

THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA (Part 2)

Introduction

- 1) **Acts 17:1-4** – the beginning of the church at Thessalonica (AD 49)
- 2) Paul soon after writes two epistles to them while he labored in Corinth (AD 50-53), the first epistle after Timothy came to him at Corinth with good news about them (1 Thess. 2:17-3:1-7; Acts 18:5) and the second epistle after matters of concern apparently came to his attention
- 3) The **church at Thessalonica** developed into an exemplary congregation, but faced challenges and problems as will any congregation that desires to serve the Lord faithfully
- 4) This study will concentrate mainly on Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians

I) Commended Again for Their Faith, Love, and Patience (1:3-4)

- A) Just as Paul has begun his first epistle (1 Thess. 1:3), he again commends them for their faith that is growing exceedingly, love abounding for one another, and their patience [endurance] in the face of persecution and tribulation
- B) The key is not just for a local church to have these characteristics, but to maintain them over time (Rev. 2:4, 10, 13; 1 Cor. 15:58)

II) The Fate of the Unbelieving and Disobedient at Christ's Coming (1:6-10)

- A) Paul had written in his first epistle about the comfort and joy all the saved have in knowing about the second coming of Christ our Lord (1 Thess. 4:13-18)
- B) Would not be the same for those who had not turned to Christ (cf. Jn. 5:29; Matt. 25:46)
- C) Our teaching and preaching must be balanced with both comfort and warning!

III) Some were Shaken by False Teaching that the Day of the Lord had Come (2:1-2)

- A) Some were trying to deceive by false teaching, even pretending and/or claiming that Paul and others were teaching it (false letters, reports, etc., cf. Rom. 3:8; 1 Jn. 4:1; Gal. 1:8)
- B) Paul reveals that a falling away [*apostasia*] must happen first and that a "man of sin" will be revealed (descriptive of error and those who are deceived by it – 2:3-12)
- C) The only way to keep from being deceived is to love the truth and stand fast holding to the inspired apostolic traditions (apostles' doctrine = word of Christ – 2:13-15)

IV) Some were Walking Disorderly and Not According to Truth (3:6-15)

- A) Instead of working to gain food to eat, some were not working, but were busybodies
- B) Exhorted to work in quietness and eat their own bread, as he had commanded them in his first epistle (see 1 Thess. 4:11-12)
- C) Some do not listen or apply the word of truth to their lives, which leads to disorderly walking ("out of rank") – we should be longsuffering and teach them to repent and obey the truth, but if they do not repent, we are to withdraw our fellowship and continue to admonish them

Conclusion

In each matter that Paul addresses to the brethren in the **church at Thessalonica**, the word of truth is the key to spiritual understanding, guidance, warning, and correction. Every congregation of God's people must remember that the word of the Lord will give perfect instruction in all that is true and right, even in the most difficult situations. May God grant us as His people peace "always in every way" (2 Thess. 3:16).