

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan**I THESSALONIANS 1*****I Thessalonians 1***

The Book of I Thessalonians is set in the picturesque city of Thessalonica, the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia. It was a city that had a population of approximately 200,000 people, with a large population of Jews who were part of the diaspora from previous years. The book was written in approximately 51 A.D. and was perhaps Paul's earliest letter to any particular church. Paul did not spend an extended time there, but he was there long enough for many Jews, proselytes, and Gentiles to come to faith in Jesus. Paul begins this letter with thanksgiving for them turning from idols to serve the living and true God. An idol is anything that we worship or serve, and in the ancient culture of the Greeks and Romans, there was an elaborate system of pagan idol worship capsulized in Greek and Roman mythology.

The Thessalonians were people who truly experienced the life-changing dynamic of repentance and faith in Jesus. They had become like Paul, who was continually guiding them to Jesus as the Son of God, Messiah of the Jewish people, and Savior of the world. He uses the Greek word "**mimētai**" of the Lord, to describe the Thessalonian believers. He said that their example of godly living and ardent, fervent conversion to Jesus had caused them to "**sound out**" the good news throughout

the entire region of Macedonia and Achaia. The Greek word that is translated as "sound out" in English is the Greek word ἐξηκέω, *exécheó*, pronounced (*ex-ay-kheh'-om-ahee*). This is the base word in the Greek language where we get the word "echo." What is an echo? It is what you hear when you *speaks with a loud voice* in an area that *reverberates* back to you! Paul said they were making known the good news of salvation everywhere they went with a loud voice, not an obnoxious voice, but with *a voice that was heard!* The primary reason that it was spoken with inflection and effect was that these new believers had a life change that backed up what they were proclaiming to the people of modern-day Greece!

Paul closes the chapter with an encouragement to them to continue what they had been doing in light of the coming of Jesus again for His own. They were to wait for Him. Waiting here is not sitting on the sidelines doing nothing, but continuing as they were, serving the living and true God. The word means to actively wait, not idle, but actively serving, expecting Jesus' words to become reality. The Lord had gone away but was coming again. Paul explains the timeline of the Lord's coming in Chapters four and five and in his second letter to them, which we call 2 Thessalonians.

Prayer and Action Steps

Thank You, dear Lord, for changing my life. Thank You that You allow me to serve You, the living and true God. Please help me to be as the early believers in Thessalonica who "sounded out" the good news everywhere they went and looked for Your return at any moment. Amen