

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 always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is *only* fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows *ever* greater;

4 therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.

The Judgment of Christ at His Return

5 *This is* a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.

6 For after all it is *only* just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you,

7 and *to give* relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,

8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.

A Prayer for God's Power

11 To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power,

12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus will 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 request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,

2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

Events that Must Precede That Day

3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

What Holds Back That Day

5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?

6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed.

7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains *will do so* until he is taken out of the way.

What Will Take Place on That Day

8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;

9 *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,

10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,

12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

Stand Firm in the Faith

13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

- 14 It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 15 So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word *of mouth* 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 comfort and good hope by grace,
 17 comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

Request for Prayer

- 3:1 Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as *it did* also with you;
 2 and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith.

Confidence in Their Faithfulness and Obedience

- 3 But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil *one*.
 4 We have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will *continue to do* what we command.
 5 May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.

Concerning Those Who Will Not Work

- 6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.
 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you,
 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we *kept* working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you;
 9 not because we do not have the right *to this*, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example.
 10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.
 11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.
 12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.
 13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.
 14 If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame.
 15 *Yet* do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Closing

- 16 Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!
 17 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write.
 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

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

Acts 18:12–17

- 12 But while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat,
 13 saying, "This man persuades men to worship God contrary to the law."
 14 But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrong or of vicious crime, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to put up with you;
 15 but if there are questions about words and names and your own law, look after it yourselves; I am unwilling to be a judge of these matters."
 16 And he drove them away from the judgment seat.
 17 And they all took hold of Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, and *began* beating him in front of the judgment seat. But Gallio was not concerned about any of these things.

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

Acts 18:18–21a

- 18 Paul, having remained many days longer, took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchrea he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow.
 19 They came to Ephesus, and he left them there. Now he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.
 20 When they asked him to stay for a longer time, he did not consent,
 21a but taking leave of them and saying, "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 When he had landed 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 Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures.

25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John;

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

In Corinth

27 And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace,

28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. [cf. [1 Cor 3:1–9](#)]

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

Acts 18:23

23 And having spent some time *there* [*Syrian Antioch*], he left and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

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

Acts 19:1–9

1 It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples.

2 He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they *said* to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

3 And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism."

4 Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus."

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they *began* speaking with tongues and prophesying.

7 There were in all about twelve men.

8 And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading *them* about the kingdom of God.

9 But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the people, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.

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

Acts 19:10–20

Paul's Miracles

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

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

12 so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.

The Seven Sons of Sceva

13 But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, "I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches."

14 Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.

15 And the evil spirit answered and said to them, “I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?”

16 And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

17 This became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified.

Destruction of Magic and Sorcery Books

18 Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices.

19 And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and *began* burning them in the sight of everyone; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

20 So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.

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Chronological Notes

1) 2 Thessalonians.¹

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.²

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.

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

² 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.