

# 1 THESSALONIANS

The Church in Thessalonica was founded approximately one year prior on Paul’s second missionary trip (Acts 17:1-9). This letter conveys the work of Christ and the purpose of His followers – even in their deaths. Jesus’ second coming is mentioned in every chapter - especially the last verse of each chapter. Thessalonica was the capital and largest city (~200,000 population) in Macedonia on the major Roman road, “Via Ignatia” (the way of the nations) as an important business center with a key harbor (similar to Corinth).

Paul probably wrote the letter to the Thessalonians from Corinth during his second missionary journey making this one of Paul’s earliest writings. (Acts 14:28; 15:2) Paul was in Corinth while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia (Acts 18:12) which is historically well-defined to be between the summers of 51AD to 53AD.

The Book of 1 Thessalonians is a comforting word to a suffering, persecuted church of Thessalonica. This is one of the earliest letters that Paul penned (with only Galatians possibly being earlier). Paul had spent three weeks in Thessalonica sharing the gospel which was very well received until envious Jews began a riot and turned Thessalonica against God’s message. (Acts 17:1-9) Paul had sent Timothy to encourage the church; now, Timothy had returned with a good report, but also shared Thessalonica’s questions about the return of the Lord.



In ancient times, Cassander was proclaimed the King of Macedonia in 305BC, and he founded Thessalonica (“Thessaloniki”) in 315BC as a new port city (after the port city of Pella began to “silt up.”). Cassander named the city after his Macedonian wife (the half-sister of Alexander the Great). King Philip II (Alexander’s father) derived her name as a combination of the words “Thessaly” (a region south of Macedonia) and “Nike” (Victory).

Thessalonica was at the crossroads of two major Roman roads; one road (Ignatia Way) from Italy eastward and the other road from the Danube River southward to the Aegean.

Outline of 1 Thessalonians	
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10	Thanksgiving for the Church

1 Thessalonians 2:1-20	Paul's Care for the Church
1 Thessalonians 3:1-3:13	Timothy's Report of the Church
1 Thessalonians 4:1-12	True Love
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	Death & the Rapture
1 Thessalonians 5:1-11	The Day of the Lord
1 Thessalonians 5:12-22	Church Relationships
1 Thessalonians 5:23-24	Benediction
1 Thessalonians 5:25-28	Closing Remarks

## 13 1 Thessalonians 1

### Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-4 ... Paul Gives Thanks for Church of Thessalonica

1:1 This letter begins by Paul (meaning "little" or "humble") referencing his companions.

- Silas was only mentioned in the epistles with Paul and Timothy (Acts 15:22-40, 16:19-29, 17:4-15) in both letters to the Thessalonians (2 Thessalonians 1:1)
  - Luke (the author of Acts) uses the name "Silas" (Hebrew name) while Paul refers to him as "Silvanus" (Roman name).
  - Silas (Silvanus) had been a leader in the church of Jerusalem (Acts 15:22).
  - Silas joined Barnabas in inspecting the church in Antioch (Acts 15:22,30-35)
  - Silas replaced Barnabas on Paul's second missionary journey while Barnabas joined John Mark in Cyprus. (Acts 15:40) Paul may have been trying to unify the new Gentile church with the established church of Jews in Jerusalem.
  - Silas was a prophet (Acts 15:32) and a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37)
- The name "Timothy" means "to honor God."
  - During Paul's second mission trip (with Silas), Paul recruited Timothy who was most likely led to Christ by Paul during the first missionary journey (1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2).
  - Timothy's mother (2 Tim 1:5), Eunice ("good victory / conquering well"), was a believing Jew (2 Tim 3:15).
  - Timothy represented the convergence of the church as the Jew (his mother) and the Gentile (his father) were a single family bearing him.
- The Greek word of "ekklesia" (ἐκκλησία) is a reference to the Old Testament gatherings of God's people.
  - The Septuagint extends "ekklesia" back into the Old Testament assemblies of Israel (Exodus 12:6; Leviticus 16:17; Numbers 14:15, etc. – Hebrew: qahal) as the New Testament church is a heritage of "the gathering" of the Jewish nation under Yahweh.
- The Greek term for "father" (patros πατρός) reflects an intimate family connection and interpersonal relationship.
- All three names/aspects of the "*Lord Jesus Christ*" are given. Lord (divine master) Jesus (humanity) Christ (the Messiah).
  - The Greek term for "Lord" (Kyriou Κυρίου) comes from Israel's Old Testament covenantal name of God. Israel was reluctant to use the name

“Yahweh” (YHWH יהוה), so Israel substituted the name “Adonai” (אֲדֹנָי) which means “Lord.” The use of the word “Lord” asserts the full deity of Jesus.

- The name “Jesus” (meaning “God is Salvation”) was given by an angel to Joseph (Matthew 1:21) and to Mary (Luke 1:31).
- The term “Christ” (Χριστοῦ) means “anointed one” for a special purpose or mission. Christ carries the meaning of Messiah from a sacrificial, “suffering servant lifestyle to the point of death.

- Peace follows the grace of God.

1:2 Paul’s mind was constantly on God’s will. (Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Timothy 2:1-2)

1:3 Thessalonians were remembered for their ministry of Faith, Love, and Hope (1 Corinthians 13:13 Romans 5:2-5; Galatians 5:5-6; Colossians 1:4-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:8; Hebrews 6:10-12; 1 Peter 1:21-22);

- Past: Faith in Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection
- Present: Live a life of Love towards God and others
  - This is the same selfless love (agape ἀγάπη) that God has for His people.
- Future: Hope in Christ’s return and transformed body
  - The term for “hope” in the New Testament typically refers to the “Parousia” (παρουσία) which is the second coming of Jesus when the lost will be judged and His people rewarded.
  - Paul used the “Parousia” as an impetus and motivation for godly lifestyles. (Philippians 2:15)
  - The Greek view of “hope” is the certainty of an event without knowing the time of the event.

