

NOTES ON  
FIRST AND SECOND THESSALONIANS

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I hope these help!

## BACKGROUND OF THE THESSALONIAN LETTERS

I. The Beginning of Paul's Second Missionary Trip, Acts 15:36-16:40.

- A. Its purpose, 15:36
- B. The sharp disagreement, 15:39 (Heb. 10:24 only)
- C. The addition of Timothy, 16:1-5 (Gal. 2:3)
- D. The Call to Preach in Europe, 16:6-10 (Use a map)
- E. The Ministry in Philippi, 17:11-40
- F. The Ministry in Thessalonica, 17:9

### II. The City of Thessalonica

A. Its strategic location (use map). Egnatian Way passed thru Thessalonica bringing much commerce to the city. It was also the major artery of communication between Rome and the east. It had a sheltered harbor, rivaled only by harbors at Corinth and Ephesus.

B. Its Political Status. City was founded by Cassander about 315 B.C. In 1146 B.C. it was made the capital of Macedonia. In 42 B.C. it was made a "free city" and enjoyed local autonomy being ruled by 6 or so Politarchs and had a senate and a public assembly. Roman proconsul resided there but did not control the internal affairs. No garrison stationed there.

C. Its People. Gentiles, Jews, Romans, Orientals. Many wealthy there. Much immorality and idolatry. 200,000 in Paul's day and 300,000 today.

D. Its Reception of and Opposition to the Gospel, 17:1-9. Paul first preached in the synagogue for 3 Sabbaths. Was he there longer than that (see Phil. 4:16 and know that synagogue meetings were held also on Mondays and Thursdays)? Some Jews and some "God-fearing" Greeks believed (Greeks who attended the synagogue but did not accept the Jewish rituals). Also prominent women (see v. 12). Searched for the missionaries in house of Jason but did not find them. Charged with treason, v. 7, but politarchs were not panicked into some desperate action; rather they took a pledge or security from Jason, v. 9, like a peace bond which made it impossible for Paul to stay there (see 1 Thess. 2:17-18).

E. Its Date. 1 Thess. written shortly after Paul arrived in Corinth in 51 (Gallio arrived in summer of 51, Acts 18:12).

### SOME REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Where is Thessalonica?
2. On which missionary trip did Paul go to Thessalonica?
3. How long was he in that city?
4. Under what circumstances did he leave the city?
5. When and from where did Paul write this letter?

## FIRST THESSALONIANS 1

I. Greetings, 1:1. Typical way to begin letter (and better than our way of leaving writer's name till the end). Saul was his Hebrew name and Paul his Roman. He used Paul from Acts 13:9 on. Silas was the one Paul chose to accompany him on second trip (Acts 15:40). Timothy was half Greek and half Jewish. Paul and Silas left Thessalonica for Berea, Timothy probably with them (though he may have joined them later (Acts 17:14). They all met again in Athens. Then Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica (1 Thess. 3:2) and Silas to Macedonia, likely to Philippi, because he feared that the persecution might have spread to Philippi. Then all three met again in Corinth (Acts 18:5).

II. Paul's Thanksgiving and Commendation of the Thessalonians, 1:2-10. By this time Paul had been saved 17-18 years and in the Lord's work 7-8 years both as a pastor and missionary.

A. For their work of faith, 3-5. Note who were involved in bringing them to faith.

1. God's selection of them, v.4 It was loving ("beloved by God"), sovereign (Rom. 9:11), pretemporal (Eph. 1:4), and involved the Spirit (2 Thess. 2:13), the message (and a messenger, v. 5) and faith (v.3; 2 Thess. 2:13). For "work of faith" note John 6:29.

2. Their assurance of being selected, v.5. Begins with "because--v. 5 is proof of their election. Note the sequence--word, power (if it means miracles the word would be plural), Holy Spirit, assurance. These words refer to the experience of the missionaries. Assurance certainly relates to the missionaries' confidence in their message: the other words may relate to both the missionaries' message and the converts reception of it.

B. For their labor of love, 6-8.

1. The intensity of their labor. Word in v. 3 means toilsome, laborious, strenuous labor.

2. The proofs of their labor of love, 6-7.(1) Mimics to unbelievers of Paul and the Lord (see also 1 Cor. 4:16; Phil 3:17; 4:9; 2 Thess. 3:7-9). "Received" points to their conversion. First mention of the opposition in v.6. "Affliction" means severe difficulties, not mild discomfort. Affliction and joy can be experienced together. Becoming a Christian does not result in escaping trials. It often brings them. (2) Type to other believers, v. 7. The believers first mimicked other believers and then matured so as to be themselves an example to others. You are a leader if you have someone who follows you.

