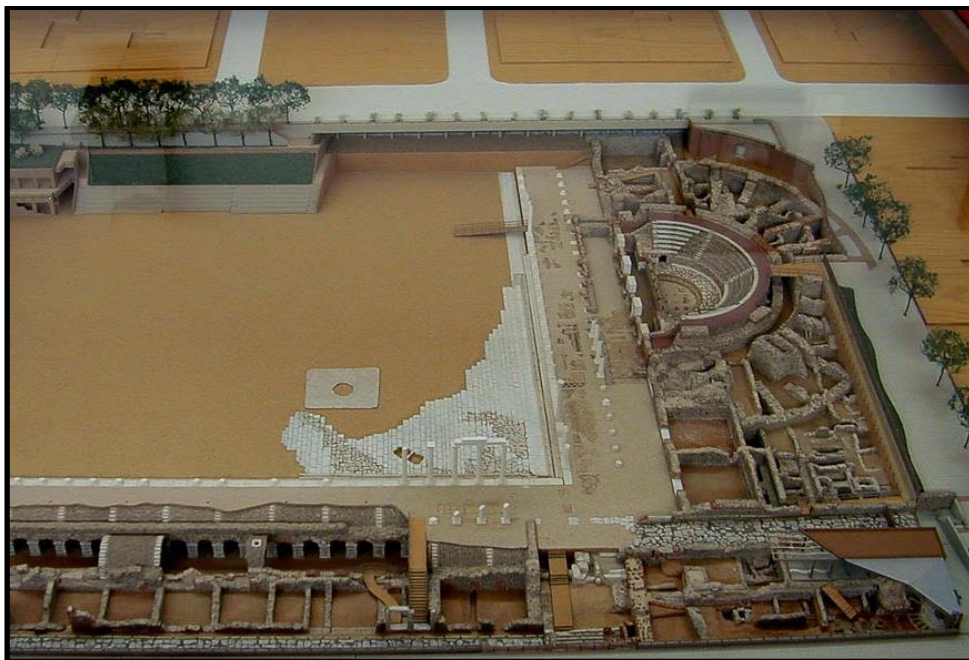


# 1st and 2nd Thessalonians



Model of the forum in Thessalonica

Fall 2019

# 1 THESSALONIANS



THE CHURCH OF ACTS - CH 17

THEY'D BEEN CALLED BY JESUS AS KING (ACTS 1:6)

Holiness Love Future Hope

FOLLOWING JESUS PROVIDES A COUNTER-CULTURAL **70LY** WAY OF LIFE...

...THAT RESPONDS TO HOSTILITY WITH **LOVE** & GENEROSITY.

...THAT IS MOTIVATED BY **HOPE** IN THE COMING KINGDOM OF JESUS.

## 1-3 A CELEBRATION OF FAITHFULNESS

## 4-5 A CHALLENGE TO GROW

**1-10** THE THESSALONIANS' CONVERSION

**1-15** THANKSGIVING PRAYER

**1-17** I THANK GOD FOR YOUR FAITH, LOVE, and HOPE!

**1-18** YOU TURNED AWAY FROM IDOLS TO SERVE THE LIVING & TRUE GOD, AND ARE WAITING FOR THE COMING OF GOD'S SON FROM HEAVEN. (1-10)

**2-1** THEIR COMMON PERSECUTION

**2-13** THEIR SUFFERING IS A WAY OF PARTICIPATING IN THE STORY OF JESUS.

**2-14** SEND THESSALONIANS TRIUMPH! I'M ON THE WAY!

**2-17** PAUL'S ANGER...

**2-19** THE THESSALONIANS ARE SUFFERING!

**2-20** SEND TRIUMPH!

**2-21** TRIUMPH'S DISCOVERY

**2-22** WE'RE GOING STRONG!

**2-23** AND WE PASS PAUL!

**2-24** PAUL'S MISSION IN THESSALONICA

**2-25** CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS & LIVING SERVICE.

**2-26** WE WERE HAPPY TO SHARE NOT ONLY THE GOOD NEWS FROM GOD BUT OUR VERY SELVES BECAUSE WE CAME TO HEARLY LOVE YOU. (2-3)

