

Paul Writes 1 Thessalonians



When: On 2nd journey [A.D. 51-52]
From Where: Corinth (Acts 18:11)

Synopsis

- Paul persuades & converts multitudes in Thessalonica (Acts 17:2-4)
- Jews, jealous of Paul, cause a riot & mistreat the new Christians (Acts 17:5-9)
- Paul & Silas forced to leave Thessalonica after the riot (Acts 17:10)
- He had “more than once” wanted to return, but could not (1 Thess. 2:17-18)
- Without doubt, Paul was anxious in wanting to know how they fared after his departure
- “When we could endure it no longer,” he sent Timothy to find out (1 Thess. 3:1-2, 5)
- Timothy’s return & good report prompts Paul to write this letter (1 Thess. 3:6-10)

Outline

Paul expresses thanks for these committed brethren (1:2-10)

- He prays for them...he is aware of their work
- He reminds them of the persecutions they have faced (cp. Acts 17:5-9)
- He had spoken about them to brethren he met in Macedonia & Achaia

Paul reminds them of the circumstances re: his coming to them (2:1-20)

- He was mistreated, imprisoned at Philippi (cp. Acts 16:16-24)
- He was opposed by the Jews after arriving in Thessalonica
- He taught boldly as an apostle, not as a fraudulent false teacher or one who was intimidated by what he had just experienced
- He supported himself, not taking wages from them (cp. 2 Thess. 3:7-12)
- He praised them for their reception of both him & the gospel he preached, turning from idols
- He likens them to their Judean brethren re: suffering at the hands of the Jews
- He states how much he has wanted to see them, but could not...“Satan has thwarted”

Paul reviews how he has learned of their condition (3:1-13)

- He could “stand it no longer”...he sent Timothy to them (obviously, he was worried)
- He was thankful for Timothy’s return & good report of their continued faithfulness

The Two Treatises

Lesson 43

General Exhortations (4:1 – 5:22)

- Refrain from sexual immorality => obvious connections to their former idolatrous practices
- Do not defraud, cheat each other legally => God will avenge any wrongdoings
- Live peaceful lives; be faithful in secular labors; behave properly towards unbelievers
- Do not worry about deceased saints => they will rise at the resurrection
- Appreciate those who labor among them, oversee them
- Help the weak; admonish the unruly; hold fast to the truth

Final Requests (5:23-28)

- May God sanctify and preserve the Thessalonians
- Pray for him
- Greet the brethren
- Make sure this letter is read to all the brethren

Review Questions

- 1) Re: 5:27, who would have been present when this letter was read? What parts of this letter would have been especially meaningful? (Acts 17:5-6, 9)

- 2) What challenges does Paul encourage these Christians to continue to master? (4:3-4; cp. 1:9)

- 3) What major “themes” do you see emphasized in this epistle?