3. The extent of their labor, v. 8. Word of the Lord echoed or reverberated throughout all of Greece. "Sounded forth" is a perfect tense indicating that their example continued. To believers in Macedonia (where Thessalonians were) and Achaia (where Paul was) and every place. How? Mostly through the people involved in commerce which passed through Thessalonica, and through the believers whose occupations took them throughout Greece and beyond.

4. The result of their labor of love, v. 9. "They themselves" refers to travelers who passed through Corinth. The Thessalonians had turned, as a voluntary act in conversion, to God from all idols (mention of idols indicates most of the converts were Gentiles). They served as slaves (see Phil 2:5 and Deut. 15:16).

C. For their steadfast hope, vv.3, 10.

1. The Object of their hope. His Son=deity. The One who was raised from the dead, Jesus the human one (not a spirit resurrection) and who rescues us from the coming wrath (=tribulation and second death, 5:9).

2. The characteristic of their steadfast hope, 10. Expectant, waiting up for His return.

### SOME REVIEW QUESTIONS?

1. Are you someone whose Christian walk should be imitated, v. 6?
2. Can we hold up our church as a type or pattern to other believers, v. 7?
3. Without telephones, radio, TV, tapes, books, etc., how could v. 8 be true?
4. What is the wrath to come?

## FIRST THESSALONIANS 2:1-12

Theme: Paul's Ministry to the Thessalonians. Or A Winning Witness. OR Successful Service. No missionary in the lists of spiritual gifts because all Christians are, even though all do not act like missionaries. Here are the characteristics of a missionary. In this section Paul is on the defensive, vindicating his ministry against the attacks of local Jews and pagans (v. 1).

### I. A Good Witness Involves Love, 2-4.

#### A. Love of the Truth, 2-3.

1. Even in times of suffering and mistreatment, 2. See Acts 16:13,19,23,37.
2. Speaks it plainly and fearlessly, 2.
3. Never with error, or appeal to impurity, or with deceit, or guile (meaning baiting or trickery).

#### B. Love of the Work, 4.

Blessing on the message is promised, but approval of the messenger is earned. Remember Paul's life after conversion: Arabia, Damascus, Jerusalem, Tarsus, Antioch, first journey (stoned), church fight, now second journey. Paul was middle age before first journey, but tested and approved by the variety of his experiences after conversion. Start serving wherever you are and in whatever opportunities open up. This will win God's approval, but not necessarily man's.

#### C. But not Love of Self, 2-4

- Not his own comforts. Journeys on horseback or boats or walking. 2 Cor. 11:23-28.  
Not his rights. Not ease. Not what caters to his own pride. Acts 16.

### II. A Good Witness Involves Labor, 2:5-9

#### A. Selfless Labor, 5-6.

1. No flattery, 5. Not a smooth tongued orator to make a good impression and thus to promote self and gain influence over hearers. He didn't try to "cash in" on his Christianity.
2. No pretext of covetousness or greed. Pretext=cloak, something to cover up real motive-greed.
3. No self-glory, v.6 Desire to show off self. Although could have because apostle. Burdensome=being of weight in authority and/or in expecting an honorarium. Apostles used in sense of missionaries including Silas and Timothy.

B. Gentle Labor, 7. Textual problem.  $\eta\pi\iota\omicron\iota$ =gentle.  $\nu\eta\pi\iota\omicron\iota$ =babes (preceding word ends with  $\nu$ ). Scribes either added a  $\nu$  from preceding word (=babes) or dropped one (=gentle). Gentle probably correct reading. Nurse means nursing mother because of phrase "her own children." Shows Paul's protection, care, and love for the Thessalonians (see Deut. 22:6). "Cares ="cherishes" or "warms" as also in Eph. 5:29. Don't scald people with the truth; warm them.

#### C. Willing Labor, 8-9.

- 1 To give the gospel to them.
2. To give their souls as a parent pours out his or her soul for the children. Reason: the Thessalonians had become dear to Paul.
3. To give his ministry freely to them, 9. Labor=fatigue from continued strenuous work. Hardship=outward obstacles to be overcome. Working for wages night and day at tentmaking (Acts 18:3; 20:34), yet had time to give the gospel to them. Every Jewish boy had to learn a trade. Paul's wages were supplemented by the gifts from Philippi (Phil. 4:15). See also 1 Cor. 9:14-15.

