

The background image shows the ruins of an ancient temple, likely the Temple of Apollo in Side, Turkey. In the foreground, there are low stone walls and a path. To the right, a well-preserved section of the temple stands with four tall, fluted columns supporting a fragment of the entablature. The temple is situated on a hillside overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. In the distance, a range of mountains is visible under a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds.

Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians

CHAPTER ONE

OUTLINE OF THE LETTER

- **Chapter One**

- Greeting (1:1)
- Paul's Gratitude (1:2-4)
- Their Conversion (1:5-10)

- **Chapter Two**

- Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)
- The Thessalonians' Faith (2:13-16)
- Paul's Desire to See Them (2:17-20)

- **Chapter Three**

- Paul's Concern (3:1-5)
- Timothy's Good News (3:6-8)
- Paul's Prayer (3:9-13)

- **Chapter Four**

- Paul's Plea for Purity (4:1-8)
- A Loving & Laboring Life (4:9-12)
- Christ is Coming (4:13-5:11)

- **Chapter Five**

- Christ is Coming (4:13-5:11)
- Various Exhortations (5:12-22)
- Closing Remarks (5:23-28)

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER ONE

Greeting (1:1)

1^a Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

- Paul omitted emphasizing his apostleship, likely reflecting a close relationship with the Thessalonian brethren (**Phil. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1**).
- Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy are all listed in the greeting.
 - Silvanus is the Roman form of the Hebrew name Silas (**Acts 15:22, 40**).
 - They worked together in establishing the church at Thessalonica during Paul's second missionary journey (**Acts 17:1-9**).
 - This reminds us that the work of preaching the gospel was not accomplished by Paul alone (**1 Cor. 3:5-9**).
- The church consisted of Gentiles who had turned from idolatry (**1 Thess. 1:9**), as well Jews who had obeyed the gospel (**Acts 17:4**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER ONE

Greeting (1:1)

1^b Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Paul's greeting is purposeful (**2 Thess. 3:16-18**).
- "Grace" and "peace" are derived from both God and Christ.
 - "Grace" – Good-will, loving-kindness, favor (Strong).
 - God delivers grace and truth to man through Jesus Christ in these last days (**John 1:14, 17; Heb. 1:1**).
 - "Peace" – Tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot (Thayer).
 - True peace comes from being in God's grace (**Phil. 4:4-7; James 1:17**).
 - Paul wished for the Thessalonians to be at peace even though they suffered (**1 Thess. 2:14**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER ONE

Paul's Gratitude for the Thessalonians (1:2-4)

² We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,

- Paul regularly thanked God for brethren (**Phil. 1:3-5; Col. 1:3; Eph. 1:15-16; etc.**).
- Faithful brethren ought to never be taken for granted (**1 Thess. 5:12-13**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER ONE

Paul's Gratitude for the Thessalonians (1:2-4)

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,

- The Thessalonians were remembered for their:
 - “Work of faith” (**James 2:17-26; Eph. 2:8-10**).
 - “Labor of love” (**Gal. 5:6; 1 John 3:18; Rom. 13:8-10; 1 Cor. 13:3**).
 - “Patience of hope” (**Rom. 5:2-5; Heb. 10:36**).
 - Faith, love, and hope are keys to successfully serving God (**1 Cor. 13:13**).
“These phrases denote Christian virtues in action: the work produced by faith, labor motivated by love, and endurance that stems from hope in Christ” (NET Footnotes).
- God saw all of the Thessalonians’ work (**Heb. 6:10**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER ONE

Paul's Gratitude for the Thessalonians (1:2-4)

⁴ knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

**We know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you,
(NET, NIV, RSV, CSB)**

- “Election” = chosen by God for salvation.
 - The question is how God chooses, not whether or not He chooses.
 - He does not selectively choose certain individuals to be saved & others lost (**2 Pet. 3:9**).
 - He calls through the gospel (**2 Thess. 2:13-14**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER ONE

Paul's Gratitude for the Thessalonians (1:2-4)

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We know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you,
(NET, NIV, RSV, CSB)

- “Election” = chosen by God for salvation.
- How could Paul know the Thessalonians were truly the elect of God?
 - They were obedient (**1 Thess. 1:3, 5-10; Acts 10:34-35; Matt. 7:15-21**).
 - A person becomes elect by obeying the gospel (**Eph. 1:3-13; 1 Pet. 1:1-2, 22-25; Rom. 9:14-33, 10:14-21**).

