

Outlines of
1 & 2
Thessalonians



1 Thessalonians

Authorship

The vast majority of scholars acknowledge 1 Thessalonians to be Pauline, the majority recognizing it as Paul's first extant letter.

Date

First and Second Thessalonians may be the earliest of Paul's extant letters, written shortly after the evangelization of the Thessalonians, hence by about A.D. 50, within two decades of Jesus' resurrection.

Situation

While preaching Jesus as Messiah (the Jewish king) in Thessalonica, Paul had been accused of preaching another king besides Caesar (Acts 17:7; cf. "kingdom" in 1 Thess 2:12; 2 Thess 1:5). The very young Thessalonian church continued to experience persecution after Paul's departure, but he encourages them with the promise of a future hope, which applies even to those who have already died (1 Thess 4:13-18). Paul borrows much of the language used by Jesus and Jewish apocalyptic motifs that had become part of the early Christian movement.

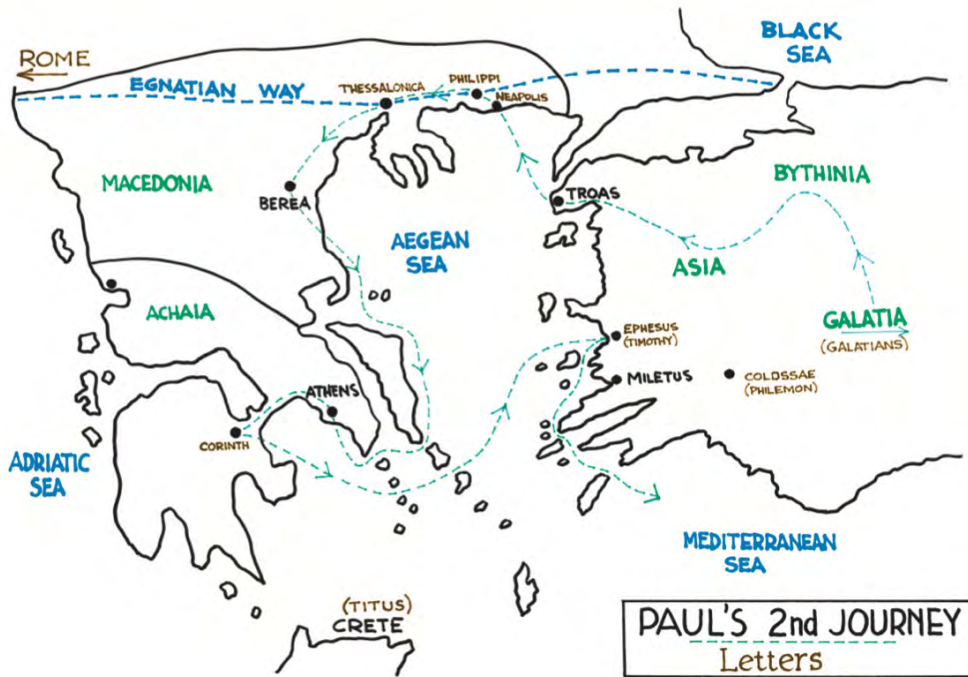
Form

Technically, the handbooks that mention letter types are later, and divide letters into types merely to provide examples for composition; nevertheless, they may provide some sensitivity to ancient ways of thinking about important themes in letters. Most of Paul's letters include a thanksgiving, but some commentators think that his thanksgiving in this letter extends from 1:2 to 3:13 (which is unlikely); thus they characterize this as a "letter of thanksgiving." Others categorize it as a "letter of comfort" or a "parenthetic letter" (a letter telling them how to behave); it also contains substantial elements of a "letter of praise," commending the Thessalonians, and features from "letters of friendship." Like most ancient letters, 1 Thessalonians is a mixture of various types, borrowing themes as necessary from each type (to the extent that they existed as such) without concern for formal categories; its closest parallels, however, are to parenthetic letters. It has deliberative elements.

