

# 1st Thessalonians

Paul, Silas (or Silvanus) and Timothy (or Timotheus) had preached the gospel together in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1ff) after leaving Philippi, where Paul and Silas had been beaten and asked to leave town. Their initial reception at the synagogue in Thessalonica had been positive, but after a few jealousy resulted in conflict with some of the local Jews who did not believe. Those adversaries soon forced the preachers to leave town. Several months later the 3 came together again in Corinth, and wrote 1 Thessalonians, in about 50-51 AD. Folks generally refer to this as a letter of Paul, and a few passages are specifically from Paul, as in 3:1, the content of the letter reflects the collaboration of the 3 men listed in 1:1. One an apostle, one a prophet, and one an evangelist.

Note faith, love, and hope in 1:3 as motivators for Christian work, labor, and perseverance. This divine attributes of Christian life are often found together as also in 1 Corinthians 13:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:8, Romans 5:1-5, Galatians 5:5-6. 1 Thessalonians is structured with Faith in the opening paragraphs, transitioning to Love in about 2:7 and Hope in about chapters 4:13-5:11.

Note the way mothers and fathers are supposed to feel and behave toward children (2:7-8, 11-12), which was modeled by the preachers to the brethren there.

Persecution was part of the ordinary life of Christians then and the general experience of Christians who are firm in their faith, 2:2, 14-16.

Eternal consequences are referenced several times in 1 Thessalonians, as in 1:10, 2:16, 4:13-5:11.

Christian moral behavior is of the utmost importance, defining holiness for believers, 4:1-12.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead were widely misunderstood and needed additional instruction. Note that the return of the Lord in 4:13-5:11 is a doctrine encouraging to Christians who are to encourage each other (4:18, 5:11), and a warning to unbelievers who won't be ready when he comes, 5:1-10.

The work of the Holy Spirit among believers is applauded in 1:5-6, 4:8, and 5:19.

Practical instructions are scattered through the letter, and especially in 4:1-12 and 5:12-22.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 is one place where the human being is described as a trinity of body, soul and spirit.