

# Lessons From I Thessalonians

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## Introduction

(I Th 3:6-10)

### INTRODUCTION

1. Good Afternoon,
  - a.
2. A new series on “Lessons From I Thessalonians.”
  - a. Today we will be looking at one of two letters written to the Thessalonians.
    - i. **I Th 1:1** “Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.”<sup>1</sup>
  - b. We will be looking at some introductory material.
    - i. In other words, some things that we must know to have a proper understanding of this first letter.
3. With that in mind let us examine this great and powerful book.

### I. The Historicity Of I Thessalonians

- A. The town
  1. Thessalonica was at one time known as Therma.
    - i. This seems to be due to the many hot salt springs in the area.
  2. Thessalonica or where it was located is now known as Salonika.
    - i. This is at the head of the Thermiac Gulf.
  3. It’s location led to it quickly becoming a prosperous and vital city.
    - i. In 315 BC it served as a great naval port station.
    - ii. In 146 BC it was the metropolis of the united province.
  4. During the Roman Empire.
    - i. In 42 BC when the Roman’s came Thessalonica sided with Antony & Octavius and because of this it was declared a “free city.”
    - ii. Rome divided Macedonia into four governments.
      - a. These four governments were governed by seven polyarchs.
        1. Each of these were responsible to the Roman proconsul but they were elected by the people of Macedonia hence the “free city” status.
      - b. Thessalonica was made the chief city of the second province.
        1. It quickly became the metropolis of the whole region.
  5. During the time of Paul’s visit.
    - i. Thessalonica was the largest city of Macedonia.
      - a. This means it lent itself as one of influence to Macedonia.
    - ii. Thessalonica had a large population of Jews.
      - a. It was for this reason Paul & Silas had to eventually be sent at night to Berea.
        1. **Ac 17:5-10**

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<sup>1</sup> All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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- B. The author
  - 1. The author is clearly Paul known formerly as Saul of Tarsus.
    - i. **I Th 1:1; Ac 9:1-2**
  - 2. Paul was, of course, the apostle to the Gentiles.
    - i. **Ac 9:15**
  - 3. Paul is also the author of half of the books of the N.T.
- C. The date
  - 1. Paul and Silvanus came to Berea (**Ac 17:10**) and was later joined by there by Timothy.
  - 2. Paul and Timothy then continued to Athens leaving Silvanus in Berea.
    - i. Timothy was then sent back to Thessalonica.
  - 3. Paul intended to wait in Athens for Silas and Timothy (**Ac 17:15**).
    - i. However Paul, for some reason, left Athens without them did not join them again until they all met at Corinth.
  - 4. We can see that all three were together at the writing of this letter (**I Th 1:1**).
    - i. Also some time had passed since Paul first visited, when the church was established, and the writing of this letter or epistle.
      - a. Paul had already twice tried to go back to Thessalonica but was prevented (**I Th 2:17-18**).
  - 5. It would appear, therefore, to indicate that this letter was written about six months after the church had been established.
    - i. That would put it at the end of 52 AD or the beginning of 53 AD.
      - a. This was during the early part of Paul's residence in Corinth.

## II. The Context Of I Thessalonians

- A. The recipients
  - 1. These were the Jews, devout Greeks, and leading women who had obeyed the gospel and any others in the last six months or so to had obeyed the gospel.
    - i. **Ac 17:4** "And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women."
  - 2. These were mostly Gentiles though it would appear.
    - i. There are no allusions to the tenets of Judaism.
    - ii. There are no allusions to the facts of Jewish history.
    - iii. There are no references to the O.T.
      - a. It is not used as an illustration.
      - b. It is not used as "proof."
- B. The purpose
  - 1. Paul had tried twice to go back to Thessalonica but Satan hindered him.
    - i. **I Th 2:17-18**
  - 2. Paul then sent Timothy back to get a report on their progress (**I Th 3:1-5**)
    - i. Timothy returned giving a good report of their growth in faith and love and that they had a fondness for Paul, Timothy, and Silas.
      - a. **I Th 3:6**

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- ii. Timothy also reported of some troubling things.
    - a. In their excitement for the Lord & His coming back it had led some to neglect their daily or ordinary responsibilities.
      - 1. **I Th 4:11**
    - b. Some of their brethren had died as well and had cause them anxiety it would appear as they did not want to be excluded from the share in the glory of the Lord's second coming.
      - 1. **I Th 4:13-18**
    - c. Their persecution was causing anxiety as well and they needed encouragement.
      - 1. **I Th 2:14; 3:2-4**
    - d. They had started having an unhealthy feeling towards spiritual gifts.
      - 1. **I Th 5:19-20**
    - e. There was an apparent danger of them falling back into some old heathen practices.
      - 1. **I Th 4:4-8**
  - 3. Thus herein we find the purpose for this letter being written.
    - i. It is a letter based on the report of Timothy.
- C. The message
- 1. Paul's message to the church here is three fold.
    - i. First to praise them for their steadfastness under persecution.
    - ii. Second to instruct them concerning holy living.
    - iii. Third to correct any misunderstandings they had especially concerning the Second Coming.

### III. The Content Of I Thessalonians

- A. The outline<sup>2</sup>
- 1. Paul's Reflections (1-3)
    - i. Reflecting on their condition (1:1-10)
    - ii. Reflecting on his condition (2:1-12)
    - iii. Reflecting on his concern (2:13-3:13)
  - 2. Paul's Instructions (4-5)
    - i. Walk in holiness (4:1-8)
    - ii. Walk in love (4:9-10)
    - iii. Walk in diligence (4:11-12)
    - iv. Walk in hope (4:13-18)
    - v. Walk in light (5:1-11)
    - vi. Walk in obedience (5:12-28)
- B. Key words
- 1. Faith/believe (14)
  - 2. To know (13)
  - 3. To urge (8)
  - 4. The word (9)

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<sup>2</sup> This outline was taken from Brother Copeland's sermon "Introduction To The Epistle."

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### C. Key passage

1. **I Th 3:6-10** “But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you— 7 for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. 8 For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. 9 For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, 10 as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?”

### CONCLUSION

1. Brethren there is no greater hope for the Christian today than that of the promise of Christ’s return.
  - a. This promise was given when Christ ascended into heaven.
    - i. **Ac 1:9-11**
  - b. This promise was designed to motivate Christians to a better living of holiness and godliness.
    - i. **II Pt 3:10-14**
2. This great epistle or letter to the brethren at Thessalonica is just that, an epistle of hope based in Christ’s return.
  - a. Every chapter mentions Christ’s return.
  - b. Every chapter has practical lessons for righteous living.
3. Question: Are you living a life based on the hope of Christ’s return or are you living a life based on a hope that Christ holds off on His return?
  - a. My prayer is that you are living a life based on the hope of Christ’s return!!!
4. Invitation
  - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
    - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
  - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
    - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
    - ii. Have Faith In Jesus **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
    - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
    - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
    - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
    - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**