



1st Epistle of Paul to Thessalonica

1 Thessalonians 1:1-4 - Faith, Hope and Love

- *1 Thessalonians 1:1 - Paul, Silvanus (Silas), and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace (from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ).*
 - Remember upfront, this was written in ~51 AD, among Paul's first epistles, and to the newly founded church in a major commercial metropolis in Macedonia, a very wealthy city inhabited by well-to-do Romans and Jewish merchants.
 - Thessalonica was a free city and enjoyed the autonomy of self-government in all its internal affairs, not desirous to be managed by anyone outside.
 - Who are all these guys anyway?
 - They were servants who brought the gospel to Thessalonica.
 - We all know Paul!
 - » *Acts 17:1,2...14 - Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to **Thessalonica**, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul went in, as was his custom, and for three weeks he argued with them from the scriptures.,..... Then the brethren immediately sent **Paul** off on his way to the sea, but **Silas and Timothy** remained there.*



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- *Silas* was a Jew (*Acts 16:20*), part of the body at Jerusalem (*Acts 15:22*), a prophet (*Acts 15:32*), joined Paul on his second missionary journey (*Acts 15:40*) and would later become a companion of Paul and Peter as well (*1 Pet. 5:12*).
- *Timothy* was young and son of a Jewish Christian mother and a Gentile father (*Acts 16:1; 2 Tim. 1:5*).
 - Did Paul lead him to Christ?
 - » *1 Tim 1:2 - To Timothy, my true child in the faith.*
- And this letter is addressed to *the church (ekklesiā) of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*.
 - Here the Greek word for *Father* is *patēr* - *nourisher* or *protector*.
 - Why might this be important?
 - What do you make of the way Paul addressed the body of believers at Thessalonica?
 - *Logos* - ‘not merely as in the Epistles to Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, “to the saints,” or “the faithful at Thessalonica.” Though as yet they do not seem to have had the final Church organization under permanent “bishops” and deacons, which appears in the later Epistles (See on *Phil 1:1*;



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- see First and Second Timothy). Yet he designates them by the honorable term “Church,” implying their status as not merely isolated believers, but a corporate body with spiritual rulers (*1 Thess 5:12; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:2*).
- *1 Thessalonians 1:2 - We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,*
 - What do make of ‘we’?
 - McCalley - ‘While it is too much to say that Silvanus and Timothy were Paul’s co-authors, the pronoun we continues throughout most of the letter. This stands in contrast to *I Cor 1:1* where Paul associates Sosthenes with himself but by verse 4 changes to the first person singular I for the remainder of the book.’
 - Doesn’t this sound a bit legal?
 - McCalley – ‘**Prayer** for other believers occupied much of Paul’s time. The emphasis on continual prayer is found in *Rom 1:9, I Cor 1:4, Phil 1:3-4, and Col 1:3*.’
 - So then how should we interpret this?
 - What is *making mention of you in our prayers*?



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- » Robertson – ‘Did Paul have a prayer list of the Thessalonian disciples which he read over with Silas and Timothy? Of course, he did not make audible prayer always, **but he was always in the spirit of prayer, “a constant attitude”** (Milligan), “in tune with the Infinite.” Of course, he did not make audible prayer always, but he was always in the spirit of prayer, “a constant attitude” (Milligan), “in tune with the Infinite.”
- » Isn't this our position translated into our condition?

- *1 Thessalonians 1:3 - remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,*

– *remembering without ceasing* – same interpretation as for giving thanks always.

– *your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope*

- Let's describe *work of faith, labor of love, patience of hope in ...Christ.*

– And, of what section of scripture do these attributes of *faith, love and hope* remind you?

- » *1 Cor 13:13 - So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*



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- » Do you think how the change in order of these attributes is important to the Thessalonian's?
- » Do you agree with McCalley – ‘The trilogy of **faith, love, and hope** is not in itself the focal point. The emphasis is rather on what each part of the trilogy produces. Faith produces works; love produces the labor; and hope produces stability.’

– *in the sight of our God and Father (patēr),*

- Our *faith, love and hope*, are not merely to pass for genuine before men, but to bring glory to our *God and Father!*

– And this is the Holy Spirit led life in Christ Jesus!

- » *Rom 16:27 - to the only wise God be glory for evermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.*
- » *1 Cor 10:31 - So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

- *1 Thessalonians 1:4 - knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.*

- *knowing* – what do you think, is this *eido, ginōskō* or *epiginōskō*?
- *beloved (perfect passive participle) brethren*



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- Constable – ‘Paul's favorite appellation for the Thessalonians was "brothers." He used it 15 times in this epistle and seven times in 2 Thessalonians. It emphasizes the equality of Christians in the family of God, Jews and Gentiles.’
- *your election by God.*
 - What does it mean to be *elected by God*?
 - Do you agree with Keathley III?– ‘The difficulty in putting divine election and human responsibility together is understanding how both can be true.’
 - And Paul further states this position to the Thessalonica’s.
 - » *2 Thess 2:13 - But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, **because God chose you from the beginning to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.***
 - Yet Vincent attempts to interpret this differently - This, and the kindred words, *ἐκλέγειν* to choose, and *ἐκλεκτός* chosen or elect, are used of God's selection of men or agencies for special missions or attainments; but neither here nor elsewhere in the N.T. is there any warrant for the revolting doctrine that God has predestined a definite number of mankind to eternal life, and the rest to eternal destruction...See [1Thess 1:5-10](#).