



My Drift

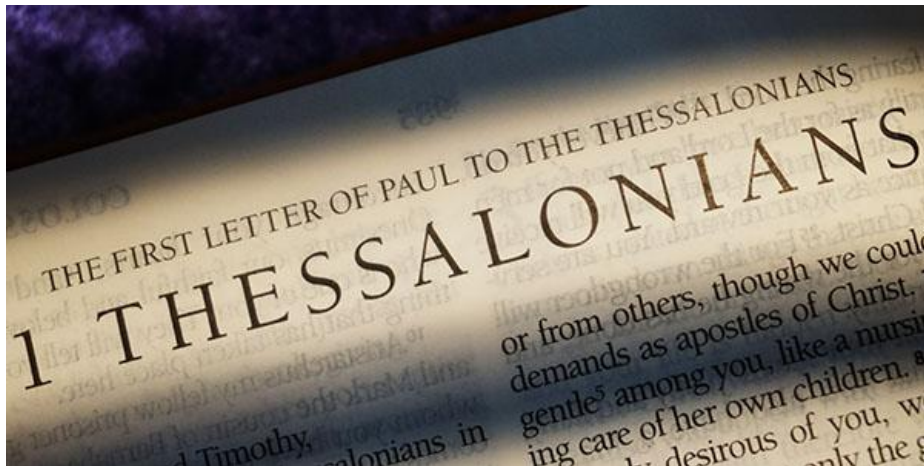
Title: Bible – Books of 1 and 2 Thessalonians

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Book of 1 Thessalonians



Who Wrote the Book of 1 Thessalonians?

Within this letter, Paul declares he wrote it with Silas and Timothy in verses 1:1 and 2:18. Few biblical scholars disagree with Paul as the author. That the message comes from all three men is reflected in the use of the word we throughout the letter.



Timothy, Paul, and Silas

Context and Background of 1 Thessalonians

Theologians consider 1 Thessalonians to be one of the first books of the New Testament written. The time frame comes from the context. The three men, in verse one, were only together for a few years, 49-51 A.D., according to Paul's journeys in the book of Acts. There's continuity between Paul's travels to Thessalonica and Corinth in this letter with the account in Acts 18. An archeological inscription found in 1909 at Delphi narrows the year to 51 A.D.

The opening words of the book indicate Paul wrote the book to the Church of the Thessalonians, a prominent seaport and the capital of Macedonia with a population close to 200,000 with a Greek majority, Romans, and a strong Jewish minority. Its location along the Egnatian Way and sheltered harbor on the Aegean Sea made it an important and wealthy city that connected Roma with the East. Rome built a naval station there. Paul ministered there on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:10), but opposition of Jews drove Paul away. Since Silas and Timothy joined Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:5), it is believed that's where they wrote the letter.



Paul shows his continued care to minister to people he converted through this letter. He is concerned about their spiritual condition because he knows they live in a pagan area where some people persecute followers of Christ. He reminds them that he preached the gospel to them and wants to help them grow in faith (chapter two). In chapter one, Paul expresses joy that he received news of their Christian love. He sent Timothy to Thessalonica, for firsthand news, who has now returned to Paul (1 Thessalonians 3:2-6) and inspires Paul to write the letter.

Main Theme and Purpose of 1 Thessalonians

Paul wrote the letter out of deep love and concern for the believers in Thessalonica and his desire to continue to disciple them. He encourages them to grow in faith, strive for holiness and purity, and stand firm against persecution. He shares the belief that knowledge of the promised end times will give them hope to remain steadfast. This purpose is best summed up with Paul's encouraging words in verses 3:12-13. These words also bridge to the hope of the future kingdom when Christ will return (Eschatology).

In the Bible, eschatology is the study of the end times, including the Second Coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the Last Judgment.

