

Book of 1Thessalonians

Synopsis



Introduction

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| Book No | 52 |
| Name | 1Thessalonians |
| Written By | Paul |
| Testament | New |
| Category | Epistles |
| Date Written | Approx. 51 A.D |
| Place Written | Corinth |
| Audience | Church in Thessalonica |
| Purpose | To strengthen the Thessalonian Christians in their faith and give them the assurance of Christ's return |
| History Covered | NA |
| Chapters | 5 |
| Verses | 89 |
| Key Verse | For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. (4:14) |
| Key People | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Paul ❖ Timothy ❖ Silaus |
| Key Places | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Thessalonica |

Purpose of the Book

Like a golden shaft of sun piercing the winter sky, a singular truth shatters the oppressive gloom: Death is not the end! Christ is the victor over death, and there is hope of the resurrection through him.

As with every member of the human family, first-century Christians came face to face with their mortality. Many of them met early deaths at the hands of those who hated Christ and all allied with him. Whether at the hands of zealous Jews (like Paul before his conversion), angry Greeks, or ruthless Roman authorities, persecution included stonings, beatings, crucifixions, torture, and death. To be a follower of Christ meant to give up everything.

Paul established the church in Thessalonica during his second missionary journey (in about A.D. 51). He wrote this letter a short time later to encourage the young believers there. He wanted to assure them of his love, to praise them for their faithfulness during persecution, and to remind them of their hope—the sure return of their Lord and Savior.

Paul begins this letter with a note of affirmation, thanking God for the strong faith and good reputation of the Thessalonians (1:1-10). Then Paul reviews their relationship—how he and his companions brought the gospel to them (2:1-12), how they accepted the message (2:13-16), and how he longed to be with them again (2:17-20). Because of his concern, Paul sent Timothy to encourage them in their faith (3:1-13).

Paul then presents the core of his message—exhortation and comfort. He challenges them to please God in their daily living by avoiding sexual immorality (4:1-8), loving each other (4:9-10), and living as good citizens in a sinful world (4:11-12).

Paul comforts the Thessalonians by reminding them of the hope of the resurrection (4:13-18). Then he warns them to be prepared at all times, for Jesus Christ could return at any moment. When Christ returns, those Christians who are alive and those who have died will be raised to new life (5:1-11).

Paul then gives the Thessalonians a handful of reminders on how to prepare themselves for the Second Coming: Warn the idle (5:14), encourage the timid (5:14), help the weak (5:14), be patient with everyone (5:14), be kind to everyone (5:15), be joyful always (5:16), pray continually (5:17), give thanks (5:18), test everything that is

taught (5:20-21), and avoid evil (5:22). Paul concludes his letter with two benedictions and a request for prayer.

Christians of all ages, like Paul (“we who are alive,” 4:15), have confidently awaited the return of Christ in their own time. Throughout the history of the church, there have been those who deprived the return of Christ of its intended force by setting dates or specifying limits. Those of any age who do so are claiming to know more than Jesus Himself: “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” (Mark 13:32).

Immediately following the prediction of Christ’s return (4:13–18), Paul makes the point (5:1–11) that the suddenness of the coming of Jesus will not surprise prepared Christians who have donned the appropriate armor (5:8), which works in all dimensions of time: faith (past), hope (future), and love (present).

Two things are certain: 1) the return of Christ is an assured future event, and 2) that event is closer than it has ever been before. But to specify a date for the Second Coming, or to specify a time by which the Lord must surely return, or to focus solely on detailed prophetic systems that attempt to sequence precisely various final events described in Scripture—such efforts dilute the force of Christ’s return as revealed in 1 Thessalonians.

Paul’s bottom line—twice affirmed (4:18; 5:11: the Greek text uses exactly the same words)—is comfort in the face of death. Such a message encourages as well the contemporary descendants of the Thessalonians who mourn “those who sleep in Jesus.” This does not discourage expectancy (5:1–10), but neither does it provide encouragement to presumptuous systems of dating Jesus’ return.

God the Father (1:1, 3; 3:11, 13) is the source of wrath and displeasure (2:15, 16) to those who oppose Him, but for those who serve Him He is the recipient of thanks (1:2; 2:13; 3:9) and the origin of salvation (5:9), courage (2:2), peace (5:23), and approval (2:4). God raised Jesus and will raise the dead who trusted Him (1:10; 4:14). He is the living and genuine God (1:9), the opposite of idols (1:9), the incontestable witness (2:5). God’s will relates to moral purity (4:3, 7), but as well to continual thanksgiving (5:18). His word, “the gospel of God” (2:2, 8, 9: compare “gospel of Christ,” 3:2), remarkably, comes through human words (2:13; 4:8). In 1 Thessalonians, as elsewhere

in the Bible, God is the source and end of all that relates to both natural and spiritual life.

