

Writer: (Vs. 1) The Apostle Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheous.

Written to: (Vs. 1) The church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Date of Writing: AD 54, shortly after sending 1st Thessalonians.

Introduction | How the Church in Thessalonica Began

Acts 15

A church, made up of Jews and Gentiles, had formed in the city of Antioch. Prior to this church most believers were Jewish. The Jewish Christians continued to keep the Law of Moses, but what about the Gentiles? What were they to do since they were not Jewish? Did they need to keep the Law too?

Verse 1–

Certain men...from Judaea (Jerusalem) came to Antioch and **taught** the brethren, no one can be saved unless he is **circumcised after the manner of Moses** (Leviticus 12:3), otherwise the Gentile believers would not really be or, **cannot be saved**.

These law-lovers were sincere. They were coming from the perspective of the law of Moses which was works based. This was their worldview. The dispensation of law was transitioning to the dispensation of grace. This led to uncertainty in this new assembly of believers.

Verse 2-18–

Paul and Barnabas had **no small dissension and disputation** with these men. The word **dissension** can be translated *insurrection* or *riot*, but is probably literally “they took a stand.” Paul and Barnabas left Antioch to find answers from the apostles in Jerusalem. This meeting is called the Jerusalem Council. After some discussion, Peter gave a speech and said, “*We believe through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved*” (Acts 15:11).

Verses 19-35–

The determination was made by the council in Jerusalem that the Gentiles are not under the Law (Acts 15:19-20). The apostles wrote a letter to the church in Antioch. Two men from that

church, Judas and Silas (Acts 15:32) left Jerusalem and delivered the letter to Antioch. Paul and Barnabas went with them. And they remained in Antioch for some time (Acts 15:35).

Paul and Barnabas Visit the Places Where they had Preached the Gospel Prior to the Antioch Dispute

Verse 36–

And some days after. The text doesn't say how long, Paul and Barnabas left Antioch to **visit our brethren in every city where we have preached...** This is the second missionary journey of Paul.

Verse 41–

They began in Syria and moved into Cilicia. **Confirming the churches.** They would have made it clear to these churches that circumcision was not required for salvation.

Acts 16–

Then Paul came to Derbe and Lystra. What is notable about this is that in Lystra Paul met Timotheous (Timothy) for the first time. Timothy joined Paul on the journey. Timothy's mother was a Jew but believed in Jesus; his father was a Greek. Therefore, Timothy was not circumcised, but "because of the Jews" and he was traveling with Paul, Timothy was circumcised.

They continued their journey, visiting churches they had planted until they received the "Macedonian Call" (Acts 16:9-11). **Therefore loosing from Troas** (Acts 16:11). They loosened the sails; and sailed for Macedonia where Thessalonica is located.

Acts 17:1-10 | Entering Thessalonica

Verses 1-3–

Synagogue. A meeting place for the Jewish people on the Sabbath. In addition to their Saturday meeting, they also met on Monday and Thursday. The Shema was read and recited (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). They prayed, and they read the Law of Moses (Acts 15:21). The synagogue was really the center of Jewish life. It was also the place of judicial administrative functions, and even punishment to lawbreakers. Paul received 40 lashes minus 1, in a synagogue (2 Corinthians 11:24; cf. Deuteronomy 25:3).

Reasoned with them out of the Scriptures. When Paul taught in the synagogue his method was to reason from the Scriptures and persuade (cf. Acts 18:4). What did he teach? The gospel, **Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead.**

This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ The Messiah or anointed One.

What was the result of his teaching?

Verse 4 –

Some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas. They believed, meaning, they were convinced of everything Paul said. Consorted means “to cast one’s lot”. When you cast your lot with someone you are joining their fate, good or bad.

-**Devout Greeks.** The word in Greek is Hellen, and it probably means Greek speaking Jews. They read the LXX (Septuagint: the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures) rather than the Hebrew. There were a lot of them in this synagogue due to its location.

-**The chief women not a few.** The Greek word for chief is *protos* which means “first or foremost” so these were the prominent women in the synagogue.

Yet not all Jews in Thessalonica believed.

Verse 5, 6 –

Believed not. Greek word is *apeitheo*. **Moved with envy.** This was a fierce envy or indignation. So much was their anger and hatred for this new teaching they **took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort.** Evil men who just wanted to stir up trouble.

-**Baser sort.** Paid troublemakers. The word baser is *agoraios* the agora was the marketplace, so these were men who loitered around the marketplace. The Jewish non-believers rounded up a lot of these guys and caused a riot, **set all the city on an uproar,** throwing the whole city into confusion.

-**Assaulted the house of Jason.** They evidently thought Jason was hiding Paul in his house. Jason was perhaps the cousin of Paul (Romans 16:21).

These who have turned the world upside down and are come hither also. Paul is being accused of spreading his message of Christ worldwide—evidently the news has spread!

Verse 7 –

There is another king. The Greek word for another is actually "a different" king. He is being accused of delegitimizing the Roman emperor or king.

Verse 8, 9–

They troubled the people. They put doubt into their mind.

Verses 10-14–

2 Thessalonians 1:1-2 | Paul's Greeting to the Church

Paul, Silvanus (Silas), and **Timotheus** (Timothy) were most likely all together in Corinth ([Acts 18:5](#)) when this letter was written to the church in Thessalonica. Timothy had returned from Thessalonica to Corinth and delivered a good report about what was happening among the Thessalonians (See [1 Thessalonians 3:6](#)).

Paul. In nine of Paul's thirteen letters, he refers to himself as an "apostle." In the four letters where he does not (1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philippians, and Philemon), it may be in the two cities he was held with a greater affection. In Philemon, he is writing a letter to a friend, his beloved Apphia. In this case, writing to two churches that loved him and to his friend, he had no need to assert his authority.

Unto the church. The Greek word for church is **ἐκκλησία** (*ekklesia*) which is a generic term for an *assembly of people*. It is a gathering of *called-out ones*. In this case, the *assembly* is identified as, **in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ**. When Paul uses the word **church** throughout his writings, his meaning is primarily the body of Christ. This would be the true definition and identifying mark of a Christian church today.

When we read the word **church** in the New Testament, we should not always think of it as the church as we know it. For example, when reading [Matthew 16:18](#); [18:17](#), our tendency is to apply those passages to us in the 21st century. When Jesus spoke those words, however, the church as we know it was still a mystery and did not even exist. Paul says the mystery of the church which is Christ's body, where the distinction between Jew and Gentile disappears, was not made known until it was revealed by God to Paul ([Ephesians 3:3,6,9,10](#)).

What did Jesus mean in [Matthew 16:18](#)? Could Jesus have been speaking of the remnant assembly of Israel and the future Kingdom where His assembly will be built in Zion ([Joel 2:16](#); [Romans 9:25-27](#))?

Grace be unto you. Grace is the Greek word **χάρις** (*charis*), and it is translated throughout the New Testament as *grace, favor, thank, pleasure, benefit*, and a few other synonyms. In this case, it could mean favor, as in *may God's favor be upon you*.

Peace. When Paul was suddenly sent away from Thessalonica because of Jewish opposition ([Acts 17:10](#)), the city was in a state of uproar ([Acts 17:5](#)). Paul was wishing an end to the chaos, and peace upon them, which can only come from **God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.**