“They were chosen and called to those blessings which, if rightly used, would lead them to eternal glory. That these blessings could be abused—become finally useless and forfeited, they had an ample proof in the case of the Jews, who, after having been the elect of God for more than 2000 years, were now reprobates” (Adam Clarke, 540).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER ONE

The Conversion of the Thessalonians (1:5-10)

⁵ For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

- Paul preached the “gospel.”
 - The gospel belongs to God (**Rom. 1:1**), Christ (**Mark 1:1**), and the apostles since they were entrusted with proclaiming it (**Rom. 2:16, 16:25; 2 Tim. 2:8**).
 - Paul preached the same gospel everywhere (**Gal. 1:8-9; 1 Cor. 15:1-4**).
 - The gospel will save every person who believes and obeys it (**Rom. 1:16**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER ONE

The Conversion of the Thessalonians (1:5-10)

⁵ For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

- Paul preached the “gospel.”
- He preached not in “word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit.”
 - Christianity doesn’t rest on blind faith but on divinely confirmed revelation (**Mark 16:20; John 16:13; Heb. 2:3-4**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER ONE

The Conversion of the Thessalonians (1:5-10)

⁵ For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

- Paul preached the “gospel.”
- He preached not in “word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit.”
- He also preached “in much assurance.”
 - There is some debate on the meaning of this phrase. This may refer to:
 - The Thessalonians having confidence in their faith since what they heard was the inerrant words of the Holy Spirit (**2 Pet. 1:19-21;etc.**).
 - The Thessalonians having confidence in Paul et al. based on the “the kind of men” they were (**1 Thess. 2:1-12; 2 Cor. 1:12, 4:2; 1 Tim. 4:12**).
 - The boldness Paul had in his preaching (**1 Thess. 2:2; Eph. 6:19-20**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER ONE

The Conversion of the Thessalonians (1:5-10)

⁵ For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

- Paul preached the “gospel.”
- He preached not in “word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit.”
- He also preached “in much assurance.”
- Paul did not preach for self but for the Thessalonians’ sake.
 - He willingly endured persecution so the Thessalonians could hear the gospel (**Acts 17:1-9; 1 Thess. 2:2**).
 - False teachers often preach for selfish reasons. Godly preachers preach for unselfish reasons (**2 Cor. 2:17; Acts 20:17-37**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER ONE

The Conversion of the Thessalonians (1:5-10)

⁶ And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,

- Paul frequently exhorted people to imitate his example insofar as he imitated Christ (**1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 2 Thess. 3:7-9**).
 - Mature Christians should live in a way that others can imitate their example (**Phil. 4:9; Tit. 2:7-8**).
- The Thessalonians did not just hear the gospel, they “received” it (**Luke 8:11-15; 1 Thess. 2:13**).
 - They received the gospel “in much affliction” (**Acts 17:5-9; 1 Thess. 3:3-4**).
 - Yet, they still received the gospel “with joy of the Holy Spirit.”
 - Finding salvation brings reason to rejoice, regardless of the circumstances (**Rom. 1:1-5; 1 Pet. 1:3-8**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER ONE

The Conversion of the Thessalonians (1:5-10)

⁷ so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.

- Lessons we learn from this statement:
 - Every Christian influences others, positively or negatively (**Matt. 5:14-16**).
 - Those imitating Christ become examples for others to imitate (**1 Cor. 11:1**).
 - Every congregation has a reputation, positive or negative (**Rev. 2-3; etc.**).
 - A congregation can quickly begin showing signs of spiritual growth (**Acts 9:31; 2 Thess. 1:3; Phil. 1:5-6; Col. 1:5-8**) or decay (**Gal. 1:6**).
 - The influence of a congregation can extend far beyond its own community (**1 Thess. 1:8; Phil. 4:15-16**).

WHAT ARE WE KNOWN FOR?

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER ONE

The Conversion of the Thessalonians (1:5-10)

⁸ For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.

- “Sounded forth” carries the idea of reverberating or echoing outward, like the blast of a trumpet or the roll of thunder (Robertson’s Word Pictures).
 - Every Christian has the responsibility to sound forth the word of God (**Acts 8:4; Phil. 2:15-16; 1 Pet. 3:15; etc.**).
- Paul did “not need to say anything” about the Thessalonians’ faith. Their active faith spoke for itself (**1 Pet. 3:1-2**).
 - Can you think of a better compliment than this?

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER ONE

The Conversion of the Thessalonians (1:5-10)

⁹ For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

- Just as the Thessalonians' faith was well-known, so too was Paul's preaching and how his ministry began in that city (**Acts 17:1-9**).
- Many of the Thessalonians were former idol worshippers [likely Gentile converts] (**Acts 17:1-4**).
 - Anything taking God's rightful place is an idol (**Col. 3:5; Matt. 6:24; 1 John 5:21**).
- The Thessalonians "turned" from idolatry "to serve the living and true God."
 - Repentance is not merely feeling sorrow for sin but changing one's direction (**Acts 3:19, 26:20**).
 - Genuine conversion always produces observable change (**2 Cor. 5:17**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER ONE

The Conversion of the Thessalonians (1:5-10)

¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

- The Thessalonians not only started serving God but also began waiting “for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead” who would deliver them “from the wrath to come” (**Phil. 3:20-21; Heb. 9:28**)
 - This tells us where Jesus currently resides (**Acts 2:32-36; Eph. 1:20-23**).
 - This tells us Jesus will return one day (**Acts 1:9-11; etc.**)
 - Every chapter of this epistle concludes with a reference to the Lord’s return (**1 Thess. 1:10, 2:19, 3:13, 4:13-18, 5:23**).
 - This shows the connection between Christ’s resurrection & our hope (**1 Cor. 15**).
 - Jesus is the only One who can deliver us from wrath to come (**John 3:36**).
 - The wrath of God is coming! (**Eph. 5:1-7**)