**2-27** PAUL'S MISSION IN THESSALONICA

**3-1** HOLINESS & SEXUAL PURITY

**3-2** FOLLOWING JESUS' TEACHINGS ON SEX & MARRIAGES (MARRIAGES SET ASIDE)

**3-3** APPROPRIATE

**3-4** COMMITMENT TO LOVE & SERVICE

**3-5** GODRINGING HARD SO THAT YOU CAN BE GENEROUS TO OTHERS (SEE 2 THESSALONIANS 3:10)

**3-6** TRIBUTE OF HOPE

**3-7** MAY GOD KEEP YOU HOLY AS YOU WAIT FOR THE ARRIVAL OF JESUS.

**3-8** THOSE WHO HAVE DIED IN CHRIST WILL RISE. (4:16)

**3-9** JAHNET'S THEIR FARE WHEN JESUS RETURNS!

**3-10** PEACE & SECURITY!

**3-11** THIS HOPE SHOULD MOTIVATE FAITHFULNESS

**3-12** SO LIKE IN THE PRESENT AS IF THAT DAY IS ALREADY HERE. (5:1)

**3-13** THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME LIKE SURPRISE BURGLAR... (5:2)

**3-14** CAESAR'S ARRIVAL MET BY HIS DELEGATES

**3-15** JESUS' ARRIVAL MET BY HIS PEOPLE (5:10)

**3-16** THE DRIFT OF THE LORD WILL COME LIKE SURPRISE BURGLAR... (5:2)

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# 2 THESSALONIANS

THINGS IN THESSALONICA HAVE GOTTEN WORSE!

PERSECUTION

CONFUSION ABOUT JESUS' RETURN

INSPIRED HOPE & FAITHFULNESS FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

NOT SPECULATION ABOUT TIMELINES

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR SHARES WHAT YOU LIVE FOR.

## 1 HOPE DESPITE PERSECUTION

1:1-3

THANKSGIVING TRAITOR

I THANK GOD FOR YOUR FAITH, LOVE, ENDURANCE.

PERSECUTION HAS INTERFERED

JESUS FOLLOWERS SHOW THEIR VICTORY THROUGH NON-VIOLENCE & ENDURANCE

THE ULTIMATE TRAGEDY

THEY WILL BE BANISHED AWAY FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD & FROM THE GLORY OF HIS POWER

JESUS' RETURN = FINAL JUSTICE

1:11-12

THE LORD JESUS WILL BE HONORED THROUGH YOU.

## 2 THE DAY OF THE LORD

PAUL SAYS: THE DAY OF THE LORD IS ALREADY UPON US!

GOD'S FINAL JUSTICE IS ON THE WAY

DID JESUS COME LIKE A THIEF IN THE NIGHT? (SEE 1 THESSALONIANS 5:2)

JESUS HAS ABANDONED US!!!

I NEVER SAID THAT!

THE REBEL

THE WORLD WILL KEEP PROSECUTING THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN JESUS. BUT NOT FOREVER.

JESUS WILL CONFRONT THE REBEL... & DELIVER HIS PEOPLE.

THE POINT: IS NOT TO FUEL APocalyptic SPECULATION - IS TO COMFORT THE THESSALONIANS & RECALL JESUS' TEACHINGS (SEE MARK 13)

THE EVENTS LEADING TO JESUS' RETURN WILL BE OBVIOUS! YOU DON'T NEED TO BE SCARED.

2:16-17

THE LORD GIVE YOU COMFORT & STRENGTH

## 3 CHALLENGE TO THE 'IDLE'

NOT LAZY, BUT IRRESPONSIBLE & REFUSING TO WORK (SEE 1 THESSALONIANS 4:10-12, 5:14)

POSSIBLE:

JESUS COME AS YOU WERE!

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

MORE LIKELY: ROMAN PATRONAGE

CLIENTS (YOUR PATRONAGE IS YOUR PROTECTION)

FEEL YOU ARE SET FREE?!

SOME OF YOU ARE LEADING A DISORDERED LIFE, NOT WORKING, BUT MEDDLING IN THE BUSINESS OF OTHERS.

THE IDEAL:

