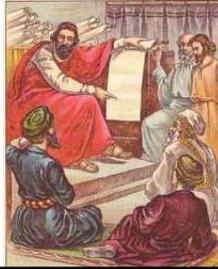


Hope for Christian Churches

Introduction to 1 Thessalonians



To the Thessalonian Christians and us

• The church founded: Acts 17

- 1 When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue.
- 2 As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,
- 3 explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he said.
- 4 Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.
- 5 But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the market-place, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd.
- 6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here,
- 7 and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus."
- 8 When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil.
- 9 Then they put Jason and the others on bail and let them go.
- 10 As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue.



Who wrote it?

• Internal support

- Authorship directly claimed
 - 1:1 **Paul, Silas and Timothy**, To the church of the Thessalonians ..
 - 2:18 For we wanted to come to you—certainly **I, Paul**, did, again and again—but Satan stopped us.
- His co authors align to the Acts narrative
 - 18:5 When Silas and Timothy came (to Corinth) from Macedonia, Paul devoted
- The letter has the Pauline typical form
- It has typical Pauline words and phrases

Who wrote it?

• External support

- Early church is in harmony with internal claims
 - Origen, Tertullian, Clement, Ireneus
 - Even supported by opposers (Marcion, ..)

Historical context?

- **3:1** *So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens.*
- **2** *We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow-worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith...* **6** *But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought...*
- **Acts 18:5** *When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself...*



Historical context?

- **51-53 AD**
 - External evidence
 - with 2nd missionary journey
- **Apostle Paul**
 - About 46 years old
 - Christian about 16 years
 - Passionate for Christ and His people



Recipients?

- **Acts 17:2** *As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,*
- **3** *explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he said.*
- **4** *Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.*

Why the letter?

- *Paul's concern and care for the infant church*
- *Pastoral visit by Timothy*
- **Report**
 - **Encouragement**
 - *Standing firm in spite of persecution*
 - **Challenges**
 - *Several upset*
 - *What about those who have died before the return of Christ?*

Purposes of writing

- **Encouragement**
 - *Despite continuing persecution*
 - *In the face of criticisms of church founding*
 - *Continuing in sanctification*
- **Exhortation**
 - *Regarding moral behaviours*
 - *About laziness*
- **Instruction**
 - *After death of loved ones*
 - *What Christians can expect*
 - *How to live in light of the second coming of our Lord*

- *1:10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.*
- *2:19 For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you?*
- *3:13 May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.*

- *4:17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord for ever.*
- *5:23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Letter outline

- *Author's greeting (1:1)*
- *Missionaries' ongoing prayer (1:2,3)*
- *Church description (1:3-10)*
- *Missionaries' defense (2:1-12)*
- *Strength in affliction (2:13-20)*
- *Missionary's pastoral visit (3:1-13)*
- *Sanctified living (4:1-12)*
- *About yours who have died (4:13-5:10)*
- *How should we then live? (5:11-22)*
- *Closing encouragement (5:23-28)*

Themes for us today

- **Leadership**
 - Teamwork
 - Prayer
 - Care and concern for the Body of Christ
- **Foundations**
 - Election in salvation
 - Integrity
 - Sanctified living
 - Sharing our faith
- **Afflictions**
 - Internal or external
- **Christian hope**

