

1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-4**1 THESSALONIANS 1:1 – BLACK****A. THE AUTHORS IDENTIFIED**

- Paul, Silvanus (Silas), and Timotheus (Timothy) are named as the authors.
- All three were known to the Thessalonian assembly and are familiar figures in the New Testament.

B. A UNIQUE GREETING FORMULA

- Paul uniquely uses the phrase **“in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ”**—a formula found only in 1 and 2 Thessalonians.
- This likely reflects:
 - The Jewish composition of the audience.
 - Their belief that Jesus is the Messiah.
- The phrase affirms their identity as **Jewish believers in Jesus**.

C. STANDARD PAULINE GREETING: GRACE AND PEACE

- “Grace be unto you, and peace” appears in all of Paul’s letters to churches.
- In contrast, his letters to individuals (e.g., Timothy, Titus) add “mercy.”

D. DIVINE SOURCE OF THE GREETING

- The phrase **“from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ”** is standard in Paul’s letters.
- It emphasizes that grace and peace originate from both Father and Son.

1 THESSALONIANS 1:2-4 – BLACK**A. ONGOING THANKSGIVING (V. 2)**

- Paul and his companions continually thank God for the Thessalonian believers.
- Their prayers are specific and heartfelt, reflecting deep spiritual investment.

B. THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BELIEVERS (V. 3)**1. WORK OF FAITH**

- Defined as labor conducted **in the sphere of faith**—not as faith producing works, but activity performed by believing men and women.

2. LABOR OF LOVE

- Service motivated by genuine affection, not obligation.

3. PATIENCE OF HOPE

- Steadfast endurance fueled by confident expectation in God's promises.

4. SPIRITUAL ANCHORING

- These three qualities are rooted **in our Lord Jesus Christ** and done **in the sight of God and our Father**.
- Note: Paul reverses the earlier order of names (Jesus before God), a shift possibly rhetorical rather than doctrinal.

C. STATEMENT ON ELECTION (V. 4)

1. COMMON MISINTERPRETATION

- Often wrongly used as a proof text for **individual election unto salvation**.
- Example: *Got Questions Ministries* interprets it as God's personal selection of Thessalonian Christians to belong to Him—an example of **eisegesis**.

2. PROPER CONTEXT: JEWISH IDENTITY

- The Thessalonian believers were **Jews and Jewish proselytes**, already part of the **elect nation of Israel**.
- Their "election" is rooted in **national covenantal election**, not individual predestination.
- Their belief in Jesus as Messiah confirms faith **within** their elect status—it does not create it.

3. SCRIPTURAL SUPPORT

- Paul affirms national election in **Romans 9:4–5**, citing the covenants, adoption, promises, and service of God—all given to Israel.

1 THESSALONIANS 1:5–10 – THE GOSPEL'S POWER AND THE THESSALONIANS' EXEMPLARY RESPONSE

1 THESSALONIANS 1:5 – BLACK

- The Gospel's Delivery in Power (v. 5)
 - The gospel was delivered not merely in word, but with supernatural manifestations of power—appropriate to Paul's transitional, apostolic ministry.
 - This is not normative for gospel proclamation in the current dispensation.
- Apostolic Evidence
 - **Romans 15:19** – Preaching was accompanied by signs and wonders.
 - **Hebrews 2:3–4** – God bore witness with miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost.
 - **2 Corinthians 12:12** – Apostolic credentials were demonstrated by signs and wonders.
- The Shift to Present Norms
 - **2 Timothy 3:16–17** – Scripture is sufficient to equip fully.
 - **Romans 10:17** – Faith comes by hearing God's Word.
 - **1 Corinthians 1:21** – God saves through preaching, not signs.
- Assurance for Today
 - The **rightly divided gospel** (1 Corinthians 15:1–4).
 - The **certainty of God's promises** (Titus 1:2).
 - The **preserved Word** (Psalm 119:160).
- Timeless Application
 - Paul's example ("WHAT MANNER OF MEN WE WERE AMONG YOU") is always applicable—character validates message.

