

# The Thessalonian Letters

1-2 Thessalonians

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## Letters

SATURDAY, AUGUST 7, 1982. It's late in the evening. A man is deeply troubled. His Father-in-law is dying, and he feels he must say something. A pioneering Chicago neurosurgeon, Loyal has been stuck with congestive heart failure and his death is imminent. "So," in the words of the woman who recently discovered the letter, "the most powerful man in the world put everything else aside, took pen in hand and set out on an urgent mission..."<sup>1</sup>

Dearly Loyal,

I hope you'll forgive me for this, but I've been wanting to write you ever since we talked on the phone. I'm aware of

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<sup>1</sup> Karen Tumulty, "A Private Letter from Ronald Reagan to His Dying Father-In-Law Shows The President's Faith," The Washington Post (Sept 14, 2018), [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-lost-letter-from-ronald-reagan-to-his-dying-father-in-law-shows-the-presidents-faith/2018/09/14/5aaab8c0-b140-11e8-9a6a-565d92a3585d\\_story.html?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.148789f6b53b](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-lost-letter-from-ronald-reagan-to-his-dying-father-in-law-shows-the-presidents-faith/2018/09/14/5aaab8c0-b140-11e8-9a6a-565d92a3585d_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.148789f6b53b)

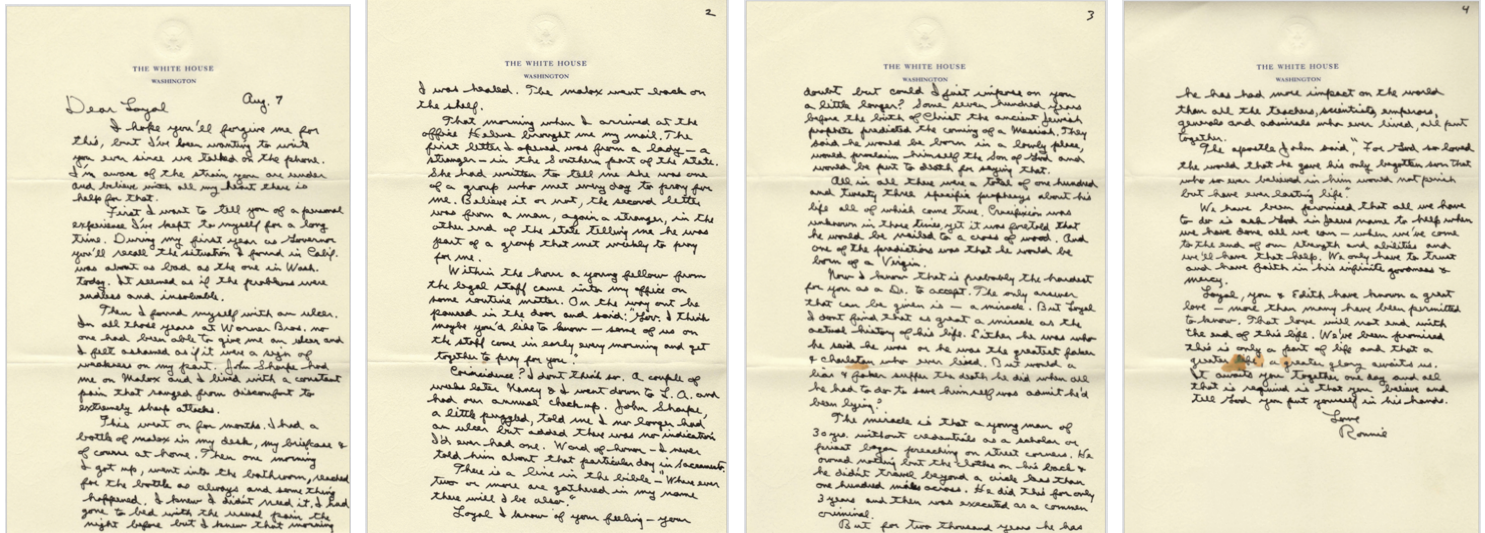
the strain you are under and believe with all my heart there is help for that.

I've given enough information here that you could probably figure out who wrote the letter, if you haven't yet heard this fascinating story. At the top of each of the four pages, printed on official government paper, it reads, "The White House, Washington." The end is signed, "Love, Ronnie." The letter is a private correspondence to his Nancy Reagan's father: Loyal Edward Davis.

