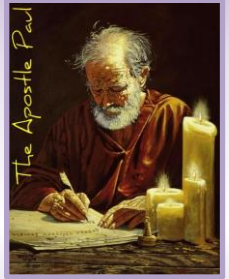


# THESSALONIANS

## There Is Hope!



### Lesson 02: Inspiring Hope ... [1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-10]

#### PREVIEW

Paul, Silas and Timothy send greetings to the believers in Thessalonica. Paul refers to the position of the Thessalonians in God and Jesus Christ and desires both grace and peace for them. Paul stresses his thankfulness to God for the Thessalonians for turning to God from idols, for maintaining their faith in the face of severe affliction, and lastly for expectantly waiting for the second coming of Jesus Christ.

#### GREETINGS: 1 THESSALONIANS 1:1

**1** Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

--- 1 Thessalonians 1:1 ... NKJV

The epistle opens in the typical letter format of the period, namely with a **FROM**, **TO** and **GREETING** element at the opening of the letter.

**FROM:** Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy

**TO:** The believers of the church of the Thessalonians

**GREETING:** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### PROFILE: SILVANUS OR SILAS

Paul always refers to him as Silvanus (Roman), while Luke always refers to him as Silas; the name means "god of the woods". He was a respected leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:22), a prophet (Acts 15:32), a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37), an accomplished preacher (2 Corinthians 1:10) and a fitting companion and co-worker for Paul. In addition, he was Peter's scribe for Peter's First Epistle (1 Peter 5:12).

#### PROFILE: TIMOTHEOS OR TIMOTHY

Timothy was half-Jewish and half-Greek and a Protégé of Paul. His name means "honoring God". He was part of five Pauline epistle co-salutations.

The word *church* in verse 1 is the translation of the Greek word *Ekklesia*, which means "called out assembly". From a spiritual sense the church is never a building but an assembly of believers that God has called out of the world - sanctified or set apart to serve Him. The church is not an *organization* but a living *organism* whose mission is to occupy until He comes.

Notice the phrase "In God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" indicating the co-equal nature of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The meaning of the phrase, "in God ...", is not that we are *Spatially in God*, but rather, we are *Positionally in God*; not of any works on our part, but because of the finished work of Christ.

The greetings element in the opening of the letter contains the words "grace" and "peace". Notice these are given to us from God; co-equal members of the Trinity - God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not earn *grace* or *peace*; they are gifts of God - similar to our salvation which also cannot be earned.

Grace can be defined as God's Riches At Christ's Expense. Peace is that sense of inner tranquility and well-being from knowing you are reconciled to God through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20-21).

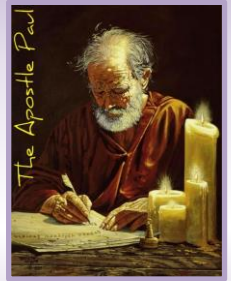
#### GRATITUDE: 1 THESSALONIANS 1:2-4

**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, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, **4** knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. --- 1 Thessalonians 1:2-4 ... NKJV

The "we" in verse 2 refers to Paul, Silas and Timothy, who express their gratitude to God for the Thessalonian believers. These believers are remembered in the prayers of Paul, Silas and Timothy.

# THESSALONIANS

## There Is Hope!



### Lesson 02: Inspiring Hope ... [1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-10]

From Paul's epistles we know that Paul had an extensive prayer list of believers and churches that he prayed for.

DO YOU THINK PAUL WAS A BUSY MAN?

YET HE MADE PRAYER A PRIORITY.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM PAUL'S EXAMPLE ON PRAYER?

The phrase *"remember without ceasing"* in verse 3 is another way of saying "never forgetting". What was never to be forgotten was the Thessalonian believers' **(1)** Work of Faith, **(2)** Labor of Love and **(3)** Patience of Hope. This is first of two great triplets in this chapter; the other in verses 9 and 10 (*Turn, Serve & Wait*).

**FAITH** LOOKS BACK TO A **CRUCIFIED** SAVIOR.

**LOVE** LOOKS UP TO A **CROWNED** SAVIOR.

**HOPE** LOOKS FORWARD TO A **COMING** SAVIOR.

-- CHUCK MISSLER

This **Faith, Hope, and Love** triplet is found throughout the New Testament epistles. We are all familiar with the 1 Corinthians 13 (*the Love chapter*) reference.

The *"work of faith"* should not be confused with *"working for one's faith"*. The context of the word *"work"* here is rooted in the idea of *"fruit-bearing"*. In this sense we can substitute the word *"fruit"* for *"work"* here for the proper understanding of the text, namely, the out-working of one's faith is fruit.

Notice in verse 4 that our election is by God. God is the source.

*Election protects us from thinking of salvation as dependent on human whims and roots it squarely in the will of God. Left to ourselves, we do not wish to leave our state of untroubled sinfulness.*

-- CHUCK MISSLER

#### GOSPEL POWER: 1 THESSALONIANS 1:5-10

Notice in verse 5 the gospel was transmitted to the Thessalonians in **Word, Power**, the **Holy Spirit**, and much **assurance** in the character of the Paul, Silas and Timothy. Jesus is the Word of God, the Father is the power of God, the Holy Spirit is a trinity member of the God-head and Paul, Silas and Timothy are witnesses for the gospel. So to summarize the gospel came by God (*all members of the trinity represented*) through faithful witnesses. To be clear, Paul gives us a working definition of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 where he lays out a simple trilogy (*verse 3*), **(1)** Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **(2)** He was buried, and **(3)** He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. This is the gospel in a nut-shell.

Notice in verses 6-8 of 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians chapter 1 the gospel spread throughout Macedonia, Achaia and beyond. The Greek word *typos*, translated *"example"* in verse 7 means a *"mark left by a blow, as when a die strikes an image on a coin; an impression"*.

#### ARE YOU IMPRESSED WITH THE IMAGE OF CHRIST?

In verses 9-10 we encounter the second great triplet of this chapter; the *"true conversion"* triplet. This triplet involves three important actions **(1)** Turning ... *turn to God from idols*, **(2)** Serving ... *serve the living and true God* and **(3)** Waiting ... *wait for His Son from heaven*. **Turn** represents your **Salvation** (*past*), **Serve** represents your **Sanctification** (*present*), and **Wait** represents your coming **Glorification** (*future*).

Verse 10 concludes the chapter with a reference to the second coming of Christ (*Parousia*). The truth of the second coming is mentioned at the end of every chapter in this book. The promise given in this verse is that Jesus delivers us completely out of the reach of future judgement or *"wrath to come"*. Wrath is the holy revulsion of God against that which is a contradiction of His holiness.