

# 1 THESSALONIANS

## THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH IN THESSALONIKA

Rm 1:1+  
2 Th 1:1-2 **Address**

Ac 15:22+  
16:1+ **1** From Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, to the Church in Thessalonika which is in 1  
God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; wishing you grace and peace.<sup>a</sup>

2 Th 1:3 **Thanksgiving and congratulations**

Ph 1:3 We always mention you in our prayers and thank God for you all, •and 2  
5:8 constantly remember before God our Father how you have shown your faith in 3  
1 Co 13:13+  
Rv 2:2 action, worked for love and persevered through hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ.  
2 Th 2:13 We know, brothers, that God loves you and that you have been chosen, 4  
Ac 20:18 because when we brought the Good News<sup>b</sup> to you, it came to you not only as 5  
1 Co 2:4 words, but as power and as the Holy Spirit and as utter conviction. And you  
2 Co 12:12 observed the sort of life we lived when we were with you, which was for your  
Ac 1:8+ instruction, •and you were led to become imitators of us, and of the Lord; and 6  
Ac 17:1-9 it was with the joy of the Holy Spirit that you took to the gospel, in spite of the 7  
2 Th 3:7+ great opposition all round you. •This has made you the great example to all 8  
3:3 believers in Macedonia and Achaia •since it was from you that the word of the 9  
Rm 14:17 Lord started to spread—and not only throughout Macedonia and Achaia, for  
Ga 5:22 the news of your faith in God has spread everywhere. We do not need to tell other  
2 Th 1:4 people about it: •other people tell us how we started the work among you, how 9  
Rm 1:8 you broke with idolatry when you were converted to God and became servants  
Ac 3:19+ of the real, living God; •and how you are now waiting for Jesus, his Son, whom 10  
Ga 4:8 of the real, living God; •and how you are now waiting for Jesus, his Son, whom 10  
2:19-20: he raised from the dead, to come from heaven to save us from the retribution<sup>c</sup>  
4:16-17: which is coming.  
5:9  
Mt 3:7+  
Rm 2:5f:  
5:9

**Paul's example in Thessalonika**

**2** You know yourselves, my brothers, that our visit to you has not proved 1  
ineffectual.

Ac 16:19-40 We had, as you know, been given rough treatment and been grossly insulted 2  
Ph 1:30 at Philippi, and it was our God who gave us the courage to proclaim his Good 3  
Ac 13:46+  
2 Co 3:12 News to you in the face of great opposition. •We have not taken to preaching 4  
Ep 3:7 because we are deluded, or immoral, or trying to deceive anyone; •it was God 5  
1 Tm 1:11 who decided that we were fit to be entrusted with the Good News, and when we  
Jr 11:20 are speaking, we are not trying to please men but God, *who can read our inmost*  
2 Co 4:2; 5:9 *thoughts*. •You know very well, and we can swear it before God, that never at 6  
Ga 1:10 any time have our speeches been simply flattery, or a cover for trying to get money;  
Rm 1:9 nor have we ever looked for any special honour from men, either from you or 7  
Jn 5:41,44 anybody else, •when we could have imposed ourselves on you with full weight, 8  
as apostles of Christ.<sup>a</sup>

1 Co 3:2 Instead, we were unassuming. <sup>b</sup> Like a mother feeding and looking after her own  
Ga 4:19 children, •we felt so devoted and protective towards you, and had come to love 8  
Rm 9:3  
Ga 2:20+

- you so much, that we were eager to hand over to you not only the Good News  
 9 but our whole lives as well. •Let me remind you, brothers, how hard we used to  
 work, slaving night and day so as not to be a burden on any one of you while  
 10 we were proclaiming God's Good News to you. •You are witnesses, and so  
 is God, that our treatment of you, since you became believers, has been impeccably  
 11 right and fair. •You can remember how we treated every one of you as a father  
 12 treats his children, •teaching you what was right, encouraging you and appealing  
 to you to live a life worthy of God, who is calling<sup>e</sup> you to share the glory of his  
 kingdom.