Recently discovered in the dusty drawers of the Reagan Library, this letter is not among the publicly available records. But the Library granted access to it as part of biography someone was writing on Nancy. A month ago she published and explained the history of the letter in *The Washington Post*, because in it is contained one of the best examples of faith in Jesus Christ perhaps ever penned by a sitting U.S. President. That makes it newsworthy, at least to some (you won't find any of the major news outlets covering this story). "Either he was who he said he was or he was the greatest faker & charlatan who ever lived. But would a liar & faker suffer the death he did when all he had to do to save

himself was admit he'd been lying?" Reagan writes about the Lord Jesus.

It is easy to seize upon this one line or a couple others like it and disregard the rest of the letter. But doing so, you would miss the relationship between a father and son (they had just talked on the phone days earlier), the personal anecdotes of "Ronnie" entering sympathetically into Loyal's present suffering (his humbling at the hands of an ulcer), the inexplicable but providential physical healing and confirmation he experienced (confirmed by both the doctors and through the "coincidental" letters he was reading that morning by from citizens and his own legal staff telling him they were praying for him every day), the keen mind of a man defending his faith with apologetics on the virgin birth, the atoning death, and resurrection (he had clearly been reading C. S. Lewis or Josh McDowell or someone like them), and the hope he believed was available for Loyal should he "believe and tell God that you put yourself in his hands."



Ronald Reagan, Letter to his Father-in-law Loyal. Aug 7, 1983

What I'm about to say is, on one level, completely obvious. That level is the level of what we do when we receive a letter from a friend. We read it. We read the entire thing, start to finish. This is because **the letter is personal**; it is written to me. **The letter is substantive**; it has many things in it I want to hear. **The letter is a whole line of thought**; the person writing it had reasons for why things went where they went. **The letter is going somewhere**; it communicates many ideas that make the most sense when read together.

The New Testament contains some 27 books. At least 20 of these are letters. This includes the **seven** undisputed so called "General Epistles" or "Letters" (James-Jude); **Revela-**

tion, which though apocalyptic in nature and therefore a rather bizarre letter nevertheless has many trademarks of an ancient letter; **Hebrews**, which has many characteristics of a letter, although it is probably better classified as a sermon; and the **thirteen** undisputed letters of Paul (Hebrews is disputed).

These letters are not unlike our own today in the way they are written. They start with **a beginning**. This usually identifies sender, the recipient, contains a formulaic greeting, and contains a blessing of some kind. By far the longest part of a letter is **the body**. It often has an initial exhortation followed by a thesis statement, a theological discussion, with ethical admonitions at the end. This is an important order, by the way, because it teaches you by the very form itself that theology grounds ethics, not the reverse. To put it in a Pauline way, faith comes before works. It finishes with **a conclusion**. This usually deals with practical matters of the present moment, contains individual greetings, has some kind of personal postscript, and concludes with a doxology or prayer.

### Outline of a Biblical Letter:

1. Beginning
  - a. Sender
  - b. Recipient
  - c. Greeting
  - d. Blessing
2. Body
  - a. Exhortation
  - b. Thesis
  - c. Theological Discussion
  - d. Ethical Admonition
3. Conclusion
  - a. Practical Matters
  - b. Individual Greetings
  - c. Personal Postscript
  - d. Doxology or Prayer

Here's where, oddly and sadly, **the obvious** which is staring us in the face **is missed** by nearly every modern church as we glare back with blurry eyes oblivious. We don't read these letters, as letters, to one another in church. They did in the early church. We don't. In fact, I've never been in a church service where an *entire* letter was read at once, to the congregation, start to finish (other than the one we did when we began Hebrews). I don't think I've even heard of it being done. This despite the Bible's own charge. For example, in the first of two letters we will be studying



together in this series, Paul says, “I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers” (1Th 5:27). For this reason alone, we are going to do this today. Then we will begin to study it as does often happen in churches.

But there are other good reasons to read the whole thing together. These letters are not just written to “*those people*” way back there. They are written to you and I. Paul tells the Colossian Christians, “And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea” (Col 4:16). He writes in Galatians, “To the churches of Galatia” (Gal 1:2). There were many churches in Galatia, meaning that this one letter was to be read in all of them. The very same Church exists today as existed back then, for it is Christ’s body. Therefore, these letters are personally written to you and I.

