

Diversion: 1st Epistle to Thessalonians

Notes for 5 Aug

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Read: [1 Thessalonians](#)

Thessalonica

It was a port, in present day Greece, at the head of the Thermaic Gulf. It was not, in Paul's day, a Roman colony, but it was a major centre of Roman influence.

Unlike Philippi, it had a Jewish population of sufficient numbers to sustain a synagogue.

The message of 1 Thessalonians can be summed up in two basic points: first the scriptures point to the suffering, death, and resurrection of Israel's Messiah; second, Jesus was and is that Messiah.

The message was accepted by some of the Jews, several of the God-fearing Greeks, and quite a number of the leading women.

It appears that many in the young church had been polytheistic pagans.

Half a century before Paul arrived, their Roman coins had designated Caesar as 'THEOS, ie 'god'. Undoubtedly, because the emperor was viewed as 'lord', Paul's declaration that Christ is Lord, and there is only one God, was bound to be a source of future, potential harassment for Paul. The Romans had no problem with a group declaring worship in a god. Their issue, outside their toleration of Judaism, was another group declaring that there was only one God.

Paul understood the danger of his message deeply driven by his conviction. This threat hung over him throughout his journeys. However, the aim of the study is not to discuss the threat, but with this in the background, his unrelenting focus on his care for his sheep.

1. A big deal was made of Paul going into the synagogue in Thessalonica and reasoned with them from the Scriptures for three sabbaths. No mention of this in 1 Thessalonians. I need an explanation please?
2. Can we discuss the psychological thrust of Paul's leadership to the Thessalonians converts? What implications does it have for in terms of our relationship with fellow believers? [1 Thess. 1:2-7].
3. Paul indicates that the gospel is not only spread by the word, but also by miracles, and the conviction of the teller himself, 'who stood as a living, inimitable emblem of the faith he professed. [1 Thess. 1:5-6; 2:8]. Discuss!
4. However, the community of believers that Paul had left behind may not have been a stable community, hence the reason Paul had to write to them from Athens. There may have been different emphasis on beliefs. Some of those in our Christian communities challenge other groups on their doctrinal perspectives. Mainly conservatives on progressives. Sometimes, the other way round. [Adventist Today]. I have been challenged in the past, in some cases because there has been a genuine concern that I may end up in a place where thermals are no longer required.

Can we learn from Paul the proper Christian protocol for dealing with different perspectives in our religious communities? {1 Thess. 5:15-22, among others.}

5. 1 Thess. 1:3 is reminiscent of which well-known and famous statement? These virtues were in evidence in the early days of the Thessalonian church. How do we retain them within our Christian community? Also read 1 Thess. 5:8.
6. Chapter 4 alludes to discouragement and wavering because of death in their midst. What was Paul's suggested antidote?
7. SANCTIFICATION. Please read 1 Thess. 4:1-12. Can we ever please God by our actions?
8. The 'Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night'. 1 Thess. 5:1. Discuss!

THE MORE I STUDY THE WRITINGS OF PAUL THE MORE I UNDERSTAND HIS IMPORTANCE IN ESTABLISHING THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.