As you read this letter, listen carefully to Paul's practical advice for Christian living. And when burdened by grief and overwhelmed by sorrow, take hope in the reality of Christ's return, the resurrection, and eternal life!

Overview

- ❖ 52nd book of the BIBLE, 13th in the New Testament, 8th of the 21 epistles and 8th of the 14 epistles written by Paul
- ❖ Not only is 1 Thessalonians the first of two letters to the church at Thessalonica, it is Paul's first letter period.
- ❖ 2 Thessalonians would be his 2nd letter.
- ❖ Thus, Paul's first two letters were written to Thessalonica.
- ❖ Paul established the congregation at Thessalonica during his 2nd missionary journey, and remained there for about one month.
- ❖ After Paul's forced separation from the Thessalonians, he grows increasingly concerned about the progress of their young faith.
- ❖ Upon hearing of their progress from Timothy, he writes 1 Thessalonians.
- ❖ In 1 Thessalonians, Paul:
 - Commends the Thessalonian brethren for remaining steadfast under some difficult afflictions.
 - Exhorts them to excel in their Christian walk.
 - Consoles them concerning Christian loved one who have died.
- ❖ Paul encourage the Thessalonica brethren:
 - To increase brotherly love
 - To pray
 - To rejoice
 - To give thanks always
- ❖ In Paul's salutation to the brethren at Thessalonica:
 - He uses the customary Greek, "grace."
 - He uses the customary Hebrew, "peace."
- ❖ In writing to the church at Thessalonica, Paul deals with the subject of the 2nd coming of Christ.
- ❖ It is mentioned in 23 of the 27 New Testament books.

- ❖ Of 7,959 verses in the New Testament, at least 370 of them refer to the 2nd coming of Christ.
- ❖ 1 Out of every 21 verses in the New Testament touches on the subject of the Lord's return.
- ❖ The city of Thessalonica.
 - Capital of the Roman province of Macedonia.
 - A prominent seaport city.
 - Situated on the great northern military highway from Rome to the east.
 - Located 100 miles west of Philippi

Hebrew Names of GOD used in 1Thessalonians

NA

Revelation of JESUS CHRIST

Jesus is the Son of God (1:10), whose death and resurrection (1:10; 2:14, 15) provide an example to believers who suffer now (1:6; 2:14, 15) but who, as He was, will be raised in the future (1:10; 4:14, 16). Believers then and now have a mystical spiritual position “in the Lord” (1:1, 3; 4:1; 5:18), which, nevertheless, is practical enough to be the ground of respect for ruling elders (5:12). From Christ comes grace (5:28). But above all in 1 Thessalonians, Christ emerges as the coming King, the conqueror of death, whose awaited return from heaven (1:10) gives comfort to the bereaved (4:17, 18; 5:11) and joy to his expectant subjects (2:19, 20). This will be His day, the “Day of the Lord” (5:2; see 2 Thess. 2:2, “day of Christ”).

Work of THE HOLY SPIRIT

All Christians can affirm that it is God who has “given us His Holy Spirit” (4:8). The Spirit inspires joy even amid affliction (1:6). When the gospel arrived in Thessalonica, it came not only in word “but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance” (1:5), suggesting a balanced mix of intellectual argument, the Spirit's power (probably with “signs and wonders”), and deep personal response. First Thessalonians 5:19–21 reveals a lively charismatic character to the worship at Thessalonica—prophetic activity, which some were inclined to subdue but for which Paul asks tested acceptance: his words were to be read “to all the holy brethren” (5:27).

Mega Themes of 1Thessalonians

PERSECUTION

Paul and the new Christians at Thessalonica experienced persecution because of their faith in Christ. We can expect trials and troubles as well. We need to stand firm in our faith in the midst of trials, being strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit helps us to remain strong in faith, able to show genuine love to others and maintain our moral character even when we are being persecuted, slandered, or oppressed.

PAUL'S MINISTRY

Paul expressed his concern for this church even while he was being slandered. Paul's commitment to share the gospel in spite of difficult circumstances is a model we should follow.

Paul not only delivered his message, but gave of himself. In our ministries, we must become like Paul—faithful and bold, yet sensitive and self-sacrificing.

HOPE

One day all believers, both those who are alive and those who have died, will be united with Christ. To those Christians who die before Christ's return, there is hope—the hope of the resurrection of the body.

If we believe in Christ, we will live with him forever. All those who belong to Jesus Christ—from throughout history—will be present with him at his second coming. We can be confident that we will be with loved ones who have trusted in Christ.