<b>Continual Christianity</b>	
Past	Faith in Jesus’ crucifixion & resurrection
Present	A life of Love towards God & others
Future	Hope in Christ’s return & transformed body

1:4 God loved His people (1 John 4:19; John 3:16), so He saved them (Ephesians 1:4-5)

### **Read 1 Thessalonians 1:5-7 ... Witness Beyond Words to Power & Actions**

1:5 Accurate doctrine is essential; however, there is a greater need for a personal walk with the Lord in His Spirit following a God-ordained calling and lifestyle.

- The gospel came in 1. Word 2. Power 3.the Holy Spirit
- The profession of “Christianity” is validated by the “Christ-likeness” of the believer. (Romans 8:28-29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 7:1; Galatians 4:19; Ephesians 1:4; 4:13; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:3,7; 5:23; 1 Peter 1:15)

1:6 The Greek term for “imitate” (mimētai) is the root word for “mimic.” (1 Thessalonians 1:6; 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:7,9; 1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Galatians 4:12; Philippians 3:17; 4:9).

- Believers make the choice to turn all that they are individually over to all that they understand of God – for His will and purpose.

- Everyone has challenges and difficulties in this world, and those trials offer a great opportunity to witness by lifestyle and attitude. “...during great affliction with the joy of the Holy Spirit...”
- As God planned (Acts 9:16), Paul experienced a great deal of suffering in his ministry. (2 Corinthians 4:7-11; 6:3-10).

Reasons that Believers Suffer	
Judgment/Punitive	Galatians 6:7
Decline of the World	Matthew 24:6-9
Correction/Personal Improvement	2 Corinthians 12:7-9; James 1:2-4
Spiritual Perfection of Faith	1 Peter 1:7
Consequence of Knowing Jesus	Matthew 5:10-12; John 15:20

1:7 The believers in Thessalonica were to be examples of the impact of the gospel to both areas within Greece (Macedonia in the north and Achaia in the south).

- The Thessalonian example was to show believers how to live in difficult times.

### Read 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10 ... The Testimony of the Church of Thessalonica

1:8 The lifestyle evangelism of Thessalonica went beyond the local regions to the world (Acts 17:6). The witness of a believer may affect more people than can be imagined.

- The Greek term for “sounding forth” (exēchētai ἐξήχηται) is related to the root word for “echo.”

1:9 There is bad news (all men are sinners) before there is positive news (God offers salvation). Salvation includes turning from sin while turning to God. (Mark 1:15)

- God’s covenantal name in the Old Testament was Yahweh (יהוה) which was written as a tetragram consisting of four letters. The name Yahweh means the “ever living, only living God.”

1:10 Christians serve the only true God as they await the return of Jesus (Isaiah 30:18, 40:31; Psalms 22:14, 62:1) who will save His chosen people from the end times wrath (Revelation 6:17, 11:18).

- The theme of the Lord’s second coming underlies 1 & 2 Thessalonians. (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; Revelation) Paul emphasizes that believers should live purposefully/watchfully and be ready for the Lord’s return.
- Christ’s resurrection from the dead reflects the same power that will resurrect His people (1 Corinthians 15).

14 1 Thessalonians 2

### Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-2 ... Witness Through Persecution

2:1 Paul affirms that those in Thessalonica have first person experience. (1 Thessalonians 2:1, 2, 5, 10-11)

- The Greek term for “vain” (kenē κενή) means “meaningless” or “empty handed.”
- The changed lives of the Thessalonians shows that Paul’s ministry to them was not in vain.

2:2 Paul had been arrested in Philippi, an earthquake had shattered the jail and the jailor had accepted Christ (Acts 16:11-40).

- When Paul entered Thessalonica, the Lord provided courage to Paul to share the gospel.

- The Greek term for “conflict” (agōni ἀγῶνι) was the root word for “agony” and meant hand-to-hand combat or competition.
- The “gospel” (euangelion εὐαγγέλιον) is the good news that God has provided salvation for sinful man.

### **Read 1 Thessalonians 2:3-6 ... Sincere Witness Without False Persuasion**

2:3 Three things that the gospel message is not 1. Erroneous 2. Unclean 3. Deceitful

- The Greek term for “exhortation” (paraklēsis παράκλησις) literally means “to come alongside” and is translated as “comfort” and “consolation.”
  - A similar Greek term is used in 1 Thessalonians 2:12 for “exhorting” (parakalountes παρακαλοῦντες) and 1 Thessalonians 3:2 for “encourage” (parakalesai παρακαλέσαι)
  - The same term “paraklēsis” describes the help of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) and is translated into “comforter” in 1 John 2:1.
- The Greek term for “deceiver” (planos πλάνος) originates from the same root as planets. Ancient astronomers would track the movement of the stars; however, some heavenly bodies would not travel as the other heavenly bodies because they were planets (“aimless wanderers”).
  - This was the same term (“deceiver” or “wanderer”) that was later used to describe the Antichrist. (2 John 1:7).