WORKING HARD SO THEIR LIVES CAN BENEFIT OTHERS

3:10-16

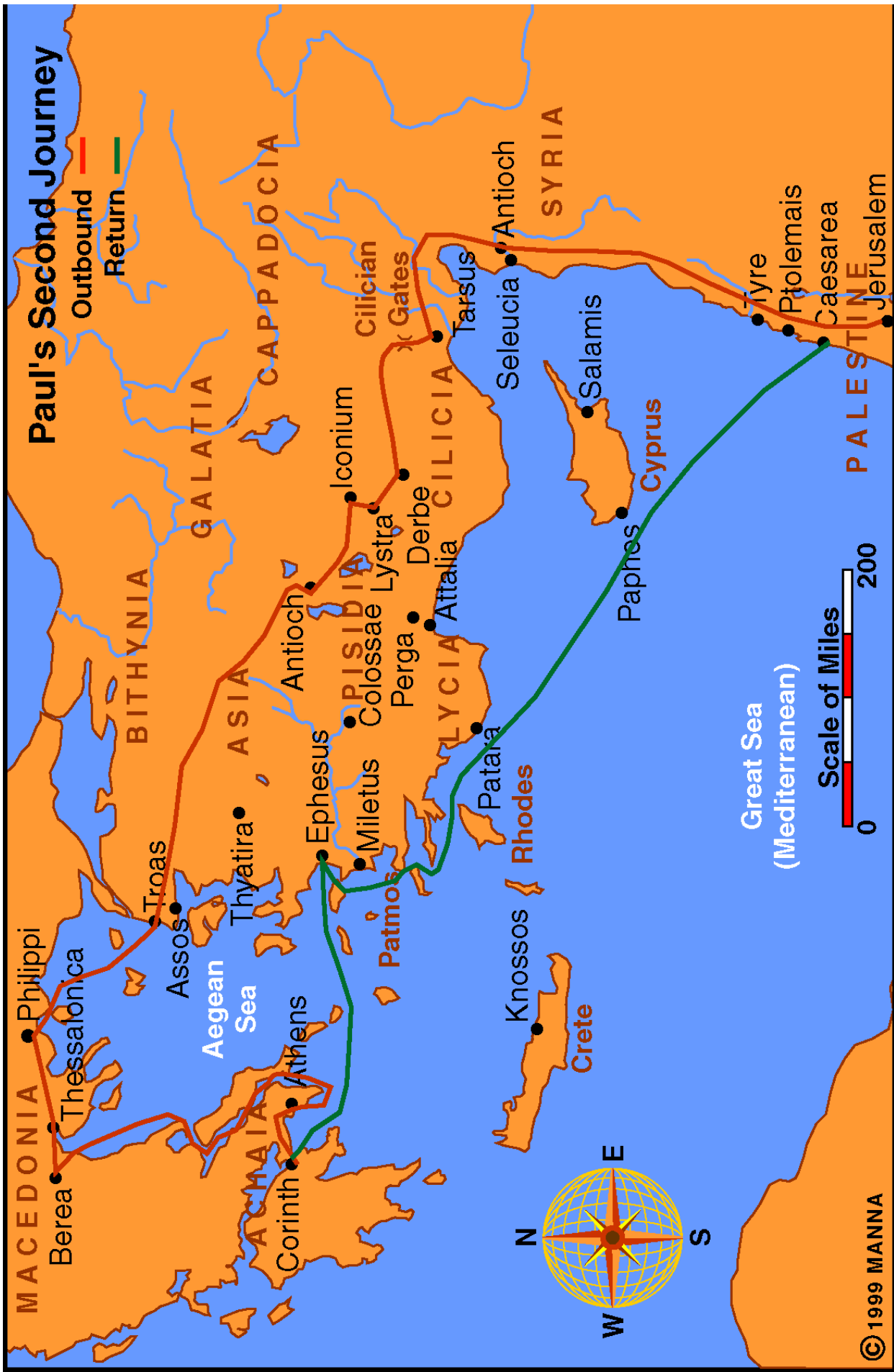
MAY THE LORD OF PEACE GRANT YOU PEACE

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# Paul's Second Journey

Outbound —  
Return —



## Founding of the Church (Acts 17:1-15)

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. <sup>2</sup>And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, <sup>3</sup>explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ." <sup>4</sup>And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. <sup>5</sup>But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. <sup>6</sup>And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, <sup>7</sup>and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." <sup>8</sup>And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. <sup>9</sup>And when they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

<sup>10</sup>The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. <sup>11</sup>Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. <sup>12</sup>Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men. <sup>13</sup>But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there too, agitating and stirring up the crowds. <sup>14</sup>Then the brothers immediately sent Paul off on his way to the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there. <sup>15</sup>Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens, and after receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they departed.

1. Name the men who came to Thessalonica

2. How many Sabbaths did Paul preach in the synagogue? Did he stay longer after this?

3. Who stirred up the mob against Paul?

4. Where did the brethren send Paul and Silas?

5. Who would this leave to strengthen the church in Thessalonica?

# 1 THESSALONIANS

## Author and Title

Paul is widely regarded as the author of 1 Thessalonians, as evidenced by how compatible the vocabulary, style, and theology are with his other letters. The mention of Silas (“Silvanus”) and Timothy as co-senders (1:1) may indicate Paul’s care to present the missionaries as a united band in order to offset any Thessalonian disappointment that Paul had not come to visit them again but had sent Timothy instead (see 2:17–18; 3:1–2, 6, 11).

## Date

Most scholars today date 1 Thessalonians to A.D. 49–51, early in Paul’s 18-month stay in Corinth during his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1–18). Only a small minority of scholars, who do not regard Acts as historically dependable, place it in the early 40s A.D. The Delphi Inscription—a letter from the emperor Claudius to the city of Delphi—dates Gallio’s proconsulship of Achaia to A.D. 51–52, and Acts 18:12–17 mentions Gallio, toward the end of Paul’s Corinthian stay.

