

# Thrills in Thessalonians

## Lesson for Sunday, March 7, 2021

We are kicking off a series through 1 & 2 Thessalonians. Today is simply an overview of & introduction to 1 Thessalonians.

### INTRO:

- Quiz: **What do you know about the book of 1 Thessalonians?** *Be creative and make it a competition.*
- 1 & 2 Thessalonians are two of the most helpful books in the Bible for Christians. They are probably as current in terms of what we are encountering today as any books of the Bible.
- **In the weeks to come we will be working through a chapter each week (so they can be reading ahead).** Today will be a fly-over – the big picture of the setting, context and purpose of 1 Thessalonians.

### BIBLE STUDY:

1. Its City **(use the maps)**
  - a. The city of Thessalonica was one of the largest cities in the NT world.
  - b. It was a very important city in Macedonia, which was really part of the nation of Greece.
  - c. The original name was *Therma*. If you think of a thermometer or thermostat, it will help you remember. The city was known for hot springs that were nearby.
  - d. The city was in the lap of the Roman Empire and had a population of approx. 200,000. It is one of the few cities in the NT that continues to thrive today.
  - e. Thessalonica was a strategic city and **fit right into Paul's strategy** for planting new churches and reaching people with the Gospel.
2. Its Church
  - a. The Book of Acts contains the road map that Paul was following which led him to Thess.
  - b. In Acts 16 is the account of his miraculous ministry in Philippi. This was about 100 miles from Thess.
  - c. **Look at Acts 17:1.** It appears that Paul was only there for less than a month (see vs. 2).
  - d. According to verse 4, Paul had mixed results.
  - e. In vs. 5-6 we see that Paul and these new converts quickly faced persecution. As a result, Paul and Silas were sent away (vs. 10).
  - f. It's amazing to notice that from what we can tell Paul was only in Thess for about a month, but when we read these letters from Paul to them, we have evidence of a thriving and growing church.
  - g. Paul left Thess and went to Berea; from there he continues to Athens. Eventually Paul sent Timothy back to Thess to check on them (see 1 Thess. 3:1-2).
  - h. In 1 Thess. 3:6-7 we see that Timothy brought back a good report. This young church was thriving! This is the setting that spurred Paul to write this letter.
3. Its Purpose
  - a. Why did Paul write this letter? Reading through the book we see at least five reasons:
  - b. Chapter 1: First was to express thanks and to encourage the people. **(go through and choose a key verse)**
  - c. Chapter 2: Paul writes to defend himself from slander.
  - d. Chapter 4: Paul writes to warn them against immorality.
  - e. Paul also wrote to deal with some church problems.

- f. Another reason was to answer questions related to the Second Coming.
  - g. Here's the key: **We must remember that these books were written to real people.** They were living in a real world. They had real problems, and they were encountering difficulties. This letter was written to help and encourage them to deal with what they were facing.
4. Its Theme
- a. The theme of the book is the Second Coming of Christ.
  - b. How should the Second Coming of the Lord affect believers? The Second Coming is one of those truths in the Bible that helps young Christians grow and mature about as much as any other doctrine.
  - c. 1 Thess has 5 chapters, and at the end of every chapter there is reference to the Second Coming of Jesus. Look these up and point out the idea behind each: **(look these up)**
    - i. 1:10 – The Second Coming in relationship to salvation – a saving truth.
    - ii. 2:19-20 – A stimulating truth – it should stimulate us to witness.
    - iii. 3:13 – A stabilizing truth – the Second Coming has a stabilizing effect on our hearts.
    - iv. 4:13-18 – A strengthening truth – the Second Coming brings us comfort.
    - v. 5:23-28 – A sanctifying truth – it has a way of causing us to set apart our life wholly and totally dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - d. Note: The return of the Lord contains two aspects. It is important to remember this as we study and Paul helps us:
    - i. Both 1 & 2 Thess deal with the return of the Lord.
    - ii. 1 Thess deals with the Rapture – Christ returns in the air for the saints.
    - iii. 2 Thess deals with the Revelation – Christ returns to the earth with the saints.

APPLICATION:

- Why not attempt to get the most out of our study?
- **Each week we will work through 1 chapter (so next Sunday will be 1 Thess 1).**
- **Take the time this week to read the chapter several times, and to even study it.**