

**Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians (50–51)****2 Thessalonians 1–3****Opening Greeting**

1:1 Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
2 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Thanksgiving for Their Perseverance in Suffering**

3 We ought to give thanks to God always concerning you, brothers, just as it is fitting, because your faith is flourishing and the love of each one of you all toward one another is increasing  
4 so that we ourselves boast in you in the churches of God about your patient endurance and faith in all your persecutions and the afflictions that you are enduring,

**The Judgment of Christ at His Return**

5 a proof of the righteous judgment of God, so that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, on behalf of which also you are suffering,  
6 since *it is* righteous in the sight of God to pay back those who are afflicting you with affliction,  
7 and to you who are being afflicted, rest with us at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels,  
8 with burning flame giving punishment to those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus,  
9 who will pay the penalty *of* eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his strength,  
10 whenever he should come to be glorified on that day by his saints and to be marveled at by all who believe, because our testimony was believed among you,

**A Prayer for God's Power**

11 for which *purpose* we also pray always for you, that you may be considered worthy of the calling of our God, and he might fulfill every desire for goodness and work of faith with power,  
12 in order 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.

**The Day of the Lord Has Not Yet Come**

2:1 Now we ask you, brothers, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to him,  
2 that you not be easily shaken from your composure, nor be troubled either by a spirit or by a message or by a letter alleged to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has arrived.

**Events that Must Precede That Day**

3 Do not let anyone 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,  
4 who opposes and who exalts himself over every so-called god or object of worship, so that he sits down in the temple of God, proclaiming that he himself is God.

**What Holds Back That Day**

5 Do you not remember that *while* we were still with you, we were saying these *things* to you?  
6 And you know that which restrains *him* now, so that he will be revealed in his own time.  
7 For the mystery of lawlessness is at work already; only the one who now restrains *will do so* until he is out of the way,

**What Will Take Place on That Day**

8 and then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will slay with the breath of his mouth, and wipe out by the appearance of his coming,  
9 whose coming is in accordance with the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders,  
10 and with every unrighteous deception against those who are perishing, in place of which they did not accept the love of the truth, so that they would be saved.  
11 And because of this, God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie,  
12 in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth, but delighted in unrighteousness.

**Stand Firm in the Faith**

13 But we ought to give thanks to God always concerning you, brothers *dearly* loved by the Lord, because God has chosen you *as* first fruits for salvation by the sanctification of the Spirit and faith in the truth,  
14 for which *purpose* he called you through our gospel for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
15 So then, brothers, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions which you were taught, whether by *spoken* word or by letter from us.

16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given *us* eternal encouragement and good hope by grace,

17 encourage your hearts and strengthen *you* in every good work and word.

#### Request for Prayer

3:1 Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may progress and be honored, just as also *it was* with you,

2 and that we may be delivered from evil and wicked people, for not all have the faith.

#### Confidence in Their Faithfulness and Obedience

3 But the Lord is faithful, who will strengthen you and guard *you* from the evil one.

4 And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are both doing and you will do *the things* that we are commanding.

5 Now may the Lord direct your hearts toward the love of God and toward the patient endurance of Christ.

#### Concerning Those Who Will Not Work

6 But we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *that* you keep away from every brother who lives irresponsibly and not according to the tradition that they received from us.

7 For you yourselves know how it is necessary to imitate us, that we did not behave irresponsibly among you,

8 nor did we eat bread from anyone without paying, but with toil and labor, *we were* working night and day in order not to be a burden to any of you,

9 not that we do not have the right, but so that we may give ourselves *as* an example to you, so that *you* may imitate us.

10 For even when we were with you, we used to command this to you: that if anyone does not want to work, neither should he eat.

11 For we hear *that* some among you are living irresponsibly, working *at* nothing, but being busybodies.

12 Now we command and we exhort such people in the Lord Jesus Christ that, working with quietness, they eat their own bread.

13 But *as for* you, brothers, do not be discouraged *while* doing what is right.

14 But if anyone does not obey our message through this letter, take note not to associate with him, in order that he may be put to shame.

15 And do not consider *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

#### Closing

16 Now may the Lord of peace himself grant you peace through everything in every way. *May* the Lord *be* with all of you.

17 The greeting *is* by my hand, Paul's, which is a sign of genuineness in every letter: this is how I write.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with all of you.

### Paul's Second Missionary Journey—Paul Before Gallio in Corinth (Summer 51)

Acts 18:12–17

12 Now *when* Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews rose up with one purpose against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat,

13 saying, "This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law!"

14 But *when* Paul was about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it was some crime or wicked villainy, O Jews, I would have been justified in accepting your complaint.

15 But if it is questions concerning a word and names and your own law, see to *it* yourselves! I do not wish to be a judge of these *things*."

16 And he drove them away from the judgment seat.

17 So they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, *and* began beating *him* in front of the judgment seat. And none of these *things* was a concern to Gallio.

### Paul's Second Missionary Journey—Ephesus (Fall 51)

Acts 18:18–21a

18 So Paul, *after* remaining many days longer, said farewell to the brothers *and* sailed away to Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. He shaved *his* head at Cenchrea, because he had *taken* a vow.

19 So they arrived at Ephesus, and those he left behind there, but he himself entered into the synagogue *and* discussed with the Jews.

