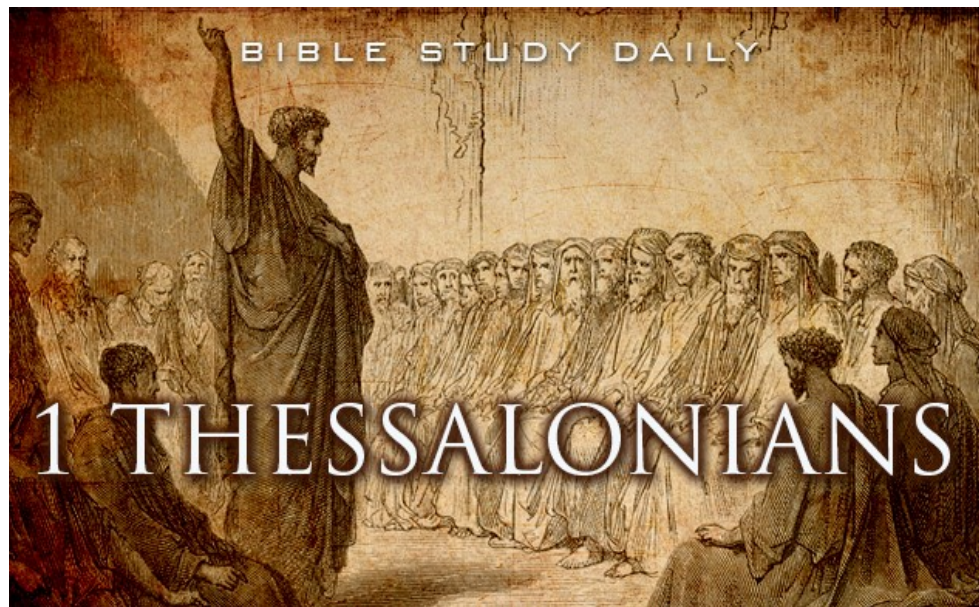




# BIBLE STUDY DAILY



This document contains the introduction to the book of 1 Thessalonians as well as my study notes for the book.

## Name

The title “1 Thessalonians” comes from the intended audience designated in 1:1, “To the church of the Thessalonians.” The body of the epistle makes it clear that Paul’s intended audience in Thessalonica is both Jewish and Gentile Christians.

## Author

Paul claims authorship of 1 Thessalonians in 1:1, and 2:18.

Externally, many of the early church fathers attribute the book of 1 Thessalonians to Paul including Irenaeus, Polycarp, Ignatius, and Justin.

## Genre

Epistle

## Literary Form

The epistle to the 1 Thessalonians is a personal letter that includes sections of encouragement and instruction.

## Time Frame

1 Thessalonians was written while Paul was in Corinth in A.D. 50-51 during his second missionary journey.

## Emphasis

The emphasis of 1 Thessalonians is on 1) how Paul conducted his ministry, 2) the persecution of the church, 3) the process of sanctification in a believer's life, and 4) the second coming of Christ.

## Outline

- Introduction, greeting and thanksgiving (1:1-10)
- Paul's conduct in the ministry (2:1-16)
- Concern for the Thessalonians (2:17-3:13)
- Call to sanctification (4:1-12)
- The second coming of Christ (4:13-5:11)
- Concluding exhortation and blessings (5:12-28)

# What I Noticed Today (1 Thessalonians 1-5)

## 1 Thessalonians 1

In verse 1 Paul opens the letter to the Thessalonians in the typical fashion: he announces himself, his intended audience the church in Thessalonica, and a greeting.

**Note:** Paul uses the Latin name “Silvanus” for Silas who Paul selected to join him on the second missionary journey when Barnabas left him (Acts 15:22).

### 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3:13

The first part of his letter is mostly personal dealing with their ministry, while chapters 4-5 deal with more practical issues of sanctification and the second coming of Christ.

In verses 2-10 Paul expresses thanksgiving for the believers in Thessalonica, saying he prays for their faith, labor of love, and endurance of hope in Jesus. In spite of severe persecution, they had welcomed the Gospel and received the Holy Spirit. They became an example to all the peoples in the region of Macedonia and Achaia. The people of these regions reported how the believers in Thessalonica had turned from their idols and serve God and His Son.

**Note:** Macedonia in the north and Achaia in the south make up most of what is modern day Greece.

## 1 Thessalonians 2

In verses 1-12 Paul relates events of his prior visit:

- Prior to their arrival in Thessalonica, while Paul and Silas were in Philippi they were treated badly (they were beaten and imprisoned for casting a demon out of a slave girl, Acts 16:16-40).
- The message Paul delivered was not given in error or with an intent to deceive but was the truth, their motives were pure, seeking only the glory of God.
- Paul did not burden them with the responsibility of helping to support him financially but cared for them gently sharing the Gospel, working (possibly in his tent making business) so as to not be a burden to them.
- The Thessalonians themselves can testify how devoutly, righteously and blamelessly they conducted themselves. And how, like a father, they had encouraged, comforted, and implored them to walk with God.

**Note:** Paul’s recounting of this history may be his way of countering some



who had accused Paul of having impure motives.

In verses 13-16 Paul explains his rejoicing at the way the Thessalonians received the Gospel.

