

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

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

Thanksgiving for Their Perseverance in Suffering

3 We ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith flourishes more and more and the love of each one of you all for one another is ever greater.
4 As a result we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and afflictions you are enduring.

The Judgment of Christ at His Return

5 This is evidence of God's righteous judgment, to make you worthy of the kingdom of God, for which in fact you are suffering.
6 For it is right for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you,
7 and to you who are being afflicted to give rest together with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.
8 With flaming fire he will mete out punishment on those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.
9 They will undergo the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his strength,
10 when he comes to be glorified among his saints and admired on that day among all who have believed—and you did in fact believe our testimony.

A Prayer for God's Power

11 And in this regard we pray for you always, that our God will make you worthy of his calling and fulfill by his power your every desire for goodness and every work of faith,
12 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 regarding the arrival of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to be with him, we ask you, brothers and sisters,
2 not to be easily shaken from your composure or disturbed by any kind of spirit or message or letter allegedly from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord is already here.

Events that Must Precede That Day

3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not arrive until the rebellion comes and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction.
4 He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, and as a result he takes his seat in God's temple, displaying himself as God.

What Holds Back That Day

5 Surely you recall that I used to tell you these things while I was still with you.
6 And so you know what holds him back, so that he will be revealed in his own time.
7 For the hidden power of lawlessness is already at work. However, the one who holds him back will do so until he is taken out of the way,

What Will Take Place on That Day

8 and then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will destroy by the breath of his mouth and wipe out by the manifestation of his arrival.
9 The arrival of the lawless one will be by Satan's working with all kinds of miracles and signs and false wonders,
10 and with every kind of evil deception directed against those who are perishing, because they found no place in their hearts for the truth so as to be saved.
11 Consequently God sends on them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false.
12 And so all of them who have not believed the truth but have delighted in evil will be condemned.

Stand Firm in the Faith

13 But we ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.
14 He called you to this salvation through our gospel, so that you may possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15 Therefore, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold on to the traditions that we taught you, whether by speech or by letter.
 16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope,
 17 encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good thing you do or say.

Request for Prayer

3:1 Finally, pray for us, brothers and sisters, that the Lord’s message may spread quickly and be honored as in fact it was among you,
 2 and that we may be delivered from perverse and evil people. For not all have faith.

Confidence in Their Faithfulness and Obedience

3 But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.
 4 And we are confident about you in the Lord that you are both doing—and will do—what we are commanding.
 5 Now may the Lord direct your hearts toward the love of God and the endurance of Christ.

Concerning Those Who Will Not Work

6 But we command you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from any brother who lives an undisciplined life and not according to the tradition they received from us.
 7 For you know yourselves how you must imitate us, because we did not behave without discipline among you,
 8 and we did not eat anyone’s food without paying. Instead, in toil and drudgery we worked night and day in order not to burden any of you.
 9 It was not because we do not have that right, but to give ourselves as an example for you to imitate.
 10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this command: “If anyone is not willing to work, neither should he eat.”
 11 For we hear that some among you are living an undisciplined life, not doing their own work but meddling in the work of others.
 12 Now such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly and so provide their own food to eat.
 13 But you, brothers and sisters, do not grow weary in doing what is right.
 14 But if anyone does not obey our message through this letter, take note of him and do not associate closely with him, so that he may be ashamed.
 15 Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Closing

16 Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with you all.
 17 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, which is how I write in every letter.
 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 Now while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews attacked Paul together and brought him before the judgment seat,
 13 saying, “This man is persuading people to worship God in a way contrary to the law!”
 14 But just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of some crime or serious piece of villainy, I would have been justified in accepting the complaint of you Jews,
 15 but since it concerns points of disagreement about words and names and your own law, settle it yourselves. I will not be a judge of these things!”
 16 Then he had them forced away from the judgment seat.
 17 So they all seized Sosthenes, the president of the synagogue, and began to beat him in front of the judgment seat. Yet none of these things were of any concern to Gallio.

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

Acts 18:18–21a

18 Paul, after staying many more days in Corinth, said farewell to the brothers and sailed away to Syria accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea because he had made a vow.
 19 When they reached Ephesus, Paul left Priscilla and Aquila behind there, but he himself went into the synagogue and addressed the Jews.
 20 When they asked him to stay longer, he would not consent,
 21a but said farewell to them and added, “I will come back to you again if God wills.”

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

Acts 18:21b–22

21b Then he set sail from Ephesus,
22 and when he arrived at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church at Jerusalem and then 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, a native of Alexandria, arrived in Ephesus. He was an eloquent speaker, well-versed in the scriptures.
25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and with great enthusiasm he spoke and taught accurately the facts about Jesus, although he knew only the baptism of John.
26 He began to speak out fearlessly 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 When Apollos 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 by grace,
28 for he refuted the Jews vigorously in public debate, demonstrating from 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 After he spent some time there [*Syrian Antioch*], Paul left and went through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

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

Acts 19:1–9

1 While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul went through the inland regions and came to Ephesus. He found some disciples there
2 and said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They replied, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."
3 So Paul said, "Into what then were you baptized?" "Into John's baptism," they replied.
4 Paul said, "John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come 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 placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they began to speak in tongues and to prophesy.
7 (Now there were about twelve men in all.)
8 So Paul entered the synagogue and spoke out fearlessly for three months, addressing and convincing them about the kingdom of God.
9 But when some were stubborn and refused to believe, reviling the Way before the congregation, he left them and took the disciples with him, addressing them 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 This went on for two years, so that all who lived in the province of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord.
11 God was performing extraordinary miracles by Paul's hands,
12 so that when even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his body were brought to the sick, their diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.

The Seven Sons of Sceva

13 But some itinerant Jewish exorcists tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were possessed by evil spirits, saying, "I sternly warn you by Jesus whom Paul preaches."
14 (Now seven sons of a man named Sceva, a Jewish high priest, were doing this.)
15 But the evil spirit replied to them, "I know about Jesus and I am acquainted with Paul, but who are you?"

16 Then the man who was possessed by the evil spirit jumped on them and beat them all into submission. He prevailed against them so that they fled from that house naked and wounded.

17 This became known to all who lived in Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks; fear came over them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was praised.

Destruction of Magic and Sorcery Books

18 Many of those who had believed came forward, confessing and making their deeds known.

19 Large numbers of those who had practiced magic collected their books and burned them up in the presence of everyone. When the value of the books was added up, it was found to total fifty thousand silver coins.

20 In this way the word of the Lord continued to grow in power and to prevail.

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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.