Paul who greatly desires to return to the Thessalonians, writes about the desire and promise of Jesus to return to His people on earth. He portrays Jesus as the Coming One who will continue to fulfill His promises. Paul writes about the future as a message of lasting hope and to assure people that those who died will be reunited with them in the future.

What Can We Learn from 1 Thessalonians Today?

The truths of the words of 1 Thessalonians remain relevant today. We should always strive to grow in our faith, show Christian love to all, and remain hopeful in the promise of Christ's return. We develop a more vibrant faith when we look forward to Christ's return and the union of all believers on earth and in heaven.

The encouragement to live lives of purity and holiness as well as to examine everything are calls for Christians to make wise choices daily, in a modern world where many people promote sexual freedom, and many writers twist the original meanings of scripture.

Paul's encouragement to stand firm against persecution reminds us to be alert and fight against laws that restrict religious freedom and to stand firm in our faith.

Paul's commendation to the believers should motivate us to also be examples of Christ to people around us just as Paul and his companions worked at setting good examples for those they discipled. His reminder to examine everything should also inspire us to study scripture carefully.

Paul's parting words to pray continually with gratitude remind us of the power of prayer and hearts filled with thanksgiving.

Favorite Verses from 1 Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians 1:5-7, “Because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so, you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.”

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13, “May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.”

1 Thessalonians 4:1,3, “As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more... It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality.”

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so, we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.”

1 Thessalonians 5:21, “But test them all; hold on to what is good.”

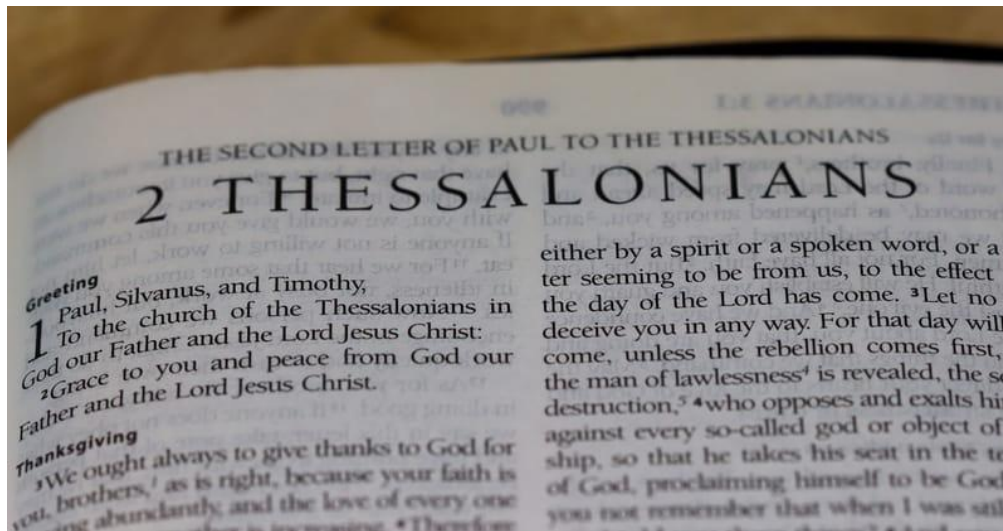
1 Thessalonians 5:23, “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18, “Pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”



1 thessalonians 5:16-18

Book of 2 Thessalonians



Who Wrote the Book of 2 Thessalonians?

This letter is attributed to the Apostle Paul although some have questioned the authorship based on ten vocabulary words not used elsewhere by Paul, it's a little more formal in a different tone than Paul usually wrote, and the doctrine of 'man of lawlessness' is not in any of Paul's other letters. Church fathers quoted from the letter in the second century, indicating it was accepted at that time. The opening words declare it is from Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, the same writers of 1 Thessalonians.