- They welcomed the message, not from a human perspective, but recognized it as coming from God.
- You suffered persecutions like the church in Judea, just as they did from the Jews who killed the Lord and the prophets and persecuted us.
- The Jews have increased their sins by persecuting God's messengers, and His wrath will fall upon them.

**Note:** This is the first time that Paul specifically calls out the Jews for their persecution of the prophets and the church. As with the Old Testament prophets the Jews first rejected the message, then the messenger.

In verses 17-20 Paul relates how badly he has wanted to return to visit the believers in Thessalonica:

- We greatly desired...made every effort to return...but Satan hindered us.
- For you are our hope, our joy, our crown of boasting at His coming.

## 1 Thessalonians 3

In verses 1-5 while in Athens Paul and Silas decided to send Timothy to strengthen and encourage the Thessalonians against the persecutions they were enduring.

- "For this reason" refers to the persecution. The "tempter" is Satan.
- Paul's concern was they may have been tempted to abandon their new faith and return to their pagan practices.

In verses 6-10 Timothy returned with a glowing report on the Thessalonians; how they were strong in the faith and love, and wanted to see them (Paul and Silas) again. Therefore, in all their persecutions, Paul and Silas were encouraged by the report of the faith of the Thessalonians.

- Paul thanks God every day for the joy he experiences in the faith of the Thessalonians and prays he will be able to see them again face to face.

In verses 11-13 Paul concludes the more personal section of the letter with a prayer for the Thessalonians: that God and our Lord Jesus would cause them to overflow with love for one another, strengthen them, and make their hearts blameless in holiness before God and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## 1 Thessalonians 4

In verses 1-12 Paul provides practical instructions for living the Christian life:

- Walk in a way that pleases God, and do so even more, based on the

instructions Paul had previously given them.

- Your sanctification (can also be translated holiness) is God's will. Be sanctified by abstaining from sexual immorality and lustful desires.
- Don't behave like the Gentiles who don't know God.
- Sexual sin is a transgression against your brothers, and the Lord will avenge these sins. Rather, lead a holy (sanctified) life.
- The person who rejects this instruction does not merely reject man, but God who also gives the Holy Spirit.

**Note:** The Holy Spirit, given by God, provides the power to avoid the temptation of sexual sin.

- God taught you to love one another and you are known to be doing this, but do it even more, seek to live a quiet life, mind your own business, and work with your hands.
- This will provide an example to outsiders, and ensure that you are not a burden to other believers.

In verses 13-18 Paul discusses the rapture of the church to be sure they have a correct understanding:

- This instruction is in regards to believers who have fallen asleep (died).
- Jesus died and rose again.
- In the same way, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus.
- We who are still alive at the Lord's coming will have no advantage over those who have already died.
- The Lord will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God.
- At that time the dead in Christ will rise first, and then those who are alive will be taken up together with them in heaven to be with the Lord forever.

**Note:** It is not clear from verse 16 whether the three kinds of announcements come from the same person. Is the shout coming from the archangel? Is the archangel Michael? Is the trumpet a literal trumpet call? In any case, the Lord's coming will certainly be announced from heaven in an unmistakable way!

## 1 Thessalonians 5

Paul expands the discussion of the Rapture from Chapter 4 to a discussion of the Day of the Lord in chapter 5.

In verses 1-11

- "Times and seasons" is a reference to an age, in this case to the time of



the Lord.

- The Day of the Lord (the time of God's judgment) will come like a thief in the night.
- He will come suddenly like the pains of childbirth, and you cannot escape it.
- But you are not in the dark, and this day will not catch you by surprise because you are children of the light. We do not belong to the night or the darkness.
- We must stay awake and be serious and put on the whole armor of faith and love on our chests, and put on a helmet of the hope of salvation.
- For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ who died for us.
- Whether we are awake or asleep when He comes we will live together with Him.

**Note:** The word for "sleep" (asleep) in verses 6-7 is different than the word used in 4:13-15. This asleep refers to spiritual lethargy. Whether we are spiritually alert or not we will still live together with the Lord forever.


In verses 12-15 Paul exhorted the brothers regarding interpersonal relationships:

- Respect those who labored among them for the Gospel (church elders/administrators).
- Be at peace with one another.
- Warn those who are irresponsible.
- Comfort the discouraged.
- Help the weak.
- Be patient with everyone.
- Do not repay evil for evil, but pursue what is good for one another.

In verses 16-22 Paul exhorted the brothers regarding their personal lives in Christ:

- Be joyful.
- Pray constantly.
- Give thanks for everything.
- Don't stifle the Holy Spirit.
- Don't despise prophecies, but test all things and hold on to what is good.
- Stay away from every kind of evil.

In verses 23-24 Paul offers his final exhortations and blessings:

- 
- May the God of peace sanctify you completely.
  - May your spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless for the coming of the Lord.
  - He who calls you is faithful to do it (sanctify you).

In verses 25-28 Paul concludes the letter asking for prayer, that they greet each other with a holy kiss, and read this letter to all the brothers.

**Note:** Paul's final admonition to read the letter to the brothers means to read it aloud. The phrase "I charge you" is like putting them under oath to read it.

*Some thoughts for additional consideration:*

- *Paul commends the Thessalonians for much of what they are doing that is correct, but at the same time, he exhorts them to do it more and more. Are we becoming more and more holy in our lives?*
- *If we were to score our own behavior against Paul's list of exhortations in chapter 5 how would we be doing?*