4:11  
 Ac 18:3+  
 2 Th 3:7-9  
 Ac 20:18  
 2 Co 4:4

1 Co 4:15  
 Phm 10  
 Ph 1:27

Mt 4:17+  
 2 Tm 2:10  
 1 P 5:10

### The faith and the patience of the Thessalonians

- 13 Another reason why we constantly thank God for you is that as soon as you  
 heard the message that we brought you as God's message, you accepted it for what  
 it really is, God's message<sup>d</sup> and not some human thinking; and it is still<sup>e</sup> a living  
 14 power among you who believe it. •For you, my brothers, have been like the  
 churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judaea, in suffering the same  
 15 treatment from your own countrymen as they have suffered from the Jews,<sup>f</sup> •the  
 people who put the Lord Jesus to death, and the prophets too. And now they have  
 been persecuting us, and acting in a way that cannot please God and makes them  
 16 the enemies of the whole human race, •because they are hindering us from  
 preaching to the pagans and trying to save them. They never stop trying to *finish*  
*off the sins they have begun*, but retribution<sup>g</sup> is overtaking them at last.

1 Co 11:2+;  
 15:1  
 Ep 1:13  
 Ph 4:9  
 Rm 1:16  
 Heb 4:12  
 1 Co 1:2+;  
 2 Th 3:7+

Mt 23:29-37  
 Ac 2:23-24+

Gn 15:16  
 2 M 6:14  
 Mt 23:32

### Paul's anxiety

- 17 A short time after we had been separated from you—in body but never in  
 thought, brothers—we had an especially strong desire and longing to see you face  
 18 to face again, •and we tried hard to come and visit you; I, Paul, tried more than  
 19 once, but Satan prevented us. •What do you think is our pride and our joy? You  
 are; and you will be *the crown* of which we shall be *proudest* in the presence of our  
 20 Lord Jesus when he comes; •you are our pride and our joy.

3:10  
 Col 2:1,5  
 Rm 1:10-11

2 Th 2:9+

Erk 16:12;  
 23:42  
 Pr 16:31  
 1 Co 9:25+  
 Ph 2:16  
 1:10+  
 1 Co 15:23+  
 2 Co 1:14+

### Timothy's mission to Thessalonika

- 1 **3** When we could not bear the waiting any longer, we decided it would be best  
 2 to be left without a companion at Athens, and •sent our brother Timothy,  
 who is God's helper<sup>a</sup> in spreading the Good News of Christ, to keep you firm and  
 3 strong in the faith •and prevent any of you from being unsettled by the present  
 4 troubles. As you know, these are bound to come our way: •when we were with  
 you, we warned you that we must expect to have persecutions to bear, and that  
 5 is what has happened now, as you have found out. •That is why, when I could  
 not stand waiting any longer, I sent to assure myself of your faith: I was afraid

Ac 17:14-  
 16+  
 1 Co 3:9  
 2 Co 6:1  
 1:6

Mt 16:24p  
 Ac 14:22  
 Rm 8:36  
 2 Th 1:5  
 2 Tm 3:12  
 Heb 10:32,36

1 a. Add, 'from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ', cf. 2 Th 1:2.

b. Var. 'the Good News of God', or 'of our God'. The Good News is more than a proclamation, it is the whole new economy of salvation.

c. Lit. 'wrath'. Vv. 9-10 seem to give an extremely condensed summary of Paul's characteristic 'proclamation'. The two main elements of the Good News as preached by Paul were: his emphasis on monotheism, and the prominence he gives to the return of the risen Lord, cf. Rm 1:1-4,20f; 1 Co 1:18,21; Ga 1:3f; 3:1; Ac 14:15-17; 17:21-31, etc.

2 a. Lit. 'being able to be with weight as apostles of Christ'; interpreted morally, this can mean that Paul could have insisted on his own dignity and prestige, or that materially he could have expected to have been fed and kept at their expense, cf. 2:9; 2 Th 3:8; 2 Co 11:9.

b. Lit. 'babies'; var. 'gentle'.

c. Var. 'called you'.

d. A brief summary of the apostolic tradition: the

message is first 'received', 4:1; 2 Th 3:6; 1 Co 15:1; Ga 1:9; Ph 4:9; Col 2:6, or 'heard', Rm 10:17+; Ep 1:13; Ac 15:7, etc. It then penetrates the mind or heart Rm 10:8-10, where if it is welcomed, 1:6; 2 Th 2:10; 2 Co 11:4; Ac 8:14, etc. Mk 4:20, it proves that the hearer acknowledges that God has been speaking through his missionary, 4:1f; 2 Co 3:5; 15:3.

e. Or 'has become': God acts through his message that has been welcomed by the believer, cf. 1:8; 2 Th 3:1.

f. The harsh tone of vv. 15-16 gives a good idea of how bitter the atmosphere was in Jerusalem, Mt 5:12; 21:33-46; 23:29-37; Ac 2:23+, owing to the way Paul upset the Jewish community by preaching to pagans v. 16; cf. Ac 13:5+. Later on Paul was able to take a more balanced attitude than he takes here, by frequent references to the special position of God's chosen people, cf. Rm 9:11; Ga 4:21-31. He tried hard to reconcile convert pagan with Jewish Christian, cf. 1 Co 16:1+; Ep 2:11-22.

g. Lit. 'the wrath'; add 'of God'.

