

K.E.Y. Bible Study

Description: K.E.Y. Bible Study introduces the essential biblical narratives, concepts, and themes, and teaches the student how to apply the message of the Bible to daily living. Each teaching session is self-contained, which allows participants to join in the study at any time during the five years.

Purpose: To teach the most significant events, passages, and doctrines of the Bible in a manner and using methods which encourages and empowers the student to:

- Keep the faith that we have received
- Be Equipped to serve the Body of Christ
- Become Yoked, or connect, with others for the purpose of ministry

An Overview of I and II Thessalonians February 17, 2016 Acts Reference: 17:1-15

General Background

Last week our focus was on Acts 17 and the founding of the church in Thessalonica. For review, this city was of utmost importance in the establishment of Christianity in this area and for the future spread of Christianity as a world religion. It sat on a main road that connected East and West. It was a major trade route and a very prosperous city.

Paul's stay here was relatively brief, but very successful in establishing a local body of believers in Jesus Christ. He had so much success that great opposition arose from the religious establishment, and he had to be smuggled out of town. Once Paul eventually reached Athens, he was anxious to hear how things were going in Thessalonica, so he sent Timothy and Silas to get this information while he, Paul, traveled on to Corinth. Timothy and Silas soon brought good news and news that was troubling. These issues are addressed in First and Second Thessalonians.

Why two letters? They are very similar and were written perhaps within days or no longer than a few months of each other. The second letter cleared up a few misconceptions that persisted. These very early letters are important to us to see how Paul handled some of the day-to-day issues of the expanding Church.

What Happened

- (1) **Paul wanted to assure them of his love and concern for them.**
 - a. His words expressed this fact – 1 Thess 1:1-3:13; 2 Thess 1:1-4
 - b. There were those who spoke evil of Paul and insinuated:
 - i. That he was only in it for his personal gain - 1 Thess 2:5,9 & 2 Thess 3:7-9;
 - ii. That he was dictatorial –1 Thess 2:6-7,11

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- (2) **Paul wanted to encourage them to live a holy life.** 1 Thess 4:1-2; 1 Thess 5:14-24; 2 Thess 2:13-17
- There was the danger that some would lapse into immorality and lifestyles from which they were now redeemed – 1 Thess 4:3-8
 - There was a tendency to become lax in obedience to authority – 1 Thess 2:12-14; 2 Thess 3:14-15
 - There was the potential of division within the church – 1 Thess 4:9, 5:13
- (3) **Paul wanted to ground them in doctrine.** There were misconceptions about the second coming of Christ which resulted in:
- A situation in which people had stopped working and had abandoned all ordinary activities to await the second coming. Paul instructed them to get on with their work. – 1 Thess 4:11-12; 2 Thess 3:6, 10-15
 - False reports were being circulated. Paul warned that there would be those who would seek to deceive them. – 2 Thess 2:1-11
 - Concern about what was to happen to those who died before the second coming arrived. Paul explained that those who die in Jesus will not miss the glory. – 1 Thess 4:13-18
- (4) **Paul wanted to offer prayers for them and to ask for their prayers for him** – 1 Thess 1:2-3, 5:25; 2 Thess 1:3, 3:1-2

What Does It Mean and How Can I Apply It?

- Is there someone to whom you need to express your love and appreciation for their faithful service to Jesus Christ?
- Acknowledge that our understanding or misunderstanding of basic doctrines can have an effect on our ethical choices?
- Let the blessed hope of the return of Jesus be a source of encouragement rather than confusion.
- Share your prayer concerns with others and be sure to pray for them as well.