

THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA (Part 1)

Introduction

- 1) **Acts 17:11** – Bereans “more fair-minded” than those in Thessalonica
 - a) It is the Thessalonian Jews, not Christians, that are denounced as less fair-minded
- 2) Those who were converted (v. 4) were the beginning of the church at Thessalonica
- 3) Paul writes two letters to this church while laboring in Corinth (AD 50-53), the first after Timothy comes to him at Corinth with good news about them (1 Thess. 2:17-3:1-7; Acts 18:5)
- 4) The **church at Thessalonica** developed into an exemplary congregation (1 Thess. 1:1-10)

I) **Three Major Characteristics of the Church at Thessalonica** (1:3)

A) ***Work of Faith, Labor of Love, Patience of Hope***

- 1) Combination of faith-hope-love (1 Cor. 13:13; 1 Thess. 5:8; Gal. 5:5-6; Col. 1:4-5)
- 2) *Work* = deed of action; *Labor* = wearying toil; *Patience* = steadfast endurance

B) All accomplished in our Lord Jesus Christ in sight of our God and Father

- 1) Made possible by their election by God (v. 4); God shows the way and if a man obeys, he becomes one of the elect [chosen] to salvation [open to *all* men]

II) **Work of Faith**

A) Faith is manifested by works (Jas. 2:20-24)

B) ***Work of faith***

- 1) Received the word (1:5-6; 2:13; Jas. 1:21)
- 2) Turned to God from idols (1:9; Acts 3:19)
- 3) Served the living and true God (1:9; worthy walk – 2:12; 4:1)

C) How we please God today → receive the word, turn to God from error, and serve Him

III) **Labor of Love**

A) Love for God and man is manifested in doing good (Jn. 14:15; 1 Jn. 3:17-18)

B) ***Labor of love***

- 1) Sounded forth the word (1:7-8; 1 Tim. 3:15)
- 2) Love one another (3:12; 4:9-10)
- 3) Edify, exhort, warn, comfort, uphold, pursue what is good, etc. (5:12-22)

IV) **Patience of Hope**

A) Hope is manifested in patience [endurance] (Heb. 6:11-12; Gal. 6:9)

B) ***Patience of hope***

- 1) Waiting for Jesus to return (1:10; 4:14-16)
- 2) Rejoicing in our brethren (1:6; 2:19-20)
- 3) Comforting words of truth (4:17-18)
- 4) Encouragement and edification (5:5-11)

Conclusion

What an excellent example for us today of a faithful local church! Do we demonstrate the ***work of faith – labor of love – patience of hope*** that Jesus is looking for in each Christian and in His church? Are we serving Him today and preparing for the return of our Master (1 Thess. 5:23-24)?