2:4 The gospel isn’t spoken to please men, but instead to please God (Proverbs 7:21, 26:28; Ezekiel 12:24)

- The Greek term for “approve” (dokimazein δοκιμάζειν) is a metallurgical test of biting a coin to ensure that it is genuine and real. The authenticity of a walk with God is the result of pleasing God instead of man. (Galatians 1:10; John 12:43)
- Believers are stewards of the good news and should not be swayed by the listeners, but be true to God’s Word that has been entrusted to His people.

2:5 The Greek term for “flattery” (kolakeias κολακείας) means “manipulation” or “techniques to change people’s mind.” Paul supported himself as a tent maker, so that no one could accuse him of ministering for money. (Acts 18:3)

- Paul repeatedly vowed that he was telling the truth with God as his witness (1 Thessalonians 2:10; Romans 1:9; 1 Corinthians 1:23; 11:31; Galatians 1:19; Philippians 2:25).
- God was a “witness” in two ways: 1. That Paul is telling the truth 2. God’s power moved people towards the gospel instead of manmade contrivances

2:6 The message of God was not to bring applause and accolades from the congregation

- The Greek term for “apostles” (apostolōn ἀποστόλων) means to “to send with official authority” as Christ’s representatives.
- In this verse, Timothy and Silas are included in the list of apostles. The gift of apostleship continues to be given by the Spirit (Ephesians 4:11)
  - Barnabas and Paul were included as an apostle (Acts 14:14)
  - James - the leader of the Jerusalem church (Galatians 1:19)
  - Apollos (1 Corinthians 4:6-9)
  - Timothy & Silas (1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2:6)
  - Andronicus & Junia (Romans 16:7)

- Some believers have been given the spiritual gifts to be apostles (1 Corinthians 12:29; Revelation 18:20)
- Several times the Greek term “apostolōn” is translated as “messengers.”
  - Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25)
  - Two unnamed apostles (2 Corinthians 8:23)
- Jesus is also called an apostle (Hebrews 3:1)

**Read 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8 ... Paul’s Genuine Affection for Thessalonica**

2:7 The message of God is gentle/compassionate (2 Timothy 2:24; Titus 3:2; James 3:17)

2:8 Paul cared so much for them that he shared of himself (and gave of his life) to bless them with the Word of God.

- The Greek term for “beloved” (agapētoi ἀγαπητοὶ) is used in the New Testament 30 times and is commiserate with the same selfless love that God extends towards His people.

**Read 1 Thessalonians 2:9-12 ... Exhortation to Walk Worthy of God’s Calling**

2:9 For the Jew, the nighttime preceded the day as every new day began at 6:00pm. This may be symbolic of their time without the Messiah before they accept Jesus as their Messiah.

- Paul supported himself as a tent maker, so as not to burden the believers in Thessalonica. (Acts 18:3)

2:10 Paul lists three behavioral characteristics of His witness 1. Devout/Holy (hosiōs ὁσίως) 2. Just/Righteous (dikaiōs δικαίως) 3. Blameless (amemptōs ἀμέμπτως)

2:11 Three pastoral activities as a father: 1. Exhort/Urge 2. Comfort/Encourage 3. Charge/Implore

2:12 Believers are to have changed lifestyles relative to their understanding of the Lord.

- The characteristics of the father should be in His children.
- The Greek term for “dominion” (exousias ἐξουσίας) means “domain” or “legal right.” God rescued His people from the domain and authority of darkness. (Luke 22:53).
- God’s people were resettled/relocated into the kingdom of Jesus (Matthew 3:17, 17:5) – the kingdom of the Son (basileian tou huiou – βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ). God’s people are citizens of the kingdom of God. (Philippians 3:20).

**Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16 ... Judgment of God on Persecutors of the Church**

2:13 Paul continually gave God thanks that Thessalonica openly received God’s Word as God’s Word instead of manmade, imaginary fiction.

What It Means to “Receive the Lord Jesus Christ”	
1. Personal Relationship with Jesus	John 1:12
2. Truth (and Doctrine) of Christ	1 John 4
3. Submitting to the Lord in Lifestyle	1 Thessalonians 4:1

- As one of the earliest books written by Paul, he establishes that the apostolic message is God’s message for men.
- The Lord is working in the hearts of God’s people as He shapes believers into the image of God the Son (Genesis 1:26; Galatians 4:19; 1 John 3:2; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:24).

- 2:14 The Greek term for “imitate” (mimētai) is the root word for “mimic.” (1 Thessalonians 1:6; 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:7,9; 1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Galatians 4:12; Philippians 3:17; 4:9).
- The Greek word of "ekklesia" (ἐκκλησία) is a reference to the Old Testament gatherings of God’s people.
    - The Septuagint extends "ekklesia" back into the Old Testament assemblies of Israel (Exodus 12:6; Leviticus 16:17; Numbers 14:15, etc. – Hebrew: qahal) as the New Testament church is a heritage of "the gathering" of the Jewish nation under Yahweh.
  - The church of Thessalonica mirrored (imitated) the Christian church of Jerusalem as both were persecuted by doubters who were native to those areas.
  - The phrase “In Him” or “in Christ Jesus” was one of Paul’s favorite phrases as it carries broad meaning of shared unity and power from God alone.
  - The name Christ Jesus (Christō Iēsou - Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) emphasizes Christ as the Messiah who was the “suffering servant” even to the point of death. The name Jesus emphasizes His humanity.
- 2:15 The Jews were portrayed as the persecutors of God’s truth: 1. Killing the Lord Jesus Christ Prophets 2. The Prophets 3. The Apostles (Acts 17:5-9)
- The active Jewish persecution of Christians did not please God.
  - As the good news is available to all men, the persecution by the Jews offended all men.
- 2:16 The Jews went beyond rejection of the gospel to obstructing the Gentiles from hearing the gospel message. (Acts 17:5)
- God’s wrath would fall on the Jewish community with the destruction of the Temple by Vespasian and Titus in 70AD and the devastation of Jerusalem in 135AD by Hadrian.

**Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20 ... Satan’s Hindrance of Paul’s Visit to Thessalonica**

- 2:17 Paul had intensely missed the Christian brothers of Thessalonica.
- The Greek term for “desire” (Epithymia Ἐπιθυμία) carries the same passion as the word “lust,” but in a positive sense. (James 1:15; 2 Peter 1:4, 2:10; 1 John 2:16-17)
- 2:18 Satan is called the prince of the air (Ephesians 2:2) who continually challenges God’s people (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 John 5:19). Satan is a defeated foe, but do not underestimate his craftiness and wicked ways (Jude 1:9).
- 2:19 Paul hopes that the believers of Thessalonica can share in Paul’s joy as he is rewarded for their faithfulness at the coming of Christ.
- The term for “hope” in the New Testament typically refers to the “Parousia” (παρουσία) which is the second coming of Jesus when the lost will be judged and His people rewarded.
  - Paul used the “Parousia” as an impetus and motivation for godly lifestyles. (Philippians 2:15)

<b>Jesus Will Come Again</b>	
“The Day of the Lord”	1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:2; 2 Peter 3:10
“The Day of the Lord Jesus”	1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:14
“The Day of the Lord Jesus Christ”	1 Corinthians 1:8

“The Day of Christ Jesus”	Philippians 1:6
“The Day of Christ”	Philippians 1:10; 2:16
“That Day”	2 Timothy 1:18
<b>The explicit title “the Second Coming” is not in Scripture</b>	

2:20 One of the glories and joys of believers at Jesus’ coming will be those who they have impacted for Christ

15 1 Thessalonians 3

### **Read 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5 ... Timothy’s Visit in the Midst of a Suffering Church**

3:1 Paul had traveled to Athens which was filled with idols and manmade philosophies. (Acts 17:16-34)

- Paul valued the companionship of his fellow ministers, and it would have been difficult to have been left behind (kataleiphthēnai καταλειφθῆναι).

3:2 Timothy’s role has been threefold 1. Brother 2. Minister of God 3. Fellow Laborer

- The Greek term for “fellow worker” (synergon συνεργόν) is also the root of “synergy.”
- The Greek phrase “to encourage” (parakalesai παρακαλέσαι) which literally means “to come alongside” and is translated as “comfort” and “consolation.”
  - A similar Greek term is used in 1 Thessalonians 2:12 for “exhorting” (parakalountes παρακαλοῦντες).
  - The same term “paraklēsis” describes the help of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) and is translated into “comforter” in 1 John 2:1.

3:3 The church in Thessalonica had only three weeks of training, so Paul wanted to support their knowledge and doctrine. (Acts 17:1-9).

- The Greek term for “moved/disturbed” is better translated as “deceived” (sainesthai σαίνεσθαι). This type of deception came from flattery, and originated with the wagging of a dog’s tail which can be a motivator.
- The Christian life is “destined” (keimetha κείμεθα) for suffering (2 Timothy 3:12) as the Christian increases in faith and becomes more like Christ. (Romans 8:17; 1 Peter 3:13, 4:12-16)

3:4 Paul did not preach a “prosperity gospel” that entertained the masses. Instead, Paul was forthcoming with the persecution of the church by the world to set the appropriate expectations. (Luke 14:25-33)

3:5 Paul was faithful during suffering, but his concern was for the new believers of Thessalonica.

- Although the Thessalonian believers were saved, Paul was concerned about the unusefulness and vanity of life. (1 Corinthians 3:10-15)
  - Although salvation is free, believers have a continued choice to be sanctified as believers become more like Christ.
- Paul was concerned about their faithfulness when “the one tempting” (ho peirazōn - ὁ πειράζων) attacked them in various ways.
  - Satan is called the prince of the air (Ephesians 2:2) who continually challenges God’s people (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 5:19).



- The background of Satan is provided in Scripture (Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28), and his temptations began in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1).
- Satan was created by God and is in no way as powerful; Satan was a part of God's creation. Satan is a defeated foe, but do not underestimate his craftiness and wicked ways (Jude 1:9).

### **Read 1 Thessalonians 3:6-10 ... Thankful for Timothy's Good Report of Thessalonica**

3:6 This is the only time in the New Testament that the Greek word "euangelisamenou εὐαγγελισαμένου" (good news) is used for something other than the gospel.

- Paul often referenced Faith, Love, and Hope (1 Corinthians 13:13 Romans 5:2-5; Galatians 5:5-6; Colossians 1:4-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:8; Hebrews 6:10-12; 1 Peter 1:21-22).
  - Hope often refers to the second coming of the Lord Jesus, and Thessalonica had questions concerning the Lord's return. Paul would build up their "hope" with insight into the second coming of Jesus.

3:7 Although Paul faced many trials in his life (2 Corinthians 11:24-27), he was comforted by the faithfulness of those Thessalonica.

3:8 *"For now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord."*

- People who want to wholeheartedly experience "life" in this world often give themselves over to sinful lifestyles – which translates into their giving themselves over to death. (Ephesians 2:1)
- In order to fully "live," one must give themselves over to the Spirit of God to accomplish His will in His creation. (Romans 6:11; John 14:6)
- The concept to "stand firm" (stēkete στήκετε) includes not being swayed by the manmade philosophies of the world (1 Corinthians 16:13; 2 Corinthians 1:24; Galatians 5:1; Philippians 1:27); to remain on Christ as the foundation. (1 Corinthians 3:11; Matthew 7:24; Ephesians 2:20; 2 Timothy 2:19).

