

1 Thessalonians - The Situation.

The Situation

1. Paul had left Thessalonica in a hurry, having been removed from the city. He was "sent away... to Berea" He must have left with anxiety, knowing that the brethren there would suffer greatly and he had attempted a return to Thessalonica, but had been prevented. [1Thess 2.17-18].
2. When he could not do without information, he sent back Timothy to Thessalonica from Athens [1Thess 3.1-5] to bring him back some news.
3. No doubt he was greatly relieved when, at Corinth, where Timothy caught up with him, he received good news. Timothy's report can be inferred from the letter which Paul wrote in AD 51.
- [1] The witness of the local Christians in Thessalonica was impressive to the provinces of Achaia and Macedonia. [1 Thess 1.6-10]
- [2] While the persecution had sustained, they were standing strongly in the middle of it. [1 Thess 3.1-10]
- [3] There were some folks [probably of the Jewish community] who were misrepresenting Paul. Certainly Paul feels the need to defend himself on a number of points [1 Thess 2.1-8,17, 3.10-11]
- [4] They were under strong temptation to slip back into pagan standards [4.1-8, 5.22-24]
- [5] They were anxious about the ones who had died since the apostle left them [1 Thess 4.13-5.11]. They needed instructions about how to wait and not rely on the support of others [1 Thess 2.9, 4.11, 5.14]
- [6] There was a tendency to disrespect the elders among them. [5.12,27]

1 Thessalonians - Overview

Overview

1. From what the apostle's can tell from the reception they and their gospel received among the Thessalonians they are confident of their election in God. The product of the Spirit's work is seen in their trust in God, their intense love for one another and their sure hope.
2. They are also aware that the Thessalonians have taken in how they lived whilst among them. They know the true way they conducted themselves, without deceit and with transparency. This is so because they are beginning to live like them, imitating their values and life.
The Thessalonians received the gospel, like the Judean churches, under great external pressure and persecution. This was so, right from the start.
Paul and the others long to see them again.
3. It was because he was worried for them under such pressure, that Paul had sent Timothy from Athens.
Now, with Timothy arriving in Corinth which such a good report, the apostles can 'live' again and have such joy before God. Even so, they still long to see them all again.
4. The apostles give the Thessalonians some general instruction in warnings from the Lord about godly living, as well as encouraging them to care for one another. They are also not to worry or grieve about those who have died before the Lord has come. The apostles outline the order of events so that the Thessalonians would be comforted about their dead ones – those who have fallen asleep.
5. Christian people are awake and sober because they have revelation about the coming of the Lord and also they currently live in trust in God, with love to one another and a deep hope for the future coming of Jesus.
They are to take care to honour their local elders. And to look to admonish and encourage their fellow Christians. Finally, God will preserve them complete them at the day of Jesus Christ, and they should greet each other and know God's grace.