

GOD'S AMAZING BOOK

THROUGH THE BIBLE, BOOK BY BOOK

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GETTING READY FOR THE RAPTURE

A Quick Look at the First Letter to the Church of Thessalonica

Fast Facts on 1 Thessalonians

Written by?

Apostle Paul

Written to whom?

Christians in Thessalonica

Written when?

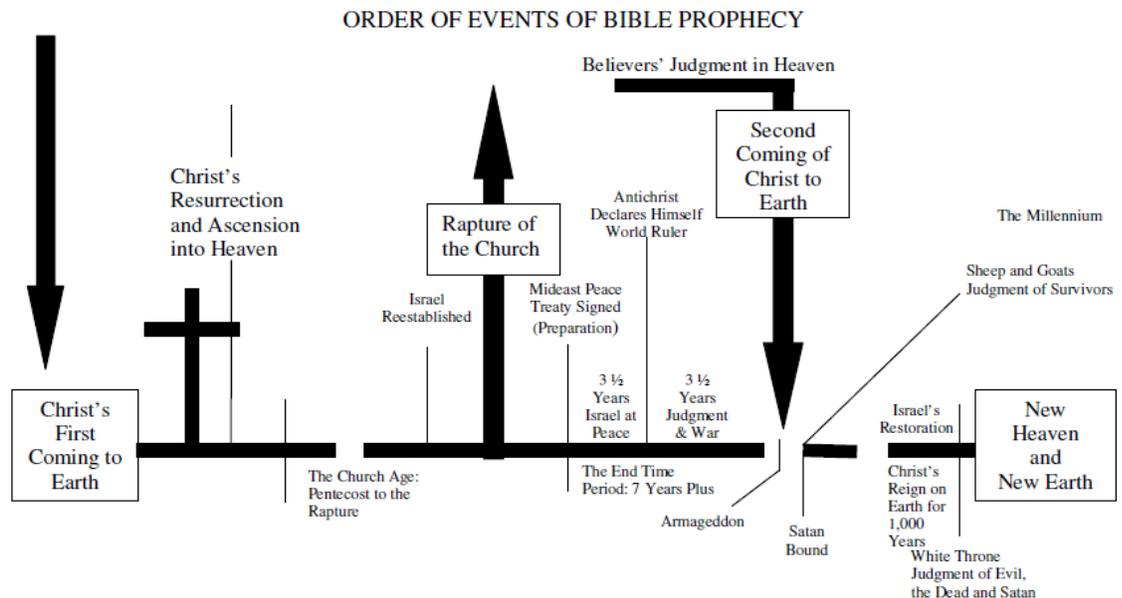
c. A.D. 50-52

Written where?

Corinth (Paul's second missionary journey)

Written why?

- To defend Paul's integrity.
- To encourage faithfulness and holiness in the face of persecution.
- To comfort and teach the church about the Lord's return.



Source: Dr. Daniel Akin

On the subject of the Second Coming, Paul assures the Thessalonians what will happen, but not when it will happen. His discussion throughout is dominated by an emphasis on practical living, rather than on speculation. The best way to prepare for Christ's return is to live faithfully and obediently now.

– Nelson's Bible Dictionary

A woman was waiting at the train station for her fiancé to come. He was coming in on the train, and they were going to get married. She was there, waiting for the train, waiting for the train—looking, listening, longing. The old stationmaster was there also. He had all of the charts; he had all of the schedules. He knew about the facts of that train coming. But oh, he was not expecting like she was, because her bridegroom was on that train. And, I want the spirit, not of the stationmaster; I want the spirit of that young lady. – Vance Havner

Date and Place - After leaving Thessalonica, Paul went to Berea, where he again met with opposition from Thessalonian Jews and was forced to leave (Acts 17:13-14). He came to Athens and then moved on to Corinth. While at Athens, Paul sent Timothy to Thessalonica to ascertain the condition of the church. After Timothy's

return to Paul at Corinth, he wrote 1 Thessalonians. Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians from Corinth during his second missionary journey (A.D. 50-52).

The Church at Thessalonica

- a. Thessalonica was the capital of Macedonia, and was located on a major highway (the Via Egnatia) that connected Rome with the east. Apparently it included a substantial number of Jews since it had a synagogue (Acts 17:1).
- b. Paul visited this city on his second missionary journey after leaving Philippi (Acts 17:1ff). Paul’s mission was immediately successful as a number of Jews and Greeks accepted his message (Acts 17:4).
- c. Paul’s success stirred other Jews of the city to a jealous rage; they violently attacked the house of Jason (Acts 17:5) where Paul was staying. Jason and some fellow Christians were dragged before the magistrates as disturbers of the peace. Because of this hostility, Paul was forced to leave the city (Acts 17:9-10).
- d. According to Acts 17:2, Paul spent three Sabbaths preaching in the synagogue at Thessalonica. Luke’s narrative seems to imply that the riot that forced Paul to leave occurred immediately following his ministry in the synagogue, and Acts 17:10 indicates that the Christians sent Paul away right after the riot. However, some believe that there is a longer time gap between Paul’s synagogue ministry and his subsequent departure from the city. The exact chronology of this period is open to debate.

Reasons for Writing:

- 1. To commend the Thessalonian believers (1:1-10)
- 2. To comfort them (chapter 2)
- 3. To confirm his own conduct and motives and to explain why he had not returned to see them (2:17-18)
- 4. To correct wrong doctrine (3:10; 4:13; 5:1-11)
- 5. To challenge them to persevere in the face of opposition and persecution (2:14ff)
- 6. To cement the affection between the Thessalonian believers and himself (3:10)
- 7. To caution against cliques and errors in living (4:1-12; 5:12-18)
- 8. To call them to obey and respect their leaders (5:12ff)

FASCINATING FACTS:

- 1. Every chapter in 1 Thessalonians ends with a reference to Christ’s return (1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:16; and 5:23).
- 2. This was probably the 2nd epistle written by the Apostle Paul, and one of the earliest of the New Testament books.
- 3. 1 Thessalonians contains the earliest New Testament reference to the Rapture of the Church (4:16).
- 4. 1 Thessalonians does not contain any quotations from the Old Testament.

1 Thessalonians: A Heart-to-Heart Talk					
Writer: Paul the Apostle	Unique Contributions:				
Date: Early, c. A.D. 50-52	* First of Paul’s letters (possible exception being Galatians)				
Key Passages: 1:8; 4:9-11, 13-18	* Sets forth his style of ministry				
Background: Acts 17:1-9	* Provides insight into eschatology				
	* Offers balance regarding the Lord’s imminent return				
	* Emphasis on ministry perseverance				
	<i>The Pastor’s Heart . . .</i>		<i>The Believer’s Hope</i>		
Encouraging	The Minister before the Church	Personal Concern	Sexual Purity	Stay Alert!	
Remembering				Encourage One Another!	
Affirming	The Church’s Response to her Ministers	Comfort and Relief	Prophetic Clarity	Live in Peace!	
Waiting				Chapter 5	
Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	
PERSPECTIVE	The Present			The Future	
SUBJECT	THE CHURCH	THE MINISTER	YOUR FAITH	PROPER CONDUCT	PREPAREDNESS
ESPECIALLY APPROPRIATE FOR . . .	A Model Fellowship	Faithful Minister	Suffering Christians	Ignorant and Anxious Christians	Sleepy Unbelievers