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## The Chapters of 1 Thessalonians

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# 1 Thessalonians

## SECTION OUTLINE ONE (1 THESSALONIANS 1)

Paul opens his first letter to the Thessalonians by listing five characteristics of the church in Thessalonica.

I. IT IS AN ENERGETIC CHURCH (1:1-3): Paul gives thanks to God.

**A. For their strong faith** (1:1-3a)

**B. For their labor of love** (1:3b)

II. IT IS AN ELECT CHURCH (1:4): They have been chosen by God himself.

III. IT IS AN EXEMPLARY CHURCH (1:5-7)

**A. Paul's example to the church** (1:5-6)

1. His preaching is anointed by the Holy Spirit (1:5).

2. His personal lifestyle is anointed by the Holy Spirit (1:6).

**B. Their example to the world** (1:7): They are a model to all the believers in Greece.

IV. IT IS AN EVANGELISTIC CHURCH (1:8): Their faith in God has become known everywhere.

V. IT IS AN EXPECTANT CHURCH (1:9-10): They are looking forward to the return of Jesus from heaven.

## SECTION OUTLINE TWO (1 THESSALONIANS 2)

Paul talks about the trip he took to visit Thessalonica and about his desire to go again.

I. PAUL'S PAST TRIP TO THESSALONICA (2:1-16): The apostle overviews two factors concerning his visit to Thessalonica.

**A. How the gospel was relayed to the believers there** (2:1-12): The preacher in the pulpit.

1. Paul the persecuted (2:1-2): He speaks of his sufferings at Philippi just prior to coming to Thessalonica.

2. Paul the pattern (2:3-6, 9-10): The apostle served as a positive role model to the church.

a. Concerning his words (2:3-6, 10): Paul's preaching was bold, truthful, straightforward, and sincere.

b. Concerning his works (2:9): Paul labored long, weary hours so that he would not be a burden to the church.

3. Paul the parent (2:7-8, 11-12)

a. He fed and cared for them as would a loving mother (2:7-8).

b. He encouraged and comforted them as would a loving father (2:11-12).

**B. How the gospel was received by the believers there** (2:13-16): The people in the pews.

1. The enthusiasm (2:13): They accepted Paul's words as being from God.

2. The enemies (2:14-16): They persevered through suffering and persecution.

II. PAUL'S PLANNED TRIP TO THESSALONICA (2:17-20)

**A. Why the apostle is anxious to revisit them** (2:17, 19-20)

1. They are his reward and crown (2:17, 19b).

2. They are his pride and joy (2:19a, 20).

**B. Why the apostle has been unable to revisit them** (2:18): He has been hindered by Satan.

## SECTION OUTLINE THREE (1 THESSALONIANS 3)

Paul talks more about his visit to the Thessalonians and rejoices over the good news Timothy has brought back to him about them.

- I. PAUL'S REVIEW (3:1-5): The apostle calls to remembrance events both during and after his previous visit to Thessalonica.
  - A. The action during his visit** (3:4): While he was with them, Paul warned the church that they could expect future persecution because of their faith in Christ; this soon came to pass.
  - B. The action after his visit** (3:1-3, 5)
    - 1. Where he was (3:1): He was in Athens, experiencing great concerns over the spiritual welfare of the church in Thessalonica.
    - 2. What he did (1:2-3, 5): He sent Timothy to minister to them.
- II. PAUL'S REPORT (3:6-9)
  - A. The return of Timothy** (3:6): Paul informs them that Timothy has brought back the joyous news that they are growing in faith and love.
  - B. The rejoicing of Paul** (3:7-9): The apostle is greatly comforted by this news.
- III. PAUL'S REQUEST (3:10-13): Paul now lifts up a twofold prayer request.
  - A. For himself** (3:10-11): Paul asks God to permit him to visit the church again.
  - B. For the church** (3:12-13)
    - 1. That their love will both increase and overflow (3:12)
    - 2. That their hearts will be strengthened in matters of holiness (3:13)

#### **SECTION OUTLINE FOUR (1 THESSALONIANS 4)**

Paul discusses the glorious rapture of the church.

- I. THE CHALLENGES IN VIEW OF THE RAPTURE (4:1-12)
  - A. What we are to do** (4:1-2): Believers are to live their lives in a way that is pleasing to God.
  - B. How we are to do it** (4:3-12)
    - 1. Be holy and pure (4:3-5, 7-8).
    - 2. Don't defraud another believer (4:6).
    - 3. Love all believers (4:9-10).
    - 4. Take care of your own business (4:11).
    - 5. Earn your own living (4:12).
- II. THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE RAPTURE (4:13-18)
  - A. The purpose** (4:13, 18): Paul explains the Rapture for two reasons:
    - 1. To clarify (4:13): He does not want them to be ignorant of God's prophetic plan.
    - 2. To comfort (4:18): This glorious event may be used to encourage each other.
  - B. The particulars** (4:14-17)
    - 1. The return of the Lord (4:14, 16a-c)
      - a. The saints (4:14): All believers currently in heaven will accompany him.
      - b. The sound (4:16a-c)
        - (1) A loud command (4:16a)
        - (2) The voice of the archangel (4:16b)
        - (3) The trumpet call of God (4:16c)
    - 2. The resurrection of the dead (4:16d): The bodies of dead believers will rise first.
    - 3. The rapture of the living (4:15, 17): The believers on earth will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

#### **SECTION OUTLINE FIVE (1 THESSALONIANS 5)**

Paul sets forth several rules for the church in light of the coming Rapture, then ends his letter with three requests.

- I. THE RULES (5:1-22)
  - A. Be watchful** (5:1-10).

1. The action (5:1-2): The event Paul describes here is the Day of the Lord.
2. The reaction (5:3-10): There has been, is, and will be a twofold response to this terrible time of judgment.
  - a. The response by the children of darkness (5:3, 7): In their drunken unbelief, the unsaved will believe all is quiet and peaceful until sudden destruction falls on them.
  - b. The response by the children of light (5:4-6, 8-10): We are to put on the full armor of God, for God has saved us.

**B. Be helpful** (5:11, 14).

1. Build one another up (5:11).
2. Warn, encourage, be compassionate, and show patience with one another (5:14).

**C. Be respectful** (5:12-13): Honor and love your spiritual leaders.

**D. Be merciful** (5:15): Do not return evil for evil.

**E. Be joyful** (5:16): At all times.

**F. Be prayerful** (5:17): In all things.

**G. Be thankful** (5:18): No matter what happens.

**H. Be careful** (5:19-22)

1. What not to do (5:19-20)
  - a. Don't quench the Spirit (5:19).
  - b. Don't despise prophecy (5:20).
2. What to do (5:21-22)
  - a. Do test everything (5:21).
  - b. Do avoid every kind of evil (5:22).

II. THE REASSURANCES (5:23-24)

**A. What God will do** (5:23)

1. At the present (5:23a): He will sanctify us through and through.
2. In the future (5:23b): He will present us blameless at Christ's coming.

**B. Why God will do it** (5:24): Because he is faithful.

III. THE REQUESTS (5:25-28)

**A. Pray for me** (5:25).

**B. Greet everyone for me** (5:26).

**C. Read this letter to all the Christians** (5:27-28).