3 a. Om. 'who is God's helper', var. 'who is God's slave' or 'God's slave and our helper'.

the Tempter<sup>b</sup> might have tried you too hard, and all our work might have been wasted.

### Paul thanks God for good reports of the Thessalonians

2 Th 1:3;  
2:15+  
2 Co 7:7

However, Timothy is now back from you and he has given us good news of your faith and your love, telling us that you always remember us with pleasure and want to see us quite as much as we want to see you. •And so, brothers, your faith has been a great comfort to us in the middle of our own troubles and sorrows; now we can breathe again, as you are still holding firm in the Lord. •How can we thank God enough for you, for all the joy we feel before our God on your account? We are earnestly praying night and day to be able to see you face to face again and make up any shortcomings<sup>c</sup> in your faith.

2 Th 2:16-17

5:15  
Rm 12:17  
Ga 6:10  
2 Th 1:3  
Ti 3:2  
Zc 14:3  
1 Co 1:8+;  
15:23+

May God our Father himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, make it easy for us to come to you. •May the Lord be generous in increasing your love and make you love one another and the whole human race<sup>d</sup> as much as we love you. •And may he so confirm your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless in the sight of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus Christ comes *with all his saints*.<sup>e</sup>

### Live in holiness and charity

2 Th 3:6  
2:13+  
Rm 12:1-2  
1 Co 11:2+

4 Finally, brothers, we urge you and appeal to you in the Lord Jesus<sup>a</sup> to make more and more progress in the kind of life that you are meant to live: the life that God wants, as you learnt from us, and as you are already living it.<sup>b</sup> •You have not forgotten the instructions we gave you on the authority of the Lord Jesus.

5:18  
Mt 6:10  
Ep 1:4  
1 Co 6:12-20

What God wants is for you all to be holy.<sup>c</sup> He wants you to keep away from fornication, •and each one of you to know how to use the body that belongs to him<sup>d</sup> in a way that is holy and honourable, •not giving way to selfish lust like the pagans who do not know God. •He wants nobody at all ever to sin by taking advantage of a brother in these matters; the Lord always punishes sins of that sort, as we told you before and assured you. •We have been called by God to be holy, not to be immoral; •in other words, anyone who objects is not objecting to a human authority, but to God, *who gives you his Holy Spirit*.<sup>e</sup>

Jr 10:25  
Ps 79:6  
Dt 32:35  
Ps 94:1-2  
Jn 17:19  
Lk 10:16  
Ezk 37:14  
2 Th 2:13  
Js 54:13  
Jr 31:33-34  
Jn 6:45;  
13:34+  
1 Jn 4:7

As for loving our brothers, there is no need for anyone to write to you about that, since you have learnt from God yourselves to love one another, •and in fact this is what you are doing with all the brothers throughout the whole of Macedonia. However, we do urge you, brothers, to go on making even greater progress •and to make a point of living quietly, attending to your own business and earning your living, just as we told you to, •so that you are seen to be respectable by those outside the Church, though you do not have to depend on them.

2 Th 1:3  
2:9  
Ac 18:3+  
Ep 4:28  
2 Th 3:6-12  
1 Co 5:12+

### The dead and the living at the time of the Lord's coming<sup>f</sup>

Ep 2:12  
Col 1:27

We want you to be quite certain, brothers, about those who have died,<sup>g</sup> to make sure that you do not grieve about them, like the other people who have no hope.

Rm 1:4+;  
8:11+;  
10:9+;  
1 Co 15:1-20  
JCo 15:51  
1 Co 15:23  
Mt 24:30-31+  
1 Co 15:52+  
2 Th 1:7f

We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that it will be the same for those who have died in Jesus: God will bring them with him. •We can tell you this from the Lord's own teaching,<sup>h</sup> that any of us<sup>i</sup> who are left alive until the Lord's coming will not have any advantage over those who have died. •At the trumpet of God, the voice of the archangel will call out the command and the Lord himself will come down from heaven;<sup>j</sup> those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise, and then those of us who are still alive<sup>k</sup> will be taken up in the clouds, together with them, to meet the Lord in the air. So we shall stay with the Lord for ever.<sup>l</sup> With such thoughts as these you should comfort one another.

