**1THESSALONIANS**

References;

*The Open Bible Authorized King James Version*

*Scofield Study Bible King James Version*

*Life in the Spirit Study Bible*

*Online Dictionary*

**Theme:** Righteous Living & The Return of Christ

**Author:** Paul

**Written:** A.D. 51

**Background and Occasion for writing.**

In Paul’s time, Thessalonica was the prominent seaport and capital of the Roman province of Macedonia. This prosperous city was located on Via Egnatia, the main road from Rome to the East, within sight of Mount Olympus, legendary home of the Greek pantheon (*public building containing tombs or memorials of the illustrious dead of a nation).* Cassander expanded and strengthened this site around 315 B.C. and renamed it after his wife, the half sisters of Alexander the Great. The Romans conquered Macedonia in 168 B.C. and organized it into a single province twenty-two years with Thessalonica as the capital city. It became a “free city” under Augustus with with its own authority to appoint a governor board of magistrates who were called “politarchs.” The strategic location assured Thessalonica of commercial success, and it boasted population of perhaps 200,000 in the first season. Thessalonica survives under the shortened name Salonika.

Thessalonica was substantially populated with Jews and ethically monotheism of Judaism attracted many Gentiles who no longer was interested in Greek paganism. These God-fearing believers responded to Paul’s reasoning in the synagogue when he ministered there on his second missionary journey (*Acts 17:10).* The Jews became jealous of Paul’s success and organized a mob to oppose Christian missionaries. Not finding Paul and Silas, they dragged Jason, Paul and Silas host before the politarchs and accused him of harboring traitors of Rome. The politarchs extracted a pledge guaranteeing the departure of Paul and Silas, who left that night for Berea. After a time, the Thessalonian Jews raised an uproar in Berea so that Paul departed for Athens, leaving orders for Silas and Timotheus (Timothy) to join him there (*Acts 17:11-16).* Because of Luke’s account in Acts some scholars have reasoned that Paul was in Thessalonica for less than a month (three sabbath days” *Acts 17:2),* but other evidence suggests a longer stay:

1. Paul received two separate offerings from Phillipi, 100 miles away, while he was in Thessalonica (*Philippians 4:15, 16).*
2. According to 1:9 and 2:14-16, most of the Thessalonica converts were Gentiles who came out of idolatry. This would imply an extensive ministry directed to the Gentiles after Paul’s initial work with the Jews and Gentiles God-fearers.
3. Paul worked “night and day “ (*2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9)* during his time there. Paul supposed himself by tent making, which took many hours away from his ministry, requiring a longer stay to accomplish the extensive ministry of evangelism and teaching that took place in that city.

After Silas and Timothy met Paul in Athens (*3:1,2),* he sent Timothy to Thessalonica (Silas went back to Macedonia, probably Phillipi), and his assistants later rejoined him in Corinth (*Acts 18:5; 1 Thessalonians 1:1* where Silas is called Silvanus). There he wrote this epistle in A.D. 51 as his response to Timothy’s good report.

Thessalonians was written in Corinth, shortly after Paul’s departure from Thessalonica (*Acts 17: 1-10; 18:1).* Released from prison in Philippi, Paul with his company Silas and Timothy, traveled south and then west to Macedonian capital and commercial center, Thessalonica.

In spite of persistent efforts of opposition they established the the second European church. Harassed by Jews (*Acts 17:10-15).* Paul fled to Athens *(1 Acts 17:15-34),* concern for the Thessalonians prompted him to send Timothy to support the church against persecution (*1 Thessalonians 3:1-3).* Timothy rejoined Paul at Corinth *(Acts 18:1-17)* with the report that the gospel sent had fallen on good ground (*1 Thessalonians 3:6-8).* Paul at that time wrote 1 Thessalonians to commend and encourage his faithful brethren for dedicating themselves to Christ and to one another.

**Date and Place Written:**

Thanks to Luke’s historical details, the dates of these letters may be fixed with reasonable certainty. Luke’s reference to Gallio in connection with Paul’s temporary stay in Corinth *(Acts 18:12),* has been illuminated by the discovery at Delphi’s inscription which dates Gallio’s as governor over the area with Claudius as emperor. Gallio assumed office in the summer of A.D. 51. Luke suggests Paul’s stayed in Corinth about eighteen months before Gallio came to power *(Acts 18:11).*  Paul probably arriving in Corinth early in A.D. 50. Soon afterward, Silas and Timothy return with the report which prompted Paul’s writing 1 Thessalonians (*Acts 18:5; 1 Thessalonians 3:1-6),* probably about the middle A.D. 50. A few months later 2 Thessalonians followed to resolve certain problems not yet solved.

**Theme in Thessalonians**

1. To confirm the young converts in Thessalonica in foundational truths already taught to them
2. To exhort them to a life of personal holiness pleasing to the Lord
3. To comfort them concerning those who had died and
4. To instruct them concerning their own hope of the Lord’s return

**Key verses:**

*1 Thessalonians 3:12,13 and 4:16-18*

**Key chapter:**

*1 Thessalonians 4*

Concludes the central passage of the epistle on the coming of the Lord when the dead in Christ shall rise first, and those who remain are caught up together with them in the clouds.