3:9 *"For what thanks can we give to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice because of you before our God."*

3:10 For the Jew, the nighttime preceded the day as every new day began at 6:00pm. This may be symbolic of their time without the Messiah before they accept Jesus as their Messiah.

- Paul was fervent as he prayed moment by moment and took various items to the Lord (1 Thessalonians 5:17, 25)
- Salvation is only the beginning as there is so much more to learn and live through the sanctification process as God's people apply the truths and revelations that are increasingly understood

### **Read 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 ... Paul's Prayer to Visit & Encourage Thessalonica**

3:11 Paul begins to pray as he is telling Thessalonica about his prayer to visit them.

- The Greek term for "guide" (kateuthynai κατευθῆναι) means to direct the way and is used in the prophecy of Zechariah in *"guide our feet into the way of peace."* (Luke 1:79).
- This concept of "guiding" and "directing" is also repeated in a prayer for the church of Thessalonica. *"May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the perseverance of Christ."* (2 Thessalonians 3:5)

3:12 The Lord is the source of love; first to other believers (for edification) and then to all believers (as a testimony of God's love).

3:13 The Lord is also the source of holiness to present His people before God the Father. The Lord Jesus will return with His saints to rule the world (Zechariah 14:5; Jude 1:14-15)

- The Greek term for "God's people" (hagious ἁγίους) is the term for "saints" which originated with the term "holy" (to be set apart for God's service – as in "sanctuary"). The term "saint" is not associated with man's goodness, but is defined by God's goodness imputed to man. A saint is a "separated one to an assigned task." (Romans 1:7, 15:25-26, 1 Corinthians 1:2, 14:33, 2 Corinthians 1:1, Philippians 4:21)
  - The term "saints" is always plural in Scripture except for one time (Philippians 4:21) when the word is still used in a corporate sense.

16 1 Thessalonians 4

- Having established the doctrine, Paul enters a detailed discussion around the return of the Lord.

### **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 ... A Call to a Pure Lifestyle**

4:1 As is usually the case with Paul, this is his early close of "*Finally then*" (loipon οὖν - λοιπὸν οὖν) before continuing into deep truths for two more chapters.

- Paul repeatedly emphasized that he (and all believers) should think, speak and act "*in the Lord Jesus*" (en Kyriou Iēsou - ἐν Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ) – in His power and His will. (1 Thessalonians 1:3)
- The Greek term for "Lord" (Kyriou Κυρίου) comes from Israel's Old Testament covenantal name of God. Israel was reluctant to use the name "Yahweh" (YHWH יהוה), so Israel substituted the name "Adonai" (אֲדֹנָי) which means "Lord." The use of the word "Lord" asserts the full deity of Jesus.
- The name "Jesus" (meaning "God is Salvation") was given by an angel to Joseph (Matthew 1:21) and to Mary (Luke 1:31).
- A believer who has genuinely been redeemed is to live a dedicated and obedient walk with the Lord in order to please Him. (Ephesians 4:1; 1 John).
  - Christianity (like marriage) is a decision followed by a lifestyle commitment.

4:2 The Greek term for "instructions/commandments" (parangelias παραγγελίας) refers to military orders passed down through the chain of command. "Parangelias" is only used one other time in the New Testament: "*But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from a sincere faith.*" (1 Timothy 1:5)

4:3 God's will for His people includes purity without sexual sin (Jeremiah 2:20, 3:6, Ezekiel 6:2)

- "Sanctification" (hagiasmos ἁγιασμός) has the same root word as "holy" and "saints" (hagious ἁγίους). After the initial salvation, sanctification develops into lifestyle of godly character (1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:7; Romans 6:19-23)
- The Greek term for sexual immorality (porneias πορνείας) is the same root word for pornography.

- 4:4 The Greek term for “vessel” (skeuos σκεῦος) can either reference one’s own body or a wife. Sanctification refers to the process of becoming increasingly Christlike.
- Believers are being changed into the image of God the Son (Genesis 1:26; Galatians 4:19; 1 John 3:2; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:24)
- 4:5 The Greek phrase “passion of lust” (pathei epithymias – πάθει ἐπιθυμίας) means a man who is unable to control himself.
- Unbelievers are controlled by their animal instincts instead of following the Spirit of God.
- 4:6 God is the avenger of blood for all injustices to His people (Deuteronomy 19:15, 19; Isaiah 61:2). There are spiritual truths to be learned, but also stern warnings that must be regarded.
- 4:7 God calls His followers to sexual purity.
- *“For God has not called us for impurity, but in sanctification.”*
- 4:8 Believers who reject God’s requirement of sexual purity do not reject a “legalistic fogey”, but instead, they reject God’s commands. (Galatians 6:7)
- The Greek term for “reject” (athetōn ἀθετῶν) means “to treat as having little value.”
  - The Greek term for “giving” (didonta διδόντα) means God’s continual pouring of His Spirit upon his people.

