

I Thess. 1:1

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SUBJECT: Introduction to the Letters
of Paul to the Church of the
Thessalonians.

[The Doctrine of the Second Advent]

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I Thess. 1:1

THE EPISTLES OF THE ADVENT

Deeply meaningful, remarkable letters. Unusual, remarkable features:

1. Like Ruth, Esther in the Old Testament, the Thessalonian Epistles trace their name to a famous woman.

323 B.C. death of Alexander the Great. His four generals, Ptolemy in Egypt, Seleucus Nicator in Syria, Lysimachus in Asia minor, Cassander in Macedonia and Achaia. He was married to Alexander's sister, Thessalonica.

315 B.C. builds his capital at Thessalonica (warm springs), an ancient city mentioned by both Herodotus and Thucydides. Strategically located at the head of the Aegean Sea, commanding the passes between the high mts. and the sea. Cassander re-named it after his wife, Thessalonica.

168 B.C. conquered by the Romans

148 B.C. Roman organized Province of Macedonia, capital at Thessalonica

42 B.C. Battle of Philippi. Octavian, for city. T. J. & Antonio. Octavian's army. Cicero - favorite stopping place. Some of his famous letters written from there. He was there with Pompey's army just before that army was defeated by Julius Caesar at Battle of Pharsalia in 48 B.C.

A great commercial city as well as political center. Sea port, the great entre-port of the Balkans via Thessalonica from Adriatic to the Hellespont. A great city today, of a quarter million people.

2. It [I Thess.] is the first inspired letter written by Paul or is addressed to young Christians, who have been converted from pagan idolatry within a year. Its contents are amazing revelation. How much they knew! doctrines refer to. How much they were suffering, how steadfast they were!

I Thess. 1:1 opening salutation, "Paul and Silvanus and Timothy"

II Thess. 1:1 The three had preached the gospel to the Thessalonians. Acts 17 recounts the miraculous results of their ministry: some say less than a month in duration.

Essentially from Paul and his companions to leave in order to Silvanus in Athens (I Thess. 3:1-6) Paul sends Timothy to see how they fare in Corinth, Timothy reports to Paul, a wonderful report. Paul writes the first letter.

In Corinth, about six months later, the second letter.

3. Their doctrinal content.

though young & with less than a year of NT experience, nevertheless they were familiar with the great doctrines, deep truths of the NT faith - salvation, assurance, sanctification, the Trinity, the nature of man, the resurrection, the Day of the Lord, the return of X.

Hard to realize - the NT, to whom addressed recent converts had no NT

- doubtful if had any large portion of the NT
- the presbytery that broke with over the minority of Paul broke with over this decade after Paul sent away. Immature X's facing terrible trials, difficulties, confusions, ...

4. The nature of the chief doctrine dispersed - the time and manner of the return of the Lord, the second coming of X. Some of these members had heard - what of them? So I Thess. Superior epistles (a epistle) "as from no" II Thess 2:2 created havoc among the faithful. So II Thess,

Each of the NT Epistles was written in response to a need, a reason that called them forth. Consequently each has some specific characteristic:

Romans, justification by faith

Galatians, the church (circumcision letter)

Philippians, the NT of all its letters

Timothy, the minister and his work

Hebrews, the superiority of the NT faith over Judaism

So Thessalonians, the advent epistles. The one theme that runs throughout the two letters like a suit of golden thread; appears in every chapter in connection with some important doctrinal doctrine. Faith is a commitment which entails in the first coming and waits for the second. Belief in the return of the Lord should be the impetus of all things that are of service to ourselves.

(1) Acts 17:7 This subject so prominent in the preaching / Paul that during his visit to Thessalonians, when his enemies brought charges against him before rulers of the city, made this the point of their accusation "... another king, one Jesus." Evidently, general impression from his preaching, that he preached a real King, coming to establish a H. of earth. Otherwise, no complaint or reasonable grounds by friends of Paul.

(2) Japanese conquest of Korea, the actual head of the Baptist Association of churches brought before the Japanese military officials. "Who, Jesus... what's he?" Finally to that - "He is a King? King to rule the world? What of our Emperor? Can he rule here, Emperor? You believe this about us do all agree minister. What do you?" "No, all do." All thrown in prison. Several died. By Y. in release, the Baptist leader died through suffering, degradation.

(3) I Thess. 1:9, 10. It was this preaching that brought conviction, awakened the conscience, raised by the H.S. His message to the unconverted, while still pagans. ...
? this is all - the law and now - then any child will do as well. not matter - the Y. faith like the bridge and built: about the mind of the nation.

(3) The fact that the letters to the Thessalonians were Paul's earliest epistles, and that this subject occupies so prominent a place in them, and that they were addressed to young converts, makes it very plain that the doctrine of the Lord's return is not an advanced truth that can be understood only by deeply spiritual v. It is rather one of the primary doctrines of the Gospel, part of its very essence.
f. Acts 8:35, "pneched out his gown"
:36, "See, here is water...?"