III. A Good Witness Involves An Unspotted Life, 2:10-12. Before God and people.

A. Paul's Character, 10.

1. Devoutly, piously, religiously (a different word from the usual one for "holy" referring to an inner disposition).

2. Righteously. See Luke 23:41; 1Cor. 15:34; Tit.2:12; 1 Peter 2:23 only).

3. Blamelessly. No charges could be leveled against Paul's conduct. See 3:13; 5:23.

B. Paul's Ministry to them, 11-12. Paul exhorted and encouraged individuals as a father would in training his children. Both Paul's message and goal are stated in v. 12. God continually calls (present tense, not aorist) us to walk closer and closer until that future day when we will enter His kingdom and glory.

#### SOME REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What kind of mistreatment did Paul experience at Philippi (v. 2)? Be specific.
2. Should pastors and missionaries be supported by others or should they support themselves?
3. Name the characteristics (both negative and positive) of Paul's ministry from verses 3-11.
4. Four times in this section Paul uses the word "gospel." Can you explain the gospel in about 20 words only?

## FIRST THESSALONIANS 2:13-3:13

A general title for this section might be "Concerns We Should Have for the Church."  
Too often we focus on facilities, finances, lack of leadership, programs, etc.

### I. Concern that Sufferings Would Hinder Their Progress, 2:13-3:4

#### A. Suffering because they received the Gospel, 2:13-16.

1. Paul's thankfulness that they received and believed the Word of God, 13. Literally "a word of hearing" (13a), reminding us that at that time the Word spoken, not written, was the primary means of spreading the Gospel. It is also a Word from God spoken through human beings (12b). To receive it requires faith (12b).

2. Suffering because they imitated other churches who suffered, 14. Believers can expect to be hated by unbelievers. Paul points to the churches in Judea to show that from the beginning there was persecution. Paul himself had contributed to the sufferings of those churches. Silas belonged to the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:22), and both probably related that history to the Thessalonians. The "countrymen" were Jews in the case of the churches in Judea, but refer to Gentiles in Thessalonica (though some Jews may also be involved). They killed prophets, Jesus, and drove the missionaries out ("drove out" is compounded with  $\epsilon\kappa$  which could be translated "drove out" or persecuted severely). Jews could not tolerate Gentiles coming to God without first becoming proselytes to Judaism. To "fill up sins" (v. 17) pictures a cup being filled by the opposition to Christianity and reminds us that God often allows some measure of wickedness to happen before He sends wrath (may refer to Israel's captivities or views future judgment as so certain to be able to say it has already happened, or both).

3. Suffering because Paul was blocked from returning to Thessalonica, 17-20. He did not run away because of danger, but was forced out (passive voice, v. 17 and probably refers to Acts 17:9) and Satan was behind it, 18. "Being taken away" v. 17 literally means "bereaved of you." Paul's expected "short while" had gone on much longer which intensified his feeling of bereavement, v. 17-18. Satan has great power within the will of God, but do not attribute every hindrance to him (see Acts 16:6-7). Yet Paul continued to have deep love for those converts and looks ahead to the time when they would be united and receive crowns for their work, vv. 19-20. Paul ministered with the coming of Christ in view.

#### B. Suffering because of everyday opposition against Christians, 3:1-4

1. Paul's plan to help them, 1-2a. (a) The reason: because they could stand it [not knowing how the believers were standing up] no longer. The "we" indicates Silas and Timothy concurred in the plan. The Effect on Paul: he would be left alone (literally, forsaken or abandoned). (c) Timothy's qualifications, 2a. Brother and minister (literally, deacon=servant). (d) The purpose of Timothy's visit, 2b--strengthen and encourage.

2. Paul's purpose in helping them, 3a. That the believers be not flattered away from their stand for the Lord. Verb (only here in NT) is used of a dog wagging his tail, to flatter the believers to compromise or even abandon their faith. Not yet persecution by Rome but affliction from society or commerce. Affliction means to press together.

3. Paul's reminder, 3b-4. Christians are destined to this. On destined see <sup>Mr</sup> Wm. 4:14; Phil. 1:16. Paul kept telling them of this again and again (present tense in 4a).

II. Concern that Satan Would Tempt Them, 3:5. Satan called "the tempter" only here and <sup>Mr</sup> Wm. 4:3. Word can mean either "tempt" and/or "test." <sup>Mr</sup> Wm. 6:13 "Do not permit us to be led into temptation." If Satan got the upper hand then Paul's labor (1 Cor. 15:58) would come to nothing.

