



1 Thessalonians

Introduction

You can visit Thessalonica today, only the travel guide will call it Thessaloniki. (It used to be known as Salonika.) It is an important industrial and commercial city in modern Greece and is second to Athens in population. It served as an important Allied base during World War I. In World War II it was captured by the German army, and the Jewish population of about 60,000 persons was deported and exterminated.

Thessalonica is an ancient city, originally named Therma after the many hot springs adjacent to it. In 315 B.C. it was renamed Thessalonica after the half sister of Alexander the Great. When Rome conquered Macedonia in 168 B.C., the city was made capital of that entire province. In Paul's day 200,000 people lived there, most of them Greeks but also many Romans and a strong Jewish minority. Today it has a population of 300,000 and is one of the few cities that survived the New Testament era of apostolic ministry.

Paul wrote this letter to encourage the believers regarding the second coming of Christ and how to live in the face of persecution and suffering. Thus, the message of this letter continues to benefit believers today. Our suffering is different; yet there is still suffering and trials. The remedies and encouragement of this letter remain as vital now as they were then.

BACKGROUND

1. Paul's visit to the city of Thessalonica during his second missionary journey has been recorded in Acts 17:1-9. *Paul, as his custom was, went to the synagogue, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures. According to verse 4, some of them were persuaded. Who were they?*
 - a. What did it take for you to be *persuaded* of the truth of the gospel?
 - b. Verse 5 reveals that some were *not persuaded*. Who were they?
 - 1.) What was their reaction?
 - 2.) Why do you think some people are not only *not persuaded*, but are angered by the gospel?

c. Paul and Silas escaped to the city of Berea. Acts 17:13-15 informs us that *when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was preached by Paul at Berea, they came there also and stirred up the crowds*. What did the brethren *immediately do*?

1.) The accounts in Acts about Paul have shown us that the threat of physical harm did not move him to react in fear. Sometimes Paul would flee; sometimes he would stay and face the threatened harm. What lesson can we learn from this?

2. Place yourself in the city of Thessalonica approximately 20 years after the death and resurrection of the Jewish Messiah. How do you think you would have viewed Paul's teachings?

a. What questions do you think you would have asked Paul?

READ CHAPTER ONE

1. What is your favorite verse? Why?

2. Share one thing this chapter reveals about:

Jesus

The believers in Thessalonica

Paul (and those with him)

READ CHAPTER TWO

1. What is your favorite verse? Why?

2. Share one thing this chapter reveals about:

Jesus

The believers in Thessalonica

Paul (and those with him)

READ CHAPTER THREE

1. What is your favorite verse? Why?

2. Share one thing this chapter reveals about:

Jesus

The believers in Thessalonica

Paul (and those with him)

READ CHAPTER FOUR

1. What is your favorite verse? Why?

2. Share one thing this chapter reveals about:

Jesus

The believers in Thessalonica

Paul (and those with him)

READ CHAPTER FIVE

1. What is your favorite verse? Why?

2. Share one thing this chapter reveals about:

Jesus

The believers in Thessalonica

Paul (and those with him)

THEREFORE

1. The term of conclusion, *therefore*, was used seven times in 1 Thessalonians. Record the stated conclusions based on each *therefore*.

1 Thessalonians 2:18

1 Thessalonians 3:1

1 Thessalonians 3:7

1 Thessalonians 4:8

1 Thessalonians 4:18

1 Thessalonians 5:6

1 Thessalonians 5:11

REVIEW

1. What are some of the main topics addressed in this letter?

2. If you were one of the believers in Thessalonica, what do you think your impression of this letter would be?

so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

- 1 Thessalonians 3:13