



# A Study in 1 Thessalonians

## Review: Historical Context

1. Author
2. Audience
  - a. religion and politics in first-century Thessalonica
  - b. the church of the Thessalonians (Acts 16.6-10, 17.1-15)
3. Date (AD 50-51)
4. Occasion
  - a. to defend his [Paul's] apostleship (2.1-12), strengthen and encourage the saints (cf. 3.2), and give thanks to God (1.2; 2.13; 5.12)

## 1 Thessalonians 1.1-10

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, <sup>3</sup> remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, <sup>5</sup> because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

1. We give thanks to God always for all of you
  - a. constantly mentioning you in our prayers
  - b. remembering before our God and Father
    - i. your work of faith
    - ii. labor of love (3.6, 12; 4.9; 5.13)
    - iii. steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1.3b; cf. 5.8)
  - c. *for we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you*<sup>1</sup> (1.4)

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<sup>1</sup> *Contra pagan approach to religion: cf. 1 John 4:10-11* In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.)

- i. because our gospel came to you
  - 1. not only in word,
  - 2. but also in power and
  - 3. in the Holy Spirit and
  - 4. with full conviction<sup>2</sup>
- d. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake (1.5; cf. 2.1-12)

<sup>6</sup> And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, <sup>7</sup> so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. <sup>8</sup> For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. <sup>9</sup> For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, <sup>10</sup> and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

- 1. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord<sup>3</sup> (1.6a; cf. 2.13-14)
  - a. for you received the word in much affliction (*thlipsis* = tribulation)
  - b. with the joy of the Holy Spirit<sup>4</sup> (1.6b)

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*Concerning love and election:* **2 Timothy 1:8-12a** Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, <sup>9</sup> who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, <sup>10</sup> and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, <sup>11</sup> for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, <sup>12</sup> which is why I suffer as I do. **Ephesians 1:3-6** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. **Colossians 3:12** Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

<sup>2</sup> **Romans 15:18-19** For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience-- by word and deed, <sup>19</sup> by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God-- so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ. **1 Corinthians 2:3-5** And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, <sup>4</sup> and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

<sup>3</sup> **1 Corinthians 4:16** I urge you, then, be imitators of me. **Ephesians 5:1** Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. **Hebrews 13:7** Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

<sup>4</sup> *Concerning affliction (tribulation) and joy in the Holy Spirit:* **2 Corinthians 8:1-2** We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, <sup>2</sup> for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. **Colossians 1:24** Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. **Philippians 2:17** Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. **Romans 12:12** Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer (cf. Rom 5 and 8). **1 Peter 4:13-14** But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and

- i. so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia (1.7)
2. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything<sup>5</sup> (1.8)
3. For they themselves report concerning us
  - a. the kind of reception we had among you (cf. 2.1-12)
  - b. how you turned
    - i. to God from idols<sup>6</sup>
    - ii. to serve the living and true God<sup>7</sup> (1.9; cf. 2.13-16)
    - iii. to wait for his Son from heaven,<sup>8</sup> whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come<sup>9</sup> (1.10)

*God's love and election (v.4) is the source of the Thessalonians' faith, love, and hope (v.3) and is manifest by the way in which the Gospel came to them (v.5), their reception (v.6), conversion (v.9b-10), and witness (vv.7-9a), all of which is brought to mind when Paul prays and results in thanksgiving (vv.2-3a).*

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be glad when his glory is revealed. <sup>14</sup> If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you (cf. Rom 5.3-5; 8.23).

<sup>5</sup> I.e., Paul and his associates didn't have to evangelize, because of the Thessalonians' testimony.

<sup>6</sup> **Deuteronomy 32:15-18** "But Jeshurun grew fat, and kicked; you grew fat, stout, and sleek; then he forsook God who made him and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation. <sup>16</sup> They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods; with abominations they provoked him to anger. <sup>17</sup> They sacrificed to demons that were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded. <sup>18</sup> You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth." (Cf. Exodus 17.1-7) **1 Corinthians 10:19-21** What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? <sup>20</sup> No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. <sup>21</sup> You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. (See also Ps 115, 135.)

<sup>7</sup> **Jeremiah 10:10, 14** But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King. At his wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure his indignation ... <sup>14</sup> Every man is stupid and without knowledge; every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols, for his images are false, and there is no breath in them.

<sup>8</sup> **Ephesians 1:20** that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places; **Philippians 3:20-21** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

<sup>9</sup> **Colossians 3:5-6** Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup> On account of these the wrath of God is coming.