

Living in Expectation of Christ's Return
1 Thessalonians 1.1-10

It's the early 50s A.D. Jesus' resurrection occurred less than twenty years earlier, but already churches dot the ancient Roman world. In Thessalonica, a band of Christians faced persecution and questions. Paul writes to encourage and instruct them. Let's 'tune in'...

Getting Our Historical Bearings (Acts 17.1-10; 1 Thess. 3.6)

On his second missionary trip, Paul preached in Thessalonica and a church was born. Persecution was fierce; he had to leave suddenly, so he sent Timothy to check on them. He reported they were strong in their faith, but needed more teaching. So Paul wrote this letter.

Important Issues...Then and Now!

- *Expecting Christ's return cultivates hope in persecution.*
- *Expecting Christ's return cultivates sexual purity.*
- *Expecting Christ's return cultivates a united church.*

1. Understanding the background to any Bible book is important; knowing the historical context of a New Testament epistle is critical, since the purpose(s) for its writing are a fundamental part of understanding its message. Paul evangelized in the city of Thessalonica on his second missionary journey, which lasted from about 49-52 A.D. You can read about it in Acts 15-18. To 'get your bearings,' answer these questions:
 - Where was Paul planning to go on this journey (15.36)? Where did God 'forbid' them to go (16.6)? Where did they attempt to go instead (16.7)? When God again said "No," they came to Troas. What happened there (16.9)? How did they respond to this event (16.10)?
 - Where was their first ministry in Macedonia? How would you characterize the overall response there (see 16.12-40)?
 - The second ministry stop was Thessalonica. How would you characterize the response to their ministry there (see 17.1-10)?
2. Read I Thessalonians in one sitting (five short chapters!). What does Paul say about them? What prophetic issue does he press? What practical issues does he address?