Unity

Nearly all scholars today acknowledge that 1 Thessalonians is a unity (the change of tone in chaps. 4-5 is characteristic of Paul's and some similar letters), except for 2:14-16, which some scholars think (on content grounds) were added later to Paul's letter. Chapters 1-3 seem to exhibit a slightly modified chiasmic (inverted parallel) structure, however, which suggests that even these verses belong: thanksgiving (1:2-5; 3:9-10), victory in suffering (1:6-10; 3:6-8), apostolic care (2:1-13, 17-20) and suffering (2:14-16; 3:1-5).

Source: Keener, Craig S. (2014). The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament, Second Edition. InterVarsity Press.



I (WARM)

THESSALONIANS

II (COOL)

We pray for you

A. THEIR RECEPTIVITY (1)

1. Word, deed and sign
2. Faith, hope and love
3. God, Jesus, Spirit
4. Turn, serve, wait

B. HIS INTEGRITY (2-3)

1. Flatters when present
2. Forgets when absent

C. THEIR MATURITY (4-5)

1. HOLINESS

Women. Work.

2. HOPE

Dead. Date.

LEADERS, MEMBERS,
SPIRIT, GOD, JESUS

You pray for us

A. THEIR TENACITY (1)

1. Human injustice in present
2. Divine justice in future

We pray for you

B. THEIR STABILITY (2-3)

1. HOPE

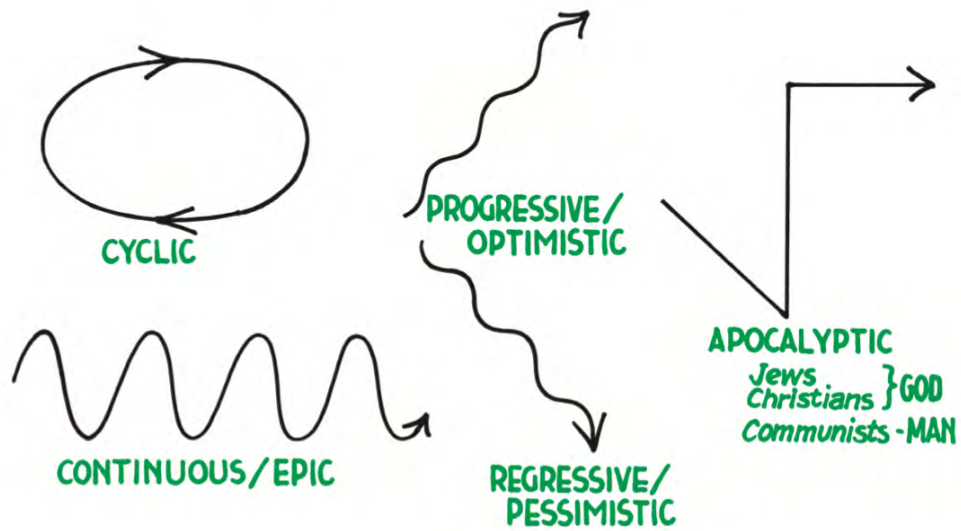
Date. Delay.

You pray for us

2. HOLINESS

Work

PHILOSOPHIES OF HISTORY



Chapter

1

- 1Th 1:1-4** The Thessalonians are given to understand both how mindful of them Saint Paul was at all time in thanksgiving, and prayer;
1Th 1:5-10 and also how well he was persuaded of the truth and sincerity of their faith and conversion to God.

1 THESSALONIANS 1:2-3

“WE REMEMBER BEFORE OUR
 GOD AND FATHER
 YOUR WORK PRODUCED BY FAITH,
 YOUR LABOR PROMPTED BY LOVE, AND
 YOUR ENDURANCE INSPIRED BY HOPE
 IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.”

Chapter

2

- 1Th 2:1-17** In what manner the gospel was brought and preached to the Thessalonians, and in what sort also they received it.
1Th 2:18-20 A reason is rendered both why Paul was so long absent from them, and also why he was so desirous to see them.

