



I Thessalonians

Background Information

The first epistle to the Thessalonians was the first of all Paul's epistles. It was in all probability written from Corinth, where he abodes a "long time" (Acts 18:11, 18), early in the period of his residence there, about the end of A.D. 52.

Paul's main purpose in writing is to encourage and reassure the Christians there. Paul urges them to go on working quietly while waiting in hope for the return of Christ. The primary way in which Paul sought to influence the Thessalonian community was by preaching the gospel and living a life that conformed to its values. The gospel as the good news of God's salvation in Christ is God's means of creating faith in and transforming the lives of those whom he calls. Paul celebrates the church's future hope as they remain faithful to Jesus and flourish in their faith despite persecution.

Paul (with Silas and Timothy) came to Thessalonica from Philippi on his *second missionary* journey, stopping in Amphipolis and Apollonia before arriving here (Acts 17). He preached in the city's synagogue, the chief synagogue of the region, for at least three weeks. His ministry was strong, and **he established a Jewish-Gentile church**, although it was more heavily Gentile (I Thess. 1:9). When Paul faced great persecution at the hands of the mob, he fled to Berea, but Thessalonians eventually forced him to leave there also (Acts 17:13-14).

The occasion of its being written was the return of Timotheus from Macedonia, bearing tidings from Thessalonica regarding the state of the church there (Acts 18:1-5; I Thess. 3:6). While, on the whole, the report of Timothy was encouraging, it also showed that **divers errors and misunderstandings regarding the tenor of Paul's teaching had crept in amongst them.** He addresses them in this letter with the view of correcting these errors, and especially for the purpose of exhorting them to purity of life, reminding them that their sanctification was the

great end desired by God regarding them. The subscription erroneously states that this epistle was written from Athens.

Thessaloniki is a Greek port city on the Thermaic Gulf of the Aegean Sea. Evidence of Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman history remains, especially around Ano Poli, the upper town. The ruins of Roman Emperor Galerius' 4th-century palace include the Rotunda that has been both a church and a mosque.

Thessalonica was located at the intersection of two major Roman roads, one leading from Italy eastward (Ignatia Way) and the other from the Danube to the Aegean. Thessalonica's location and use as a port made it a prominent city in 168 B.C. It became the capital of the second district of Macedonia and later it was made the capital and major port of the whole Roman province of Macedonia (146 B.C.). In 42 B.C., after the battle at Philippi, Thessalonica was made a free city. Today the modern city of Thessaloniki is the second most important city of Greece and home to a million inhabitants.

Thessalonica became a free city of the Roman Republic under Mark Antony in 41 B.C. It grew to be an important trade hub located on the Via Egnatia, the road connecting Dyrrhachium with Byzantium, which facilitated trade between Thessaloniki and great centers of commerce such as Rome and Byzantium.

The Massacre of Thessalonica in Greece was a massacre of local civilians by Roman troops. The best estimate of the date is 390.

Thessalonica is Victory against the Thessalians. After the fall of the kingdom of Macedon in 168 B.C., Thessalonica as it came to be called in Latin, became a city of the Roman Republic.



Thessalonians

Make our Calling and Election Sure



2 Peter 1:10-11

"Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (KJV).