

2 THESSALONIANS

THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH IN THESSALONIKA

Address

1 From Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, to the Church in Thessalonika which is in
2 God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; •wishing you grace and peace
from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Th 1:1

Ac 15:22+;
16:1+

Thanksgiving and encouragement. The Last Judgement

3 We feel we must be continually thanking God for you, brothers; quite rightly,
because your faith is growing so wonderfully and the love that you have for one
4 another never stops increasing; •and among the churches of God we can take
special pride in you for your constancy and faith under all the persecutions and
5 troubles you have to bear. •It all shows that God's judgement is just, and the
purpose of it is that you may be found worthy of the kingdom of God; it is for the
sake of this that you are suffering now.

1 Th 1:2

1 Th 3:6-12;
1 Th 3:12;
4:9-10
Ac 14:22
1 Co 14:22+
1 Th 1:7-8;
2:19-20

Mt 4:17+;
1 Th 2:14;
3:4+

6 God will very rightly repay with injury those who are injuring you, •and reward
you, who are suffering now, with the same peace as he will give us,^a when the Lord
8 Jesus appears from heaven with the angels of his power. •He will come in *flaming
fire^b* to impose the penalty on *all who do not acknowledge God and refuse to accept*
9 the Good News of our Lord Jesus.^c •It will be their punishment to be lost eternally,
excluded *from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his strength*
10 *on that day* when he comes to be glorified among his saints and seen in his glory
by all who believe in him;^d and you are believers, through our witness.^e

Ph 1:28
Rv 14:13

1 Co 1:7+
Ex 3:2
Is 66:15
Jr 10:25
Is 66:4
Rm 1:5+

Is 2:10
Is 2:11-17;
49:3; 66:5
Ps (LXX) 68;
34; 89:7

11 Knowing this, we pray continually that our God will make you worthy of his
call, and by his power fulfil all your^f desires for goodness and complete all that
12 you have been doing through faith; •because in this way *the name* of our Lord
Jesus Christ *will be glorified* in you and you in him, by the grace of our God and the
Lord Jesus Christ.

Ph 2:13

Is 66:5;
24:15
Jn 17:10,24

The coming of the Lord and the prelude to it^a

1 To turn now, brothers, to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and how we
2 shall all be gathered round him: •please do not get excited too soon or
alarmed by any prediction or rumour or any letter claiming to come from us,

Mt 24:31+
1 Co 15:23
1 Th 4:15-17
3:17

1 a. Paul often compares his own situation with that of the churches he is writing to, cf. 1 Th 2:3; 1 Co 4:8; Ph 1:30, etc.

b. Heaven, cf. 1 Th 4:16, the angels, cf. Mt 13:39, 41,49; 16:27D; 24:31; 25:31; Lk 12:8f (and probably the 'saints' of 1 Th 3:13), the 'fire' of various theophanies, cf. Ex 13:22+; 19:16+, are all conventional elements of apocalyptic literature, cf. 1 Th 4:16+.

c. I.e. both pagans. 1 Th 4:5, and Jews. Rm 10:16.

d. Paul here seems to be thinking of angels (the 'saints', cf. Ac 9:13+) and Christians ('those who believe').

e. Vv.6-10 form a parenthesis, v.11 follows on from v.5.

f. Or 'his'.

2 a. In 1 Th 4:13-5:11 Paul avoided suggesting anything that would indicate when the *parousia* would take place, cf. 1 Th 5:1+. Obviously replying to further questions, Paul does not now repeat all he said, about what would happen to the living and the dead: all he is concerned with is to emphasise that the coming is not imminent, and that it cannot take place till certain specific signs have preceded it.

¹Co 1:8+ ^{Ga 1:6} implying that the Day of the Lord has already arrived. •Never let anyone 3 deceive you in this way.