Chapter

3

- 1Th 3:1-9** Saint Paul testifies his great love to the Thessalonians, partly by sending Timothy unto them to strengthen and comfort them; partly by rejoicing in their well-doing; and partly by praying for them, and desiring a safe coming unto them.
1Th 3:10-13

Chapter

4

- 1Th 4:1-5** He exhorts them to go forward in all manner of godliness;
1Th 4:6-8 to live holily and justly;
1Th 4:9-10 to love one another;
1Th 4:11-12 and quietly to follow their own business;
1Th 4:13-16 and last of all, to sorrow moderately for the dead.
1Th 4:17-18 And unto this last exhortation is annexed a brief description of the resurrection, and second coming of Christ to judgment.

Chapter

5

- 1Th 5:1-15** He proceeds in the former description of Christ's coming to judgment;
1Th 5:16-22 and gives divers precepts;
1Th 5:23-28 and so concludes the epistle.

2 Thessalonians

Authorship

Some scholars have denied that Paul wrote this letter, because it differs in some respects from 1 Thessalonians; conversely, they attribute the similarities it has with 1 Thessalonians to imitation. But 2 Thessalonians is Pauline in style and moves in the same apocalyptic world of thought that much of 1 Thessalonians 4–5 does; the differences are no greater than one would expect in two separate letters dealing with such a broad topic, or even than one sometimes finds in passages within a single apocalypse. It seems unlikely that 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 was written after the temple's destruction (A.D. 70); because pseudepigraphic letters were rarely written during or immediately after the lifetime of their alleged author, 2 Thessalonians was most likely written by Paul (who died around A.D. 64). The majority of commentators today accept it as Pauline.

Relationship to 1 Thessalonians

Although scholars have debated which letter was written first, most scholars think that 1 Thessalonians was written before 2 Thessalonians (the original letters were not titled or numbered, of course). The bearer of his first letter has probably returned with news about the situation in Thessalonica; some of the Christians have embraced Paul's message about future hope without the qualifications he had attached to it, and have decided that the day of the Lord has already come (2:2).

Source: Keener, Craig S. (2014). *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament, Second Edition*. InterVarsity Press.

Chapter 1	2Th 1:1-10	Paul certifies them of the good opinion which he had of their faith, love, and patience;
	2Th 1:11-12	and therewithal uses divers reasons for the comforting of them in persecution, whereof the chief is taken from the righteous judgment of God.
Chapter 2	2Th 2:1-2	Paul urges them to continue stedfast in the truth received;
	2Th 2:3-8	shows that there shall be a departure from the faith,
	2Th 2:9-14	and a discovery of Antichrist, before the day of the Lord come;
	2Th 2:15-17	and thereupon repeats his former exhortation, and prays for them.
Chapter 3	2Th 3:1-2	Paul craves their prayers for himself;
	2Th 3:3-4	testifies what confidence he has in them;
	2Th 3:5	makes request to God in their behalf;
	2Th 3:6-15	gives them divers precepts, especially to shun idleness, and ill company;
	2Th 3:16-18	and then concludes with prayer and salutation.

Quiz on 1 and 2 Thessalonians

1. Who was with Paul when 1 Thessalonians was written?

2. In 1 Thessalonians Chapter 1, what 3 things does Paul remember about the Thessalonians?

3. According to 1 Thessalonians Chapter 4, when Christ returns, those who are saved will meet him where?

4. To whom was the church of Thessalonica an example?

5. How did Paul describe Timothy in 1 Thessalonians Chapter 3?

6. What did Paul urge us to do regarding those that labour among us and are over us in the Lord?

7. In 2 Thessalonians Chapter 1, for what did Paul commend the Thessalonian church?

8. In 2 Thessalonians Chapter 2, Paul calls the anti-Christ “the man of sin” and “the son of...” what?

9. What does Paul say about those that do not willing to work, in 2 Thessalonians Chapter 3?

10. As Paul nears the end of his letter, at the beginning of 2 Thessalonians Chapter 3, he asks the Thessalonians to do something. What is it that he asks of them?

GENEVA
BIBLE SCHOOL