## Theme

The most prominent theme in 1 Thessalonians is the second coming of Jesus. It is mentioned in every chapter of the book (1:10; 2:19–20; 3:13; 4:13–18; 5:1–11, 23–24). At Jesus’ future coming, the dead in Christ will rise and will be caught up along with the living to meet the Lord in the air (4:15–17). Unbelievers will be subject to his wrath, but Christians will be delivered from this, inheriting salvation instead (1:10; 5:2–4, 9–10). Those who are destined to participate as saints (lit., “holy ones”) in the second coming must be holy and blameless (3:11–4:8; 5:23), and God, who is faithful, will produce holiness in the lives of those whom he calls (5:24).

## Purpose, Occasion, and Background

Thessalonica was the proud capital of the Roman province of Macedonia and had a population of over 100,000. Its natural harbor and placement on the busy east-west Egnatian Way as well as key north-south trade routes meant that it was a flourishing center of trade and philosophy. It was a free city and was governed by local officials called “politarchs” (cf. Acts 17:6, 8). Religiously, the city was committed to the Greco-Roman pantheon and the imperial cult; Egyptian cults were also prominent. There was a sizable population of Jews in Thessalonica (Acts 17:5).

Paul, Timothy, and Silas preached in the Thessalonian synagogue over three Sabbaths, and a number of Jews and God-fearing Gentiles believed (Acts 17:4). First Thessalonians 1:9–10 suggests that Paul subsequently spent some weeks ministering fruitfully to pagan Gentiles. However, rioters instigated by Jewish opponents dragged Jason (Paul’s host) and some other Christians before the politarchs and charged them with sedition against Caesar (Acts 17:5–8), forcing the missionaries to leave Thessalonica prematurely (Acts 17:9–10). Paul was concerned for the new Christians, and therefore a few months later he sent Timothy back to Thessalonica (1 Thess. 3:1–2, 5; see note on Acts 17:15). Catching up with Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:5), Timothy updated him on the Thessalonian church (1 Thess. 3:6).

Timothy reported that generally the church community was doing well. However, not everything at Thessalonica was rosy. Some members of the church had died (4:13), and because they were not fully informed about what would happen to deceased Christians at Christ’s return (3:10; 4:13), some apparently thought that those who had died would miss out on the second coming, and they had plunged into hopeless grieving for them (4:13).

In addition, Timothy related to Paul a Thessalonian question about *the timing of the day of the Lord* (5:1–2). A number of scholars believe that the query reflected restless impatience or a false sense of security, but this view is countered by Paul’s repeated assurances in 5:4–5, 9, along with the lack of threat or warning in 5:1–11. Paul reassures the Thessalonians that they are destined not for wrath but for salvation on the day of the Lord. Some think that the Thessalonians were concerned that they would be unprepared for Jesus’ return, but 4:3–8 suggests that they were not concerned *enough* about holy living. Perhaps the simplest explanation is that these new Christians were questioning their own final salvation in view of the recent unexpected deaths (4:13). They may even have wondered whether the deaths were an expression of divine disapproval.

Whatever the specifics, clearly the Thessalonians needed reassurance about those who had died (4:13–18) and about their own destiny at the second coming (5:1–11).

The Thessalonians seem to have been vulnerable in other ways too. They had not expected the initial persecution to continue unabated for so long (3:3–4; cf. 2

Thess. 1:5–7). Moreover, they missed Paul, apparently disappointed that he himself had not yet returned to see them (1 Thess. 3:6–10).

Yet another problem in Thessalonica demanded Paul's attention: some Christians were bringing the church into disrepute by depending on wealthier Christians to provide for them rather than earning their own living (4:10b–12; 5:14; cf. 2 Thess. 3:6–15). It is possible that this problem was a result of the Thessalonians' erroneous thinking about the future. However, it may simply be that some church members were selfishly and lazily exploiting the charity of wealthier members to avoid having to work.

When Paul heard Timothy's generally positive report, he was filled with joyful relief and was eager to encourage the embattled and discouraged Christians and to answer their questions. So he immediately began composing 1 Thessalonians (1 Thess. 3:6–8). Paul's main purpose was to repair the hope of the Thessalonian Christians in the wake of the unexpected deaths of people in their congregation and to reassure them that both the dead and the living were destined to be saved at the second coming (4:13–5:11). Related to this was his desire to reassure the Thessalonians that they were among those elected by God for salvation (1:4; 5:24).