^{Rv 13:1-8} It cannot happen until the Great Revolt^b has taken place and the Rebel, the Lost One, has appeared. •This is the Enemy,^c the one who claims to be so much 4

^{Dn 11:36} *greater than all* that men call 'god', so much greater than anything that is worshipped, that *he enthrones himself* in God's sanctuary and claims that he is God.

^{Is 14:13} Surely you remember me telling you about this when I was with you? •And you ^{Ezk 28:2} 5

^{Rv 20:3} know, too, what is still holding him back^d from appearing before his appointed time. •Rebellion is at its work already, but in secret,^e and the one who is holding 7

^{Rv 17:5} it back has first to be removed •before the Rebel appears openly.^f The Lord^g 8

^{Is 11:4} *will kill him with the breath of his mouth* and will annihilate him with his glorious ^{Ps 33:6} appearance at his coming. ^{Rv 19:11-21}

^{Ep 2:2} But when the Rebel comes, Satan will set to work:^h there will be all kinds of 9 ^{Rv 13:13-17} miracles and a deceptive show of signs and portents, •and everything evil that 10

^{Mt 24:12} can deceive those who are bound for destruction because they would not grasp ^{Jn 8:44} the love of the truth which could have saved them. •The reason why God 11

^{Heb 3:13} is sending a power to delude them and make them believe what is untrue •is 12 ^{1 K 22:22} to condemn all who refused to believe in the truth and chose wickedness ^{Is 6:10} instead.ⁱ

Encouragement to persevere^j

But we feel that we must be continually thanking God for you, brothers whom 13 ^{1 Th 1:4-5} the Lord loves, because God chose you from the beginning^k to be saved by the

^{1 Th 4:3+8} sanctifying Spirit and by faith in the truth. •Through the Good News that we 14 ^{1 P 1:2} brought he called you to this so that you should share the glory of our Lord Jesus

^{1 Th 3:6,8} Christ. •Stand firm, then, brothers, and keep the traditions that we taught you, 15 ^{1 Co 11:2+} whether by word of mouth or by letter.^l •May our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and 16

^{1 Th 3:11-13} God our Father who has given us his love and, through his grace, such inexhaustible comfort and such sure hope, •comfort you and strengthen you in everything 17 good that you do or say.

^{Ps 147:15} **3** Finally, brothers, pray for us; pray that the Lord's message may spread 1 ^{Ep 6:19f} quickly, and be received with honour as it was among you; •and pray that we 2

^{Col 4:3} may be preserved from the interference of bigoted and evil people, for faith is not ^{1 Th 5:25} given to everyone. •But the Lord is faithful, and he will give you strength and 3

^{Heb 13:18} guard you from the evil one,^a •and we, in the Lord, have every confidence that 4 ^{Rm 10:16} you are doing and will go on doing all that we tell you. •May the Lord turn your 5

^{Mt 6:13} hearts towards the love of God and the fortitude of Christ. ^{1 Th 5:24}

^{1 Jn 2:14+} ^{2 Co 7:16} ^{1 Co 13:13+}

Against idleness and disunity

^{1 Th 4:1,11-12; 5:14} In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we urge you, brothers, to keep away from 6 ^{2:15+; 3:14} any of the brothers who refuses to work or to live according to the tradition we passed on to you.

^{Ac 18:3+} You know how you are supposed to imitate us:^b now we were not idle when 7 ^{1 Co 11:1} we were with you, •nor did we ever have our meals at anyone's table without 8

^{Ga 4:12} paying for them; no, we worked night and day, slaving and straining, so as not to ^{1 Th 2:9+} be a burden on any of you. •This was not because we had no right to be, but in 9

^{Mt 6:11} order to make ourselves an example for you to follow. ^{Mt 10:10}

We gave you a rule when we were with you: not to let anyone have any food if 10 ^{Gn 3:19} he refused to do any work.^c •Now we hear that there are some of you who are 11 living in idleness, doing no work themselves but interfering with everyone else's.

In the Lord Jesus Christ, we order and call on people of this kind to go on quietly 12 working and earning the food that they eat.

