

# The First Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians

*The city of Thessalonica was ideally situated along the Egnatian Way on the western side of the Chalcidic peninsula. It was the chief seaport of ancient Macedonia and an important commercial and military center.*

*After Paul and Silas were forced to leave Pilippi, they traveled along the Egnatian Way to Thessalonica (Acts 16:39 – 17:1) where Paul taught in the synagogue for three sabbaths. They were forced to leave the city when antagonistic Jews, after stirring up the people of Thessalonica, brought some of the believers before the city officials and accused them of promoting treasonous ideas (Acts 17:5-10). The believers there came under great persecution following this uproar. Paul feeling that he had not had enough time to ground them in Christian doctrine, decided to return to Thessalonica, but was hindered by Satan (1 Thess. 2:17, 18). Consequently he sent Timothy to complete the work he had begun (1 Thess. 3:1, 2).*

*The book of 1 Thessalonians was probably written by the Apostle Paul between the years A.D. 50 and 51 when Timothy returned to him in Corinth (Acts 18:5). He brought good news of their steadfastness and zeal in propagating the gospel (1 Thess. 3:6). Nevertheless, he reported that there were some ethical problems (1 Thess. 3:4-7), as well as some eschatological misconceptions. The Thessalonian believers were concerned that those believers who had already died would miss Christ's coming. Paul assured them that those who died would be caught up to meet the Lord just like those who are alive at His coming (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Despite these problems and the persecution that they had faced, the church at Thessalonica had faithfully spread the gospel (1 Thess. 1:8). (Key Word, page 1484)*

*Thessalonica (thies' a lo-ni'ka). A city on the Thermaic Gulf, now called the Gulf of Salonika. The city was first called Therme, or Therma, hot springs; but Cassander, 1 of the successors of Alexandra the Great, made it his residence and renamed it Thessalonica, after his wife Thessalonike, a daughter of the conqueror of the Chersonesus and sister of the great Alexander. Under the romans it was the capital of the 2d district out of 4 into which they had divided Macedonia. (Davis, page 602)*

## Chapter 1

1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Th: -assembly, church.essalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Church 1577, ekklesia, ek-klay-see'-ah; from a compound of 1537 and a derivative of 2564; a calling out, i.e. (concretely a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both)*

### ***The Power of the Gospel***

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

*Election 1589, ekloge, ek=log-ay'; from 1586; (devine) selection (abstract or concrete): -chosen, election.*

5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

*Romans 10:*

*17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

*18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.*

9 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

## Chapter 2

1 For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:

2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

*Acts 16:22; Acts 17:2*

3 For our exhortation *was* not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God *is* witness:

6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor *yet* of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

8 So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

*Souls 5590, psuche, psoo-khay'; fro 5594; breath, i.e. (by implication) spirit, abstract or concrete (the animal sentient principle only; thus distinguished on the one hand from 4151, which is the rational and immortal soul; and on the other from 2222, which is the mere vitality,*

*even of plants: these terms thus exactly correspond respectively to the Hebrew 5315, 7307 and 2416): -jeart (+-ily), life, mind, soul, + us, +you.*

9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

10 Ye *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father *doth* his children,

12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

14 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the Jews:

15 Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

16 Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

17 But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

19 For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

*The word Parousia (3952), translated “coming” in this verse, basically means “presence” or “arrival” (1 Cor. 16:17; 2 Cor. 7:7). Thus, the same Jesus who ascended to heaven will come again in a bodily presence (Acts 1:11) at the end of the age (Matt. 24:3). He will come in power and glory to destroy the Antichrist and evil (2 Thess. 2:8).*

*The return of Christ will also be a “revelation” or a “removing the cover” from something that is hidden, noted by the Greek word apokalupsis (602), disclosure. The power and glory that Christ now possesses will be unveiled and disclosed to the world (1 Pet. 4:13). Christ is now reigning as LORD at GOD’s right hand (Heb. 12:2), sharing God’s throne (Rev. 3:21). Although His authority is not discernible to the world, it will be made visible by His apokalupsis, “revelation.”*

*Another word that is related to the Second Coming of the Lord is epephaneia (2015), which means “a manifestation.” In ancient Greek, the word was used especially to refer to the appearance of gods and of the manifestation of divine power or providence. However, in the New Testament, it is used of the appearing of the manifestation of Jesus Christ on earth (2 Thess. 2:8; 2 Tim. 1:10; 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13). (Key Word, pages 1485-1486)*

20 For ye are our glory and joy.

## Chapter 3

### ***“Stand Fast in the Lord”***

1 Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;

*Acts 17:15*

2 And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

3 That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

*Ephesians 3:13*

4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

5 For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

*Tempter 3985, peirazo, pi-rad'-zo; from 3984; to test (object), i.e. endeavour, scrutinize, entice, discipline: -assay, examine, go about, prove, temp (-er), try.*

6 But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also *to see* you:

*Acts 18:1, 5*

7 Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:

8 For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

9 For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;

10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

11 Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.

12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all *men*, even as we *do* toward you:

13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

## Chapter 4

### *Sanctification*

1 Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort *you* by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, *so* ye would abound more and more.

