

1 Thessalonians 1

Salvation: Evidence of Life & Spiritual Growth

Introduction: The Context of the Letter

1. Author & Date: Paul, Around 51 A.D.
2. One of the Earliest Writings of Paul
3. Thessalonica
 - a. On Major Trade Route in terms of Commerce
 - b. Beautiful Harbor City in Northern Greece-Macedonia
 - c. Founded in the 4th Century B.C. by Cassander, a World Leader at the time of Alexander the Great
4. The Occasion for the Letter
 - a. Paul's Second Missionary Journey Brought Him Here (**Acts 15-18**)
 - b. Paul's Missionary Strategy: Go to the Cities to Win Converts; the Gospel would spread from there into the World
 - c. Acts 17: Paul, Silas, and Timothy Teach in the Synagogue for Three Weekends – Causes a Riot, Escapes at Night
 - d. Paul concerned about the Gospel taking root in Thessalonica (**1 Thess 3:6-7**)
5. Three Main Features of the Letter
 - a. 1:1-2:16 – Paul Defends His Ministry
 - b. 2:17-3:13 – Concern/Joy for Church Stability
 - c. 4:1-5:28 – Christian Growth & Maturity

Central Concern of 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10:

Christians proclaim the Gospel of Christ and are Grateful to God when the evidence of Salvation, marked by faith, hope, love, is present both in individuals and in the church body.

The Greeting (Verse 1, See Also 3, 5-6)

1. Different from other Letters
2. Father and Son One – Thessalonians Secure Within
3. Demonstrates a Trinitarian Unity (**vv 3, 5-6**)

The Evangelist's (Paul's) Encounter (Verses 2-5)

1. Paul Went to the People – His Mission
2. Paul Used *Words* to Preach the Gospel
 - a. The Content: Jesus Crucified and Risen
 - b. The Faith Produced in the Listener (**Rom 10**)
3. Words are Useless without... Power, Certainty, Truth
 - a. The Power of God (**2:13**)
 - b. The Conviction of the Witness (**1 Cor 2:4**)
 - c. The Illumination & Regeneration of the Holy Spirit
4. Paul Knows They are Chosen by God
 - a. How can He know? How is He so Sure?
 - i. The Gospel Came to Them
 - ii. They Received It & Welcomed It
 - iii. The Gospel Bore Fruit in their Lives
5. Paul is Prayerfully Grateful to God for their Salvation

The Evidence of a Conversion Experience (Verses 3, 5-10)

1. The Gospel Came to the Thessalonians through Paul
2. They Received the Gospel - They were Marked by Joy in the Lord, Courage, & Obedience (**vv 6-7**)
 - a. God Opened their Hearts to Hear, Understand, Believe, and Obey
 - b. They Responded to the Message
 - c. They Received it in Much Affliction
 - d. They Received it with Joy from the Holy Spirit
3. They Modeled & Became Examples for Others (**v 8**)
4. They Imitated The Godly & The Lord
5. The Word Sounded Forth about their Conversion
6. The Three Cardinal Virtues of the Convert (**1 Cor 13**)
 - a. Faith (**vv 3b, 9b**): marked by past repentance
 - i. Idols: Dead, False, Many, Visible Images, Tangible, Creaturely
 - ii. God: Alive, One, Invisible, Spirit, The Creator of All Things
 - b. Love (**vv 3c, 9b**): marked by present service
 - c. Hope (**vv 3d, 10**): marked by patient waiting for a glorious future