^{Ga 6:9} My brothers, never grow tired of doing what is right. •If anyone refuses to obey 13 ^{1 Co 5:5,9-11} what I have written in this letter, take note of him and have nothing to do with 14

^{2 Co 2:7} him, so that he will feel that he is in the wrong; •though you are not to regard him 15 ^{Ga 6:1} as an enemy but as a brother in need of correction. ^{1 Th 5:14} ^{Mt 18:15-18}

Prayer and farewell wishes

- 16 May the Lord of peace himself give you peace all the time and in every way.^a Jn 14:27
 The Lord be with you all. 1 Th 5:23
- 17 From me, PAUL, these greetings in my own handwriting, which is the mark Ga 6:11+
 18 of genuineness in every letter; this is my own writing. • May the grace of our Lord Col 4:18
 Jesus Christ be with you all.^c 2:2

b. The way this Revolt (*apostasia*) is mentioned here shows that the Thessalonians had already been told something about it. The word is used here in its usual sense of 'secession' or 'defection' but with a specifically religious reference, Ac 5:37; 21:21; Heb 3:12. It seems that the rebels are not only those who have never belonged to Christ but also those who have given up the faith, cf. 1 Tm 4:1; 2 Tm 3:1; 4:3f; etc.

c. The apostasy will be due to a being who is given three names. He is the 'Rebel' (lit. 'man of lawlessness' or 'man of sin'). He is a being destined to be lost (lit. 'son of perdition') v.10; Jn 17:12; cf. 1 Th 5:5. He is the enemy of God and is described here in terms reminiscent of the description of Antiochus Epiphanes in Dn 11:36. Later on in Christian tradition, based on Dn, he is called the Antichrist, cf. 1 Jn 2:18; 4:3; 2 Jn 7. Unlike Satan, whose tool he is, and who is already at work in 'secret' (lit. 'the mystery') v.7, the lawless one is represented as a person who will be revealed at the 'end of time', and whose power will persecute and seduce Christians. On the final 'test', that will only come to an end with the *parousia* of Christ, cf. Mt 24:24; Rv 13:1-8.

d. We do not know what Paul refers to when he talks about a cause that delays the *parousia* of Christ. All he says is that it is something, v.6, or someone, v.7 that can 'delay' it. This person or power blocks the coming of Christ by preventing the manifestation of the Messiah's enemy who must precede the coming of the Messiah himself.

e. Rebellion (lit. 'lawlessness') is going on, but it is underground, secretly preparing for the great revolt. When the obstacle, whatever it is, is removed, lawlessness (or the lawless one) will work unmasked.

f. The revealing of the Rebel, vv. 6-8, is the counterpart of the revealing of Christ, 1:7; 1 Co 1:7, in the same way as his *parousia* is the counterpart of Christ's *parousia*, v.8. The enemy of God becomes the enemy of Christ, but Christ will conquer his enemy.

g. Add. 'Jesus'

h. The Rebel is the instrument through which Satan works, cf. 1 Th 2:18, and whom he endows with superhuman power rather as Christ endows his followers with his own Spirit. Cf. the Dragon and the Beast, Rv 13:2,4.

i. Truth and untruth here have a religious as well as an intellectual reference because they involve the whole of human life and activity, cf. 1 Jn 3:19.

j. This passage, 2:13-3:5, is very closely linked to the description of the *parousia*. Having corrected the false ideas of the Thessalonians, Paul goes on to describe the positive consequences of his conception.

k. Var. 'as first-fruits'.

l. What Paul taught them when he was in Thessalonika and what he had written to them since he returned from there, 2:2,5; 1 Th 3:4; 4:2,6; 5:27, include, in the message of the Good News, cf. 1 Th 2:13+, the principles on which a Christian should lead his life, cf. 1 Th 4:1; 1 Co 11:2,23-25.

