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GRACE**

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# 1 Thessalonians 1

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

# 1 Thessalonians 1.

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## Topics.

- For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you
- The Thessalonians faith has gone forth everywhere.
- Turning to God from idols to serve the living and true God.
- Waiting for God's Son from heaven whom God raised from the dead.
- Jesus delivers us from the wrath to come.

**INTRODUCTION:** this affectionate letter is one of Paul's first (A.D. 51) it was written to encourage these new believers in their faith, give them assurance about the eternal state of believers who had died, remind them of the coming of the Lord (1 Thess. 4:15) and to exhort them to godly living. Paul urged them to be at peace and to give thanks in all circumstances. Thessalonica; (present-day Greece) was the capital of Roman Macedonia that lay astride important trade routes. Paul is twice identified as the author ((1 Thess. 1:1) (1 Thess. 2:18). He visited Thessalonica on his second missionary journey, but was forced to flee because of intense Jewish opposition. Paul and Silvanus are in Athens the capital city of Greece, they send Timothy to the Thessalonians and he brings good news of their faith (1 Thessalonians 3:1-7).

**NOTE:** for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

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## 1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-3

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### Paul's Greeting to the Church in Thessalonica.

- **1 Thessalonians 1:1-3:** Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. <sup>2</sup>We give thanks to God always for all of you constantly mentioning you in our prayers, <sup>3</sup>remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Timothy:** means dear to God.

**NOTICE:** the beautiful language, "The church is in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (v2) every repentant sinner when being water baptised should see themselves as being baptised into God and the Lord Jesus Christ since biblical water baptism is not about being baptised into a church or a religious organisation.

**Paul, Silvanus and Timothy:** are extremely thankful to God that the Thessalonians have a strong hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, are faithfully serving the Lord and sacrificing themselves for others and the Gospel. To see brothers and sisters in Christ faithfully growing in in the Lord, (especially in the face of hardship and persecution) produced a joy in Paul, Silvanus and Timothy that by far superseded any joy this world could give to them. This shines a spotlight on the heart of a true shepherd, their greatest joy is not in the things of this world, but in seeing the lost saved and brothers and sisters growing faithfully in the Lord.

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## 1 THESSALONIANS 1:4-7

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## **For we know, Brothers Loved by God, that He has Chosen You.**

- **1 Thessalonians 1:4-7:** For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, <sup>5</sup>because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. <sup>6</sup>And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, <sup>7</sup>so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

**Achaia:** is a country of Europe (today it is Greece).

**Macedonia:** a region of Greece.

Paul's words, "We know, brothers that God has chosen you" does not mean that God had predestined that they would be saved, but that by the Thessalonians strong faith and self-sacrificing behaviour Paul is confident the Thessalonians are saved. It is in this sense that Paul and those with him "Know that God has chosen them." Today we would say, "We know God has saved them." The Thessalonians are suffering extreme persecution (v6) Paul words, are words of comfort. For further information on predestination see:

- Ephesians 1 in Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The word power in the following verse, "O our Gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power" (v5), does not refer to Paul's miraculous power, but the power of the Gospel to change a person's life. This is why Paul says, "The Gospel came to them not only in word, meaning not only intellectually, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit (i.e., power to deliver them from the domain of darkness and transfer them into the kingdom of God's beloved Son) (Col. 1:13) and to change their passions in such a manner that they now desire to live a life that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The words: "with full conviction," (v5) means the Thessalonians are fully convinced that the Gospel message that Paul proclaimed is the true word of God and that it truly proclaims the path to eternal life and everlasting glory. The words, "You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake" refer to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy being men who were prepared to suffer for their faith. It was in this way that the Thessalonian brothers and sisters were not only imitators of Paul Silvanus and Timothy, but also of Jesus. They were imitators in that they were suffering for the Gospel and it was in this manner that they that they became an example to all believers in Macedonia and in Achaia (v7).

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## **1 THESSALONIANS 1:8-10**

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### **The Thessalonians Faith has Gone Forth Everywhere.**

- **1 Thessalonians 1:8-10:** For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. <sup>9</sup>For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, <sup>10</sup>and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Paul and those ministering with him are thrilled at the Thessalonians faith because they have stood firm in the face of hardship and suffering and because of this their faith has been spoken about in Macedonia, Achaia and surrounding areas. It is interesting to notice that it is not prosperity, success and worldly riches that testify to the glory of the Gospel, but standing firm in faith when facing hardship and troubled times. Even the world is praiseworthy when life is charmed, but when a brother or sister in Christ continues to glorify the Lord despite their suffering unbelievers are bewildered by such a strong display of love toward God and the Lord

Jesus Christ. It is very much like a man and a woman who are deeply in love with each other, because of that love they will do whatever they are able to support and help each other regardless of how difficult life is and all the world stands in awe when they see self-sacrificing love. Struggles and crisis's in life not only prove a person's love for their partner and family, but also a Christians love for Christ i.e., will they endure in love or become bitter, resentful and in some cases even forsake their faith.

**Turning to God from idols to serve the living and true God:** The Thessalonians "Turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (v9) this also evidences that the Gospel came to them in power and in the Holy Spirit with full conviction (v5) because it totally changed their religious beliefs and transformed their lives. Whenever a repentant sinner humbles themselves before God and with full conviction accepts Christ as their Lord and Saviour their life will be changed. Knowing Christ and God's love will become the deep desire of the heart and any false religious system or institution that they have adopted that denies the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace will be forsaken regardless of the cost or ramifications. This is what had taken place in the lives of the Thessalonians and why Paul full of joy was able to say with such confidence that he knew they were loved by God and that God had chosen them (v4).

**Waiting for God's Son from heaven:** the words, "To wait for God's Son from heaven" (v10) refers to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in spectacular and awesome power and glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy city Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God. The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Paul commends the Thessalonian brothers and sisters for, "Waiting for God's Son from heaven" (v10) many sceptics today attempt to demean those who trust in Christ and degrade the Christian faith by mockingly saying that people have been waiting for the Lord to return for hundreds of years, but this is the wisdom of God. The Bible is written in such a manner that every generation is able to live with this glorious hope living in their heart and mind. No-doubt one of the reasons God designed it this way was because this eternal hope produces tremendous joy in the heart and mind that no-one can rob nor can anything take it away and it anchors the heart, the mind and the emotions through hardship and troubling times. Added to this it should always be remembered that no believer has ever waited for hundreds of years since the instant they die is the instant they are with Christ and therefore the longest any of us will ever wait is one lifespan and to God and to eternity that is like a blink of the eye. For further information on this topic see the title:

- Sleeping in the Grave and Sleeping in Christ.
- In, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

**Whom God raised from the dead:** The words, "Whom he raised from the dead" (v10) show that it was God the Father who raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the grave and who will at the great resurrection raise to eternal life and everlasting glory all who have died in faith and are sleeping in Christ. This phenomenal event will not only change the entire world as we know it, but will by far supersede every other wonder God has done throughout the history of the world. God at Christ's resurrection God raised only one man, but at the resurrection of believers God in the twinkling of an eye will literally raise thousands from the dead to eternal life.

**Jesus delivers us from the wrath to come:** the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is called the Good News one of the reasons for this is Paul's statement, "Jesus delivers us from the wrath to come" (v10) whoever belongs to the family of Christ will be delivered from God's judgment of wrath which ultimately means they will not be condemned at judgment to eternal death, but instead resurrected to eternal life and everlasting glory.

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**For further information see the title:**

- Death (What happens when we Die)

In Death on (WEBSITE MENU).

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*