Paul also wished to underline the missionaries' authenticity as preachers of the gospel of God (1:5; 2:1–12; 2:17–3:10) in the face of real or potential questions relating to his lengthy absence (2:17–3:10), the unrelenting persecution (3:3–4), and the unexpected deaths (4:13). Paul also sought to encourage the Thessalonians by explaining that persecution is normal for the Christian (3:3–4). In addition, Paul is calling the recently converted, predominantly pagan community to sexual holiness (4:3–8) and the idle members of the community to gainful employment (4:9–12).

It also seems that Paul is seeking to undo their heavy dependence on him by urging the church to respect and defer to its own ministers (5:12–13). This can be seen in his forbidding the despising of prophesying (5:19–22), his emphasizing Timothy's credentials (3:2), and his presenting the missionaries as a team (hence the use of the first person plural through much of the letter).

## **History of Salvation Summary**

Christians should look back on the accomplished salvation of Christ, which fulfills OT promises, and look forward to the second coming, which consummates the promises. (For an explanation of the "History of Salvation," see the Overview of the Bible, pp. 23–26.)



	A.D.	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80
Death, resurrection of Christ (A.D. 33 [or 30]) <sup>†</sup>		■										
Paul's conversion (33/34*)			●									
Paul's first Jerusalem visit (36/37*)				●								
Paul's second Jerusalem visit (famine relief) (44–47*)					■							
Paul's first missionary journey (46–47)					●							
Paul's third Jerusalem visit (apostolic council) (48–49*)					●							
Paul's second journey, to Thessalonica and Corinth (48/49–51*)					■							
Paul writes 1 Thessalonians from Corinth (49–51*)						●						
Paul's third missionary journey (52–57*)						■						
Paul martyred in Rome (64–67*)									■			

\* denotes approximate date; / signifies either/or; † see *The Date of Jesus' Crucifixion*, pp. 1809–1810

## Timeline

## Key Themes

1. The wrath of God comes on those who reject the gospel. 2:16; 5:3
2. Jesus' death and resurrection are the basis for the Christian's hope. 4:14; 5:10
3. Christians are destined not for wrath but for salvation at Jesus' coming. 1:10; 5:4, 9
4. Christians who die will participate fully in the second coming. 4:14–17; 5:10
5. Those who respond to the gospel have been elected by God in prehistory and called by God, and they continue to be called by God throughout their earthly lives. 1:4; 2:12; 4:7; 5:9, 24
6. Christians should live lives of comprehensive holiness. 3:13; 4:3–8; 5:23
7. Christians must never shirk their responsibility to work. 4:9–12; 5:14
8. The authenticity of the gospel is confirmed by the integrity of its preachers. 1:5; 2:1–12
9. Joy, especially in suffering, is a mark of the Christian. 1:6; 5:16
10. Christians experience the realities of the prophesied new covenant. 4:8–9
11. Faith, hope, and love are essential and universal traits of the Christian. 1:2–3; 5:8

## Literary Features

First Thessalonians is an informal epistle that contains all of the usual ingredients of NT epistles. It is a public letter in the sense of being addressed to a whole group, but at many points it reads more like a personal letter to an individual, as it highlights the relationship between author and recipients. The purpose of letters is usually to inform, and this letter informs the Thessalonian church about Paul's feelings toward them, events in his own life, and Christian doctrine and practice.

Distinguishing literary features include: a strong apologetic and autobiographical element; exuberant expressions of thanksgiving for people who are living the Christian life correctly; repeated direct addresses to the recipients of the letter; extended teaching on the second coming of Christ, so that even some of the moral exhortations are related to that doctrine; and the conclusion of each chapter with a reference to Christ's second coming.

## The Setting of 1 Thessalonians

*c. A.D. 49–51*

Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians from Corinth near the end of his second missionary journey. Paul and his companions had established the church in Thessalonica but were forced to leave by opponents of the gospel. Later, Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to check on the church there, and Timothy's report led Paul to write this letter. Thessalonica enjoyed privileged status as the capital of Macedonia and was located on a natural harbor along the busy east-west Egnatian Way.

## Outline

- I. Opening (1:1)
- II. Thanksgiving and Encouragement (1:2–3:13)
  - A. Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians' faith, love, and hope (1:2–3)
  - B. Paul's confidence in the election of the Thessalonians (1:4–2:16)
  - C. Paul's defense of the missionaries during their absence (2:17–3:10)
  - D. A pastoral prayer for the Thessalonians (3:11–13)
- III. Instruction and Exhortation (4:1–5:28)
  - A. On pleasing God (4:1–12)
  - B. On the second coming of Jesus (4:13–5:11)
  - C. On community conduct (5:12–22)
  - D. Prayer, assurance, and conclusion (5:23–28)

# 1 Thessalonians English Standard Version (ESV)

## Chapter 1

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

<sup>2</sup>We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, <sup>3</sup>remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, <sup>5</sup>because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. <sup>6</sup>And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, <sup>7</sup>so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. <sup>8</sup>For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. <sup>9</sup>For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, <sup>10</sup>and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. How many epistles of the Apostle Paul are in the bible? What was his typical format? Who else is mentioned at the beginning of this letter. Why do you think that this epistle is called only by the name Paul? Did Paul write some letters with only his name mentioned at the beginning?

