

## THE BOOK OF FIRST THESSALONIANS

### "Gospel Outreach"

#### 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10

#### Introduction

1. The testimony for the Lord at Thessalonica was started by Paul and his associates on their second missionary journey (Acts 17). A true work of the Spirit took place as the record indicates the salvation of souls (v. 4) and the rejection by the Jews (v. 5).
2. After Paul left the area, he wrote this letter to express deep thanks to God for the believers (1 Thess. 1:2-3). His heart was thrilled at the way in which things "happened" in the life of the church (vv. 5-7).
3. But the work did not confine itself to Thessalonica. It moved out in great influence. That is the focus of this section. Two major emphases are given God's work at Thessalonica:

1. The SOUND OUT of the Word v. 8.

- a. Stated

The verb "sounded out" is in the perfect passive form, hence the trumpeting out of the Word of God stood the test. It was not just a blast, but a resounding tone! It reverberated with continuity. This was no splash in the pan witness.

- b. Extended

The two provinces of Macedonia and Achaia got the message from Thessalonica. But that was not the end of things. The adjective "every" is singular suggesting that many other individual places were also reached. Their Gospel witness was penetrating!

- c. Included

What was made known is given here: "your faith toward God." Their fame was not related to mundane items but a spiritual concern toward the Lord. Hallelujah!

- d. Attested

The result of the "sounding out" is clearly given. There was no need to say anything about the work in Thessa-

lonica. The proof of the pudding was in the witness being given! What a marvelous testimony to the work of the Spirit at that city as witnessed by others.

2. The REPORT OUT of the work vv. 9, 10.

a. Item No. 1 v. 9a

The people touched with the Word by the extension of the Gospel from Thessalonica were the witnesses to the apostle Paul. They, the hearers, actually reported back to Paul about the work at Thessalonica. The present tense of the verb shows there was constant reporting of the facts. What was of peculiar concern to the report is the qualitative entrance which Paul had had among the Thessalonians. It was of good value.

b. Item No. 2 vv. 9b-10

1) The "turn" to God The aorist form of the verb points to the dramatic momentary and critical decision to turn to God. In doing this, the Thessalonians actually moved away from idols. This is a key phrase to show the intensive act of true faith. It is at once positive and negative. There is no greater testimony to the one act in salvation than this single phrase. Faith includes a denunciation of a former position. One critical step is taken.

2) The "serve" with God When the Thessalonians turned to God, they in fact took their stand to action with God. The verb here is present tense and is a root which means to become a slave. True salvation results in this sort of action. Contrasted with dead idols, the service noted here is with a living God. Whereas idols are false, this is the true God.

3) The "wait" for God Again the linear action tense of the verb is used. Here is persistent waiting. Being a compound verb, the thought of waiting is intensified. It is the "Son" of God for whom the Thessalonians waited. The reference to the rapture is significant. Two statements are made about the work of the Son: His resurrection (aorist tense verb, cf. Mark 9:9, 10; Phil. 3:11) and His delivering power (present tense verb). Specifically, the deliverance concerns "the wrath to come" as if speaking of a definite wrath. The preposition used here accents no involvement (cf. Rev. 3:10). The reference is both temporal and eternal.

Conclusion This is a Gospel worthy of expression! A Gospel which involves a critical turn to God, constant service to Him, and constant waiting for His Son to return.