

A stylized mountain graphic in a light blue color. The mountain's silhouette is filled with the words 'ENCOURAGEMENT' and 'HOPE' in a bold, blocky, sans-serif font. The word 'ENCOURAGEMENT' is on the top line, and 'HOPE' is on the bottom line. The letters are dark blue, creating a strong contrast with the light blue background of the mountain.

ENCOURAGEMENT HOPE

A study from the books of Thessalonians



The city was founded around 315 BC by King Cassander of Macedon, near the ancient town of Therma. He named it after his wife Thessalonike, a half-sister of Alexander the Great and princess of Macedonia as daughter of Philip II. Under the kingdom of Macedonia, the city retained its own autonomy and parliament and evolved to become the most important city in Macedonia.

- After the fall of the Kingdom of Macedonia in 168 BC, in 148 BC Thessalonica was made the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia. Thessalonica became a free city of the Roman Republic under Mark Antony in 41 BC. It grew to be an important trade hub located on the Via Egnatia, the road connecting Dyrrhachium with Byzantium, which facilitated trade between Thessaloniki and great centers of commerce such as Rome and Byzantium.
- Thessaloniki lays at the southern end of the main north–south route through the Balkans along the valleys of the Morava and Axios river valleys, thereby linking the Balkans with the rest of Greece. The city became the capital of one of the four Roman districts of Macedonia.
- At the time of the Roman Empire, about 50 AD, Thessaloniki was also one of the early centers of Christianity; while on his second missionary journey, Paul the Apostle visited this city's chief synagogue and sowed the seeds for Thessaloniki's first Christian church.

Last week...

1 Thessalonians Chapter 1



Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the
church of the Thessalonians in God
the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
Grace to you and peace.

1 Thessalonians 1:1



Who was Paul?

- Prior to his conversion, Paul was a persecutor of Christians. Acts reports that he 'laid waste the church' and 'dragged off men and women and committed them to prison' (8:3). He 'persecuted them even to foreign cities' (26:11), receiving authority from the high priest to extradite Christians from Damascus (9:1–2; 22:5). 'I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it' (Gal. 1:13; see Gal. 1:23; 1 Cor. 15:9).
- Paul's conversion involved the revelation of Jesus as God's Son and the commission to preach to the Gentiles. In Acts, the conversion of Paul is recounted three times (9:1–19; 22:3–16; 26:4–18) and include supernatural details: light and voices from heaven, Paul's blindness and recovery. They also observe that Paul's conversion was facilitated by a religious leader named Ananias (9:10–18; 22:12–16) and that Paul was baptized (9:18; 22:16). The risen Christ had appeared to him (1 Cor. 15:8). This vision led to the conviction that the crucified Jesus was the Messiah.
- Immediately after his conversion he retired into the solitudes of Arabia (Gal. 1:17) for devout study and meditation. Coming back, after three years, to Damascus, he began to preach the gospel "boldly in the name of Jesus" (Acts 9:27), but soon fled to Jerusalem (9:25; 2 Cor. 11:33). After three weeks, he was again forced to flee (Acts 9:28, 29) from persecution. He returned to his native Tarsus (Gal. 1:21).
- More than one-fourth of the writings of the New Testament are attributed to him. Paul's use of Greek confirms his origin as a Hellenistic Jew of the Dispersion, at home in the Greco-Roman world.
- Most likely, Paul was executed at the end of his original Roman imprisonment, probably in 62 AD.

Sources: Easton's Bible Dictionary and Harper's Bible Dictionary



Who was Timothy?

