



I and II Thessalonians

Lesson 1 Chapter 1

AUTHOR: Paul and his companions Timothy and Silvanus (Silas)

PLACE: From Corinth

DATE: Approximately 50 A.D.

INTRODUCTION

Luke, the physician, devoted follower of Jesus, and close friend of the Apostle Paul, was a historical writer that investigated and documented the life and ministry of Jesus in his gospel of Luke. After recording the events of Jesus' birth and ministry in that gospel, he continued to write the history of the fulfillment of the Great Commission through the Apostles after Jesus' ascension in the book of Acts. In Acts Luke recorded the initial spread of the gospel through Peter and then Paul. He details the three missionary journeys of Paul, as well as Paul's voyage to Rome to appeal his legal case to Caesar. After establishing churches in the many cities and towns he visited on those journeys, Paul later wrote letters back to them to continue their instruction on what it looks like to "live a life worthy of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27).

Paul's first missionary journey is recorded in Acts 13-15:35. Paul and his traveling companion Barnabas preach to both Jews and Gentiles in synagogues and publicly on the island of Crete, and also in several cities in Pamphylia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, and Cilicia. They then return to Antioch, their home base, to give an account of their work. Because of a dispute over Barnabas' cousin Mark, Paul sets out on his second journey with Silas. He returned to some of the areas he had preached on his first journey, and while in Lystra he met Timothy, a young man that was to become Paul's son in the faith. Paul's intention was then to move north to

the region of Bithynia, but the Holy Spirit told him not to go there. Paul soon had a vision of a man from Macedonia westward across the Aegean Sea. The man was pleading with Paul to come and help them so Paul determined Macedonia was to be the next region to take the gospel. As Luke records in Acts 17, they stopped in Philippi, a large Roman colony which was a major seaport city that was thriving because of being a gateway for shipping between Europe and Asia. Paul and his companions went to the riverside to preach so there must not have been a Jewish synagogue in the city. At the river they met Lydia. She was a wealthy business-woman, and she became the first convert in Europe. This was the beginning of the church in Philippi, and later their little church added a converted demon-possessed slave woman and a Philippian jailer and his family. The gospel was producing much fruit in Philippi, but it was also producing enemies. Paul had cast out the demon from the slave girl, and her owners lost much profit because of it. The owners then stirred up a hostile crowd, and Paul and Silas ended up in jail. When they were released, they moved on to Thessalonica which had a Jewish synagogue. It was Paul's habit to go to the synagogue first if there was one in the city and preach to Jews. In Thessalonica they preached to Jews and Greeks, and many believed. So a church was established in Thessalonica. But many hostile Jews rose up and intended to attack Paul and his companions so they were rushed out of town and went to Berea. Now,

several weeks later, Paul is in Corinth (Acts 18) writing back to the Thessalonian church to make sure the persecutors hadn't disrupted their faith, to inform them why he hadn't been able to return to them, and to reaffirm his authority in bringing the gospel to them. He is also responding to some ideas that were troubling this new church about the imminent return of Christ. His letter to them is very affirming and identifies that the gospel is moving quickly across the world due to Spirit-filled, faithful believers.



READ CHAPTER 1 AND ACTS 17:1-10

1. *Paul's first missionary journey ended with much controversy due to Paul taking the gospel to Gentiles as well as Jews. From Acts 14:24-15:35, describe details of the controversy, and how the final decision was made.*

2. *Why did Paul and Barnabas part company? Acts 15:36-41*

3. *What had to happen before Timothy could join Paul and Silas on their next journey, and why did this need to happen despite the declaration from the Council of Jerusalem? Acts 16:3*

4. *What specific message were they now taking to the people, and what was the outcome?*
Acts 16:4-5



The city of Thessalonica was strategically located on the Thermaic Gulf and was the capital city of the province of Macedonia. The Via Egnatia (a Roman road that was built to connect Rome to Constantinople) passed through Thessalonica and linked it with all the important cities of Macedonia.

~Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia

5. *What 3 things did Paul specifically appreciate in his remembrance of the believers in Thessalonica? Vs. 3*
6. *Although Paul was concerned about the Thessalonians and their continuance in faith in the face of difficult persecution, what assurance did he have that it was likely they would endure?*
1 Thessalonians 1:3-5
7. *What was the result of imitating Paul in their reception of the gospel? Vs. 6-8*
8. *How had the lifestyle of the Thessalonians changed? Vs.9-10 What evidence of change can you identify in your own life since you believed the gospel?*

9. *What does Paul say they are now waiting for? Vs. 10*

10. *From the following verses, what are some activities that induce the wrath of God?*

2 Kings 22:13

2 Chronicles 29:5-11

Psalms 106: 37-40

Isaiah 13:11-13

Romans 1:18-23

Romans 13:4

Ephesians 5:3-6

Colossians 3:5-6

11. *With those references in mind, how would you define the wrath of God?*

Prayer requests:

Group time notes:
