

**Studies in the Book of 1 Thessalonians**  
**Lesson 1 - 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10**  
**Hope for a Hopeless World**  
**What Every Church Should Be**

No doubt you have heard some preacher say, “If you ever find the perfect church, please don’t join it. If you do, it won’t be perfect anymore!” It is a wonderful thing when a pastor can think of his church and say, “We give thanks always for all of you!” Paul loved the church at Thessalonica; these people were on his heart, and he was concerned for their spiritual welfare. When we see the characteristics of this church, we should examine our own lives and ask, “Am I helping to make my church a model church in the Lord?”

The word “church” in Greek is *ekklesia*, which means “a called-out group.” The church is not a social club; it is a spiritual organism, an organization composed of people whom God has “*called out of darkness into His marvelous light.*” This calling is purely of grace. Though we are in the world physically, we are not of the world spiritually. These saints lived in Thessalonica but dwelled in Christ. God sent Paul and Silas to Thessalonica with the Word of God. The people heard the Word, believed, and were saved. After receiving Christ, they discovered that they had been chosen in Him by God through grace!

It is wonderful when “hearers” become “followers”! These people heard the Word, welcomed it, believed it, and suffered for receiving it into their lives. Having believed, these new Christians followed Paul, associated themselves with a local fellowship, and became examples to all around them. Christians were expected to be a vital part of the local fellowship. Their testimony reached throughout the whole area and helped lead others to Christ.

The second coming of Christ is a basic theme in this book. Each chapter relates Christ’s return to a basic Christian truth. While the lost are blindly worshiping and serving their idols, the saved are serving the living God and rejoicing in the living hope that Christ will come again. How are Christians supposed to wait for Christ’s return? By occupying their time well. Paul warns the saints to be awake and alert, and not to sleep and be drunken, like the people of the world.

How do we know Christ is coming again? God proved Christ is His Son by raising Him from the dead. Christ could not come again if He were dead and His body decomposing in a Jewish tomb. We cannot separate the living hope and the living Christ!

**Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 and answer the following questions**

1. What does the words “*in God*” suggest to you about the Thessalonians spiritual standing before God? (See 1:1)
2. Consider the order in which Paul uses the terms “grace” and “peace.” How is one the foundation of the other?
3. What three characteristics does Paul mention as being true of the Thessalonians? (See 1:3)
4. In light of Paul’s previous life as a proud Pharisee, what meaning do you see in his calling this large Gentile group “*beloved brethren*”? (See 1:4)
5. Take a look at Paul’s description of the “gospel” in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8. What do you think Paul means by “*our gospel*” in 1 Thessalonians 1:5?
6. In what sense should Christians be followers of inspired teachers and of the Lord? What can we learn about the importance of following Biblical examples? (See 1:6)

7. How is it possible to have joy even when following Christ leads to suffering? (See 1:6)

8. What had the Thessalonians done after they received the Word? Why is this important? (See 1:7)

9. The Greek word for “*turned*” in 1:9 indicates that they turned from idolatry once and for all. It was a single, definite act, a deliberate choice to turn to God from idolatry. What is Paul telling us about idols in this statement?

10. What effect did the preaching of the gospel have among the Thessalonians according to 1:9? What does this tell us about the background of the Believers in Thessalonica?

11. In Genesis 6, God rescues Noah and his family before He sends the flood to destroy the heathen people. In Genesis 19, God rescues Lot before destroying Sodom and Gomorrah. What does this say about God’s heart as He rescues His people before sending wrath? (See 1:10).

## Great Word from Warren Wiersbe

### 1 Thessalonians 1:3

Faith, hope, and love are the three cardinal virtues of the Christian life, and the three greatest evidences of salvation. **Faith** must always lead to works. It has been said, “We are not saved by faith plus works, but by a faith that works.”

**Love** is also an evidence of salvation: “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” We are “*taught by God to love one another.*” We serve Christ because we love Him; this is the “*labor of love*” that Paul mentioned. “*If ye love Me, keep My commandments.*”

The third evidence of salvation is **Hope**, waiting for Jesus Christ to return. The return of Jesus Christ is the dominant theme of both of these Thessalonian letters. Unsaved people are not eagerly awaiting the Lord’s return. In fact, when our Lord catches His church up into the air, unsaved people will be totally surprised.

*“And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”*  
1 Cor. 13:13

*“For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.”* Gal. 5:5-6

*“Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.”* Col. 1:4-5

*For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* Heb. 6:10-12