



NEW TESTAMENT
CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OF AMERICA, INC.

THE 1ST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR:

The apostle Paul, along with Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy (1:1), and again later in the epistle (2:18), is the one who wrote this letter. Early church history sources that mention this letter clearly attribute it to Paul.

THE CITY OF THESSALONICA:

In ancient times, Thessaloniki was the bustling capital and largest city of the Roman province of Macedonia. Nestled along the Egnatian Way, a crucial road connecting Rome to the eastern provinces, it was the heart of trade and commerce. Nowadays, it's still known as Thessaloniki, or Salonica.

THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA:

The church's beginnings are recorded in Acts 17:1-9. On his second missionary trip, Paul and his friends (Silas and Timothy) had just left Philippi and traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia to reach Thessalonica. As usual, Paul immediately found the synagogue and talked to the Jews for three Sabbaths about Jesus Christ. Some people think he stayed longer, but basically, his work there was only three weeks. Some of them were convinced, including a lot of devout Greeks and important women, but the unbelieving Jews became jealous and caused a big commotion in the city. So, Paul and Silas had to sneak away secretly at night to Berea. They even chased him there, so Paul moved on to Athens. Despite such a rocky start, a strong church was established in Thessalonica (1:2-10). Most of its members were Gentiles (1:9), including Jason (Ac 17:9), Aristarchus, and Secundus (Acts 20:4).

TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING:

First Thessalonians is considered one of Paul's earliest letters. Since the Gospels hadn't been written yet, and Paul was living during the middle of the Book of Acts, this is basically the very beginning of the New Testament! Also note the letter itself (3:1-6), and the record of Paul's travels in Acts (Acts 17:10-18:11).

THE PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE:

Paul was worried about the new Christians in Thessalonica after they left Thessalonica so quickly after the church started. When Timothy joined Paul in Athens (Acts 17:14-16), Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica right away to cheer up the new believers and find out how they were doing under persecution (3:1-5).

When Timothy returned to Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:5), the news was mostly encouraging (3:6-7). Despite persecution, they had remained strong (2:13-16), and even proved themselves to be an example to others (1:6-8). Yet, as with any young church, they needed further instruction concerning holy living (4:1-12). They also needed to be reassured that their loved ones who died in Christ would

not miss out on the blessings involving the coming of our Lord (cf. 4:13-18). Therefore we can summarize by saying that Paul's purpose in writing was:

- ✱ To praise them for their steadfastness under persecution
- ✱ To instruct them concerning holy living
- ✱ To correct any misunderstanding about the Rapture of the church

THEME OF THE EPISTLE:

This book is special because each chapter ends with a reminder to be ready to meet Christ when He returns (1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:23). Given his focus on staying strong and living a holy life, a fitting theme could be...

"HOLINESS IN VIEW OF THE COMING OF CHRIST"

KEY VERSES:

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

OUTLINE:

I. INTRODUCTION (1:1-4)

1. Salutation (1)
2. Thanksgiving for their faith, hope, and love (2-4)

II. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS (1:5-3:13)

- A. REGARDING THEIR CONDITION (1:5-10)
 1. Their reception of the gospel (1:5-7)
 2. Their reputation in every place (1:8-10)
- B. REGARDING HIS CONDUCT (2:1-12)
 1. The manner of his preaching (2:1-8)
 2. The manner of his life (2:9-12)
- C. REGARDING HIS CONCERN (2:13-3:13)
 1. For their faithfulness (2:13-3:10)
 2. For their continued growth (3:11-13)

III. APOSTOLIC INSTRUCTIONS (4:1-5:28)

- A. WALK IN HOLINESS (4:1-8)
 1. To please God (4:1-2)
 2. To abstain from sexual immorality (4:3-8)
- B. WALK IN LOVE (4:9-10)
 1. As they are taught by God to love one another (4:9)
 2. To increase more and more (4:10)
- C. WALK IN DILIGENCE (4:11-12)
 1. To work with their hands (4:11)
 2. To walk properly toward those who are outside (4:12)
- D. WALK IN HOPE (4:13-18)
 1. With no sorrow concerning those who have died (4:13-14)
 2. For we will be reunited with them when Christ returns (4:15-18)

E. WALK IN LIGHT (5:1-11)

1. For the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night (5:1-4)
2. For we are sons of light and day (5:5-8)
3. For God has appointed us to salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ (5:9-11)

F. WALK IN OBEDIENCE (5:12-22)

1. With respect toward those over us (5:12-13)
2. With concern for one another (5:14-15)
3. With joy, prayer and thanksgiving (5:16-18)
4. Don't quench the Spirit or despise prophecies, but don't be gullible either (5:19-22)

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS (5:23-28)

1. A prayer for their sanctification and preservation (5:23-24)
2. A request for prayer in his behalf (5:25)
3. A charge to greet one another with a holy kiss, and to read the epistle to others (5:26-27)
4. A benediction of grace from the Lord Jesus Christ (5:28)