1 THESSALONIANS 1:6 – BLACK

- Following Paul and Christ Amid Affliction (v. 6)

- The Thessalonians followed both Paul and the Lord, showing the necessity of Pauline fellowship in the dispensation of grace.
- Legitimacy of Pauline Fellowship
 - 1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Philippians 3:17 – Paul explicitly calls believers to follow him.
 - Following Paul is not pride—it’s doctrinal obedience to the revealed mystery.
- The Thessalonian Context
 - They already believed Jesus as Messiah and followed Him under kingdom principles.
 - Romans 15:8 – Christ came as a minister to the circumcision to confirm the promises.
- Dispensational Overlap
 - Before Paul: Only the kingdom gospel.
 - During Paul’s early ministry: Both kingdom and mystery programs active.
 - After full revelation: Only the mystery program remains.
- Affliction and Its Limits
 - Their suffering is real but contextual—not a universal model for all believers.
 - Suffering is not a required sign of sanctification or legitimacy.
- Joy from the Spirit
 - Joy amid trial was given by the Holy Ghost (Acts 13:52; Galatians 5:22; Romans 14:17).

1 THESSALONIANS 1:7–8 – BLACK

- The Thessalonians’ Exemplary Testimony (vv. 7–8)
 - Their sincere faith became a model for others throughout Macedonia and Achaia.
- Enduring Faith Observed
 - They became examples due to their faith under pressure.
 - Encouragement spreads naturally when believers hold fast in trial.
- Proclamation and Reputation
 - Their testimony “sounded out”—the word of the Lord spread from them.
 - Their reputation for genuine, God-directed faith preceded Paul’s further testimony.

1 THESSALONIANS 1:9 – BLACK

- Turning from Idols to the Living God (v. 9)
 - Believers throughout the region reported how the Thessalonians had turned to God from idols.
- Historical Challenge
 - Acts 17 only records Jews and devout Gentiles responding—no mention of pagan idolaters.
 - Likely refers to previous conversion from paganism to Judaism prior to Paul’s arrival.
- Jewish Proselyte Language
 - “To serve the living and true God” echoes:
 - Jeremiah 10:10
 - Daniel 6:20
 - Acts 14:15
 - This is not typical Pauline gospel language (cf. Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 1:13; Romans 3:24).
- Problems with a Pagan-Conversion Reading
 - Paul’s brief three-week stay makes a large-scale pagan response unlikely.
 - Suggesting a separate group risks:
 - Divorcing this group from the Acts 17 audience (forcing a disconnect).
 - Assuming a dominant, undocumented group—an argument from silence.
- Theological Implication
 - Paul is describing their religious history in Jewish categories, not introducing mystery truth.

1 THESSALONIANS 1:10 – BLACK

- Waiting for the Son and Deliverance from Wrath (v. 10)
 - The Thessalonians also waited for God’s Son from heaven, reflecting Jewish Messianic expectation.
- Prophetic Expectation

- Jewish hope included a coming Son (Psalm 2; Proverbs 30:4; Daniel 7:13; Hosea 11:1 / Matthew 2:15).
- Parenthetical Identification
 - “Whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus” is likely parenthetical.
 - Paul identifies the Son as Jesus without requiring that full understanding at the time of their initial turning.
- Wrath to Come
 - Likely refers to the Day of the LORD (Zephaniah 1:14–15), not hell or general suffering.
 - Deliverance is prophetic (Joel 2:32)—survival through wrath, not rapture out of it.
- Distinct from Mystery Deliverance
 - The mystery program (1 Thessalonians 4:17) promises rapture before wrath—not survival during it.
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:9 speaks of deliverance in the prophetic context, reinforcing the Jewish framework.
- Grammar of “Delivered Us”
 - ῥυόμενον – present-middle participle: “delivering us”
 - KJV renders it “delivered us” to reflect certainty and completed assurance, not necessarily timing.
 - Present participles in Greek often express timeless, settled truths:
 - Ephesians 2:8–9 – “by grace ye are saved”
 - 1 Peter 1:5 – “who are kept by the power of God”