There is a time break between v. 5 and v. 6, for Timothy had gone and now returned.

### III. Concern that Shortcomings Would Stunt Their Growth, 3:6-13.

A. The good report, 3:6-8. It is called a gospel=good news: of their faith (not initial conversion, but Christian growth), love, longing to see Paul (v. 6). It was comfort to Paul, v. 7. It meant life to Paul, v. 8. The "if" does not express doubt but confidence and can be translated "since" (a first class condition.).

B. The continuing need, 3:9-12. First Paul expresses his thanks to God, v.9. "Render" is ανταποδουναι compounded with two prepositions (αντι, απο) (to give in exchange for blessings thanks which we owe God). Then he focuses on the need he has been praying about, v.

10. Paul prayed night and day about this continuing need. "Most earnestly" is υπερεκπερισσου (doubly compounded) used here, 5:13 and Eph. 3:20 only. Paul prayed he might be able to see them and perfect the lacks in their faith. "Perfect or complete" involves restoring and completing (W<sup>h</sup> 4:21; Gal. 6:1; Heb. 13:21). Lacks is plural because although the Thessalonians were standing true, they, like all believers, had deficiencies.

In 10-11 Paul expresses his desires for them in a kind of prayer-wish (note that the address is third person and verbs are optative, expressing his wishes). Note also a strong evidence for the full deity of Christ who is addressed equally with God and though the subject is plural, the verb is singular. His desires were (1) to be able to go to them; (2) their love would increase and overflow to each other and to all, including their enemies (W<sup>h</sup> 5:44); establish (also in 3:2) their hearts (most inclusive concept for immaterial aspect) without fault in holiness (purity of life) before God (see 1 John 1:5, 7). This will be fully realized only at coming of Christ with "holy ones" which may mean saints or angels or both.

Notice throughout chapter 3 what aids us in our spiritual growth: ministers of God (Paul, Timothy), prayer to God, v.10), and knowledge of the truth of God (vv. 3-4) which for us today is in the Bible. So we need the Bible, prayer, and people.

#### SOME REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are two ways the work of God is hindered? (see 2:16 and 18).
2. Why do we know there is a time gap between these two chapters?
3. Did Paul think the Christian life is a bed of roses? (see 3:3-4).
4. How does believers' growth (or lack of it) affect your pastor? (see 3:7-8).
5. Will there ever be a time in this life when a Christian will not have some deficiencies in their faith?

## FIRST THESSALONIANS 4

Second major section of the letter begins here. Chapters 1-3 more personal while 4-5 more instructional and exhortational.

### I. How To Please God, 4:1-12 OR Exhortations Concerning Christian Living.

#### A. Be Holy. OR Exhortations concerning Sanctification, 4:1-8.

1. The exhortation to excel, 1-2. Paul exhorts them to do what he had instructed them to do before: to walk and please God, 1a (similar to 2:12). If we walk correctly, the result will be to please God. [‘Even as ye do walk is omitted in KJV but has good ms. support and is a typical Pauline comment, so include it]. But there is always the need to excel or do better (περισσευω), 1b. This is something we “ought” to do.

2. The exhortation to sanctification, 3a. Means to be set apart and related to “holy” and “saint.” Explain the 3 aspects of sanctification: positional (1 Cor. 6:11), practical or process (here), prospective or ultimate (3:13; Eph. 5:27). Things clearly stated as being the will of God. (1) Sanctification; (2) redeeming the time (Eph. 5:15-17); (3) Working unto the Lord (Eph. 6:6); (4) Praying without ceasing and thankfully (1 Thess. 5:17-18); (5) Obeying the government (1 Pet. 2:13-15).

#### 3. The Exhortation to Sexual Purity, 3b-8.

a. The meaning of immorality, 3b. “All kinds of illicit or unnatural sexual indulgence.”

b. The means, 4a-5. Possess means to continually and gradually attain mastery of the body. Some say “vessel” means “wife” i.e., be pure in taking a wife, but tense of “possess” is present not indicating the one-time taking of a wife. So better to say “vessel” means “one’s own body” as in 2 Cor. 4:7, 2 Tim. 2:21; 1 Sam. 21:5). Know how to control and gain mastery over your body whether male or female. And not the way unsaved people act, v. 5.

c. The consequences of immorality, 5-8. (1) Dishonors self, 5. (2) Defrauds others, 6. (3) Denies our sanctification, 7. (3) Despises God, 8.

