

1 Thessalonians 3

Preparation: Look up material on persecution, and find a map of Greece

1 Thessalonians 3.1-5 – Dealing with persecution

For the superficial contradiction between *1 Thessalonians*, *Acts 17:14-16*, and *Acts 18:5*:

Possible explanations:

1. Silas and Timothy could have joined Paul in Athens and from there had been sent to Macedonia (Timothy to Thessalonica, and Silas to Berea or elsewhere)
2. Timothy only might have been sent, while Silas remained with Paul ("*we*" would have been a genuine plural, not the editorial "*we*" – this would explain Paul's omission of Silas' name)
3. Paul might have sent a message to Berea changing his first command and sending Timothy to Thessalonica with a plan to join him later

For more details, see *Beacon Bible Commentary*, IX, 464-65

V1 – Paul was greatly worried about the situation at Thessalonica

-**When was he left behind in Athens?** *Acts 17:16* (when he preached on Mars' Hill)

V2 – **How was Timothy described?** Our brother, God's fellow-worker

-Very interesting – we are fellow-workers "helping" God

V3 – **Why are we persecuted in this life?** It is destined for God's people to be persecuted

-**Read Matthew 5:10-12**

-**Which prophets were persecuted?** Jeremiah, Elijah, Amos, Isaiah, Elisha...

-**Read 2 Timothy 3:10-12**

-**Are we being persecuted today?** Our fellow Christians in other countries are being bitterly persecuted by several world religions, and in some sense, in our own country we are being persecuted by our prosperity

-**What is to become our attitude toward persecution?** Not to be disturbed by it

V4 – **Had the Thessalonian Christians been warned about persecution?** Yes, and it was coming to pass

V5 – **What was Paul's greatest worry about the Thessalonians?** That they might have given in to temptation, thus making Paul's work at Thessalonica a waste of time

-**What are the implications of this verse to the Once Saved Always Saved doctrine?** It destroys it

-Some commentators say that Paul was just trying to see if their faith was true from the beginning, but *1 Thessalonians 1:5* tells us that they had full convictions from the beginning

-So this passage continues to destroy the Once Saved Always Saved doctrine

1 Thessalonians 3.6-10

V6 – **What was Timothy's report?** Good news, they had faith and love, were thinking kindly of Paul, longed to see Paul

-Remember that the Christians at Corinth did not want to see Paul anymore (See 2 Corinthians 10:1, 10-11; 12:20-21; 13:1-3)

V7 – What effect had the news from Thessalonica had on Paul? He was greatly comforted

V8 – We can see in this verse that Paul's life was bound up in the life of the congregations he had started

-When these congregations succeeded, his life was one of ecstasy

-When they failed (as in Galatia), he went into despair

Read 2 Corinthians 11:28

V9 – He is almost in ecstasy here – he doesn't know how to thank God enough for the good things that have happened at Thessalonica

V10 – What was his daily, nightly prayer? That he might see the Christians at Thessalonica once again

-Do we long to see members of the church who live elsewhere? (thought question)

1 Thessalonians 3.11-13

V11 – What was his first request here? That God and Jesus might direct his feet to Thessalonica (notice *Lord*)

V12 – What was his second request? That the Thessalonians might love each other more and also love their fellow men more

V13 – Third request? To make their hearts without blame at the Second Coming

-Notice another reference to the Second Coming – every chapter in *1 Thessalonians* ends with some kind of reference to the Second Coming: *1 Thessalonians 1:10, 2:19, 3:13, 4:17, 5:23*

Theme of *Ch. 3*: How much Paul loved the Thessalonian church

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