

## **The Thessalonian Correspondence: an Overview**

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### **Our Goals**

- Lay foundation for the biblical study with special emphasis on equipping the teachers and identifying appropriate applications for our classes
- Help teachers clearly understand the backgrounds (historical, literary, cultural, and grammatical) of the books; present themes, structures, foci, and purpose
- Transfer encouragement and excitement about the power and practicality of the word of God
- Address some points of difficulty and questioning sufficiently to begin the process of equipping for teaching

### **Acts Timeline**

#### **Introduction to Thessalonians**

1. Historical Background in Acts 17-18  
(also see 1 Thessalonians 2, Phil. 4:15-16; 2 Cor. 8:1-5; 2 Cor. 11:5-9, et.al.)
2. General Observations
3. Establishment of the Thessalonian Church (cf. Acts 17:1-9, 1 Thessalonians 1-3)
  - a. Thessalonica (Acts 17)
  - b. Paul's Relationship to the Thessalonians (Acts 17:2-16)
  - c. Paul's Relationship to the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 1-3)
    - Paul's first preaching in Thessalonica (1:4-2:16)
    - Grammatical and vocabulary themes
    - Themes: basics of Christianity, pastoral or ministerial leadership, the parousia, fellowship, missional church questions and concerns
    - Shared sufferings
    - Family metaphors
    - Paul's relationship after leaving Thessalonica (2:17-3:10)
    - Reviewing the timetable questions
4. Cultural backgrounds: social composition of the church
5. Literary backgrounds: integrity, authorship, occasion, genre

#### **Outlines**

##### 1 Thessalonians

The background of Paul's relationship with the Thessalonians, 1

The relationship of Paul during his ministry in Thessalonica, 2:1-16

The continuing relationship and concern, 2:17-3:13

Pastoral advice, 4:1-5:22

Purity

Mutual love and fellowship

Comfort about the coming of Jesus

Readiness for the coming of Jesus

Proper relationships

General admonitions

Conclusion, 5:23-28

## 2 Thessalonians

Introductory thanksgiving and prayer, 1

Clarifying the details of the day of the Lord, thanksgiving and prayer, 2:1-3:5

Appeal to the disorderly, 3:6-15

Conclusion, 3:16-18

### **A More Detailed Study**

#### **Thematic studies**

React to the idea that Thessalonians guides “spiritual living in a secular world.”

What are the basics of Christianity? What are the elements of the initial message for a pagan world (taking the gospel to the Gentiles)?

How does one respond in the midst of suffering and opposition? How does one encourage others who are afflicted?

What are the methods of genuine pastoral or ministerial care? What is the nature of church leadership?

What is “spiritual” leadership?

What do Paul’s metaphors communicate about the nature of the shared faith?

What kind of fellowship should the church seek when becoming a Christian demands a break with former sociological patterns?

What does the first letter say about the temptation to substitute the artificial for the genuine? How would you define “lite Christianity”?

How does the expected coming of Christ affect our grieving?

What unique challenges does a church face when it is missional (existing in or sent into a hostile environment without a “home base”)?

#### **Textual studies**

#### **Textual questions and problems**

1.4.1-8

1.4.13-18

2.2.3-12