4. The Exhortation to Brotherly Love, 9-10. Love for others in the family of God. Taught by our Lord in John 13:34. We know of churches in Macedonia in Philippi and Berea, but perhaps others in smaller villages as well. Excel is again περισσευω as in v. 1.

5. The Exhortation to Have Correct Ambitions, 11-12. “Study” in KJV means ambition and is only here, Rom. 15:20, and 2 Cor. 5:9.

a. To live a quiet life. Be at rest, tranquil (see Jas. 3:15-16 for the same idea.

b. Attend to own personal affairs (see 2 Thess. 3:11).

c. Work. Don’t be idlers (see Col. 3:17). Results are in v. 12--to be good examples to unbelievers and be self-supporting. “Properly” or “honestly” means decently as in 1 Cor. 14:40.

### II. Our Blessed Hope, 4:13-18

Background of this passage, 13. Thessalonians uncertain about (1) the seeming delay in the return of Christ which would bring relief from persecution for the living, and (2) uncertainty about the fate of those who died before Christ’s return. Paul taught a lot about eschatology when in Thessalonica (2 Thess. 2:5), and Timothy learned about their questions on his visit. Paul says not to worry about the dead nor sorrow as others. It is OK to sorrow (John 11:33; Phil. 2:27), but not as the heathen do. Here are two examples of how the heathen reacted to death. (1) a second century letter said: “Irene to Tasnophris and Philon, Greeting! I was as much grieved and shed as many tears over Euroiros as I shed for Didymas. I did everything that was fitting and so did my whole family. But still there is nothing one can do in the face of such trouble. So I leave you to comfort yourselves. Farewell.” (2) An inscription on a sepulcher in Thessalonica told “the bystander that after death there is no revival, after the grave no meeting of those who have loved each other on earth.” We do not sorrow as others for 3 reasons.

A. We have a Preview, 14. First class condition is translated “since” not “if.” Sleep is used for death because it shows (1) the person has not ceased to exist, and (2) death is temporary, the

person will awake. Only the body sleeps, the soul does not (Luke 16:24; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; Rev. 6:9-10. Adventists teach soul sleep.

B. We have a Promise, 15. It is based on the Word of the Lord (either unrecorded as Acts 20:35 or a direct revelation to Paul). Its content is that the dead will rise first just before the living are changed.

C. We have a Picture, 16-17. It involves--

1. A return of the Lord Himself accompanied by archangel's voice (Jude 9) and God's trumpet.  
This is same as in 1 Cor. 15:52 but is not the same as in Rev. 11:15 since the subjects are different (church vs. unsaved) and results are different (catch up vs. more judgment)
2. A resurrection of the dead in Christ. Who are included in this?
3. A Rapture. Word means to snatch away as in Acts 8:39; 2 Cor.12:2,4. See 1 Cor. 15:51-58.
4. A Reunion in the clouds which lasts forever. The Lord does not come to earth at this time.
5. A Reassurance of comfort, 18.

It may be necessary to outline various views of the time of the rapture when teaching this section.

FIRST THESSALONIANS 5:1-11  
The Day of the Lord

I. A definition of that Day is: a time of God's special intervention in the affairs of human history. Three facets of that Day are: (1) historical--God's intervention in the affairs of Israel and heathen nations (Zeph. 1:14-18; Ezek. 30:3); (2) illustrative--an historical event represents a partial fulfillment of the future day of the Lord (Joel 2:1-11); (3) future--includes the tribulation (Isa. 2:12-19; 4:1), the second coming of Christ (Joel 2:30-32), and the millennium (Isa. 4:2; 12). In this passage the focus is on the beginning of the future Day (i.e., the tribulation).

II. The Revelation of the Day of the Lord, 5:1.

A. It does not include the revelation of the Rapture of the Church, 1. "Now" or "But" translates 2 the phrase *περι δε* which Paul uses regularly to introduce a new subject in his letters (1 Cor. 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12; 1 Thess. 4:9; 5:1). Therefore, the Day of the Lord is a new subject from the rapture in the preceding paragraph. Also the rapture is termed a mystery in 1 Cor. 15:51 (something not revealed in the O.T.) whereas the day of the Lord was known from the O.T. "Day of the Lord" occurs 20 times; "1st days," 14 times; and "that day," 100 times, so it was obviously well known from the O.T. and undoubtedly a part of Paul's teaching. We can conclude, then, that the rapture is not part of the Day of the Lord and must occur before the beginning of that Day; i.e., before the tribulation begins. "Times" may refer to the duration, and "seasons" to the characteristics of the Day.