A young disciple and Paul's companion on many journeys. His mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, are mentioned for their piety (2 Tim. 1:5). His father was a Greek (Acts 16:1). He is first seen on Paul's second visit to Lystra (16:2), where he probably resided, and where it seems he was converted during Paul's first visit there (1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 3:11). The apostle formed a high opinion of his "own son in the faith," arranged that he should become his companion (Acts 16:3), and circumcised him so that he might conciliate the Jews. He was called an evangelist (1 Tim. 4:14), and went with Paul in his journey through Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, Troas, Philippi and Berea (Acts 17:14). He followed Paul to Athens, and was sent by him with Silas on a mission to Thessalonica (17:15; 1 Thess. 3:2). We next find him at Corinth (1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1) with Paul. He passes out of sight for a few years, and is again with the apostle at Ephesus (Acts 19:22), whence he is sent on a mission into Macedonia. He accompanied Paul afterwards into Asia (20:4), where he was with him for some time. When the apostle was a prisoner at Rome, Timothy joined him (Phil. 1:1), where it appears he also suffered imprisonment (Heb. 13:23). During the apostle's second imprisonment he wrote to Timothy, asking him to rejoin him as soon as possible, and to bring with him certain things which he had left at Troas, his cloak and parchments (2 Tim. 4:13).



Who was Silvanus?

- We first see Silvanus or Silas (probably a contraction of Silvanus) as one of the "leading men among the brothers" in Jerusalem (Acts 15:22). He is selected to carry a letter from the Jerusalem Council to the Gentile churches. The letter conveys the amazing revelation that the Gentiles need not become Jews to be true Christians. They are only required to observe certain dietary customs to avoid offending their Jewish Christian brothers and sisters -- and to avoid sexual immorality, which was rampant among non-Jews.
- Later, Paul selects Silas to accompany him on his Second Missionary Journey, after Paul and Barnabas part company (Acts 15:36-41). Silas travels with Paul through Syria and the provinces of Cilicia, Galatia, and Asia. They are successful in the Macedonian city of Philippi but meet stiff opposition. Paul and Silas were stripped, flogged, and thrown in jail. But the Scripture records:
- "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them." (Acts 16:25)
- They are freed by an earthquake. The next city they come to was Thessalonica -- and the rest is history. Silas is also mentioned as Paul's co-worker in Berea (Acts 17:14) and in Corinth (2 Corinthians 1:19). Probably it is this same Silas who serves as an amanuensis or secretary for the early church's other premier apostle, Simon Peter (1 Peter 5:12).

We give thanks to God always for all of you,
making mention of you in our prayers;
constantly bearing in mind your work of faith
and labor of love and steadfastness
[endurance] of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ
in the presence of our God and Father,
1 Thessalonians 1:2-3



Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 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 large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women. Acts 17:1-4



1 Thessalonians chapter 2

1 and 2 Thessalonians, written about 50 AD, are the earliest documents in the New Testament.

- www.jesuswalk.com/books/thessalonians.htm

1 Thessalonians was written within a matter of a few months or so from the time when the readers had first heard the gospel, and it should be read as a follow-up letter to new converts.

– New Bible Commentary



First Melissa's passion is to
make disciples of Jesus who:

REACH INTENTIONALLY
CONNECT AUTHENTICALLY
EQUIP
CONTINUOUSLY
LIVE PASSIONATELY



For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain,

1 Thessalonians 2:1

Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 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 large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women. Acts 17:1-4



but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition [*ἀγών* *agon*, a contest or battle].

1 Thessalonians 2:2

*If you had suffered physically, emotionally and spiritually for sharing the gospel story of Jesus, would you be willing to do it again?





The journey from Philippi to Thessalonica was about 100 miles with Amphipolis and Apollonia at approximately 30-mile intervals on the **Via Egnatia**. - Bible Knowledge Commentary

“suffered and been mistreated in Philippi”

It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling.

Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, “These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.” She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!” And it came out at that very moment. Acts 16:16-18



But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities, and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, “These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews, and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans.”

Acts 16:19-21



The crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods. When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. Acts 16:22-24



But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. Acts 16:25-26



When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!” And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, and after he brought them out, he said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” Acts 16:27-30



They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household. And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household. Acts 16:31-34



Now when day came, the chief magistrates sent their policemen, saying, "Release those men." And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The chief magistrates have sent to release you. Therefore come out now and go in peace." But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out."

Acts 16:35-37



The policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates. They were afraid when they heard that they were Romans, and they came and appealed to them, and when they had brought them out, they kept begging them to leave the city. They went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.

