



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Special Study:

THE WITNESS OF TRANSFORMED BELIEVERS

1 Thessalonians 1:8-10

The church at Thessalonica was composed of different and diverse classes of people, yet they maintained an excellent unity. There were Jews attending synagogue worship before they heard the gospel. These Jews were committed to circumcision and fanatically zealous for the tradition of the Jewish elders. When they became saved, there was a mighty transformation. In the church were also "**devout Greeks**", coming from the background of exalting worldly wisdom and education above revelation; "**the Greeks seek after wisdom**" and "**unto the Greeks**" "**the preaching of the cross**" was "**foolishness**" (1 Corinthians 1:18-23). When the devout Greeks in Thessalonica became converted, there was a mighty transformation. The church also had in her membership "**chief women not a few**" (Acts 17:4). These were elevated women of high rank and standing in the community. They were women of influence and they also had connection with distinguished people in society. When these "**honourable women**" (Acts 17:12) believed there was a mighty transformation. Lastly, not a few members of the Thessalonian church became converted from idolatry. "**Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God**" (1 Thessalonians 1:9). And when these idol-worshippers turned to God there was a mighty transformation. And the church was committed to spreading the gospel everywhere.

EXCEPTIONAL SOULWINNING BY SAVED CHRISTIANS

1 Thessalonians 1:8; Romans 1:8; 10:14-18; 16:19; Acts 8:4-12,26-40; 11:19-21; Romans 1:14-16; 1 Corinthians 9:16-22; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Revelation 22:17.

"For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place." The Thessalonian Christians had received and believed the word of God wholeheartedly and the word had worked effectively in them (1 Thessalonians 2:13). They then began to proclaim the gospel so enthusiastically and effectively in Macedonia, Achaia and in every place. The city of Thessalonica was strategically located in the province of Macedonia. It was a hub of travel and trade; people coming through Macedonia from east and west along the Egnatian Highway passed through Thessalonica. There were multitudes of people who also visited the city by sea and used its port facilities. Everyone heard the saving gospel proclaimed and preached with conviction by the believers in Thessalonica. The Thessalonian believers who traveled out to Achaia and to every other place also carried the gospel with them. "**In every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad.**" Their proclamation of the gospel was like a long, sustained, constant sound of a trumpet, echoing into a wider and wider territory and communities of people. Their impact was clear and extensive.

EXEMPLARY SEPARATION FROM A SINFUL COMMUNITY

1 Thessalonians 1:9; Acts 14:15; 19:18-20; Ezekiel 14:6; 18:30-32; Jonah 3:4-10; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; Acts 3:19,26; 26:18-20.

"Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." These Thessalonians experienced genuine conversion to a life of holiness and zeal for the truth. They all turned from idols and from every form of idolatry. The Gentiles had idols which they worshipped. The Jews had their idols too! The Jews, "**the house of Israel**", "**set up their idols in their heart.**" "**Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart.**" "**Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols**" (Note every verse in Ezekiel 14:3-7). "**The Greeks**" also exalted "**the wisdom of this world**" to the place of idols to be worshipped (1 Corinthians 1:18-25). The chief, honourable women, who were "**lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God**" (2 Timothy 3:4) placed pleasure above God, thereby making pleasure their idol. The Thessalonians came under the clear preaching of the gospel and the inescapable conviction of the Holy Spirit. They saw idolatry in its ugly, abominable, repulsive colours and they all turned from it. "**Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry**" (1 Corinthians 10:14). "**Mortify (destroy) therefore uncleanness, inordinate affection, and covetousness, which is idolatry**" (Colossians 3:5). "**Little children, keep yourselves from idols**" (1 John 5:21).

EXPECTANT SAINTS WAITING FOR CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:15-17; Job 19:25-27; Isaiah 25:8,9; 1 Corinthians 1:7,8; Luke 12:34-40; 21:25-36;
2 Thessalonians 3:3-5; 2 Peter 3:3-14; Revelation 16:15.

The Second Coming of Christ is a recurring theme in the First and Second Thessalonians. ***“To wait for His Son from heaven”*** (1 Thessalonians 1:10). ***“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?”*** (1 Thessalonians 2:19). ***“And the Lord... stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God... at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints”*** (1 Thessalonians 3:12,13). ***“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven”*** (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). ***“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night”*** (1 Thessalonians 5:2). ***“The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels”*** (2 Thessalonians 1:7). ***“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ... that ye be not soon shaken in mind”*** (2 Thessalonians 2:1,2). ***“And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ”*** (2 Thessalonians 3:5). The Thessalonian believers were patiently waiting for the return of Christ. The desire and hope of seeing Him and being ready for His coming made them ***“diligent that (they) may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless”*** (2 Peter 3:14).

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