III. The Beginning of the Day of the Lord, 5:2-3.

Emphasize the word "comes" because the beginning of the Day will be unexpected, just like the coming of a thief. The only time in the chapters on the tribulation that there will be peace and safety is under the first seal at its beginning (Rev. 6:1-2 compared with v. 4). "Destruction" is not annihilation, but ruin of peoples' lives. The comparison of a pregnant woman suggest the Day will come inevitably, suddenly, and painfully.

IV. The Exhortations to Believers in Light of the Day of the Lord, 4-11.

A. Remember we are sons of light (because we belong to Christ who is light), and not darkness, vv.4-5 (see Joel 2:2); therefore, Day will not overtake us. (But if the church is to live through any part of the tribulation, darkness would overtake Christians).

B. Don't be asleep, 6a. Refers to indifference of spiritual things (this is a different word from 4:13). "Others" refer to unsaved. Note that believers can be indifferent to the truth just as unsaved people are.

C. Watch or be alert, 6b. Note connection with prayer in Mark 13:34-37 and Col. 4:2 same word for watch in these passages).

D. Be sober, 6c, 8. In complete control of one's senses. This is one of the characteristics for an elder (1 Tim. 3:2 and word was used of wineless offerings). We do this by having put on (aorist) two pieces of armor. Helmet is hope of the future consummation of our salvation.

E. Remember our salvation, 9-11. (1) Its origin, 9. God destined (middle voice--for Himself) salvation, not wrath (see 1 Thess. 1:10), put it in place, and we obtain it through faith. (2) Its goal, 10--All believers whether awake (alive at rapture) or asleep (dead) will live together with Him (see Rom. 14:8). (3) Its ramification, 11. Since this hope is true then exhort and build one another up. This is a mutual responsibility.

## INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING VARIOUS DUTIES IN THE CHURCH

- I. Instructions for Leaders in the Church 5:12-13. "Those" and "them" indicate a plurality of leaders probably because they had to work and could not give full time to the church.
  - A. They should labor, 1:3.
  - B. They should lead, literally stand before or preside or superintend as also in 1 Tim. 3:4.
  - C. They should admonish, literally "put in mind" carrying an implication of blame.
  
- II. Instructions for Those Who Are Being Led, 5:12-13.
  - A. Know the leaders; i.e., appreciate what they do. Try to see things from their viewpoint.
  - B. Esteem the leaders exceedingly highly (as in 3:10) in love because of their work.
  - C. Be at peace with others. No fights, no wrong schisms (see 1 Cor. 11:19).
  
- III. Instructions for the Group, 5:14-22.
  - A. Admonish the unruly or disorderly (lit., out of order; i.e., careless and lazy), 14a.
  - B. Encourage the fainthearted (those who have become discouraged for whatever reason). 14b.
  - C. Help the weak (the strong should put their arms around the weak, 14c).
  - D. Be longsuffering (i.e., long-tempered) to all, 14d.
  - E. See (lit., be on guard) not to repay evil for evil, 15a. See Matt. 5:38-48; 1 Pet. 3:9.
  - F. Seek what is good, 15b. Always. And for all.
  - G. Rejoice, 16.
  - H. Pray without ceasing, 17. Luke having a hacking cough.
  - I. Give thanks in everything, 18.
  - J. Do not quench (extinguish) the varied work of the Spirit, 19. Tongues probably not in view.
  - K. Do not despise (treat with contempt) prophesyings (direct revelations from God, 20).
  - L. Examine what is claimed to be the works of the Spirit, 21. Two possible results of examining. Hold to what is good, 21. Shun every form (that which is seen) of evil ( $\piονε\rho\sigma$ , evil evil), 22.
    - M. Be sanctified, 23-24. Present aspect. Does this verse support trichotomy (spirit, soul, body)? Consider Jas. 26; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Pet. 2:11; Heb. 4:12; Matt. 22:37. Without blame only happens at return of Christ. God will surely do this.
    - N. Pray for Paul, 25. Missionaries and leaders have their problems and need our prayers.
    - O. Kiss, 26. A sign of welcome in Jewish life (Luke 7:45) and of love and fellowship in Christian life (1 Pet. 5:14; Rom. 16:16).
    - P. Have this letter read by all. Adjure only here in N.T. meaning "put under oath." Perhaps some could not read so it would be read publicly, 27.
  - Concluding benediction, 28.

