

First and Second Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians

I. History

- A. Evangelized on the second missionary journey, just after Paul left Philippi (Acts 17:1-9)
- B. Unlike Philippi, Thessalonica had a synagogue, where Paul preached initially.
- C. Though some Jews believed, mostly Greek God-fearing men and prominent women responded and became the Thessalonian church.
- A. The unbelieving Jews stirred up a riot, hauling Paul's host Jason before the city council, requiring Jason and the other believers to "post bond."
- B. To avoid further troubling the church, Paul and Silas left and went to Berea, where they found more "noble" hearers (Acts 17:11).
- C. In Berea, Paul was further assaulted by Jews who came down from Thessalonica. Paul left Silas and Timothy in Berea, while he went alone to Athens, and then to Corinth. Timothy later joined Paul in Athens, but Paul sent him back to Thessalonica (1 Thess.3:1-2)
- D. During the 18 months Paul spent in Corinth, Timothy and Silas rejoined him (1 Thess.3:6), and Paul wrote the Thessalonian epistles.

II. Contents:

- A. Retrospect (chs.1-3)
 - 1. Remembering their conversion and subsequent testimony (ch.1)
 - 2. Remembering the apostles' character and manner in ministering to them (ch.2:1-12)
 - 3. Paul's anxiety before timothy returned (3:1-8)
 - 4. Expressions of desire to see them again (2:17-20 / 3:9-13)
- B. Three concerns (ch.4)
 - 1. Holiness and sexual purity (4:1-8)
 - 2. People not working (4:9-12)
 - 3. Misunderstanding of the second coming (4:13-18)
- C. Exhortations (ch.5)

III. Unique emphasis on the second coming

- A. Reference at the end of each chapter
- B. The resurrection and rapture (4:13-18)
- C. Being prepared for the unexpectedness of His coming (5:1-11)

IV. Seven brief exhortations (5:16-22)

- A. Rejoice always (v.16)
- B. Pray without ceasing (v.17)
- C. In everything give thanks (v.18)
- D. Do not quench the Spirit (v.19)
- E. Do not despise prophecies (v.20)
- F. Test all things; hold fast to the good (v.21)
- G. Abstain from every form of evil (v.22)

V. Sanctification: Our part and God's (5:16-24)

2 Thessalonians

The correspondence continues...

I. Similarities with 1 Thessalonians

- A. Paul continues to discuss eschatological questions (1:5—2:12)
- B. Paul renews his exhortation to work with your hands (ch.3)

II. Differences from 1 Thessalonians

- A. Paul expresses no concern about fornication
- B. Paul discusses events that must precede Christ's return (ch.2)
- C. Paul lays greater emphasis on the need to work and censures on the lazy (ch.3)