Furthermore, reading a letter together serves as its own sermon.<sup>2</sup> What I’m getting at here is that, while not sermons

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<sup>2</sup> John Byron writes, “Paul’s charge that they “read it to all the brothers and sisters” suggests that he expected it to be read to the whole church together as part of a gathering. Letters were not so much read as they were heard. Paul’s letter would have served as a sermon, read out loud, allowing him to “be there with them” even though he was absent. When read out loud Paul’s claim to have been separated from them “in person, not in thought” would have been

in themselves in the sense that you might think of with Chrysostom or Spurgeon, they are exhortations for the whole church. When preachers take bits and pieces of these letters and turn them into their own sermons, which is obviously perfectly fine to do and we will do it ourselves, in one sense they become sermons of a sermon. We do this often because people have lots of questions about the context. But sometimes, the questions you have when you read a passage are actually answered just by hearing the whole thing read at once.

Finally, **these are not just the words of a man**. Rather, they are Words of the Spirit. They are God-breathed, inspired for your sake by the Holy One Himself. Infallible, unlike my or any other mortals' sermons. What better reason could you possibly have for hearing them read together when you sit down as a body to worship?

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much more impactful (2:17). At the same time, there would be plenty of opportunity once the letter was read for questions to be asked and clarifications made. I suspect that Timothy was well prepared to elaborate on anything that had been written in the letter." John Byron, "Read this Letter: Thoughts on Reading Scripture Publicly," *The Biblical World* (Aug 30, 2012), <http://thebiblicalworld.blogspot.com/2012/08/read-this-letter-thoughts-on-reading.html>



# 1 and 2 Thessalonians: A Brief Introduction

With that, I want to give a brief introduction to the letters we will be looking at in this series. I've chosen **1 and 2 Thessalonians**. These letters themselves contain the reasons why I've done so. Commentators usually give **three reasons** these letters were written. Regarding 1 Thessalonians Carson and Moo write that it was written, “**To clear up any misconceptions about his own motives in light of his hasty departure from Thessalonica (chaps. 1–3); to remind the Thessalonians of some key ethical implications of their new faith (4:1–12); and to comfort the Thessalonians over the death of some of their fellow Christians (4:13–5:11).**”<sup>3</sup> Regarding 2 Thessalonians they explain, “Paul pursues the same basic purpose, with his focus especially on the problems occasioned by a fresh outbreak of persecution. He puts the Thessalonian persecution into eschatological perspective (chap. 1) and deals with two issues that both probably arose because of the Thessalonians' suffering: their erroneous notion that the day of the Lord had arrived (2:1–12), and their tendency

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<sup>3</sup> **D. A. Carson** and **Douglas J. Moo**, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 544.

to idleness (3:6–15),”<sup>4</sup> or as my old professor Michael Holmes puts it, their “disruptive behavior.”<sup>5</sup>

Regarding these three things, first, from sexual molestation of children to the “fat man selling salvation” who “steals the money from my hands” and Huey Lewis and Poison once sang, ministerial behavior is headline news in our day and it is a major theme of these books. Second, the way Christians are to behave towards one another, always on Paul’s heart and mind, has important and relevant application to us today. Third, the death of fellow believers leads them to think about end times, which has some important discussion in both letters. We are studying Revelation in Sunday School and with, as Holmes says, “the hard to miss parallels” regarding eschatology and getting it wrong that both the Thessalonians and contemporary people continually do, it seems to me relevant at the present moment to look into those matters.

But there is a fourth purpose as well. It concerns the occasion of Paul’s initial visit to Thessalonica as discussed by Acts and the ongoing activity that continued once he was

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<sup>4</sup> Carson and Moo, 546.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Holmes, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 23.

forced by his friends to flee the city. Luke tells us, “Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica...” (Acts 17:1). This took place on what is called Paul’s Second Missionary Journey.



I’ll stop here for a moment to tell you a little about this city. Located just a few miles west of Philippi in eastern Greece/Macedonia, Thessalonica was founded around 315 B.C. by Cassander, king of Macedonia, who named it after his wife who was the half-sister of Alexander the Great.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> This information is all summarized in F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 1977), Ch. 21.

When the Romans conquered Macedon, it became the capital of one of the four newly divided districts. In biblical times, it was a free city under the general rule of the Roman Empire, but governed by local city magistrates. It was the largest city of Macedonia and therefore naturally had a Jewish synagogue. It is here that Paul sought to make converts.

So Luke continues, “And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ’” (Act 17:2-3). Thus, we know from Luke that Paul had taught these Jews all about Jesus from the OT. He says, “And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women” (4). Here’s where the trouble and my fourth reason for preaching them begins: [persecution](#).

“But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. And when they could not find them, they

dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, ‘These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus’” (5-7).

