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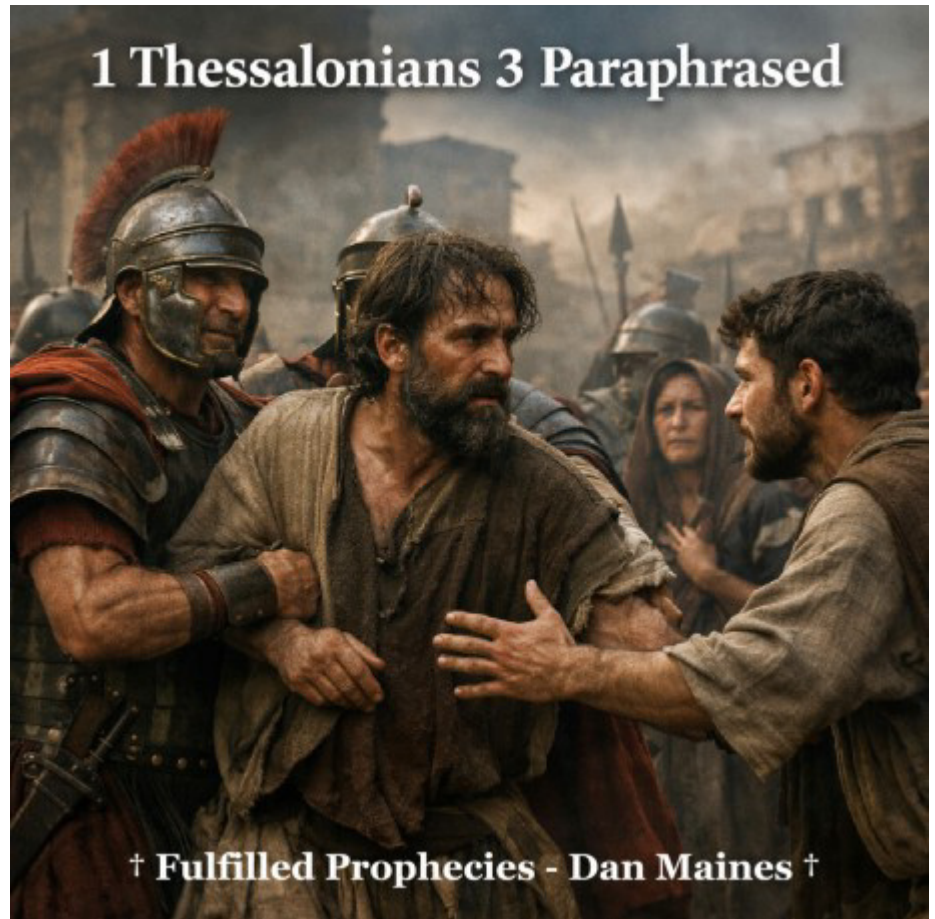
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1 Thessalonians 3 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

1 Thessalonians 3 Paraphrased

Introduction

† Paul had already been forced to leave Thessalonica because of persecution, but his concern for the believers there never stopped. This chapter shows how deeply he cared about their faith and stability.

† The early church lived under pressure from both Jewish opposition and Roman authority, so encouragement and strengthening were necessary for survival (Acts 17:5-10).

† Early Christian writers like Eusebius later recorded how

persecution shaped the faith of the first believers and proved the sincerity of their devotion to Christ.

1 Thessalonians 3:1

So when we couldn't bear the uncertainty any longer, we decided it was better for us to stay behind in Athens by ourselves.

† Paul's concern shows the responsibility of spiritual leaders to watch over believers and make sure they're standing firm (Hebrews 13:17).

† His willingness to remain alone reveals the sacrificial nature of ministry, putting the well-being of others ahead of personal comfort (2 Corinthians 12:15).

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that the apostles willingly endured hardship so the churches would remain strong in truth.

1 Thessalonians 3:2

We sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the good news about Christ, to strengthen you and encourage you in your faith.

† Timothy wasn't just a messenger, he was trusted to strengthen the believers' faith during a time of trouble (1 Timothy 4:12).

† Encouragement was vital because persecution could easily shake new believers who hadn't yet grown strong (Acts 14:22).

† Irenaeus explained that the apostles established faithful men in the churches so the truth would remain steady generation after generation.

1 Thessalonians 3:3

This was so no one would be shaken by these hardships, because you yourselves know that suffering is something we were destined to face.

† From the beginning, believers were warned that hardship would come with following Christ (John 16:33).

† Paul reminds them that suffering wasn't unexpected but part of the path the church was walking during that generation

(Philippians 1:29).

† Tertullian later wrote that persecution never destroyed the church but instead strengthened its witness.

1 Thessalonians 3:4

Even when we were with you, we kept telling you ahead of time that we would face trouble, and that's exactly what happened, just as you know.

† Paul's words confirm that persecution of the early church wasn't surprising but exactly what Jesus predicted (Matthew 10:16-22).

† The Thessalonians were experiencing the same suffering that believers throughout the Roman world were facing (Acts 14:22).

