

**The Letters to the Churches**  
**Waiting on the Lord... 1 Thessalonians & 2 Thessalonians**

Thessalonians is if not the first, one of the first of the letter of Paul wrote. The date of this was AD 52 while he was at Corinth. The church was a good church that had been started on Paul's second missionary journey. (**Acts 17:1-14**). Paul went to this port after the vision of **Acts 16:9**.

The city had hot springs, a sheltered harbor that was ideal for commerce as well as a naval station. The population was around 200,000. It was located on the main Roman highway from east to west and was the capital of Macedonia.

Paul had not stayed long in the city when he established the church and word had gotten back to him that they were suffering. He sent Timothy to check on them. (**1 Thes 3:1-2**)

Paul writes this first letter to address some of the struggles they were facing. We will study the first then the second letter.

**1 Thessalonians**

**Outline:**

- I- Prayer of Thanks... 1 Thes 1:1-4**
- II- The Church Was An Example... 1 Thes 1:5-10**
- III- Ministry under Fire... 1 Thes 2:1-20**
- IV- I Had to Know.... 1 Thes 3:1-13**
- V- "...how ye ought to walk" ... 1 Thes 4:1-12**
- VI- The coming of the Lord... 1 Thes 4:13-5:11**
- VII- Final exhortation... 1 Thes 5:12-28**

**I- Prayer of Thanks... 1 Thes 1:1-4**

Paul, after his greeting, tells these believers that he thanks God for

their faith, labor of love and hope. He also tells them he is thankful to God for them in **1 Thes 2:13, 3:9-10**.

**II- The Church Was An Example... 1 Thes 1:5-10**

This church was an example (**2:7**) to the other churches in the area. They were busy doing the work of evangelism while they waited on the Lord. (**2:10**).

**III- Ministry under Fire... 1 Thes 2:1-20**

Paul reminded them of his ministry under fire. While he was at Thessalonica he was under fire from the Jews who stirred up trouble and had him kicked out of the city (**Acts 17:1-9**) Next they even followed him to Berea (**17:13**). This bunch now was saying that Paul's ministry there was in vain. (**2:1**).

Paul reminds them of his conduct while he was among them and that what was being said was not consistent with what they had observed of him.

**IV- I Had to Know.... 1 Thes 3:1-13**

This chapter records what I call I had to know. Paul was concerned with these new converts and sent Timothy to check on them. Timothy brought good news back to Paul (**3:6**).

The prayer of Paul for them found in **1 Thes 3:11-13** deserves attention. He wanted them to increase and abound in love because of the soon coming of the Lord.

**V- "...how ye ought to walk" ... 1 Thes 4:1-12**

This as well as **5:12ff** is an application to life for them. Because of

its location the city was well known not only for its wealth but also for its vices as well. Paul gives them some practical advice on how to walk in a tainted world. **4:1-12** deserves to be read almost without comment.

#### **VI- The coming of the Lord... 1 Thes 4:13-5:11**

One of the things that the letters to the Thessalonians is best known for is its emphasis on the coming of the Lord. It contains the great passage that gives us the picture of the rapture of the church. (**4:13-18**).

Next Paul told them that men do not know the time. (**5:1**). He tells us Christ will come as a thief in the night. He reminds us that we are not children of the night but should watch and pray.

One of the reasons that preaching and teaching on the coming of the Lord for the church is important is that it should motivate us to live as if He would come in the next instance.

#### **VII- Final exhortation... 1 Thes 5:12-28**

In his parting word of the first letter he gave them some final instructions. These come at you in rapid fire as you read them.

### **II Thessalonians**

Paul writes this second letter to respond to reports that some in the church at Thessalonica were still confused. **II Thes 2:2** even suggest that that some were deliberately misrepresenting Paul teaching and there might have even been some counterfeit letters to the church.

#### **Outline:**

- I- Be encouraged... II Thes 1:1-12**
- II- The Signs of the Coming of the Lord...II Thes 2:1-17**

### **III- Don't set down and wait...II Thes 3:1-18**

#### **I- Be encouraged... II Thes 1:1-12**

Paul wanted to encourage them that even though they were being persecuted for their faith that God would have the final word. (**1:7-9**)

#### **II- The Signs of the Coming of the Lord...II Thes 2:1-17**

Perhaps the best known portion of the second letter is **2:1-12**, which tells of the coming of the Antichrist prior to the Second Coming of the Lord. The restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit is found here as well. (**2:7**).

It is important that we understand that there is a difference in the rapture of the church and the Second Coming of the Lord known as the day of the Lord. The rapture is when the church goes to meet the Lord in the air (**I Thes 4:13ff**) and the Second Coming is when Christ comes back to earth and sets foot on the Mount of Olives. Two different events separated by some seven years known as the great tribulation.

### **III- Don't set down and wait...II Thes 3:1-18**

We realize that we will not know the time of His coming and the reason for this is apparent when we understand what happened in this church.

Part of the confusion seems to have been that they quit their jobs and set down to wait on the Lord. Paul tells them to get up and go back to work. (**3:6-14**).

**STEP 45**

**Application to Life's Steps:**

- 1- The coming of the Lord for His Church could be any moment.
- 2- We should live our lives in anticipation of this event.
- 3- While we anticipate His coming we need to work for the kingdom and not set down and wait.
- 4- The indwelling Holy Spirit is preventing the manifestation of the Antichrist today.
- 5- Our walk should be directed by the teachings of these letters as well.

**Retracing our Steps:**

- 1- Who wrote the books of I & II Thessalonians?\_\_\_\_\_
- 2- Find and read the great rapture portion of scripture found here?
- 3- Who did Paul send to check on the church?\_\_\_\_\_
- 4- What is one area of you Christian walk that the Holy Spirit has pointed out in these letters that you need to work on? \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 5- What will you do to work on it?  
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