3 a. Or perhaps 'from evil'. Christians will be tempted but not beyond their powers of resistance, 1 Co 10:13.

b. By imitating Paul, 1 Co 4:16; Ga 4:12; Ph 3:17, Christians will be imitating Christ, 1 Th 1:6; Ph 2:5; cf. Mt 16:24; 1 P 2:21; 1 Jn 2:6, who is himself the one that Paul is imitating, 1 Co 11:1. Christians must also imitate God, Ep 5:1 (cf. Mt 5:48), and they must imitate each other, 1 Th 1:7; 2:14; Heb 6:12. Behind this community of life is the idea of a model of doctrine, Rm 6:17, that has been received by tradition, v.6; 1 Co 11:2+; 1 Th 2:13+. The leaders who transmit the doctrine must themselves be 'models' v.9; Ph 3:17; 1 Tm 1:16; 4:12; Tt 2:7; 1 P 5:3, whose faith and life are to be imitated, Heb 13:7.

c. This may have been laid down by Jesus but it may have been a proverb; it has been called the golden rule for Christian work.

d. Var. (Vulg.) 'everywhere'.

e. Add. 'Amen', cf. 1 Th 3:13; 5:28.

1 TIMOTHY

THE FIRST LETTER

FROM PAUL TO TIMOTHY

Address

Rm 1:1
Ph 3:20
Ti 1:3
Ac 16:1
1 From Paul, apostle of Christ Jesus appointed by the command^a of God our
saviour^b and of Christ Jesus our hope, •to Timothy, true child of mine in the
faith; wishing you grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Christ
Jesus our Lord.

Suppress the false teachers

4:7; 6:4,20
2 Tm 2:14,
16,23; 4:4
Ti 1:14; 3:9
As I asked you when I was leaving for Macedonia, please stay at Ephesus, to
insist that certain people stop teaching strange doctrines •and taking notice of
myths and endless genealogies;^c these things are only likely to raise irrelevant
doubts instead of furthering the designs of God^d which are revealed in faith.
The only purpose of this instruction is that there should be love, coming out
of a pure heart, a clear conscience and a sincere faith. •There are some people
who have gone off the straight course and taken a road that leads to empty
speculation; •they claim to be doctors of the Law but they understand neither
the arguments they are using nor the opinions they are upholding.

The purpose of the Law

Rm 7:7,
12f+
Ga 5:23
Rm 1:29+
Rv 18:13
6:3
Ti 1:9,13
Jn 1:14
2 Co 4:4
1 Th 2:4
Ti 1:3; 2:13
We know, of course, that the Law^e is good, but only provided it is treated
like any law,^f •in the understanding that laws are not framed for people who
are good.^g On the contrary, they are for criminals and revolutionaries, for the
irreligious and the wicked, for the sacrilegious and the irreverent; they are for
people who kill their fathers or mothers and for murderers, •for those who are
immoral with women or with boys or with men, for liars and for perjurers—and
for everything else that is contrary to the sound teaching^h •that goes with the
Good News of the glory of the blessed God, the gospel that was entrusted to me.

Paul on his own calling

Ac 8:3+
Ac 3:17+
Jn 16:2
1 Co 15:10
3:1; 4:9
Mt 9:13b
Ti 3:8
2 P 3:15
1 Co 15:9
2 Th 3:7+
6:16
Th 13:6
Ps 145:13
Rm 16:27+
Col 1:15
I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, and who judged
me faithful enough to call me into his service •even though I used to be
a blasphemer and did all I could to injure and discredit the faith. Mercy, however,
was shown me, because until I became a believer I had been acting in ignorance;
and the grace of our Lord filled me with faith and with the love that is in Christ
Jesus. •Here is a saying that you can rely onⁱ and nobody should doubt: that
Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. I myself am the greatest of them;
and if mercy has been shown to me, it is because Jesus Christ meant to make
me the greatest evidence of his inexhaustible patience for all the other people
who would later have to trust in him to come to eternal life. •To the eternal
King, the undying,^j invisible and only God, be honour and glory for ever and
ever. Amen.