

Lesson Five - Overview of 1 Thessalonians

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Review Questions:

The five major sections in 1 Thessalonians are:

1. Who wrote the Book?
Paul wrote the book. After he started the church at Thessalonica, he wrote this first letter to the believers there within just a few months of leaving.
(b) The major point of this section is that Paul's ministry in Thessalonica touched not only Jews but Gentiles as well. Many Gentiles in the church came out of idolatry, which was not a particular problem among the Jews of that time (1: Thes. 1:9).
2. Where are we?
(b) But after a short time in Athens, Paul felt the need to receive a report from the newborn church in Thessalonica, so he sent Timothy back to serve and minister to the new believers there. Paul wanted to check on the state of the Thessalonians' faith, for fear that false teachers might have infiltrated their number. However, Timothy soon returned with a good report, prompting Paul to pen 1 Thessalonians as a letter of encouragement to the new believers.
3. Why is First Thessalonians so important?
(b) First Thessalonians provides Christians with the clearest biblical passage on the coming rapture of believers, an event that will inaugurate the seven-year tribulation. At the rapture, Christ will return for His people. The dead in Christ shall rise first, while those still living will follow close behind. All believers will meet Jesus in the air to begin an eternity spent with the Lord (1 Thes. 4:16-18).
4. What's the big idea?
(b) Paul taught the people that any spiritual growth would ultimately be motivated by their hope in the ultimate return of Jesus Christ. He was never interested in simply telling people to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, for he knew that what ultimately inspired change was a life of consistently walking in the power of God's Spirit. And so to a group of young Christians with questions and uncertainties, Paul offered the hope of Christ's return, providing both comfort in the midst of questions and motivation to godly living.
5. How do I apply this? (b) By clinging to our hope in Christ, we may see several clear results in our lives: avoiding sexual immorality, refusing to defraud others, appreciating those Christians who serve on your behalf, refusing to repay evil for evil, rejoicing always, praying without ceasing, and giving thanks in all things—to name a few (1 Thes. 4:3-7; 5:12-23). This list, of course, is not exhaustive, but the first letter to the Thessalonians makes clear

that every Christian should expect to grow in holiness over the course of his or her life.

6. According to Swindoll, the major theme of Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians is to strengthen and encourage the church in Thessalonica. To affirm their growth, to learn how to possess your own vessel and to remind them to be prepared for the coming of the Lord.