

## INTRODUCTION

### **Author of 1 Thessalonians**

### **Recipients of 1 Thessalonians**

### **Paul's Ministry in Thessalonica**

Acts 17:1–10 indicates that Paul reasoned in the synagogue at Thessalonica for three Sabbaths.

The text does not say whether the riot occurred on the third Sabbath or whether it was later.

Hoehner argues that it was later, because Philippians 4:16 speaks of Paul receiving two financial gifts from the Philippians (100 miles distant) while he was in Thessalonica.

Hoehner allows three-months (November 50–January 51). This would be the maximum.

### **Dates of First and Second Thessalonians**

1 Thessalonians: Early summer 51

2 Thessalonians: Summer 51

### **Occasion of First Thessalonians:**

After Paul left Thessalonica, the church there came under strong persecution. Opponents charged that Paul had fleeced them and abandoned them. Furthermore, some within the congregation died. They feared that the tribulation had begun and about whether they would be reunited with deceased believers.

Thematic Statement: 1:9–10

<i>How you turned to God from idols</i>	(2:1–3:13)	The relationship between Paul & them
<i>to serve the living and true God</i>	(4:1–12)	Continue serving the Lord
<i>and to wait for His Son from heaven</i>	(4:13–5:11)	Expect the pre-trib rapture

**NEW EXPOSITION:**

**(1:1) Paul, Sylvanus (Silas), and Timothy greet the Thessalonian church with grace & peace from the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ**

**(1:2) Paul thanks God always for them as he mentions them in prayer**

**(1:3) [The first reason Paul always prays thankfully for them is because] he remembers how they apply what they believe, their diligence in showing love, and how they are patiently fixed in hope in Christ (delivering them through the rapture)**

Their application of what they believe

Their diligence in showing love

Their patient hope in Christ (delivering them through the rapture) (cf. exposition of verse 10)

**(1:4) [The first reason Paul always prays thankfully for them is because] he knows that they are elect by God**

How does Paul know that they are elect? He knows it because they have believed

**(1:5) [In explanation of why Paul prays for these elect believers who are applying God's word], Paul's initial message to them was based in more than just words, but in power, the Holy Spirit, and in assurance, which was evident to the Thessalonians through Paul's demeanor among them**

The power of the Word to impact the Thessalonians' lives is the same power that stood behind the message they first believed and behind the messengers of that word

The Holy Spirit who impacted the Thessalonians' lives is the same One that stood behind the message they first believed and behind the messengers of that word

**(1:6–7) The Thessalonians followed Paul and the Lord, because they in joy (produced by the Spirit) received that message while under much affliction—with the result that they became examples to believers throughout all of Greece**

Consider Acts 17

**(1:8) The word of the Lord has sounded forth (from Thessalonica) not only to all of Greece, but elsewhere, so Paul does not need to tell people about the Thessalonians' faith in God—they already know about the Thessalonians' faith**

**(1:9–10) Those who proclaim the Thessalonians' faith speak of Paul being welcomed by the Thessalonians, the formerly idolatrous Thessalonians serving the living and true God, and that the Thessalonians patiently await the resurrected Christ delivering from coming (tribulational) wrath**

## **CONCLUSION**

Paul thanks God for these believers who became followers of Paul after joyfully receiving the word under affliction and whose proclamation of the word is echoed back to Paul—as these welcomed Paul, serve the Lord, and await the resurrected Lord's deliverance of the Church prior to the wrath of the Tribulation