SECOND THESSALONIANS 1  
Introduction to the Letter

1. Place of writing. Corinth where Paul, Silas and Timothy were.
2. Date of writing. Shortly (perhaps 2-3 months) after the first letter, 51.
3. Occasion of writing. Paul had received further news about the church which was both favorable and unfavorable. Perhaps the bearer of 1 Thess. reported these matters to Paul, or others whose business took them to Corinth.
4. Purpose of the Letter. To correct misunderstandings or misrepresentations of Paul's teaching about the future (2:2).
5. Salvation, 1:1-2.

ENCOURAGEMENT CONCERNING PERSECUTION, 1:3-12

I. Encouragement from Paul's Gratitude for Their Growth and Steadfastness, 1:3-4.

A. The obligation Paul felt, 3. Knowing their problems and weaknesses, Paul still felt obliged to be thankful for their strong points.

B. The Content of Paul's thanksgiving, 3-4. (a) Their faith was growing exceedingly. (ἡσπεραυξανω), (b) their love was abounding, (c) their perseverance in persecutions (from enemies) and afflictions (from pressures).

C. The Consequence of Paul's thanksgiving, 4. He could boast of the Thessalonians to other churches.

II. Encouragement from Knowledge of Ultimate Relief and Vindication, 1:5-10.

A. Knowledge of their worth, 5. Their perseverance (4b) indicates they were counted worthy of their calling which they would fully realize at the judgment. Suffering is significant.

B. Knowledge of Christ's Coming and Judging, 6-8.

1. It will repay enemies and give rest (like relief from pressure like loosening a taut bowstring) to believers, 6-8.

2. It will consign unbelievers to eternal destruction, 9. Not annihilation but separation from the face of the Lord (προσωπον) but never out of the sight (ενωπιον) of the omnipresent Lord (Rev. 14:10). It is eternal.

3. It will cause the Lord to be glorified in (not only among, but in perfected saints, Eph. 2:7) and they will marvel at seeing the Lord, 10.

4. It is made certain because the Thessalonians believed the missionaries' testimony, 10.

III. Encouragement from Knowing Paul Was Praying for Them, 11-12

A. The Motivation for prayer, 11a. Thinking about the future (vv. 5-10) was the motivation.

B. The Content of the prayer, 11b. (1) That God might count them worthy of their calling through the process of sanctification (Eph. 4:1). (2) That God would fulfill every desire for goodness that God works in us, and (3) that their faith would be seen in their works.

C. The Purpose of the prayer, 12. So that the name (character) of the Lord would be glorified (seen) in believers and believers in Him because of the union of Christ and His people.

## 2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-17

### ENCOURAGEMENT CONCERNING PROPHECY

Introduction. (1) Paul did not hesitate to teach prophecy to young believers.

(2) Some thought they were already in the Day of the Lord because of the afflictions they were suffering. Paul assures them this was not so.

(3) Review the meaning of the Day of the Lord at 1 Thessalonians 5:1.

#### I. The Relation of the Day of the Lord to the Present, 2:1-2

A. The Subjects of Paul's appeal, 1. "by" should be translated "with regard to."

1. The coming ( $\pi\alpha\rho\rho\upsilon\sigma\iota\alpha$ ) of the Lord. This word is used both of the rapture of the church (2:19; 4:15) and the second coming (Matt. 24:37,39). The word means "presence" and could indicate that the rapture and the second coming are a single event (posttrib) or that His presence will be seen at the rapture and later at the second coming (pre or midtrib).

2. Our gathering together to Him. The word is used elsewhere only in Heb.10:25 of gathering of a church, and here of the gathering of the church at the rapture.

B. The Aim of Paul's appeal, 2. To counter their being so quickly (rashly, hastily) shaken and disturbed by false teaching which had come to them (1) by a spirit; i.e., a prophetic utterance; or (2) by a message (a spoken teaching); or by letter purported to have come from Paul. The thrust of this false teaching was that the Day of the Lord had already come. Not so in Paul's day or in ours.

II. The Relation of the Day of the Lord to the Apostasy 2:3a. Religious apostasy means departure from the truth. Later Paul described some of the characteristics in 1 Tim. 4:1-3 and 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

#### III. The Relation of the Day of the Lord to the Man of Sin, 2:3b-5, 8-10.

A. His Revelation, 2:3b as who he is, the man of lawlessness and son of perdition (antichrist, beast, prince, little horn, willful king). When he signs the treaty with Israel he will be revealed, Dan. 9:27. He will be alive and active before that event.

B. His Religion, 2:4-5. Opponent of all gods (anti-theistic) and one who will demand to be worshiped as he sits in the tribulation temple in Jerusalem (Matt. 24:15). Paul had taught them these truths.

