

1&2 Thessalonians

INTRODUCTION

I. THE WRITING OF THE BOOK.

1. First written by Paul, probably first in the New Testament.
2. Written about 52 or 53 A. D. before the beginning of the 3rd journey.
3. Probably written from Corinth.

II. PAUL IN THESSALONICA.

1. Macedonian call(**Acts 16:6-10**).
2. Persecution in Philippi(**Acts 16**).
3. Initial success in Thessalonica(**Acts 17:1-4**).
4. Attack on Jason's house and accusations to the rulers of the city.

*"These that have turned the world upside down
have come hither, also."*

5. They send Paul and Silas away(**vs. 10**).
6. Soon after Paul's departure, persecution turned on the church(**1 Thess. 2:14; 3:3**).
7. Paul yearned to return(**3:5**). Twice he decided to but couldn't(**2:18**).
8. Finally sent Timothy(**3:1-2**). Timothy's report occasions the epistle.
9. A strong church with a long history. Young and uncertain when book written.

III. THESSALONICA. [thes uh luh NIGH kuh]-- a city in Macedonia (see Map 7, B-1) visited by the apostle Paul (**Acts 17:1, 11, 13; 27:2; Phil. 4:16**). Situated on the Thermaic Gulf, Thessalonica was the chief seaport of Macedonia. The city was founded in about 315 B. C. by Cassander, who resettled the site with inhabitants from 26 villages that he had destroyed. He named the city after his wife, Thessalonica, the sister of Alexander the Great and daughter of Philip II of Macedonia. The Egnatian Way, the main overland route from Rome to the East, ran directly through the city.

Under Roman rule, Thessalonica achieved prominence. In 167 B. C. the Romans divided Macedonia into four districts, Thessalonica becoming capital of the second district. Some 20 years later, in 148 B. C., Macedonia became a Roman province with Thessalonica as its capital. After the battle of Philippi in 42 B. C., when Octavian (later Augustus Caesar) and Mark Antony defeated Brutus and Cassius, the assassins of Julius Caesar, Thessalonica became a free city. It was the most populous city of Macedonia.

The apostle Paul visited Thessalonica in A. D. 49 or 50 during his second missionary journey (**Acts 17:1-9**). Paul's evangelistic efforts met with success. Within a short time a vigorous Christian congregation had blossomed, consisting of some members of the Jewish synagogue as well as former pagans.

The Book of Acts leads us to assume that Paul stayed in Thessalonica only a few weeks before being forced to leave because of Jewish opposition. But in reality he probably stayed at least two or three months. A shorter stay would scarcely account for Paul's receiving two gifts of aid from the Philippians (**Phil. 4:16**), or for the depth of affection which developed between Paul and the Thessalonians (**1 Thes. 2:1-12**). Thessalonica was also the home of two of Paul's co-workers, Aristarchus and Secundus (**Acts 20:4; 27:2**).

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