Context and Background

Paul probably wrote this letter about six months after writing 1 Thessalonians, around AD 51-52. It appears the situation at Thessalonica remained the same. In addition, some people left their jobs, and their idleness gave rise to being busybodies meddling into other people's lives. The church included many people who had come out of idolatry that implies that Paul had preached to gentiles there. Paul had worked very hard establishing the church (2 Thessalonians 3:7-9

Paul is writing to the early church and new believers. He wants to stop any confusion they have about their faith, especially the return of Jesus. Jesus has not returned yet, but one day he will. They should be aware of the events that will happen before Christ returns.

Chapter two refers to an unnamed “man of lawlessness.” There are several interpretations and theories about this person. It is most often connected to prophecies in Daniel chapter seven and the anti-Christ in Revelation 13. The term used, also called a son of perdition, is used in one other place, in John 17:12, to describe Judas. For that reason, some theologians believe Paul may have been referring to a betrayer in the church.

Main Theme and Purpose of 2 Thessalonians

Paul wrote this letter with the same purpose as his earlier one. He wants to encourage them to hold fast against outside persecution, avoid false doctrine and the one he calls lawless, and to live a worthwhile and productive life. Paul responded to news that people who believed Jesus had already returned had left their jobs and become disruptive. He exhorts them to work for a living even as he showed them through his own example of hard work.

Paul fills the first chapter with thanksgiving for the believer’s faith, love, and continued perseverance. The second chapter focuses on clarifying end-times beliefs and truths about the return of Jesus. The final chapter focuses on correcting bad behavior. He concludes with a prayer for God’s peace to be among them and the grace of Jesus to be with them.

Paul states that they are praying that by God’s power they will live worthy lives and help them accomplish the works they feel inspired to do.

What Can We Learn From 2 Thessalonians Today?

Paul’s words and example remind us that to fill our hearts with gratitude, pray for God’s blessings, and work hard. His example of thanksgiving that permeates the letter is a reminder to express thanks to the people around us. Idleness still breeds disorder and meddling into other people’s lives.

In addition, Jesus will come again as Paul reminds us, but we need to wait on God’s timing and not believe false rumors about the end times. It’s been nearly 2000 years, and we still wait patiently and cling to hope.

Persecution still exists and in some places in the world, Christians experience intense attacks. This letter helps as they remain steadfast in their faith.

Paul as in all his letters, models how to live as Christians. Paul’s concern for others as well as his concern that people examine information to discern truth

reminds us that holding onto God's truths keeps us grounded and focused on what God calls us to do.

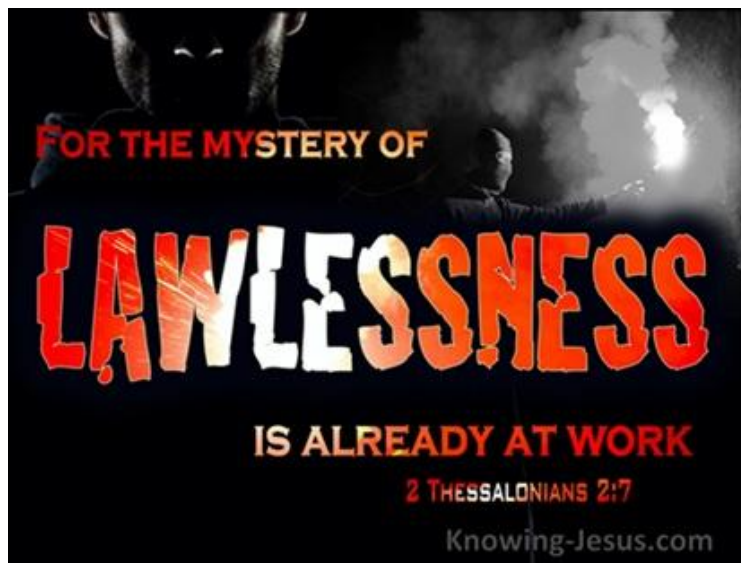
Favorite Verses from Second Thessalonians

“We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing.