It says, “And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things” (8). You need to understand why. F. F. Bruce rightly explains, “These words have been worn quite smooth by frequent repetition ... but [they] imply subversive or seditious activity: ‘these men who have upset the civilized world have now arrived here, and Jason has harboured them. Their practices are clean contrary to Caesar’s decrees: they are proclaiming a rival emperor, Jesus.’”

This is an extremely dangerous charge. Basically, they could be executed if true. These were hostile people, hell-bent on keeping their power given them by Rome. And it wasn’t just the power. It was the money they were making off it illegally through threats and intimidation. Politics never changes. Thus, vs. 9, “And when they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.”



What happened next was, “The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea...” (10). They fled because of the persecution that came from preaching the gospel. Interestingly, Paul was not very happy about leaving, for he knew that it could very well be perceived as just another religious charlatan who had come to rip them off (we’ll see more of this as we move into the letter). But he had no choice.

Even with these circumstances, he was undaunted. When he arrived in Berea, he immediately went to the Jewish synagogue there and began doing the same thing. It says, “Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men. But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there too, agitating and stirring up the crowds” (11-13). In other words, the persecution followed them.

We are living, in my opinion, in extremely volatile times in the West. There is a hatred for Christianity that has



not existed in 1,000 years. It's even more basic. It is a hatred of binaries: right and wrong, male and female, good and evil, truth and falsehood. There is also corruption in our churches and our governments that has not existed like this since the Puritans fled England. Together, these make for a powder keg that could explode at any time, should God decree it. We have not reached that point yet. But it seems to me the fuse has been lit, the cable is short, very near the blasting cap. And when it goes off, you and I need to be prepared.

But even if it doesn't go off in our lifetime, if we can dodge the seething, unrelenting hatred that is festering just near the surface of so many people, can peace last forever? And furthermore, it is always important to realize in states of great ease and comfort that suffering for the Name has actually been the norm, and it is what the Bible tells us to expect. Knowing this should wake us all up to what is important in this life. Thessalonians can help.

A couple more things about the letters. They may very well be the first letters we have from Paul, with only Galatians being probably earlier. Their dating is probably around 50-51 A.D. Paul by this time was probably in Corinth and

had heard from Timothy about things in Thessalonica. So he writes these letters to deal with questions and problems that he saw from afar.

As to [the reliability](#) of these letters, I wanted to make a point about our recent trip to Ireland where I not only spoke in a conference and church and did some radio shows, but toured some of the country. One of those tours included the Dublin Castle. Right next door to the castle is what is known as the [Chester Beatty Library](#). Beatty was an American mining magnate who became a British citizen in 1933. As a philanthropist, he collected many ancient artifacts from all over the world. These happen to include some of the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament that we have. Called Papyrus II or P<sup>46</sup>, many of the pieces are housed in the library and are rotated for public viewing. We got to see [a fragment of 1 Thessalonians](#) which dates to the second century, only 100 years from when Paul wrote the letter. The collection actually includes four different portions of 1 Thessalonians, all of which line up with later copies, such that these letters are extremely reliable copies of the original. Thank God for these men who took such care to preserve these books for us.

**Thessalonians Fragments, 150-250 A. D. (Papyrus II) P46**  
**Chester Beatty Library, Dublin<sup>7</sup>**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Col 4:16-18; 1Th 1:1</b></p> <p><small>folio 94 r      Colossians 4:16 - 18; 1 Thessalonians 1:1</small></p> <p><small>[that it may also be] read in the church in Laodicea, and that you may read the one from Laodicea. And say to Archippus, See to this service [which you received in the Lord, that you fulfil it]. The greeting is by my [own hand, from Paul. Remember my [imprisonment]. Grace be with you. 1:] lines</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><small>TO [THE THESSALONIANS] [1]</small></p> <p><small>Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church in Thessalonica in God the father and the Lord Jesus Christ, Grace to you and peace ...</small></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1Th 1:9-2:3</b></p> <p><small>folio 94 v      1 Thessalonians 1:9 - 2:3</small></p> <p><small>... for they resort concerning you what sort of reception we had from you, [and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God and to wait for his son (from heaven, whom) he raised from the dead, Jesus, (who rescued us from the coming wrath. For you know, brothers, about our coming [to you], that it was not [in vain], but having suffered beforehand and been insulted, as you know, (in Philippi, we were bold [in our] God to speak the good news of God [to you, in many struggles. For our call] to you ...</small></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Rom 5:17-6:3; 1Th 5:24-28</b></p> <p><small>folio 97 v      1 Thessalonians 5:23-28</small></p> <p><small>... at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls [us is faithful, and he will do it. Brothers, pray [for us. Greet] all the brothers [with a holy kiss]. I put you on oath [by the Lord to have the] letter [read to all the brothers. The] grace [of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you].</small></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1Th 5:23-28</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1Th 5:5-9</b></p> <p><small>folio 97 r      1 Thessalonians 5:5 - 9</small></p> <p><small>[For] all of you are sons of light and sons of day. We are not [of the night or of darkness. Therefore, let us not] sleep [like the rest, but let us keep watch and be] sober. [For those who sleep sleep at night], and those who get drunk get drunk at night], but [as we are of the] day, let us be sober, having put on a breastplate of faith and love, and a helmet of the hope [of salvation, because God has not set us for] wrath ...</small></p>