† Eusebius recorded how many early Christians endured persecution under Roman authorities but continued spreading the gospel.

1 Thessalonians 3:5

Because of this, when I could no longer wait, I sent Timothy to find out about your faith, because I was afraid the tempter might have somehow led you astray and that our work among you might have been wasted.

† Satan is often described as the one who tries to undermine faith during hardship (1 Peter 5:8).

† Paul wasn't worried about losing salvation but about believers being discouraged or misled during trials (Galatians 4:11).

† Early church teachers emphasized vigilance because false teachers often appeared during times of distress.

1 Thessalonians 3:6

But now Timothy has come back to us from you and has brought us good news about your faith and love, and that you always remember us kindly and long to see us just as we also long to see you.

† Timothy's report brought comfort to Paul, showing that the believers were standing firm despite persecution (Colossians 1:4).

† Faith and love were always the marks of genuine Christian life in the early church (1 Corinthians 13:13).

† Irenaeus noted that faithful churches preserved the teaching of the apostles with both love and perseverance.

1 Thessalonians 3:7

Because of this, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and hardship we were comforted about you through your faith.

† The faithfulness of the Thessalonians encouraged Paul even while he faced difficulties of his own (2 Corinthians 7:4).

† True ministry isn't one-sided, the faith of believers often strengthens those who teach them (Romans 1:12).

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that mutual encouragement between believers was one of the great strengths of the early church.

1 Thessalonians 3:8

Now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord.

† Paul's joy shows how deeply the spiritual health of believers mattered to him (Philippians 4:1).

† Standing firm was essential because many pressures were trying to pull believers away from the faith (1 Corinthians 16:13).

† Tertullian described steadfast believers as proof that the gospel had truly taken root.

1 Thessalonians 3:9

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we feel before our God because of you?

† Paul's gratitude shows that spiritual growth in others is a reason for deep thanksgiving before God (Colossians 1:3).

† Joy in ministry doesn't come from numbers but from seeing believers walking faithfully (3 John 4).

† Early Christian writers often spoke of rejoicing when churches remained faithful despite persecution.

1 Thessalonians 3:10

Night and day we keep praying earnestly that we may see you

again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

† Spiritual growth doesn't stop after conversion, believers must continue to grow in understanding and maturity (Hebrews 6:1).

† Paul's prayers show the ongoing responsibility of teachers to help strengthen the church (Ephesians 4:11-13).

† Irenaeus emphasized that the apostles continued teaching believers so their faith would remain grounded in truth.

1 Thessalonians 3:11

Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you.

† Paul recognized that even travel plans were ultimately guided by God (Acts 16:6-7).

† The unity of the Father and the Son in guiding believers shows their shared authority and purpose (John 10:30).

† Early Christian writings consistently emphasized dependence on God's direction in all things.

1 Thessalonians 3:12

And may the Lord cause you to increase and overflow with love for one another and for everyone else, just as we also do for you.

† Love was the defining mark of the followers of Christ (John 13:34-35).

† Paul prays not just for love within the church but toward everyone, including outsiders (Romans 12:17-21).

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that love was the greatest evidence that the gospel had transformed a person's life.

1 Thessalonians 3:13

So that He may strengthen your hearts to be blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His holy ones.

† The believers of that generation were living in expectation of Christ's coming judgment upon Jerusalem and the end of the old covenant age (Matthew 16:27-28).

† Holiness and faithfulness were necessary as that climactic

moment approached (Hebrews 10:25-27).

† Eusebius recorded that many believers in Judea recognized the approaching destruction of Jerusalem and remained faithful during that time.

Historical References

† Josephus described the turmoil and persecution surrounding Judea and the Roman world leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

† Eusebius recorded how early Christians endured persecution but continued spreading the gospel across the Roman Empire.

† Irenaeus emphasized the continuity of apostolic teaching preserved in the churches established by the apostles.

† Clement of Alexandria wrote extensively about perseverance and love as defining characteristics of early believers.

How It Applies To Us Today

† The faith of the Thessalonians shows that standing firm during hardship is part of the Christian life (James 1:2-4).

† Encouragement among believers strengthens the church and helps prevent discouragement during trials (Hebrews 3:13).

† Love for one another remains the clearest evidence that Christ's life is working in us (John 13:34-35).

† Faithfulness matters because the gospel continues to transform lives even after the fulfillment of the old covenant age.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why did Paul send Timothy to Thessalonica?

A: Paul wanted to strengthen their faith and make sure persecution hadn't shaken them (Acts 14:22).

Q: Why did Paul expect suffering for believers?

A: Jesus warned His followers that tribulation would come with following Him (John 16:33).

Q: What encouraged Paul the most about the Thessalonians?

A: Their faith and love remained strong despite persecution (Colossians 1:4).

Q: What did Paul pray would grow in the church?

A: He prayed that their love would increase and overflow toward one another and toward everyone (John 13:34-35).

Q: What event were believers of that generation approaching?

A: They were living in the time leading up to the coming of the Lord in judgment upon Jerusalem (Matthew 16:27-28).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† 1 Thessalonians 3

† Josephus, The Jewish War

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

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