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“With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith.” – 2 Thessalonians 1:11

“Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.” – 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3



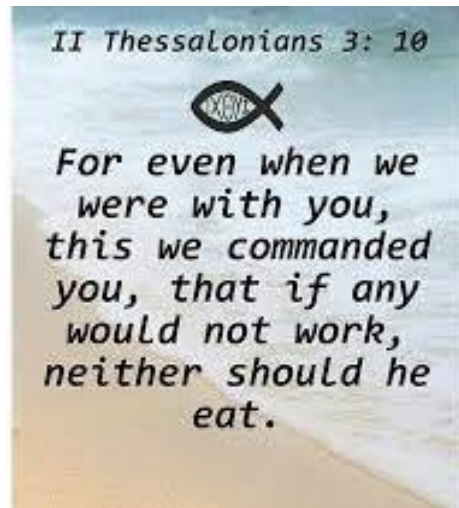
“For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.” – 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8

“But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as first fruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.” – 2 Thessalonians 2:13

“But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.” – 2 Thessalonians 3:3

“In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.” – 2 Thessalonians 3:6

“For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.” – 2 Thessalonians 3:10



“Take special note of anyone who does not obey our instruction in this letter. Do not associate with them, in order that they may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard them as an enemy but warn them as you would a fellow believer.” – 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15

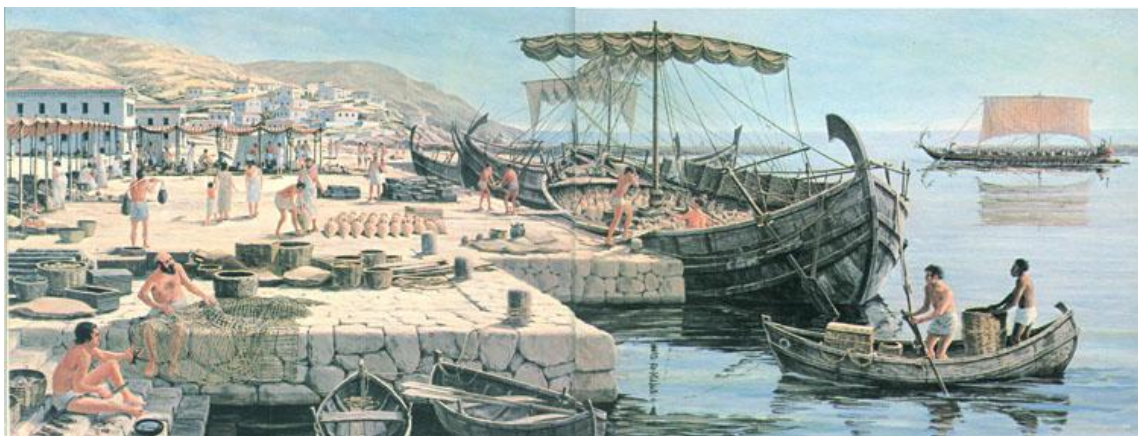
Apostle Paul's Journeys



Over a period of some ten years in the middle of the first century, Paul went on three missionary journeys as well as a final trip that took him to Rome, where he eventually died. The journeys included both land and sea travel throughout what is now Israel, Syria, Turkey, Greece, and Italy. The walking portion of the journeys is said to have been over 10,000 miles.

This got me to thinking – back in those days there were no airplanes or motor vehicles. How did he travel to all these places?

By sea - they did have ships and boats.



Sea Port back in Biblical Times

By land, they used camels, horses, and donkeys but people mostly walked. The bible doesn't mention Paul traveling by camel or horse, so he either walked or rode a donkey.



Paul traveled on Roman roads, which followed ancient routes that passed through river and mountain passes. He traveled in groups as large as possible to protect against bandits. He stayed at wayside inns for food and shelter.

And another thing – how were all these letters Paul wrote delivered? There was no postal service back in those days. Well, Apostle Paul's letters were delivered by hand by trusted couriers, often co-workers of his, who were chosen for their faith and experience. They had to use the above modes of transportation.

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