2. What is probably the first letter Paul wrote and when was it written? What was the last letter and when was it written? Did Paul actually pen the letters?

3. How did the gospel come to Thessalonica? How does it come to us today?

4. What does Paul have to say about the church in Thessalonica? How should this apply to Tyngsboro today?

5. What subject is mentioned in all five chapters and why is this subject so important for the Thessalonians?

## Chapter 2

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. <sup>2</sup>But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. <sup>3</sup>For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, <sup>4</sup>but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. <sup>5</sup>For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. <sup>6</sup>Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. <sup>7</sup>But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. <sup>8</sup>So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

<sup>9</sup>For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. <sup>10</sup>You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. <sup>11</sup>For you know how, like a father with his children, <sup>12</sup>we exhorted each one of you

and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

<sup>13</sup>And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men<sup>[e]</sup> but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. <sup>14</sup>For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews,<sup>[f]</sup> <sup>15</sup> who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind <sup>16</sup>by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them at last.

<sup>17</sup>But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, <sup>18</sup>because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us. <sup>19</sup>For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? <sup>20</sup>For you are our glory and joy.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What had Paul and his companions endured before coming to Thessalonica? What was their attitude toward the Thessalonians?

2. How did Paul, Silas, and Timothy conduct themselves while in Thessalonica? Did Paul conduct himself this way at other churches? How was this behavior considered by Paul's enemies?

3. How did the Thessalonians receive the preaching of Paul?



## Chapter 3

Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone, <sup>2</sup>and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith, <sup>3</sup>that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. <sup>4</sup>For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know. <sup>5</sup>For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.

<sup>6</sup>But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you— <sup>7</sup>for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. <sup>8</sup>For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. <sup>9</sup>For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, <sup>10</sup>as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?

<sup>11</sup>Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, <sup>12</sup>and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, <sup>13</sup>so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

1. Who joined Paul later in Athens?

2. Why did Paul send Timothy back to Thessalonica? Why do you think that he was selected?

3. What warning had Paul given the Thessalonians regarding affliction/persecution? Do we need this warning today?

4. What message did Timothy bring to Paul? How did he receive the news?

## Chapter 4

Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. <sup>2</sup>For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. <sup>3</sup>For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup>that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, <sup>5</sup>not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; <sup>6</sup>that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. <sup>7</sup>For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. <sup>8</sup>Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

<sup>9</sup>Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, <sup>10</sup>for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, <sup>11</sup>and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, <sup>12</sup>so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

<sup>13</sup>But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. <sup>14</sup>For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. <sup>15</sup>For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup>For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup>Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup>Therefore encourage one another with these words.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What did Paul ask and urge the brethren to do?

2. What was the Lord's instructions regarding their sanctification? What is today's attitude fornication in the US?

3. Did the Thessalonians need to be instructed in brotherly love? Why? What did Paul still urge them?

4. How were they to walk properly before outsiders? How is this applicable today?

5. What does Paul have to say about those who have died (asleep) before the coming of the Lord?

## Chapter 5

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. <sup>2</sup>For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup>While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. <sup>4</sup>But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. <sup>5</sup>For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. <sup>6</sup>So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. <sup>7</sup>For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. <sup>8</sup>But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. <sup>9</sup>For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord

Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup>who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. <sup>11</sup>Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

<sup>12</sup>We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, <sup>13</sup>and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. <sup>14</sup>And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. <sup>15</sup>See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. <sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not despise prophecies, <sup>21</sup>but test everything; hold fast what is good. <sup>22</sup>Abstain from every form of evil.

<sup>23</sup>Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

<sup>25</sup>Brothers, pray for us.

<sup>26</sup>Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.

<sup>27</sup>I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.

<sup>28</sup>The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What is "the day of the Lord"?