Finally, we do not actually know which letter was written first, as they were placed in the order they were mostly because the longer letter is placed first and the shorter second (or third). But it does seem to make the most sense that 1 Thessalonians was written first. So we will go with that premise as we now make our way to the letters themselves.

I pray that as you hear them together, the Spirit would join your hearts as one as you are transported back nearly

<sup>7</sup> Pictures from The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, [http://www.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA\\_P46](http://www.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_P46). Translation from D. Edgar, "Translation of Chester Beatty Biblical Papyrus II (Epistles of Paul)," Sept 21, 1998, [http://www.cbl.ie/getdoc/4a02241d-54b6-446f-9f34-dbfa9a3f0f8/Letters-of-Paul-\(P46\)-English.aspx](http://www.cbl.ie/getdoc/4a02241d-54b6-446f-9f34-dbfa9a3f0f8/Letters-of-Paul-(P46)-English.aspx)

1,950 years into the past to consider things that are as relevant today as they ever were back then.

*(Note: I have chosen to print the letters from the ESV without verse markers so as to keep the feel of a letter, there were no verse markers in the original. But I have created paragraphs even though the original was written as one solid undivided paragraph from start to finish. It is easier to read this way. Note the length of each letter as printed in this fashion as compared to what we've already said this far).*

## **1 Thessalonians (ESV)**

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

We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and

steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has **chosen** you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became **imitators of us** and of the Lord, for you received the word in much **affliction**, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became **an example** to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but **your faith in God has gone forth everywhere**, so that we need not say anything. For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned **to God from idols** to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. But though we had already **suffered** and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. For **our appeal** does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, but just as

we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

For you remember, brothers, **our labor and toil**: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was **our conduct** toward you believers. For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received **the word of God**, which you heard from us,



you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the **word** of God, **which** is at work in you believers. For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you **suffered** the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them at last!

But since we were **torn away** from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but **Satan hindered us**. For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy.

Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at **Athens** alone, and we sent **Timothy**, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith, that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that

we are destined for this. For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to [suffer affliction](#), just as it has come to pass, and just as you know. For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow [the tempter](#) had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.

But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you—for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and [supply what is lacking in your faith](#)?

Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in

holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

**Finally**, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us **how you ought to walk and to please God**, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the **will** of God, your **sanctification**: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because **the Lord is an avenger** in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to **love** one another, for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work

with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are [asleep](#), that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by [a word from the Lord](#), that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Now concerning [the times and the seasons](#), brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and

they will not escape. But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus

for you. Do **not quench** the Spirit. Do **not despise** prophecies, but **test** everything; **hold fast** what is good. **Abstain** from every form of evil.

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

Brothers, pray for us.

Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.

I put you under oath before the Lord to **have this letter read** to all the brothers.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

## **2 Thessalonians (ESV)**

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.



We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because **your faith** is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your **persecutions** and in the afflictions that you are enduring.

This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be **considered worthy** of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty **angels** in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not **obey the gospel** of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on **that day** to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so 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.

Now **concerning the coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one 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, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And you know what is **restraining** him now so that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of **Satan** with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are

perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God **chose** you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers, **stand firm** and hold to **the traditions** that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

Finally, brothers, **pray for us**, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith. But the Lord is faithful. **He will establish**

**you** and guard you against the evil one. And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command. May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.

Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you **keep away** from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to **work**, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

As for you, brothers, **do not grow weary** in doing good. If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note

of that person, and **have nothing to do with him**, that he may be ashamed. **Do not regard him as an enemy**, but warn him as a brother.

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.

I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

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