20 And *when* they asked *him* to stay for a longer time, he did not give his consent,

21a but saying farewell and telling *them*, "I will return to you again *if* God wills,"

### Paul's Second Missionary Journey—Caesarea, Jerusalem and Syrian Antioch (Fall 51)

Acts 18:21b–22

21b he set sail from Ephesus.

22 And *when he* arrived at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, *and* went down to Antioch.

### Apollos' Ministry in Ephesus and Corinth (c. 51/52)

Acts 18:24–28

#### In Ephesus

24 Now a certain Jew named Apollos, a native Alexandrian, arrived in Ephesus—an eloquent man who was well-versed in the scriptures.

25 This man had been instructed *in* the way of the Lord, and being enthusiastic in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the *things* about Jesus, *although he* knew only the baptism of John.

26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but *when* Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the way of God to him more accurately.

#### In Corinth

27 And *when* he wanted to cross over to Achaia, the brothers encouraged *him and* wrote to the disciples to welcome him. *When he* arrived, he assisted greatly those who had believed through grace.

28 For he was vigorously refuting the Jews in public, demonstrating through the scriptures *that* the Christ was Jesus. [cf. [1 Cor 3:1–9](#)]

### Paul's Third Missionary Journey—Return to the Galatian Churches (Spring 52)

Acts 18:23

23 And *after* spending some time *there* [Syrian Antioch], he departed, traveling through one *place* after another *in* the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

### Paul's Third Missionary Journey—Return to Ephesus (Summer 52)

Acts 19:1–9

1 And it happened that *while* Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the inland regions *and* came to Ephesus and found some disciples.

2 And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit *when you* believed?” And they *said* to him, “But we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit!”

3 And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” And they said, “Into the baptism of John.”

4 And Paul said, “John baptized *with* a baptism of repentance, telling the people that they should believe in the one who was to come after him—that is, in Jesus.”

5 And *when they* heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And *when* Paul laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they began to speak in tongues and to prophesy.

7 (Now the total *number of* men was about twelve.)

8 So he entered into the synagogue *and* was speaking boldly for three months, discussing and attempting to convince *them* concerning the kingdom of God.

9 But when some became hardened and were disobedient, reviling the Way before the congregation, he departed from them *and* took away the disciples, leading discussions every day in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.

### Paul's Third Missionary Journey—Extended Ministry in Ephesus (Summer 52 to Summer 54)

Acts 19:10–20

#### Paul's Miracles

10 And this took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

11 And God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul,

12 so that even handkerchiefs or work aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to those who were sick, and *their* diseases left them and the evil spirits came out *of them*.

#### The Seven Sons of Sceva

13 But some itinerant Jewish exorcists also attempted to pronounce the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, “I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches!”

14 (Now seven sons of a certain Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.)

15 But the evil spirit answered *and* said to them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I am acquainted with, but who are you?”

16 And the man who had the evil spirit leaped on them, subdued all of them, *and* prevailed against them, so that they ran away from that house naked and wounded.

17 And this became known to all who lived in Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks, and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was exalted.

#### **Destruction of Magic and Sorcery Books**

18 And many of those who had believed came, confessing and disclosing their practices,

19 and many of those who practiced magic brought together *their* books *and* burned *them* up in the sight of everyone. And they counted up their value and found *it* was fifty thousand silver coins.

20 In this way the word of the Lord was growing in power and was prevailing.

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#### **Chronological Notes**

##### 1) 2 Thessalonians.<sup>1</sup>

- A) 2 Thessalonians was probably composed several months after 1 Thessalonians, perhaps in the winter of 50. 2 Thessalonians 1:1 identifies Paul, Timothy and Silas as coauthors. According to the testimony of Acts, these three men traveled together only during the second missionary journey. 2 Corinthians 1:9 confirms that Paul and Timothy resided together in Corinth, and Silas is probably also among the “brothers from Macedonia” mentioned in 2 Corinthians 11:7–11. Paul was probably not in Athens long enough to have written 1 Thessalonians there. It is even less likely that he composed his second letter in Athens. So 2 Thessalonians was probably written within a few months of the first letter, and Paul’s 18 months in Corinth affords more than enough time for the letter to have been written there.

##### 2) Paul Before Gallio.<sup>2</sup>

- A) Acts 18:11–12 states that Paul stayed a year and six months in Corinth and then, when “Gallio was proconsul of Achaia,” was attacked by the Jews and brought before the tribunal of the governor. The language seems to suggest that Gallio arrived at that time, and it seems likely that the coming of a new governor, who was inexperienced in that place, would provide a good opportunity for such an attack. It is probable, therefore, that Paul was brought before Gallio (who had arrived perhaps in May/June [§687]) in the early summer of 51. Since at that time he had been in Corinth a year and six months (Acts 18:11), Paul’s original arrival in Corinth may be dated in midwinter 49/50, say perhaps in December 49. This determination of the time when Paul arrived in Corinth provides an important anchor point for the entire chronology of Paul.

<sup>1</sup> Andreas J. Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown* (B&H Academic, 2009): 441–42.

<sup>2</sup> Sourced from Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, Rev. Ed., (Hendrickson Publishers, 1998): 390–393. For more detail on the derivation of the date of Gallio’s governorship, see the extensive discussion in §674 through §679.