

# The First Letter to the Saints at Thessalonica—Part 1

## Southside church of Christ, Huntsville

Reading Assignment—I Thessalonians 1-3

### Introduction

We are given the account of Paul's first encounter with Thessalonica in Acts 17. Paul reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue, but they did not receive his teachings. The Jews plotted to have Paul and Silas detained by stirring up trouble. When the trouble was blamed on Paul, they assumed he would be harassed by the government. However, they could not find Paul, so they caused trouble for Jason instead. Eventually everything works out after Paul flees to Berea. The Jews in Berea were more receptive of Paul. However, the Jews in Thessalonica were so upset that they followed Paul to Berea. Again, Paul flees to safety.

In chapter 1 Paul greets the brethren at Thessalonica and praises them for their faithfulness. The brethren were known for their faith and teaching throughout the region. In spite of the reception Paul received at first, there were many in Thessalonica who we gladly receive the gospel.

In chapter 2 Paul argues for the example he and others showed to the Thessalonians. While the gospel was being preached they did not use excessive words or any other guise. They did not even burden the brethren with their physical needs, but worked to provide for themselves while in Thessalonica. Paul expresses how he loves and desires them as a father prefers his children. Because of that love, he exhorts the Thessalonians to "walk worthy." He also warns them about the Jews. He makes a list of sins of which the Jews have participated. Among those sins is a desire to not make the gospel known to the Gentiles. Paul contrasts himself to that by pointing out how much he desires to be with them.

Continuing the theme of his desire for the Thessalonians, Paul describes in chapter 3 the report of Timothy. Paul was worried about the Thessalonian brethren's faithfulness. In chapter 2 he blames Satan for not allowing him to come to see them. When he sent Timothy, he was worried that Satan had used the opportunity of his absence to cause them to fall away. However, Timothy returned with a good report. He reminds them to stand fast and makes known how much it would hurt him if they fell away.

In each of his letters Paul expresses his sincere love for the brethren. It was important to him that the brethren not be swayed away from God. Paul would have been devastated to hear of the loss of even one Christian. Today, when divisions arise, we should desire the brethren so much that we feel as if we have lost a family member. We should remember always to give thanks for our brethren, as well as praying for the faithfulness of other Christians.

## **Instructions**

While reading chapters 1, 2, and 3, be sure to identify the major and minor themes as well as the major arguments used to support the themes.

### **Chapter 1**

Major Theme:

Major Argument:

Minor Themes:

### **Chapters 2-3**

Major Theme:

Major Argument:

Minor Themes:

## **Questions**

1. How did the gospel come to the Thessalonians? (I Th. 1:5)

2. Were the Thessalonians followers of the Lord only?

3. How will the Thessalonians establish their hearts?

4. Name some of the sins of the Jews.

5. God trusted Paul with what? (I Th. 2:4)

6. How did the Thessalonians receive the gospel?

7. How did Timothy find the Thessalonians?

**True or False**—Be sure to provide scripture for your answer.

T or F—The Thessalonians were an example to those around them.

T or F—The Thessalonians were busy teaching.

T or F—Paul fondly remembered his time at Philippi.

T or F—Paul had an easy time with the Thessalonians.

T or F—The Thessalonians themselves were a reward to Paul.

### **Thought Questions**

1. Why were the Jews forbidding the Gentiles to be taught? (I Th. 2:14-16)

2. Consider the longing Paul had for the Thessalonians. Do we observe this today in the church?