

NEW TESTAMENT 3

Paul's Letters - Week 5

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Paul's gospel ministry faced opposition and separation but continued through pastoral correspondence and prayer.

Though the end seems near, a right eschatology involves turning to Christ, serving others and patiently enduring in hope.

Before we begin...

Review the structure of our exegetical system for the Pauline Epistles.

What do you know or want to know about 1 and 2 Thessalonians? Discuss.

Who is a model you seek to emulate in some area of life? Why?

The Thessalonian Church

1 Thessalonians

Read Acts 17:1-15; 18:1-5

- What characterises the Thessalonians who became Christians? (cf 1 Thess 1:3, 6-10)
- What characterises those opposed to the gospel mission of Paul?
(cf 1 Thess 1:6; 2:2, 14-16)
- What characterises those who brought the gospel to Thessalonica?
(cf 1 Thess 1:2, 5-6; 2:2-12, 17-20; 3:1-2)

The Thessalonian Epistles

1&2 Thessalonians

- What has Paul been doing during his separation from the Thessalonians? (cf Acts 18:1-5)

We know much about Paul's missionary method from 1 Thessalonians. His first point of contact is to address the Jews in the synagogue, if there is one, then to speak publicly about God to the Gentiles.

- What concerns about the Thessalonians were on his mind?
(cf 1 Thess 2:19-20; 3:2-5, 10-11; 2 Thess 1:5-11; 2:1-3; 3:6-15)
- Why was it necessary for Paul to write a second letter so soon after the first?

Themes in the Epistles

1&2 Thessalonians

Motives and Methods of the mission.

(1 Thess 1:6-8; 2:1-12; 3:1; 5:11-12, 14f, 23f; 2 Thess 1:11f; 2:16f; 3:1f)

Content of the teaching

(1 Thess 1:5, 6, 8; 2:2, 4-5, 8, 9, 13; 3:2; 4:1-14; 5:1f, 9-10; 2 Thess 1:8, 2:14-15; 3:1, 6-10)

Return of Christ

(1 Thess 4:13f; Matt 24:30f; Jn 6:39f; 1 Cor 15:51f; 1 Thess 5:1-11; Matt 24:36-44; Lk 12:39f; 21:34f; 2 Thess 1:5-12; 2:1-12; Matt 24:10-31; 2 Thess 2:13-15)

Concluding

Briefly summarise Paul's teaching about the return of Christ. Why is it important to get this doctrine right in the Christian life?

How can we deal with wrong motives and cultivate Paul's attitude in ministry?

Read the articles on 'Thessalonians, Epistle to the', 'Day of the Lord', and 'Eschatology' in the *New Bible Dictionary*
Read 1 Corinthians