### **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12 ... A Loving Lifestyle While Performing Responsibilities**

- 4:9 God will teach His genuine followers how to love through His Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:1; John 14:26; 16:13; 2 Corinthians 9:1; 1 John 2:20,27).
- The indwelling Spirit is a sign of the new covenant. (Jeremiah 31:31-34)
  - The Greek term for “brotherly love” (philadelphias φιλαδελφίας) is a close, welcoming friendship.
    - Bishop of Hippo (354–430 AD) attributed this type of love to those with a common purpose.
  - The closing phrase “to love one another” (agapan allēlous - ἀγαπᾶν ἀλλήλους) references the unconditional, covenantal love (hesed חֶסֶד) of God for His people. (1 John 3:14; Galatians 5:22)
- 4:10-11 While Thessalonians were energetic in blaming, gossiping and relying on others, Scripture calls for each one to personally get involved instead of “outsourcing” God’s callings to other people. Three aspirations for life in this world
1. To lead a quiet life
  2. To mind your own business
  3. To work with your own hands
- Believers in Thessalonica had quit work in immediate expectation of the Lord’s return (2 Thessalonians 3:11)
  - As Christians follow a “Carpenter,” there is a dignity in work.
  - The Fugio cent (also called the Franklin cent because Benjamin Franklin designed it), is the first official circulation coin of the United States. (1787); the Fugio cent had the phrase “*Mind your business*” imprinted on it.
- 4:12 The world is watching a “working witness.” As the believer works to care for his family and God blesses the workman’s efforts, the world testifies to the faithfulness of God and man.

Paul Did Not Want Others To Be Ignorant (ἀγνοεῖν agnoein)	
Romans 1:13	Paul had been prevented to visit Rome, so that he could minister to the Gentiles
Romans 11:25	“Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.”
1 Corinthians 10:1	The Jewish “ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea,” but God was not please with most of them.
1 Corinthians 12:1	The spiritual gifts of the spirit are varied and are to be used in submission to the Lord.
2 Corinthians 1:8	Paul had suffered persecution for the purpose of forcing reliance on God
1 Thessalonians 4:13	Believers who die will be raised in Christ

### Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 ... The Return of Jesus

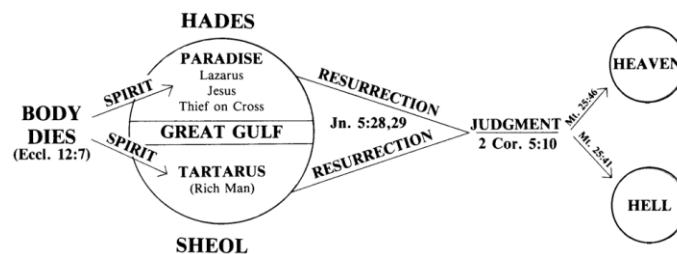
4:13 The church in Thessalonica questioned whether their fellow brothers who died would participate in end time events.

- Paul explains that he doesn't want the Thessalonians to be “ignorant brothers” (agnoein adelphoi - ἀγνοεῖν ἀδελφοί) which is a phrase that Paul uses repeatedly. (Romans 1:13, 11:25; 1 Corinthians 10:1, 12:1; 2 Corinthians 1:8).
- The Greek term for “*falling asleep*” (koimōmenōn κοιμωμένων) is the root word for “cemetery.”
- “Falling asleep” is a phrase that grew from “sleeping with their fathers.” (Genesis 47:30; 2 Samuel 7:12; 1 Kings 22:40; Matthew 27:52; John 11:11-13; Acts 7:60; 13:36; 1 Corinthians 7:39; 11:30; 15:10; 2 Peter 3:4).

4:14 The central belief for Christians is the death and resurrection of Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:23)

4:15 The dead in Christ will see the Lord before those in the final days (Isaiah 26:19; Eph 5:14)

- The term “Hades” (Sheol/Grave in the Old Testament) was considered by the Jews the holding place for the dead with two divisions: Paradise for God's people (Luke 16:19-31) and Tartarus for those who rebelled against God (2 Peter 2:4).
  - This is different from Gehenna which refers to hell after the judgment.



- When Jesus rose from the dead, those who were in the Paradise portion of Sheol joined Him in spirit; however, the bodies of believers will not join until His return.

- 4:16 The second coming (Acts 1:11) of Christ (like His first coming - Zechariah 9:9) will be heralded by the archangel (possibly Michael, the warrior – Jude 1:9); in the Old Testament, Israel was always assembled (Ex 20:18; Numbers 10:2) and called to battle with a blast of the trumpet (1 Cor 15:52)
- 4:17 Christ’s followers will be caught up to meet Jesus in the air and the prince of the air will be helpless (Ephesians 2:2)
- The Greek term for “caught up” (harpagēsometha ἀρπαγησόμεθα) is Scriptural evidence for the rapture. (1 Corinthians 15:52)
  - Jerome’s Latin Vulgate used the term “*Rapturo*” (spelled as “*Rapiemur*”) meaning “*Rapture.*”
  - The term “Rapture” means to seize/take/snatch quickly by force.
- 4:18 The rapture should be a comfort and an event eagerly anticipated to His followers (Hebrews 9:28)

<b>The Greek Term for “Rapture” (ἀρπαγησόμεθα harpagēsometha)</b>	
Matthew 11:12	<i>“From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven <sup>[2]</sup>suffers violence, and violent men <b>take it by force.</b>”</i>
Matthew 12:29	<i>“How can anyone enter a strong man’s house and <b>carry off</b> his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man?”</i>
Matthew 13:19	<i>“When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and <b>snatches away</b> what was sown in their heart.”</i>
John 6:15	<i>“Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king <b>by force</b>, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.”</i>
John 10:12	<i>“The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf <b>snatches</b> the flock and scatters it.”</i>
John 10:28	<i>“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will <b>snatch</b> them out of my hand.”</i>
John 10:29	<i>“My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can <b>snatch</b> them out of my Father’s hand.”</i>
Acts 8:39	<i>“When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord <b>snatched</b> Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.”</i>
Acts 23:10	<i>“The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He ordered the troops to go down and <b>take him away</b> from them by force.”</i>
2 Corinthians 12:2	<i>“I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was <b>caught up</b> to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows.”</i>
2 Corinthians 12:3-4	<i>“And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows— was <b>caught up</b> into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.”</i>
Jude 1:23	<i>“Save others by <b>snatching</b> them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.”</i>
Revelation 12:5	<i>“She gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was <b>caught up</b> to God and to His throne.”</i>

### **Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4 ... The Day of the Lord Will Astonish with Destruction**

5:1 The Greek term for “time” (chronōn χρόνων) is the root word for chronology and means the passing of time.

