

Lesson #31
Book Overview
1&2 Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians

Paul celebrates the Church's future hope as they remain faithful to Jesus and flourish in their faith despite persecution.

This is the earliest letter we have from Paul.

Story is in Acts chapter 17.

Church persecuted when they said there was another King besides Jesus. Acts 17:7.

Paul was there for only a month.

Letter has 2 main sections. 1) Celebration of their allegiance to Jesus (1-3). 2) Challenges them to keep growing as followers of Jesus (4-5).

Two sections are surrounded by 3 prayers.

1. Section #1 – Chapters 1-3.
 - a. Served living and true God.
 - i. Persecuted as a result.
 - b. Became very close in only 1 month.
 - c. Christian leadership is not about power but humble and servant leadership.
 - d. They happily endured suffering.
2. Section #2 – Chapters 4-5.
 - a. Live totally holy unto God e.g. sexual purity.
 - i. Sexual impurity destroys human dignity.
 - b. Love and serve others.
 - i. Should be known as people who are reliable and work very hard.
 - ii. Use money to share with others.
 - c. Future hope of 2nd coming.
 - i. Death can't separate us from Jesus.
 - ii. This hope should motivate hope in Jesus.

- d. Pokes fun at Roman peace and security.
 - i. Rome's peace come through violence.
 - 1. Jesus will come and confront this violence.
- 3. Closes with prayer of hope.
 - a. Jesus as King is ultimate hope.
 - b. Suffer with JOY!
 - c. Live as if Jesus already returned.

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2 Thessalonians

Addresses persecution, Jesus' return and our need to remain faithful, reminding us that what we hope for shapes what we live for.

Paul wrote second letter shortly after he wrote the first letter.

Received a report of problems with Thessalonian church.

Problems he addressed in 1st letter only got worse!

Three sections in letter to address 3 problems in the Church. 1) Hope in persecution, 2) Day of the Lord and, 3) addresses lazy people in Church.

- 1) Hope in the midst of Persecution.
 - a. Suffering is a way of participating in God's kingdom.
 - b. Jesus became King when he suffered on the cross.
 - c. Believers reflect Christ in their lives by non-violence and endurance of suffering.
 - d. Jesus will bring justice.
- 2) Day of the Lord.
 - a. Some claimed Paul said, the "Day of the Lord" has already arrived.
 - b. Some believers thought that they were left behind.
 - i. Return of Jesus inspires hope not fear.
 - ii. Predicted that an evil ruler will arise i.e. anti-Christ.
 - iii. Will be obvious when Jesus returns so no fear being left behind.

iv. Stay faithful until Jesus returns.

3) Challenge to idle believers.

a. Not lazy but irresponsible and refuse to work.

i. Addressing Roman "patronage".

b. Paul modeled work so people don't support him. Self supporting.

Conclusion: Not talking about end times. WHAT YOU HOPE FOR SHAPES WHAT YOU LIVE FOR!