

New Testament Foundations: Session Ten

Thessalonians: Persecution and Christ's Return

Authorship

1. Paul wrote I Thessalonians from Corinth, about ____ AD and II Thessalonians shortly after.
2. The city of Thessalonica was the capital of the Roman province of _____. It was large and prosperous because of its ideal harbor and maritime commerce, and its location on one of Rome's main highways, the Egnatian Way.
3. Although there was a substantial contingent of _____ in Thessalonica, the church was composed mainly of Gentiles.

Background

1. Paul, Silas, and Timothy came to Thessalonica directly from their harsh treatment at _____.

I Thessalonians 2:2

We had previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you His gospel in spite of strong opposition.

2. They preached in the Thessalonian synagogue for _____ weeks with significant results before they were ejected.

Acts 17:2-4

And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ." And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a great multitude of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women.

3. Paul and his team were taken by night to _____ where they immediately began preaching in the synagogue, again with exceptional results.

Acts 17:13

But when the Jews of Thessalonica found out that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Berea also, they came there likewise, agitating and stirring up the crowds.

4. Paul was then taken to _____ while Silas and Timothy remained for a time in Berea. Timothy soon joined Paul in Athens, but Paul, after several abortive attempts to return to Thessalonica personally, dispatched Timothy instead.

I Thessalonians 2:18

Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us.

5. Timothy returned to Paul after he had made his way to Corinth. The _____ Timothy brought was an encouragement and relief to Paul (3:6). Shortly after this, Paul dictated and dispatched I Thessalonians.

6. Paul received two _____ from Philippi during his stay in Thessalonica (Philippians 4:16), yet he supported himself from his trade of tent making. This was done deliberately to avoid any charges of fraud.

I Thessalonians 2:9

For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

7. After the first letter was delivered to the church in Thessalonica, a message was returned to Paul with news that persecution was continuing and the eschatological errors Paul had addressed were not resolved but had rather grown worse.
8. A _____ letter had been sent to Thessalonica from some unknown source purporting to be from Paul, and declaring that the day of the Lord had already come.

Purpose

1. The first letter to the Thessalonians was a _____ to the concerns Timothy brought to Paul when he met him at Corinth.
- Men were maligning Paul's _____ and motives.

I Thessalonians 1:5

...just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

I Thessalonians 2:10

You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers.

- The church was confused about the _____ of Christ.

I Thessalonians 4:13, 14

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

- Some of the former pagan practices of the new disciples were leading them into _____ and sin.

I Thessalonians 4:3-5

For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God.

2. The second letter to the Thessalonians covered some of the same themes and added a few more.
- The church needed to be assured they had not _____ the second coming.

II Thessalonians 2:1, 2

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to Him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come.

II Thessalonians 2:3, 4

Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

- The church needed to be encouraged to _____ in the midst of persecutions.

II Thessalonians 3:3, 5

But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.

- The church needed to be confronted about the opposition to his _____ that had developed.

II Thessalonians 3:6, 14

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame.