried that those who had already died would not receive the glory when Christ returns.

A believer does not really die, they go to 'sleep' in Jesus, this state exists because Jesus died and rose again, [1 Cor 15:20](#), on the return of Jesus they will be restored, [1 Cor 15:51-55](#); [Rom 6:4](#); [Col 3:1-5](#). Believers, when they die physically, they go to 'sleep' with Christ. When He returns He will bring those 'sleeping souls and spirits' to be joined back to their new risen bodies. v14,15 Any believer, alive at the time of the return of Christ, will not go before those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

v16-18 The return of the Lord.

The hope of all believers, "the Lord Himself (personally) shall descend from Heaven," to take them home to be with Him, the shout will be that death is ended, [1 Cor 15:54-57](#). Daniel tells us that the angel will be Michael, [Dan 12:1-2](#).

The dead in Christ will rise first, then the living saints will be "caught up" with them and they will all go into heaven with the Lord, for ever.

What a wonderful promise.

Chapter 5

v1-11 The Day of the Lord.

[1 Cor 1:8](#); [1 Cor 5:5](#); [2 Cor 1:14](#); [Phil 1:6,10](#); [1 Thess 4:13-17](#); [2 Thess 2:1-12](#); [2 Peter 3:10-13](#); [Jude v6](#); [Rev 6:12-17](#).

The Apostle Paul has just described what will happen on the return of Jesus for the believer, This event is the start of the Day of the Lord, with the glorification of Jesus and the believers taken up into heaven for judgement and reward.

v1-3 Paul now writes a little more about the event, it was not a new revelation, but the event will happen suddenly, without warning. The world will think they have managed to reach peace on the earth when it will happen.

v4-11 The Believer and Day of the Lord.

v4-6 The judgements and pouring out of the anger of God on the earth will not affect the believer because they "are all the children of light and the children of the day," [Eph 5:8](#); [2 Cor 6:14](#); [Col 1:12,13](#); [John 3:19,20](#). Even so, we must be prepared for the event, not asleep but watching and ready for the call, [Mark 13:36](#); Consider [James 1:17](#).

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v6 "Be sober," not necessarily talking about not being drunk but control of your life, compare [2 Tim 4:5](#); [1 Peter 1:13](#).

v7,8 Do not go through life asleep, people sleep at night and get drunk at night, but we do not since we are children of light, take up our spiritual protection, faith, love and hope. Note and consider [Eph 6:14ff](#).

v9-10 God has never intended the believer to feel His anger because the blood of Christ has already dealt with that anger. This applies whether we are awake with the living or asleep with the dead, we are all alive with Jesus.

v11 So we must make our lives an encouragement for each other, build up our hope and faith, [1 Cor 3:8,9](#); [Eph 2:20-22](#); [Rom 8:1ff](#).

v12,13 Brothers and sisters look after those who are your leaders, they have been given the responsibility of guiding you in your spiritual life, honour them, love them, be thankful for them, do this all in love and may peace be with you.

v14 You must encourage each other, warn any who are not doing their share of the work, help those who are physically and / or spiritually weak. Be patient with each person, any who are exhausted, then pull them up and encourage them, [Eph 4:2](#); [Matt 5:39-44](#)

v15,16 Make sure you do not upset each other, doing things which are evil or wrong, encourage the best in each other, with the fellowship and unbelievers, [Rom 14:1ff](#); [1 Cor 8:1ff](#); [Rom 5:3-5](#). Keep on rejoicing.

v17 Go on praying, whenever you have the chance, talk to God in prayer, [Phil 4:6,7](#).

v18 It has always been the will of God that believers will be full of thanks for what has been done through Jesus.

v19 We may be able to hurt the Holy Spirit by our un-confessed sin, [Eph 4:30](#). We can prevent the Holy Spirit working by disobeying the commands of God, not seeking His will.

v20-22 Examine everything carefully, do not reject or have contempt for any truths about God made through His prophets. Avoid anything which has even the appearance of evil, keep away from any evil.

v23-24 Make sure you are set aside (sanctified) for God only, the action does not come as a result of human activity, we are unable to make ourselves holy, it is the work of God Himself. This action involves the whole nature of man. The *body*, the vessel which contains man. [2 Cor 5:1-8](#). The *soul*, the area where we have desires, affections, emotions and our will, [Matt 11:29](#); [Matt 26:38](#). The *spirit*, the part of man which can know and communicate with God, [1 Cor 2:11](#).

Sanctification has three stages. *The Past*, the believer was sanctified through the regeneration of Christ, [1 Cor 1:2](#). *The present*, each believer is being set apart by God each day [2 Thess 2:13](#). *The future*, one day we will become like Christ in His Glory. [1 John 3:1-3](#).

v24 God will never fail in His promise. He has already made our future in Christ a time of Glory [1 Cor 10:13](#); [2 Thess 3:3](#); [Gal 5:16](#)

v25-28 Requests for prayer, greeting each other with a holy kiss. This greeting was often the greeting by early believers, especially due to the spiritual love which was apparent in these early churches.

v27 Paul requests that the letter is read in all the Thessalonian churches.

v28 A common closing greetings by Paul.