

# Survey of 1Thessalonians

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1. Paul is the writer of this letter (1:1). After leaving Philippi on his second missionary journey, Paul, Silas, and Timothy went to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9). Because of the persecution of the Jews he only spent three Sabbaths there and then went to Corinth where he stayed 18 months passing through Berea and Athens. The unbelieving Jews in Thessalonica violently opposed the gospel by assaulting the house of Jason, where Paul was staying, and later traveled to Berea to drive Paul out of that city as well.
2. Thessalonica is the capital city of Macedonia and on the main highway connecting Rome with the east. It is about 100 miles west of Philippi. Paul's statement that "You turned from idols" (1:9) most likely indicates that the majority of Christians in Thessalonica were not Jews but Gentiles.
3. 1 Thessalonians is probably the first of Paul's known letters. It is not characteristically doctrinal or full of controversy but one of the most gentle and affectionate of Paul's letters (2:7,8).

## Outline

### The Spiritual Condition of the Church (1)

### Paul's Personal Involvement in the Church (2—3)

### An Exhortation for the Future (4—5)

## Main Points and Application

1. The Thessalonians are noted for not being as "noble-minded as the Bereans (Acts 17:10-11) but they were nevertheless great examples (1:7) of the saints of God. In what ways (1:2-10)?
  - Good at loving others (1:3; 4:9-10)
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If someone was writing about our church, in what ways would we be an example to others?

2. Notice the change of tenses in 1:9,10. All of us need to learn to live in three tenses: Past Tense—turned to God from...; Present Tense—serving the living God; Future Tense—waiting for Jesus! Explain what this would look like in our lives if today we lived three tenses.
3. Paul's involvement in the lives of the Thessalonians (2:10-12). How does Paul's involvement encourage us to be involved in the lives of other believers? What kind of things do we need to do differently to have a sanctifying involvement in the lives of others? Look back at Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians (1:2). What can we learn from this? Do we have a scheduled time and list for praying for others? Should we? What does it mean to walk worthy of the God who has called us?

4. Consider the pay-off for right involvement in the lives of others at Christ's coming (2:19, 20)? Can you think of any guaranteed rewards we get for successful businesses or other things at the end of life or is only our involvement in the lives of the church (those who believe and those yet to believe) what is really important?
  
5. God's will for our lives is here clearly revealed (4:3-8), what is it? How often should our sanctification take place and in what ways?
  
6. Comfort for those of us who have lost loved ones (4:13-18). What is the practical comfort here? What do we know about the coming of Christ (4:16; Acts 1:11; Jn.14:3; Rev.1:7)?
  
7. How should we prepare for the days ahead (5:2-11)? Many people say they are ready to die. What is the difference between being ready to die and being ready to meet Christ face to face? I want to die while I am still living, don't you (5:4-8)?
  
8. Of particular interest to this epistle is the coming of Christ (1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:17; 5:2-4, 23). Notice the coming of Christ is mentioned at the close of every chapter. What should we gain from such an emphasis? The coming of the Lord is an incentive for living:
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9. See the great way Paul concludes his exhortations (5:12-28). While we wait on the Lord, what should we focus on or be doing?
  - Rejoice always (5:16)
  - Pray without ceasing (5:17)
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