



Thessalonica:

A Working
Church

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- ◆ Thessalonica is a seaport located at the head of the Themaic Gulf in Macedonia, and was on the well traveled Egnatian Way.
- ◆ The largest city of Macedonia, with a population of ca. 200,000, The city was affectionately called the "mother of all Macedon."
- ◆ It had been granted the status of a free city.

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- ◆ A grossly immoral city (1:9).
- ◆ Had a large Jewish population, who had their own synagogue (Acts 17:1).
- ◆ 1st Thessalonians was written by Paul from Corinth and sent by Timothy, who returned with good news of their faith (Acts 18:1,5; 1 Thessalonians 3:1-8).
- ◆ The apostle penned the epistle in A.D. 52. (1st letter - perhaps the 1st book of New Testament).

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1 Thessalonians 1:2-10 (NKJV)

² We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, ³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, ⁴ knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

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1 Thessalonians 1:2-10 (NKJV)

⁵ For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

⁶ And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.

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1 Thessalonians 1:2-10 (NKJV)

⁸ For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. ⁹ For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

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- ◆ Paul, Silas and Timothy came to Thessalonica after they had preached in Philippi on the apostle's second journey (Act 16:1-3; 17:1-2).
- ◆ Paul preached to the Jews in their synagogue for three Sabbaths, proving that Jesus was Christ by appealing to the Old Testament prophets (Acts 17:2-3).
- ◆ Paul probably stayed in Thessalonica at least several months - (Acts 17:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 1:9).

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- ◆ The apostle preached boldly among them in the face of much opposition (2:2,14-16).
- ◆ His work among them was as a father with his children (2:3-11), while they received his preaching as the word of God (2:13).
- ◆ He was forced to leave due to Jewish persecution (Acts 17:5-10).
- ◆ He was anxious about them, and desired to return, but was hindered by Satan (2:17-20).

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- ◆ He sent back Timothy from Athens to find out about them (3:1-5).
- ◆ Timothy brought back to Paul the comforting news of a faithful church who loved Paul (3:1-10; 1:3,8).
- ◆ They were surrounded, however, by ungodliness and were being persecuted (2:14).

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They Were Workers

- ◆ **They were evangelistic** – Not only locally but throughout the region - (1:8-10; cf. Acts 8:1-4).
- ◆ **They were benevolent** - included in the "great collection" for the saints in Jerusalem (Rom. 15:26; Acts 20:4; 2 Cor. 8:1; 9:1-6).
- ◆ **They edified one another** - (1 Thes. 5:11-14; cf. Eph. 4:12-16).



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The Working Conditions

- ◆ **Persecution** – *subjected to assault, civil prosecution and economic persecution* - (Acts 17:4-9; 1 Thes. 2:14-16; 2 Thes 1:3-8; 3:2-8).
- ◆ **Poverty** – *Not as much in need as the saints in Jerusalem, but still spoken of as being in “deep poverty”* - (Rom. 15:26; Acts 20:4; 2 Cor. 8:1-5; 9:1-6),



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What Prompts A Church To Work?

- ◆ **Because they had faith, love and hope** – *due to their reception of the word of God* - (1 Thes. 1:5; Rom 10:17; 1 Thes 2:1-13).
- ◆ **Because they had the proper examples** – *the need for elders, deacons and preachers to do what it takes to set the proper example.* - (1 Thes 1:6; 2:9-11; 2 Thes 3:7-9),



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What Prompts A Church To Work?

- ◆ **Because their lives had been transformed by repentance** – *"turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God."* - (1 Thes. 1:9; Luke 13:3,5; 2 Cor. 7:10,11; 8:5).
- ◆ **Because they had heaven as their goal** – *they were to wait for Jesus Who had saved them from wrath & comfort one another -* (1 Thes 1:10; 4:13-5:11; 2 Thes 1:7-10)



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What About Us?

- ◆ **What of our “work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope?”**
- ◆ **Are there things stealing your heart from working for God as you should?**
- ◆ **Are you willing to be an example to others?**
- ◆ **Is heaven your goal? Are you doing the work it takes to be there?**

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