2. What are the characteristics of "children of the light/day"?

3. What are the characteristics of "children of night/darkness"?

4. What did Paul ask/urge the brethren in Thessalonica to do?

5. How were they to greet all of the brothers? How does that apply to us?

## 2 THESSALONIANS

### Author and Title

Although some scholars today have questioned Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, the unanimous testimony of the early church fathers supports Pauline authorship. The main reasons given by those who question Pauline authorship include: (1) The eschatology of 2 Thessalonians is regarded as different from that of 1 Thessalonians. Specifically, the sudden/imminent expectation of Christ's return in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11 is said to be inconsistent with the requirement in 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12 that specific signs must first take place. (2) The many commonalities between 1 and 2 Thessalonians are alleged to reflect literary dependence, which is regarded as inconsistent with Paul's authorship of both. (3) Second Thessalonians supposedly has a colder tone than 1 Thessalonians. (4) Second Thessalonians 2:2 and 3:17 are thought to make best sense if written by a pseudonymous author.

A careful evaluation of these objections, however, supports the conclusion that Paul was in fact the writer of 2 Thessalonians. The duplicity entailed in the forgery hypothesis (see 3:17) is hardly credible. In addition, the above objections can be readily refuted: (1) Both letters portray the second coming as an unwelcome and sudden surprise for unbelievers (1 Thess. 5:2–3; 2 Thess. 2:8–12) but an anticipated and welcome event for those who are in Christ (1 Thess. 5:4–8; 2 Thess. 1:6–10; 2:13–17). Moreover, certain events precede the Lord's return in 1 Thessalonians 5:3 as well as 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4, 9–10, and imminence can be seen both in 1 Thessalonians 4:15–17 and in 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 10; 2:1. A sudden and imminent eschaton was regarded as compatible with signs in Jewish and early Christian writings (e.g., Matthew 24–25). (2) Paul probably wrote 2 Thessalonians shortly after 1 Thessalonians, and may have referred to a copy of it. (3) The idea of a colder tone in 2 Thessalonians is exaggerated (see "Literary Features" below). (4)



Second Thessalonians 2:2 and 3:17 probably reflect Paul's concern that a forged letter may once have existed.

## **Date**

Second Thessalonians was probably penned from Corinth in A.D. 49–51, shortly after 1 Thessalonians.

## *Relationship to 1 Thessalonians*

Some have proposed that 2 Thessalonians preceded 1 Thessalonians, but 2 Thessalonians 2:15 rules this out. Others have postulated that Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians for a Jewish group within the church or even to the Philippians, but such hypotheses are in tension with 2 Thessalonians 1:1. Probably Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians soon after dispatching 1 Thessalonians, because he had received a report (2 Thess. 3:11) that the situation at Thessalonica had taken a surprising turn.

## **Theme**

The theme of the second coming of Jesus dominates 2 Thessalonians just as it dominated 1 Thessalonians. Jesus' coming will be preceded by an "apostasy" (or rebellion) and by the revelation of the man of lawlessness, the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:3). When Jesus comes, he will defeat this rebellious world ruler (2:8) and bring justice to oppressed Christians, and wrath to their persecutors and to unbelievers in general (1:5–10; 2:9–15).

## **Purpose, Occasion, and Background**

The Thessalonian church had accepted the strange claim that "the day of the Lord has come" (2:1–2). How could they have thought this? Some think they spiritualized the concept of the day of the Lord, but Paul's argumentation seems inconsistent with this. Others postulate that they thought that tribulation was part of the day of the Lord and that it had begun, and consequently the second coming was imminent. However, Paul assumes that they knew the second coming occurred at the same time as the coming of the day of the Lord. As strange as it may seem, the Thessalonians may simply have fallen victim to the bizarre notion that the day of the Lord, understood in its normal sense, had come. As a result they were shaken and frightened (2:2). The Thessalonians were also undergoing persecution (1:4), which may have exacerbated their confusion about the end. Furthermore, the community had a problem with idlers refusing to work (3:6–15). They may have stopped working to await and preach the second coming, but evidence for connecting the problems in this way is lacking. Lazy Christians may simply have been exploiting wealthier Christians' generosity in order to avoid work.

Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians (1) to reassure those terrified by the thought that the day of the Lord had come (2:1–3:5), (2) to strengthen the Thessalonians in the face of unremitting persecution (1:3–12), and (3) to deal with the problem of some of the church members refusing to earn their own living (3:6–15).

## Timeline

	A.D.	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80
Death, resurrection of Christ (A.D. 33 [or 30]) <sup>†</sup>		■										
Paul's conversion (33/34*)		●										
Paul's first Jerusalem visit (36/37*)			●									
Paul's second Jerusalem visit (famine relief) (44–47*)				■								
Paul's first missionary journey (46–47)					●							
Paul's third Jerusalem visit (apostolic council) (48–49*)					●							
Paul's second journey, to Thessalonica and Corinth (48/49–51*)					■							
Paul writes 2 Thessalonians from Corinth (49–51*)					■							
Paul's third missionary journey (52–57*)						■						
Paul martyred in Rome (64–67*)									■			

\* denotes approximate date; / signifies either/or; † see *The Date of Jesus' Crucifixion*, pp. 1809–1810

## History of Salvation Summary

Christians are to wait expectantly for the second coming of their Savior, Jesus Christ. (For an explanation of the “History of Salvation,” see the Overview of the Bible, pp. 23–26.)

