

The Relevance of 1st Thessalonians

Thessalonica was one of the several cities visited by Paul on his second preaching journey (Acts 17:1-4). The city was founded 300 years before the birth of Jesus by one of the generals of Alexander the Great. It was the capital city of Macedonia and a commercial trading center. It was also full of idolatry and sexual immorality.

Upon arriving in Thessalonica, for three straight Sabbaths, Paul went into the synagogue and preached about Jesus. A local church was planted, and the newly converted brethren were immediately persecuted by hostile Jews (Acts 17:5-10). Paul was forced to leave and travel to Berea.

After learning from Timothy that the Thessalonians continued to serve Jesus amid persecution, Paul wrote them a letter. This letter is commonly referred to as "1st Thessalonians." It was written to offer encouragement and thanksgiving and answer spiritual questions.

What makes this ancient, inspired letter relevant?

Its message about repentance (1 Thessalonians 1:6-9).

- The repentance of the Thessalonians did not merely involve feeling bad, admitting wrong, and taking full responsibility for their sins.
- Their repentance also involved action. They turned from idols and began serving the living God (1 Thessalonians 1:9).
- Since every person of an accountable age commits sin, preaching about repentance will always be necessary (2 Peter 3:9; Acts 17:30-31).
- Repentance is a prerequisite for baptism (Acts 2:37-38).
- Repentance involves godly sorrow, turning away from sin, and reforming our lives to the will of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Its message about relationships (1 Thessalonians 1:2; 2:7, 11; 3:6).

- Paul loved and had great concern about the spiritual welfare of these brethren. He valued the fellowship they had in Christ. Paul has much to say about how Christians are to treat one another.
- They are to love one another (1 Thessalonians 4:9-10).
- They are to appreciate one another (1 Thessalonians 5:12).
- They are to live peaceably with one another (1 Thessalonians 5:13).
- They are to admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, and be patient with all (1 Thessalonians 5:14).
- They are to avoid seeking revenge (1 Thessalonians 5:15).

Its message about sexual immorality (1 Thessalonians 4:1-8).

- Christians are to rise above their immoral culture and flee from sexual sins.
- Those single must abstain from fornication.
- Those married must avoid adultery and seeking attention from those who are not their spouse.
- Disciples must also avoid homosexuality, pornography, immodesty, and language full of sexual filth.
- God demands that His people be holy and use their bodies for His glory!

Its message about the return of Jesus (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-5:11).

- The Lord will come back like a thief!
- Those unprepared will experience God's eternal judgment.
- We must always be spiritually alert, sober, and encouraging one another.

- We must avoid becoming distracted and oblivious to the reality that this event could occur in our lifetime.

Conclusion:

Are you prepared for His return?

- Shawn Jeffries