BEING PREPARED

No one knows the time of Christ's return. We are to live moral and holy lives, ever watchful for his coming. Believers must not neglect daily responsibilities, but always work and live to please the Lord.

The gospel is not only what we believe but also what we must live. The Holy Spirit leads us in faithfulness, so we can avoid lust and fraud. Live as though you expect Christ's return at any time. Don't be caught unprepared.

Life Lessons in 1Thessalonians

| Truth | Lesson |
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| <p>Growing in Godliness</p> <p>Godly living is characterized by a life lived to please God. Through Jesus' sacrifice, we have already found favour in God's sight; therefore, we are to live a life that reflects that favor. Like Jesus, our work is to flow from faith and love, honoring God in all that we do. We are to behave so that when unbelievers see our lives they will recognize and honor God, who is our source of godliness. Love, honor, prayer, and the full expression of the Holy Spirit are but a few of the things that Thessalonians exhorts us to pursue.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Understand that godly living includes: 1) work that flows from faith, 2) labor that flows from love, and 3) patient endurance that flows from living hope. Pray that these virtues would characterize your life. Remember always that you are loved and chosen in Christ. ❖ Be faithful and persevering in prayer for other believers and other congregations. ❖ Live your life to please God. ❖ Seek to grow in love for others. Strive to live quietly, not gossiping, but tending to your own work. Be a witness to unbelievers through your godly lifestyle. ❖ Understand that each of these exhortations is a command. Therefore, seek diligently to apply each of these truths to your life as you grow in godliness. |
| <p>Cultivating Dynamic Devotion</p> <p>The focus of the believer's devotion and hope is Jesus, our coming Lord.</p> <p>In Thessalonians, Jesus is shown returning in glory for His church. Our devotion and worship of Him encompasses not only what He has done for us in the past and is</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Set your heart on Jesus, patiently waiting with trust for His coming. Know and give thanks to Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath of God. ❖ Look to the Lord's coming as a source of comfort and hope. Jesus' coming is our hope in both life and in death. Devote yourself wholeheartedly to the Lord so that you will be one in whom He finds faith when He comes (Luke 18:8). |

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| <p>doing in our lives in the present, but also what awaits us in eternity when He comes to usher in His kingdom in its fullness. Let the hope of His coming strengthen and comfort you as you devote yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Watch. Be alert and awake. Commit yourself to grow in your relationship with the Lord, which includes prayer, worship, and studying to understand the Bible. This is the lifestyle of the children of light, who have salvation in Jesus. |
| <p>Pursuing Holiness</p> <p>It is true that we are fully and completely sanctified, made holy in Jesus. It is equally true that God calls us to work out that sanctification in the way that we live our lives. It is working out practically what God has already worked into us. In Thessalonians, pursuing holiness means living a life worthy of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, always remembering that you are called into His kingdom and glory.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Conduct your life so that it reflects the glory and kingdom of God, to which you belong. Set as your goal to live worthy of God. ❖ Be holy. Sanctification is God’s will for your life. Keep away from all sexual activity outside of marriage. Behave with honor and purity in all of your relationships. ❖ Live in holiness, for to this God has called you. Remember that God has given you His Holy Spirit. His power is in you; draw on it. ❖ Submit your whole spirit, soul, and body completely to the sanctifying work of God, the God of peace. |
| <p>The Walk of Faith</p> <p>The walk of faith is expectant and hopeful. By faith, we pray and expect to see God move through His church today with signs, wonders, and miracles.</p> <p>By faith, we embrace biblical preaching with the expectant hope that through His Word, God will change us increasingly into His</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Pray that your living and presenting the gospel will be accompanied by the power of the Spirit with signs, wonders, and miracles. ❖ Welcome the Word of God in faith. Believe that the gospel message is from God and not from mere human reasoning. Know that when you receive biblical preaching, it is able to powerfully effect change in your life (Rom. 10:17). ❖ Believe by faith that Jesus is returning to usher in the fullness of His kingdom and |

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| <p>image. By faith, we expectantly look forward to the return of our Lord Jesus, in whom all our hope is placed.</p> | <p>glory for all eternity. Comfort those who have lost believing loved ones with the hope that those who have died in Christ will rise first.</p> |
| <p>Lessons for leaders</p> <p>Although righteous spiritual leaders speak the truth of GOD boldly they do so gently. They are unmoved by the flattery or praise from humankind. They only seek praise from GOD. They are diligent workers who never take advantage of those they serve</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ leaders seek to please GOD rather than cater to humans ❖ never employ flattery rather speak the truth forthrightly ❖ look only to GOD for praise ❖ leaders practice gentleness in your ministry ❖ leaders understand that ministry means hard work and long hours |
| <p>Keys to relating to authority</p> <p>Pastoral leadership is a gift from GOD. We must treat GOD's appointed leaders and teachers with appropriate respect</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ honor church leadership ❖ recognize that their BIBLE based instruction comes with JESUS own authority |

Praise Points in 1Thessalonians

- ❖ The Holy Spirit, who enables us to follow the Lord (1:6-7)
- ❖ The joy we may experience even in the midst of persecution (1:6)
- ❖ The word of the Lord, which continues to reach new people (1:8)
- ❖ The Good News of Jesus Christ which never stops working in us (2:13)
- ❖ The bright hope of our resurrection (4:16-18)
- ❖ The gifted leaders who direct and admonish us in worship (5:12-13)
- ❖ The peace and unity experienced by believers (5:12-13).

