

The Half Hour That Changes the World

1 Thessalonians

Book 52

Basic Questions behind the book:

How does our hope in Christ relate to our everyday life?

Summary of book:

Thessalonica was a big Northern Greek city and an international port. It was one of the first big cities in which Paul planted a church. It seems that the Thessalonian believers are normal and robust.

The letter is a typical pastoral letter. It was written to deal with questions which were being asked and dangers which were being encountered. And there is some defensiveness in it as well. Some people were judging Paul's short visit, but if he hadn't left, he would have been hit harder by the rioters.

When Paul wrote this letter, he really believed that Jesus was going to return during his lifetime. Therefore he talks about Jesus' promise of return to the believers in Thessalonica. Both issues of persecution and confusion, because Jesus had not yet returned, were issues that Paul deals with in this letter.

Vital Statistics:

Purpose: To strengthen the Thessalonian Christians in their faith and give them the assurance of Christ's return.

Author: Paul.

Recipients: To the church at Thessalonica, and all believers everywhere.

Dating: The date is believed to have been around AD 51, one of the early letters of Paul.

Setting: The church of Thessalonica was very young; therefore there was a need for maturation. Also, at this time, the believers were persecuted.

“We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.” (4:14)

“So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.” (5:6)

“For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.” (1:4, 5)