

# The Thessalonians

## Introduction

**1. Character studies often times centers on an individual, but it can also center on a group of people.**

**A. This morning, we want to learn more about the group of people called the Thessalonians.**

1 Thessalonians 1:5-6; 2:13b For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, .... you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

## Background

1. The church at Thessalonica was established during Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> journey (Acts 15:40-18:22).

A. 1 & 2 Thessalonians written from Corinth (51-52 A.D.)

**Show Second Missionary Journey Map**

**Review Thessalonica Chart**

### THESSALONICA

- A. Paul reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue for three Sabbaths (Acts 17:2)
  - B. He explained and demonstrated that Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead and that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 17:3)
  - C. Some believed, including a great number of devout Greeks and leading women (Acts 17:4)
  - D. The unbelieving Jews stirred up the people. They assaulted the house of Jason, thinking that Paul and Silas were there. When they were not found, Jason and some of the brethren were dragged before the rulers, charged, and released (Acts 17:5-9)
2. It was said of these people in general that they were not as "fair-minded," meaning "just, impartial, unprejudiced" as those that Paul spoke to in Berea.  
**MAP**
  3. The church in Philippi helped support Paul in his work at Thessalonica (Phil 4:16)

## **Commendation**

- 1. There were some things woven through the pages of 1 and 2 Thessalonians that expressed a commendation for these brethren.**
  - A. They turned from idols to serve God (1:9)**
  - B. They were commended for their work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope**  
(1 Thes 1:3; 4:10; 2 Thes 1:3-4)
  - C. They faithfully endured under trial**  
(1 Thes 1:6; 2:15; 3:3; 2 Thes 1:4,6)
  - D. They were examples to the other churches of Macedonia and Achaia**  
(1 Thes 1:7)
  - E. They were imitators of the churches in Judea**  
(1 Thes 2:14)
  - F. They welcomed the word, not as of men, but as the word of God**  
(1 Thes 2:13)

## **Condemnation**

- 1. Some of the brethren were not holding to the word of God**  
(1 Thes 2:15)
- 2. As a result, Paul condemns those who walk disorderly (“out of step”), that fail to work, and who are busybodies**  
(2 Thes 3:6-15)
  - A. The tradition of God establishes orderliness**  
(2 Thessalonians 2:15).

## Clarification

### 1. There were some things that the apostle Paul needed to clarify to these brethren:

#### A. Concerning those who had died in the Lord before His return

(1 Thes 4:13-18)

- 1) Do not be sorrowful about those who have died in Lord
- 2) When Jesus comes, He will bring them.
- 3) The dead in Christ will rise first, then those who are alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

#### B. Concerning the second coming of the Lord (2 Thes 2)

- 1) Some may have thought that Paul taught the immediate return of Jesus was about to happen (1 Thes 1:13; 5:1-11)

- 2) To counter this, Paul told them:

- a. The “falling away” must come first (2 Thes 2:3)

- **There has been much discussion from many different commentators and learned men on exactly what the “falling away” is. We certainly know this, that there would come a time when men would “fall away” from the grace of God through disobedience — as the children of Israel did long ago.**

- b. They must stand fast (2 Thes 2:13-15)

- c. Idleness was not acceptable (2 Thes 3:6-15)

## Exhortation

1. The apostle Paul, as he will do in every letter, exhorts them to keep on keeping on in various areas. Notice the exhortation given to these Thessalonians:
  - A. Holy living and sexual morality (1 Thes 4:3-8)
  - B. Preparedness (1 Thes 5:1-10)
  - C. Recognition of those who labored among them (1 Thes 5:12-13)
  - D. Peace (1 Thes 5:13)
  - E. Concern for others - warn, comfort, uphold, be patient (1 Thes 5:14)
  - F. Prayer and giving thanks (1 Thes 5:17-18)
  - G. Not to quench the spirit or despise prophecies (the preaching of the word) (1 Thes 5:19-20)
    - 1) Quench the spirit: **“Likened to putting out a hot fire.” We must be careful not to quench the Holy Spirit by indulging carnal lusts and affections, or minding only earthly things. We also must not be guilty of heaping dirt and water on the fire of others also!**
  - H. Test all things, hold fast that which is good, abstain from evil (1 Thes 5:21-22)
  - I. Warnings about deception, lying wonders, strong delusion, believing a lie (2 Thes 2)
  - J. Withdraw from the disorderly (2 Thes 3:6-15)

## **Principles**

- 1. We must first put away our idols before we can effectively serve God.**
- 2. Persecutions and Trials must be endured to the end.**
- 3. The local churches' example to other churches is important.**
- 4. The church today MUST imitate the church of the first century.**
- 5. We must respect the word of God -- (Not what I think He meant, but what He said).**
- 6. Christ's enemies will be condemned.**
- 7. The disorderly cannot be tolerated in the church. God demands holiness and faithfulness in His church. Remember - it is God's church ---- not ours.**
- 8. We do not know when the Lord will return, therefore we must always be prepared. Lest we forget — There has been a “*falling away*” and we are certainly in the last days. WATCH OUT.**
- 9. It is possible to believe a lie, therefore test all things to ensure that it is of God.**
- 10. Pray without ceasing ---- great things can happen to those who ask!**