Worship Insights in 1Thessalonians

Our worship should also anticipate the future, looking toward the return of Christ. The believers in Thessalonica were concerned about the future. They eagerly anticipated the Second Coming, but in their eager anticipation they were also anxious. Would

those who had already died share in the blessings of Christ's return (4:13-17)? Should they continue to work for a living or focus on more heavenly pursuits (4:11; 5:14)?

In this letter, considered to be one of the oldest in the New Testament, the apostle Paul instructed his flock concerning Christ's second coming and directed their attention to an essential element of New Testament worship: a godly lifestyle. Paul reminded his beloved ones of their recent departure from idols to serve the living God and urged them to continue in this way of holiness (1:9; 4:1-2). Worship is more than religious ceremony; it is holy living. As in other letters, the apostle reminded God's people that preaching the gospel would equip them for service to each other and the world. Heeding these instructions, the Thessalonians would find themselves quite ready for Christ's return.

- ❖ We should thankfully and prayerfully remember how other Christians are serving God (1:2-3).
- ❖ We should be thankful for the prospect of the second coming of God's Son, Jesus, who has rescued us from the coming judgment (1:10).
- ❖ Our purpose in worship should be to please God, not people (2:4).
- ❖ God releases his power in our life as we believe and obey his Word (2:13).
- ❖ Our worship provides us with the opportunity for our love to overflow to each other (3:12).
- ❖ Our worship should be characterized by holy living (4:1-2).
- ❖ Our worship provides us with an opportunity to build each other up (5:11-14).
- ❖ Our worship is an activity for all seasons, for we are called to "always be thankful" no matter what our circumstances (5:18).

An Outline of 1Thessalonians

I. Grace and Peace: [1Th 1:1-2](#)

II. The Three Greatest Things in the World: [1Th 1:3](#)

III. Jesus Christ Can Change Your Life: [1Th 1:4-10](#)

A. Your Election by God: [1Th 1:4](#)

B. The Gospel is More Than Words: [1Th 1:5](#)

C. The Strange Union of Suffering and Joy: [1Th 1:6](#)

D. The Influence of Changed Lives: [1Th 1:7-10](#)

IV. Evangelism at its Best: [1Th 2:1-12](#)

- A. The Boldness of Authentic Witness: [1Th 2:1-2](#)
- B. The Importance of Sincere Motivation: [1Th 2:3-6](#)
- C. The Art of Gentleness: [1Th 2:7-9](#)
- D. The Necessity of Integrity: [1Th 2:10-12](#)

V. The Power of Christian Relationships: 1Th. 2:13-3:13

- A. The Basis of Christian Community: [1Th 2:13-14](#)
- B. The Contrary Forces: [1Th 2:15-16](#)
- C. The Power of Separation: [1Th 2:17-20](#)
- D. The Continuing Need for Support: [1Th 3:1-4](#)
- E. Paul's Need for His Friends: [1Th 3:5-8](#)
- F. Your Joy is My Joy: [1Th 3:9-10](#)
- G. Paul's Prayer for His Friends: [1Th 3:11-13](#)

VI. A Life That Pleases God: [1Th 4:1-12](#)

- A. Walking with God: [1Th 4:1-2](#)
- B. The Meaning of Sex: [1Th 4:3-8](#)
- C. Life Together: [1Th 4:9-12](#)

VII. The Second Coming of Christ: 1Th. 4:13-5:11

- A. What of Those Who Have Died?: [1Th 4:13-18](#)
- B. When Will He Return?: [1Th 5:1-3](#)
- C. How, Then, Shall We Live?: [1Th 5:4-11](#)

VIII. Life in the Church: [1Th 5:12-28](#)

- A. Respect for Leaders in the Church: [1Th 5:12-13](#)
- B. Discipline in the Church: [1Th 5:14-15](#)
- C. Standing Orders for the Church: [1Th 5:16-18](#)
- D. Life in the Spirit: [1Th 5:19-22](#)
- E. And in Conclusion: [1Th 5:23-28](#)