

# 890108AM

## INTRODUCTION TO FIRST THESSALONIANS

Welcome again to our study of the epistle of first Thessalonians. We noted as we began our study last Sunday evening 3 things:

1. **FIRST**, it is **EARLY** - probably the third of 27 NT books. After First James [45] and Galatians [48].
2. **SECOND**, IT IS **SPECIFIC** - It marks the first letter to specific local church. James: "12tribes", Galatians: "Churches of [Province] Galatia"
3. **FINALLY** - IT CAN BE **LOCATED** - as with all Scriptures, this book is introduced by a **CONTEXT**. Acts 17:1-9 tells us of Paul's entrance to **THESS**.

Prior = PHILIPPI 16:11-40 DO YOU REMEMBER...

- ❖ **WONDERFUL** but **PAINFUL** ministry to Philippian people v. 11-21
- ❖ **COSTLY** but **TRIUMPHANT** suffering v. 22-40

Actual visit to Thessalonica: We learned it was:

- ❖ **BRIEF** but **FRUITFUL** [17:1-4]
- ❖ **DIFFICULT** but **ENDURING** [v. 5-10]
  - Why? What kept that brief visit alive in their lives?
  - What kept new life **THRIVING** in the midst of a **HOSTILE PAGAN CITY**?
  - How did such a small beginning **FLAME** into the **VIBRANT**
- ❖ **WITNESS** that was to **ENDURE** thru centuries to today?

We found it in the theme of this book. Look at I Thess. 3:13:  
"UNBLAMEABLE LIVING IN LIGHT OF CHRIST'S RETURN"

This powerful theme **PULSATES** thru each chapter. Let's look again: [NOTE OUTLINE]  
**THROUGH CHRIST'S PROMISED COMING WE HAVE:**

- Chap. 1 - Present **HOPE** of salvation [v.10]  
2 - Future **JOY** in homegoing [v.19]  
3 - Constant **CAUSE** for holy living [v.13]  
4 - Constant **SOURCE** of comfort [hope in action] [v.17,18]  
5 - Ultimate **PROMISE** of completed salvation [v. 23]

**SO WHO WAS THIS MAN THAT WROTE?**

With that reminder, let's focus on Paul the Apostle from just two perspectives: His... **LIFE MOTIVATION** **LIFE MINISTRY**  
"PAUL'S LIFE MOTIVATION" - OR - "PAUL'S MOTIVATION FOR LIFE"

Paul **EMBODIED** the life of Christ **MORE** than any other single human being. **WHAT** was at the **CORE** of his life? What **MOTIVATED HIS ACTION AND LIFE**?

Well, this morning we can find out. Let's LEARN the secrets of Paul's motivation for ministry. There are three of which WE CAN LOOK AT ONE TODAY. FROM THEM WE CAN EXAMINE OUR OWN LIVES.

#### SECRETS OF PAUL'S MOTIVATION TO MINISTRY

- ❖ FIRST he had a BREADTH OF VISION: Two Scriptures reveal this first area. Look at Col. 2:9 HE SAW THE CARPENTER OF GALILEE TO BE THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD. THAT TRUTH IS THE DIVIDING TRUTH OF ALL TIME, FOR ALL WHO EVER LIVE. All people either know him as he is in truth or not. There is only one true Lord Jesus Christ! All churches, religions and faiths must submit to the Scriptural portrait of Christ to be orthodox and true.  
He is the touchstone of truth.

- \* Paul knew, followed and taught only one message:  
"The image of the invisible God was Christ"

SO HIS MOTIVATION WAS FIRST IN HIS BREADTH OF VISION AND THAT WAS THIS ABSOLUTE VIEW OF CHRIST....BUT WHAT ELSE?

Turn back to Gal. 4:4-5. Because Paul's breadth of vision was dominated by a second truth:

> HE SAW GOD'S PLAN IN HISTORY

Paul was motivated BY a BREADTH OF VISION.

He saw that Christ the carpenter of Galilee was the image of the invisible God AND...

That God has a definite and specific plan for history.

Look at v.4 - "Fulness of time"

God chose the exact moment for Christ to come at His First Advent.

- Rome ruled the western world
  - \* Peace was present
  - \* Transportation was advanced
  - \* Communication was rapid
  - \* People were desperate

God is still in control! How's your vision this morning?  
Do you see Christ as He truly is?  
Are you yielding to God's plan?