2 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

3 For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

*Fornication 4203, porneia, por-ni'-ah; from 4203; harlotry (including adultery and incest): (figurative) idolatry: -fornication.*

4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

6 That no *man* go beyond and defraud his brother in *any* matter: because that the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

9 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

10 And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

12 That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and *that* ye may have lack of nothing.

### *Christ's Return*

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

*To be ignorant 50, agnoeo, ag-no-eh'-o: from 1 (as a negative particle) and 3539; not to know (through lack of information or intelligence): (by implication) to ignore (through disinclination): -(be) ignorant (-ly), not know, not understand.*

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

*This word here that is translated “prevent” is derived from the Greek verb phthano (5348), which means “to anticipate, to be before.” Also in this verse, the dead are called, “the which are asleep.” The Greek word used is koimethentas (2837), “to sleep or slumber.” In this verse, it refers to the body being asleep, not the soul. (Key Word, page 1487)*

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

*There are two important Greek words in this verse. The first is harpagesometha, translated “caught up.” This refers to a specific moment in the future when believers will be caught up by Jesus Christ, as He descends from heaven. The other word is “meet,” translated from the Greek phrase eis apantesin (1519, 529), which means “to come into the presence of, to meet.” This occurs after the dead have been raised (1 Thess. 4:14-16). Then the bodies of those who are alive will be transformed into new bodies. (Key Word, page 1487)*

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

## Chapter 5

### **“A Thief in the Night”**

1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

2 Peter 3:

9 *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

10 *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

11 *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,*

12 *Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?*

13 *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

Revelation 16:

13 *And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.*

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

*Zephaniah 1:*

14 The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.

15 That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness,

16 A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.

17 And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung.

18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.

*The "Day of the Lord" holds an important place in prophecy. Amos declared that the "Day" signified judgement for Israel (cf. Is. 2:12-22; Ezek. 13:5; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11; Zeph. 1:14; Zech 13:1 see note on Zeph. 1:7)*

*Several prophets refer to it as God's "day of judgment" upon individual nations such as Babylon (Is. 13:6-9), Egypt (Jer. 46:10), Edom (Obad. 1:8), and many other nations (Joel 2:31; 3:14; Obed. 1:15). Thus, the Day of the Lord represents the occasion when Jehovah will actively and openly intervene to punish sin.*

*During the time period of the Day of the Lord, there will be those who truly repent and are saved, but those who remain enemies of the Lord, whether Jews or Gentiles, will be punished.*

*In the New Testament, the Day of the Lord is related to the Second Coming of Christ. So also is the phrase "the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:8; 5:5; Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16; 2 Thes. 2:2). Both Expressions, the "Day of the Lord" and the "Day of Christ," refer to time periods of judgement by Christ. The Day of the Lord will include the time of the Great Tribulation (cf. Rev. 6-20). It also refers to the liberation by Christ of His Church. Zechariah 14:1-4 explains that the events of the Second Advent are included in the program of the Day of the Lord. Thus, the Day of the Lord and the Day of Christ occur simultaneously. For the Church, it is the rapture; and for the unbelieving of judgement and the Tribulation. If the Day of the Lord began after the Second Advent, it could not come as a "thief in the night," (1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10). Consequently, the only way these events could occur unexpectedly would be for them to begin immediately after the rapture of the Church. The Day of the Lord, therefore, is that extended period of time when God begins to deal with Israel after the rapture of the church. It also continues through the Second advent and the millennial age, preceding the creation of the new heaven and new earth. (Key Word, pages 1487-1488)*

*Note: The word rapture is not in the King James Bible, or the manuscripts. It is a word used by man. Mark 13:5 Christ stated, “**And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you:**” He goes to tell us of His return;*

*13 **And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.***

*14 **But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains:***

*15 **And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house:***

*16 **And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.***

*17 **But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!***

*18 **And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.***

*19 **For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.***

*20 **And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.***

*21 **And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not:***

*22 **For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.***

*23 **But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.***

*24 **But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light,***

*25 **And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.***

*26 **And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.***

*27 **And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.***

*Thus the gathering of us alive on earth, what they refer to as rapture, happens in Mark 13 verse 27 above, not before the tribulation mentioned in Mark 13 verse 24. The good news for us is in verse 20, “the Lord had shortened those days.”*

3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

*Isaiah 13:*

*6 **Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.***

*7 **Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt:***

*8 **And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames.***

*9 **Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.***

*10 **For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.***

*11 **And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.***



12 *I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.*  
13 *Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.*

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.  
5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

*John 12:*

35 *Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.*

36 *While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.*

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.

*Sleep 2518, katheudo, kath-yoo'-do; from 2596 and heudo (to sleep); to lie down to rest, i.e. (by implication) to fall asleep (literal or figurative): -(be a) sleep.*

7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

*Isaiah 59:*

16 *And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.*

17 *For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.*

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

### ***Final Instructions***

12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves.

14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*.

15 See that none render evil for evil unto any *man*; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all *men*.

16 Rejoice evermore.

17 Pray without ceasing.

- 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.
- 19 Quench not the Spirit.
- 20 Despise not prophesyings.
- 21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.
- 22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.
- 23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 24 Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who also will do *it*.
- 25 Brethren, pray for us.
- 26 Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.
- 27 I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.
- 28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen. (*The first epistle to the Thessalonians was written from Athens.*)

## References

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