

A LOOK AT THE BOOK

1 Thessalonians

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AUTHOR AND DATE

Pauline authorship is indicated by tradition and internal evidence.
The letter was written about A.D. 51.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The church at Thessalonica was one of the first churches in Macedonia which Paul began on the second missionary journey (Acts 16-17). His ministry there was fruitful. There was a positive response (1 Thess. 1:3-10). It was founded in the midst of heavy Jewish opposition and persecution which continued after Paul's departure and was the source of their major problem. The testimony of their changed lives resulted in persecution (1:3).

Result of their suffering

They felt alone and discouraged.
They thought that Paul hadn't come because he didn't really care about them.

Paul's concern for them

He tried to visit them but was not able to go 2:17-18
Satan thwarted him from getting there 2:18
Finally he sent Timothy to encourage them 3:1-5

Timothy's report

The church was growing.
They were discouraged.
They were still questioning why Paul had not gone to them.

PURPOSE AND THEME

1. Paul wrote to defend himself concerning their doubts about him.
 - *Results desired:* That we might trust Paul and his love for us.
 - *Message:* He is sincerely interested in them and would like to visit them personally but has not been able to do so. He wants them to keep growing as they have been.
2. Paul wrote to stimulate them to be faithful and not be discouraged by their affliction.
 - *Results desired:* Faithfulness and joy in the midst of their affliction.
 - *Message:* He exhorts them to live a holy and blameless life and to be joyful in the midst of their suffering.
3. Paul wrote to answer doctrinal question about those who died before the Lord's return.
 - *Results desired:* Knowledge concerning the rapture and the Day of the Lord.
 - *Message:* The dead in Christ will be raised together with the living.
God will save them all together from the wrath of the day of the Lord.

What difference should the study of this letter make in our lives today?

1 THESSALONIANS

What difference does it make?

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RELATION WITH THESSALONIANS 1-3	EXHORTATION TO HOLY CONDUCT 4:1-12	INSTRUCTION CONCERNING DEATH AND THE END TIMES 4:13-5:11	EXHORTATIONS CONCERNING SPECIFIC NEEDS 5:12-28
Greeting 1:1	Moral Concerns 4:1-8	Concerning the dead in Christ 4:13-18	Concerning the Elders 5:12-13
Thanksgiving for their response to the Gospel 1:2-30		The problem 4:13	
Evidence of Paul's concern for them 2:1-12		The solution 4:14-17	Concerning other brethren 5:14-15
Response by them to Paul's ministry 2:13-16	Fraternal concerns 4:9-12	Resurrection 4:14	
Answer to their question concerning Paul's absence 2:17-20		Rapture together 4:15-17	Concerning the individual 5:16-22
Temporary solution by Timothy's visit 3:1-10		The result 4:18	
Present interest demonstrated by prayer for them 3:11-13		Concerning the Day of the Lord 5:1-11	Summary 5:23
		As a thief in the night 5:1-3	
		Not a surprise for God's children 5:4-8	Source of ability 5:24
		Not for wrath for God's children 5:9-10	
		Result of the message 5:11	Concluding personal notes 5:25-28