## Literary Features

Second Thessalonians follows the customary order of a NT letter. It begins with a salutation and ends with a prayer and benediction. Between these bookends is found the type of informal letter that meanders through a series of topics in the way that present-day informal letters often do. There is the usual mixture of personalia (references to the letter writer’s relationship with his recipients) and public information, and Christian doctrine and practical application.

In contrast to the warm and effusive tone of 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians includes some blunt commands as Paul addresses bad behavior and bad thinking. Further, this letter is noteworthy for the author’s tough-mindedness in predicting judgment on the ungodly and rebuking church members who behave and think

incorrectly. Still, there is a regular swing back and forth between reproof and warm encouragement.

## Key Themes

1. God's righteous judgment will be fully manifest when Jesus returns. At that time unbelievers will be condemned and believers will be saved. 1:5-10; 2:9-14
2. Christians will share Christ's glory. 1:10, 12; 2:14
3. The lawless one's revelation and humanity's final rebellion are prerequisites for Jesus' second coming. 2:3-4, 9-12
4. The lawless one will deceive all those who have rejected the gospel, guaranteeing their condemnation when Jesus returns. 2:3, 6-12
5. Christians must not exploit the charity of fellow Christians. 3:6-15

## Outline

- I. Opening (1:1-2)
- II. Thanksgiving and Comfort for the Persecuted Thessalonians (1:3-12)
  - A. Thanksgiving proper (1:3-4)
  - B. Justice guaranteed when Jesus returns (1:5-10)
  - C. Prayer report (1:11-12)
- III. Refuting the False Claim about the Day of the Lord (2:1-17)
  - A. The false claim (2:1-2)
  - B. The false claim refuted (2:3-12)
  - C. Reassurance (2:13-14)
  - D. Exhortation (2:15)
  - E. Prayer (2:16-17)
- IV. Transition (3:1-5)
  - A. Request for prayer (3:1-2)
  - B. Reassurance (3:3-4)
  - C. Prayer (3:5)
- V. The Problem of the Idlers (3:6-15)
  - A. The command to the community (3:6)
  - B. The tradition (3:7-10)
  - C. The problem (3:11)
  - D. The command to the idlers (3:12)
  - E. Instructions to the community (3:13-15)
- VI. Conclusion (3:16-18)

# 2 Thessalonians English Standard Version (ESV)

## Chapter 1

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

<sup>2</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>3</sup>We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. <sup>4</sup>Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring.

<sup>5</sup>This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— <sup>6</sup>since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, <sup>7</sup>and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels <sup>8</sup>in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. <sup>9</sup>They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, <sup>10</sup>when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. <sup>11</sup>To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, <sup>12</sup>so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What did Paul thank God and boast about the members of the church in Thessalonica?

2. What is the "evidence of the righteous judgment of God"?

3. What will happen to those who are afflicting the church in Thessalonica?

## Chapter 2

Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, <sup>2</sup>not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. <sup>3</sup>Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, <sup>4</sup>who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. <sup>5</sup>Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? <sup>6</sup>And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. <sup>7</sup>For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. <sup>8</sup>And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. <sup>9</sup>The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, <sup>10</sup>and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. <sup>11</sup>Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, <sup>12</sup>in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

<sup>13</sup>But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. <sup>14</sup>To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>15</sup>So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.

<sup>16</sup>Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, <sup>17</sup>comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What topics could some of the brethren be "easily shaken"? What might be the source of this deception?



2. What will happen before "the day of the Lord" comes?

3. Who do you think the "man of lawlessness" might be? Who is behind his behavior?

4. What will God do to those who are deceived and refuse the love of the truth?

5. How did God call the Thessalonians? How does he call us today? How were they to stand firm?

## Chapter 3

Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, <sup>2</sup>and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith. <sup>3</sup>But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one. <sup>4</sup>And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command. <sup>5</sup>May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.

<sup>6</sup>Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. <sup>7</sup>For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, <sup>8</sup>nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. <sup>9</sup>It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. <sup>10</sup>For

even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. <sup>11</sup>For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. <sup>12</sup>Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

<sup>13</sup>As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. <sup>14</sup>If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. <sup>15</sup>Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

<sup>16</sup>Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.

<sup>17</sup>I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I write. <sup>18</sup>The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What did Paul ask them to pray on his behalf? What did he pray for them?

2. What does Paul have to say about idleness?

3. What are Paul's final comments in this second letter?