Acts 16:38-40





The journey from Philippi to Thessalonica was about 100 miles with Amphipolis and Apollonia at approximately 30-mile intervals on the **Via Egnatia**. - Bible Knowledge Commentary

For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; but just as we have been approved [δοκιμάζω, *dokimazo*, shown by testing to be genuine] by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts.

1 Thessalonians 2:3-4



For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness— nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority.

1 Thessalonians 2:5-6

*Traveling philosophers and orators were common in the Roman Empire. They itinerated from place to place, entertaining and seeking a personal following for fame and fortune.

Accusations against those who proclaim the Gospel have been around for a long time. Paul catalogs ten of them here...

- (1) appealing from error
- (2) appealing from impure motives
- (3) trying to trick people
- (4) speaking to win their favor
- (5) employing flattering talk
- (6) putting on a false front to mask
- (7) greed
- (8) seeking human praise
- (9) using one's authority to make one's weight felt
- (10) putting a burden on people by seeking material support from them

But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives [ψυχή *psuche*, souls], because you had become very dear to us. 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8

*If a nursing mother does not feed herself, she cannot feed her baby. If she eats certain foods, her baby will get sick. Similarly the spiritual diet of a parent Christian is vitally important to the health of a newer Christian.

For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day [tent-making, see Acts 18:3] so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; 1 Thessalonians 2:9-10

*Could we honestly write this?



just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

*The training provided included strong positive appeals (encouraging, *parakalountes*), soothing encouragement (comforting, *paramythoumenoi*), designed to cheer up and to inspire correct behavior, and solemn, earnest entreaty (urging, *martyromenoi*). Such a combination of appeals proved effective in moving the Thessalonians to action by the Holy Spirit's convicting power.



For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God [preaching of the missionaries] which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who **believe** [Greek present tense verb πιστεύω *pisteuo*, indicating continuing action].

1 Thessalonians 2:13



The Word of God works in you who believe

- For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:13
- for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Philippians 2:13



For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews [Ἰουδαῖος *Ioudaios* “Judeans”, not all Jews], 1 Thessalonians 2:14

“You people in God’s congregation in Thessalonica suffered the same things from your countrymen the Thessalonians as God’s congregations in Judah did from theirs.”

who both killed the Lord Jesus [non-believers among Judeans and Romans] and the prophets, and drove us out. They [those who rejected Jesus] are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men, hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved; with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins [by hindering the spiritual growth of others]. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost. 1 Thessalonians 2:15-16



But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short while—in person, not in spirit—were all the more eager with great desire to see your face. 1 Thessalonians 2:17

*Paul and his companions had tried to return to Thessalonica on several occasions because of the intense longing they felt for their brethren. The care and feeding of new Christians was not just an obligation those missionaries felt toward God; it was something they longed with all their hearts to be able to do, because of the love of Christ, in spite of the personal danger that faced them in Thessalonica. – Bible Knowledge Commentary



For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet Satan hindered us [spiritual warfare]. 1 Thessalonians 2:18

Centuries earlier, an angel said to Daniel...

But the prince [demon] of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes [angels], came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. Daniel 10:13



For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?

1 Thessalonians 2:19

* The English word “coming” is the Greek word *parousia*. Since Paul’s letters to the Thessalonians are among the first New Testament books written, this is chronologically the first use of this important word in the New Testament. It means “presence, being present,” and was used for the arrival of a great personage, such as a king making a royal visit.

King Yeshua’s return will be the Royal Visit. – Jewish New Testament Commentary



For you [new believers in Jesus living in Thessalonica] are our glory [δόξα *doxa*] and joy [χαρά *chara*].

1 Thessalonians 2:20

* This profession of affection should have removed any thoughts from the Thessalonian Christians' minds that Paul had not returned because he was unconcerned or selfish.

- Bible Knowledge Commentary



Next week...

1 Thessalonians chapter 3



Lessons for Us... 1 Thessalonians Chapter 2

- God has called His people to boldly share the story of Jesus even when facing opposition
- Spiritual warfare is real
- Our generation of Christ-followers is not the first to face spiritual opposition
- Our spiritual goal must be to please God, not other people
- A person who has met Jesus as Savior looks, acts, thinks differently because they are a new creation
- The most important result of ministry is changed lives



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