C. His Punishment, 2:8. He will be slain by the Lord and his program will be ended at the second coming (Rev. 19:20; 20:10).

D. His Power, 2:9-12. Generally his power may be summarized as counterfeiting. He has a coming as does Christ. He will be able to produce signs and wonders as Christ did (Acts 2:22). All through the power of Satan. He will deceive people into believing him rather than the truth of Christ. As a consequence of peoples' unbelief God will send "a powerful working of error" (v. 11) to judge unbelievers. Will people have a chance to be saved in the tribulation who rejected Christ before the rapture?

#### IV. The Relation of the Day of the Lord to the Restrainer, 2:6-7

A. Some facts. There is restraint that must be removed before Antichrist can be revealed. In v. 6 "what restrains is a neuter participle with the neuter article. In v. 7 "he who now restrains is a masculine participle with the masculine article. The restrainer is both a principle and a person. Evil is present in all time, but the restrainer holds back its full expression under Antichrist.

B. Identification of the restrainer. Some say government, elect angels, Michael, the providences of God, one or all persons of the Godhead. One thing is clear. The restraint must be more powerful than Satan who will empower Antichrist in the tribulation. Only God qualifies. Many focus on the Holy Spirit since He indwells the church today. But the Father and Son also indwell us. It may be best to say the restrainer is the Spirit and all the means He uses to restrain

evil.

C. A pretribulational argument. If the restrainer is to be removed before the man of sin can be revealed, then believers in whom He dwells must be removed as well. No believer who can be disindwelt, so when He is removed, we will be also.

V. The Relation of the Day of the Lord to Unbelievers, 2:13-17

Believers will not be on earth for the judgment aspect of that Day for these reasons.

A. We have been chosen from the beginning of all things (from eternity past, Eph. 1:4) to salvation (in its fullest sense) being set apart by the Spirit and faith in the truth, 13.

B. We have been called at the time of conversion, 14a.

C. We will obtain glory in a future day.

Since believers have this standing and assurances, we should do these things.

D. Stand firm, 15a.

E. Vigorously hold firm the traditions, i.e., things handed on by Paul through word of mouth and letters, 15b. "Traditions" have authority external to the teacher.

VI. Prayer for the chosen, 16-17. May God who gives eternal comforting encouragement and beneficial hope by grace (1) comfort and (2) make them firm and stable in works and word.

## ENCOURAGEMENT CONCERNING PRACTICES, 3:1-15

### I. Paul's Request for Prayer, 3:1-2

- A. That the word may run-- "have free course" and be glorified
- B. That Paul might be delivered from unsaved enemies at Corinth, Acts 18:1-18.

### II. Paul's Confidence, 3:3-5

- A. In the faithfulness of God, 3a.
- B. In His ability to protect us from Satan, 3b.
- C. In the Thessalonians' continued obedience, 4.

### III. Paul's Prayer for the Thessalonians, 2:5. (Other prayers for them --1:11-12 and 2:16-17).

For the love of God and endurance of Christ. Probably both are a blend of objective and subjective genitives.

### IV. Commands concerning the Disorderly, 3:6-15

A. The Penalty, 6. Withdraw from the disorderly (a military term meaning "those out of rank." They were deliberate loafers, expecting the church to support them. Withdraw is more stern than what Paul wrote in 1 Thess. 5:14 and did not mean excommunication but probably no participation in the Lord's Supper.

- B. The Pattern of Paul's life, 7--9. He had the right to expect support but did not take it.
- C. The Precept, 10. No work, no eat.

### V. Commands concerning Busybodies, 11-12

Only here and 1 Tim. 5:13. What they were doing., 11. What they should be doing, 12. "Quietness" means an inner peace and tranquility.

VI. Encouragement for Believers, 13. Be not weary means not to lose heart (as also in Luke 18:1; 2 Cor. 4:1, 16; Gal. 6:9). No matter how long the Lord tarries, we should conduct ourselves with highest standards without faltering.

### VII. Commands Related to the Disobedient, 14-15.

- A. Note such, 14a. Mark them off with disapproval. How is not stated.
- B. Do not mix with such (have no company), 14b. Object is to put such to shame and it is remedial, not vindictive.
- C. Admonish such as brothers, not enemies, 15

## CONCLUDING BENEDICTION AND GREETING, 3:16-18.

### I. His prayer for peace, 16

II. His personal greeting, 17. The rest of the letter was dictated (see Gal. 6:11).

III. His prayer for grace, 18.