

Contagious & Confident Christianity

A Study of Thessalonians

Our study this quarter of the letters to the Thessalonians is much more than a look into a couple books of the Bible. Layered within these passages are instructions on how to walk with the Lord, amazing examples of confident godly living and a look into a very young church.

How do we get to Thessalonica?

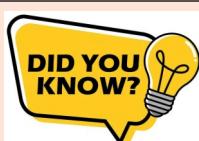
- The city of Thessalonica is located in the region of Macedonia
- It was the capital of Macedonia and the largest city (population around 200,000)
- It was a very old city, originally named "Therma" because of the hot springs. Later, renamed Thessalonica (in 315 B.C.) after the sister of Alexander the Great
- It was about 100 miles from Philippi and 40 miles from Berea
- There remains a city there today called "Thessaloniki"



What about the church?

1. The church was young
Paul had not been gone long (1 Thes 2:17)
- He seems to be really concerned about the brethren
- He was prevented from returning (1 Thes 2:18)
- He sent Timothy to check on them (1 Thes 3:2, 5). Timothy has now returned to Paul in Corinth

1 Thessalonians seems to be the first inspired letter that Paul wrote



All the "T" books in the N.T. are grouped together

- After the heated dispute between Paul and Barnabas, Paul took Silas (1 Thes 1:1) and headed to Derbe (Acts 16:1)
- In Lystra, they pick up Timothy (1 Thes 1:1)
- Not being allowed to go into Asia (Acts 16:6-7), Paul receives the "Macedonia Vision" (Acts 16:9-10)
- From Troas they travel to Philippi (Acts 16:12)
 - it is here that Paul baptizes Lydia (Acts 16:15)
 - Paul casts a spirit out of a girl who was being used to make divinations for a profit (Acts 16:16-18)
 - This leads to a crowd beating Paul and Silas with rods (16:22-23) and being put into prison (Acts 16:24)
- They come to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9)
 - Paul stays a few months
 - while there Paul supported himself (1 Thes 2:9)
 - The brethren sent Paul away because of opposition (Acts 17:8-10)
- From there they go to Berea (Acts 17:10)
- Then to Athens (Acts 17:16)
- Then to Corinth (Acts 18:1)
 - It is believed that Paul writes 1 Thessalonians from Corinth around the year A.D. 50

What are the challenges facing a young church?

The Letter to Thessalonica

1. Chapters 1-3: Looking _____
2. Chapters 4-5: Looking _____

A. Three Major Themes are Found

1. Praising the young church for their example

Imitators of _____ (1:6)

_____ to all believers (1:7)

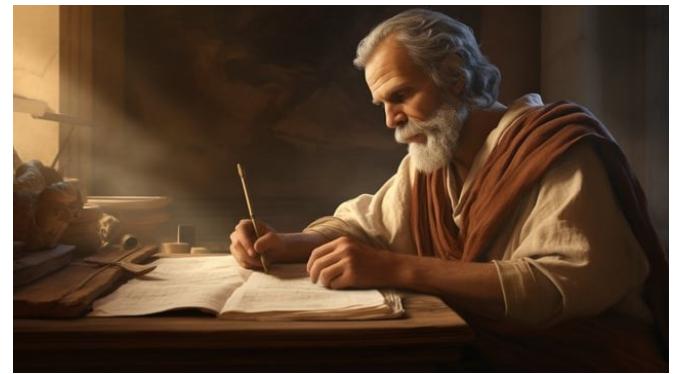
Word sounded _____ from you (1:8)

Imitated the _____ of Judea (2:14)

2. Paul emphasizes his character among them (2:3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11)

3. Paul instructs them about the coming of the Lord

Every chapter mentions the Lord's coming (1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:23)



B. The letter opens with a series of compliments from the apostle

What all do you see:

C. The letter ends, much like Romans, with some common admonitions (5:12-22)

One of the characteristics of Paul's letters are the use of "triplets" - a string of three expressions
Twice in the first chapter he does this:

What he remembered (3): _____

How the Gospel came to them (5): _____

A big part of this church was Gentiles (Acts 17:4). They had turned from idols to the living God (1 Thes 1:9). How hard would this be? What would be your approach in talking to one who believed in idols?