- Although a believer cannot know the specific time, he can recognize the general season (Matthew 24:32-36; Acts 1:7).

5:2 Believers should live obedient, watchful lives (Matthew 24:42; Mark 13:33)

- The Day of the Lord references the second coming of Jesus (Joel 1:15; 2:11, 31)
- The purpose of the Day of the Lord is to humble mankind while exalting God. (Isaiah 2:11-12).

5:3 The world will be lured into a false sense of peace before the Tribulation (Matthew 24:8). Unbelievers will grow in political power (peace and security) while the church and genuine believers grow increasingly challenged and persecuted. (Matthew 24:21; Mark 13:19)

5:4 The birth of a child (Romans 8:22; Mark 13:8; Isaiah 13:6-8; Jeremiah 4:31) and the breaking in of a thief (Matthew 24:42-44; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 3:3; 16:15) are two analogies to “timing” as no one knows when these will occur.

- Jewish Rabbi’s taught that that the Messiah would come in the middle of the night just as the Angel of Death had come at Passover. (Exodus 12:29)

### **Read 1 Thessalonians 5:5-11 ... Believers Should Live Watchful Lives**

5:5 The Greek term for “light” (photos φωτός) represents “enlightenment” and “understanding.”

- In Biblical times, the phrase “son of” (huiοι υιοι) was a way to describe a key characteristic of the individual. (John 1:4-9; 3:13-21; 8:12; 11:9-10; 12:35-36, 46; 1 John 1:5, 7; 2:8-10)
- “Darkness” represents lack of understanding and immoral living.

5:6 Jesus is the true light (Mt 17:2; Rev 22:5); His followers reflect Him (Mt 24:29; Gen 1:16)

- The Lord’s followers should not be taken unaware at His second coming (Mark 13:32)
- The term “sleep” refers to spiritual and moral apathy. (Mark 13:36; Ephesians 5:14)
- A key message of the New Testament is that believers should watch and pray (Matthew 24:42, 43; 25:13; Mark 13:34). Instead of guessing about the exact date and time, believers should daily walk with God while loving others.

5:7 The nighttime represents a time of darkness; similar to the “dark ages,” it is a time of poor judgment without understanding and impulsive living.

5:8 The day represents “light” and “enlightenment” with understanding of God’s will and ways.

- The Greek term for “sober” (nēphōmen νήφωμεν) means to have “mental alertness.” (1 Corinthians 15:34; 1 Thessalonians 5:6; 1 Peter 1:13, 4:7; 5:8)
- Scripture often uses clothing to represent spiritual attributes like righteousness. In the Old Testament, the Messiah is dressed for spiritual battle (Isaiah 59:17).
- Life in this world equates to spiritual warfare where the believer needs to be clothed appropriately with the armor (protection) of God (Ephesians 6:10-17)

- Faith and love protect the body
  - The helmet represents the hope of salvation as Jesus is the head (Ephesians 5:23; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Colossians 1:18). Hope represents a looking forward to salvation's culmination without knowing the exact time.
  - Paul often emphasizes the three gifts of God as Faith, Love, and Hope (1 Corinthians 13:13 Romans 5:2-5; Galatians 5:5-6; Colossians 1:4-5; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; Hebrews 6:10-12; 1 Peter 1:21-22).
- 5:9 "For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."
- The doctrine of predestination is that God the Father chose/selected (ἐξελέξατο) believers (John 17:6) to be in Christ before the foundation of the world (John 17:24, Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:19-20, Jeremiah 1:5, 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Titus 1:2, Revelation 13:8, 17:8, 2 Timothy 1:9).
  - All three names/aspects of the "*Lord Jesus Christ*" are given. Lord (divine master) Jesus (humanity) Christ (the Messiah).
    - The Greek term for "Lord" (Kyriou Κυρίου) comes from Israel's Old Testament covenantal name of God. Israel was reluctant to use the name "Yahweh" (YHWH יהוה), so Israel substituted the name "Adonai" (אֲדֹנָי) which means "Lord." The use of the word "Lord" asserts the full deity of Jesus.
    - The name "Jesus" (meaning "God is Salvation") was given by an angel to Joseph (Matthew 1:21) and to Mary (Luke 1:31).
    - The term "Christ" (Christou Χριστοῦ) means "anointed one" for a special purpose or mission. Christ carries the meaning of Messiah from a sacrificial, "suffering servant lifestyle to the point of death.
- 5:10 As the perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 10:14-24), Christ died so His believers might live in Him. (Mark 10:45; 2 Corinthians 5:21) Believers who have died are currently with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8).
- 5:11 The Greek term for "encourage" (parakaleite παρακαλεῖτε) means "to come alongside" and is translated as "comfort" and "console."
- A similar Greek term is used in 1 Thessalonians 2:12 for "exhorting" (parakalountes παρακαλοῦντες).and 1 Thessalonians 3:2 for "encourage" (parakalesai παρακαλέσαι)
  - The same term "paraklēsis" describes the help of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) and is translated into "comforter" in 1 John 2:1.
- Believers are to assist each other into spiritual maturity (Ephesians 4:13). Believers are to be actively engaged with each other as they await the Lord's second coming.
  - The remaining passage shows the way that believers are to live as they await the Lord's return. These are fifteen imperatives/commands regarding the believer's lifestyle.

**Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 ... Respect Religious Leaders & Admonish Rebels**

- 5:12 The first step of honor is to recognize those who should be honored. Believers should not discount the work of Pastors, Leaders and Ministers.
- Believers are called to “appreciate” (eidenai εἰδέναι) the call and work of Spiritual leaders. Respect should not be a gauge of performance; instead, leaders are to be respected because of God’s call on the leader’s life.
- 5:13 Believers should respect the leadership of the church while promoting peace/unity within the church. (2 Thessalonians 3:5)
- “*Live in peace with one another.*” (Mark 9:50; Romans 12:18; 2 Corinthians 13:11).

**Read 1 Thessalonians 5:14-22 ... Godly Fellowship & Worship**

<b>The Will of God in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:14-22)</b>		
<b><u>Counsel</u></b>	<b><u>Affirmative Conduct</u></b>	<b><u>Discern</u></b>
Warn the unruly Comfort the leery Uphold the weak Be Patient with all (Eccl 7:7)	Pursue good without revenge Rejoice always Pray continually (1 Sam 12:23) Gratitude for everything	Do not quench the Spirit Do not despise prophecies Test all things Abstain from evil

- 5:14 The Greek term for “unruly” (ataktous ἀτάκτους) is a military term for “disorderly conduct.” In Biblical times, the word also describes those who are idle and shirk responsibility. (2 Thessalonians 3:7-16)
- Believers should encourage the weak in faith. The Greek term for “fainthearted” (oligopsychous ὀλιγοψύχους) literally means the “little minded.”
  - “*Help the weak.*” (Romans 15:1; 1 Corinthians 8:7; 9:22)
  - Believers are called to be longsuffering instead of short-tempered. (1 Corinthians 13:4; Ephesians 4:2). Just as God has been patient (makrothymeite μακροθυμεῖτε) with His people (Isa. 57:15; Rom. 2:4; 9:22; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 3:9), believers should be patient with others.
- 5:15 Believers should not hold grudges and seek revenge. (Matthew 5:44; Romans 12:17-21; 1 Peter 3:9).
- The Greek term for “seek” (Diōkete Διώκετε) means to aggressively pursue ways to show kindness to each other.
- 5:16 “*Rejoice always.*” Believers should have a reputation of being joyful.
- 5:17 “*Pray without ceasing.*” Believers should have on-going dialog with God throughout every situation.
- 5:18 Believers are being changed to the image of God the Son (Genesis 1:26; Galatians 4:19; 1 John 3:2; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:24), so there is a purpose in everything as God continues to mature His people.
- The phrase “In Him” or “in Christ Jesus” was one of Paul’s favorite phrases as it carries broad meaning of shared unity and power from God alone.
  - The name Christ Jesus (Christō Iēsou - Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) emphasizes Christ as the Messiah who was the “suffering servant” even to the point of death. The name Jesus emphasizes His humanity.
- 5:19 Respectable leaders of respectable churches may fervently proclaim that Pentecostal fellowships are wrong; however, this verse, clearly commands the more conservative believers not to reject and obstruct movements of the Spirit.



5:20 *“Do not utterly reject prophecies.”* The Lord leaves the prophetic means open to His use when He desires.

5:21 God approves of testing and examining the spirits instead of making blanket (predetermined) statements against them.

5:22 *“Abstain from every form of evil.”*

- The Greek term “apo” (ἀπό) means to “separate” and is used in the prefix for the Greek word for “abstain” (ἀπέχεσθε).
- Societal morality is judged by whether someone is offended instead of the Word of God; Society is morally offended by Scriptural truths.

### **Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28 ... A Benediction for the Church in Thessalonica**

- A “benediction” is a blessing to the worshippers while a “doxology” is an act of praise to God.

5:23 This is the only verse with all three components of a person listed: spirit, body, soul (Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:33; Hebrews 4:12)

- The spirit often refers to the spiritual essence of man; the soul refers to the man’s personality/predispositions, and the body refers to the physical presence.
- Paul frequently concluded his epistles with the “God of peace.” (Romans 15:33; 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 4:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:16)
- The Greek term for “blameless” (ἀμείπτως ἀμεμπτός) is only used in the book of 1 Thessalonians (2:10), and archeologists have also uncovered an inscription with this term in Thessalonica.

5:24 Believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and God (who predestined His people) will also retain the faithfulness of His people by the power of His Spirit.

5:25 Paul believes in the power of prayer as he performs His ministry through God’s power. Paul repeatedly asked for prayer support. (Romans 15:30; Ephesians 6:18-19; Colossians 4:3-4; Philippians 1:19)

5:26 “A holy kiss” is a kiss on one or more cheeks of someone of the same gender (men to men; women to women) – Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14. This is still the custom in several cultures (Russia, France, Arabia).

5:27 Paul obligates the leaders to reading 1 Thessalonians to the congregation even though there might be some points where they disagreed.

- This is the only book that Paul mandates via oath that it be read by all believers.

5:28 Paul repeatedly concluded his letter with “grace” because God’s gift of grace was the foundation of everything else. “Grace” is always a reminder of God’s sovereign goodness and gifts.