### Watchfulness while awaiting the coming of the Lord<sup>a</sup>

Dn 2:21  
Ac 1:8+  
Mt 24:36,43  
2 P 3:10

5 You will not be expecting us to write anything to you, brothers, about 'times and seasons',<sup>b</sup> •since you know very well that the Day of the Lord is going to

- 3 come like a thief in the night. •It is when people are saying, 'How quiet and peaceful it is' that the worst suddenly happens, as suddenly as labour pains come on a pregnant woman; and there will be no way for anybody to evade it.
- 4 But it is not as if you live in the dark, my brothers, for that Day<sup>c</sup> to overtake you like a thief. •No, you are all sons of light and sons of the day: we do not belong to the night or to darkness, •so we should not go on sleeping, as everyone else does, but stay wide awake and sober. •Night is the time for sleepers to sleep and drunkards to be drunk, •but we belong to the day and we should be sober; let us put on faith and love for a *breastplate*, and the hope of *salvation* for a *helmet*.
- 9 God never meant us to experience the Retribution, but to win salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, •who died for us so that, alive or dead,<sup>d</sup> we should still live united to him. •So give encouragement to each other, and keep strengthening one another, as you do already.

Rv 3:3A  
Jr 6:14  
Jr 4:31+  
Mt 24:8+  
Lk 21:34-35  
Ep 5:8-9  
Jn 8:12+  
Mt 24:42+  
Rm 13:12-13  
1 P 1:13; 4:7; 5:8  
Ep 6:11  
1:3  
Is 59:17  
1 Co 13:13+  
1:10+  
4:14+  
Ep 2:20

### Some demands made by life in community

- 12 We appeal to you, my brothers, to be considerate to those who are working amongst you and are above you in the Lord as your teachers. •Have the greatest respect and affection for them because of their work.
- 14 Be at peace among yourselves. •And this is what we ask you to do, brothers: warn the idlers, give courage to those who are apprehensive, care for the weak and be patient with everyone. •Make sure that people do not try to take revenge; you must all think of what is best for each other and for the community. •Be happy at all times; •pray constantly; •and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus.

1 Co 16:16  
1 Tm 5:17  
Ti 1:5+  
Heb 13:17  
Ga 6:6  
Rm 14:1  
2 Th 3:6-12  
Ex 21:25+  
Mt 5:38f  
Rm 12:17  
Col 3:12-13  
Ph 1:4+  
Ep 5:20  
4:3

b. 'Tempter', i.e. 'Satan' as in 2:18, cf. Mk 1:13.

c. This would refer to gaps in their knowledge of Christian doctrine, as well as gaps in their code of Christian behaviour, cf. Rm 14:1; 2 Co 10:15; Ph 1:25.

d. Brotherly love of one another in the Christian community is only the beginning of charity; it has to spread to love for the whole human race.

e. Add. 'Amen'. Holiness, 4:3+, begins with brotherly love but will not be perfect till the *parousia*. In this context 'saints' can refer to the chosen, the saved or the angels, Ac 9:13+.

4 a. Paul speaks 'in' (v.1) 'by' (v.2) or 'in the name of' Christ, cf. 4:15; 2 Th 3:6,12. His doctrine on moral behaviour which is based on the earliest Christian teaching invests ordinary day-to-day life with a new depth: it has the seal of Christ on it, Col 3:18+.

b. Om. 'and as you are already living it'.

c. It is the will of God, cf. Mt 6:10, that makes people holy, vv. 3,7; 2 Th 2:13; Ep 1:4. It is God who makes them holy, 5:23; 1 Co 6:11. Christ has made himself our 'holiness', 1 Co 1:30. The Holy Spirit is involved in making us holy, v.8; 2 Th 2:13; 1 Co 6:11.

d. Lit. 'each one of you to 'know' (or 'be able') to possess the vessel of himself in sanctification and honour'. 'Vessel' means 'wife' in 1 P 3:7 and many rabbinic texts, but it means 'body' in 5:23; cf. Rm 12:1; 1 Co 6:19.

e. Ezekiel foretold that the Spirit would be given to the messianic people: this reference draws attention to the continuity between the church of Thessalonika and the giving of this gift to the early Christian community, Ac 2:16f,33,38 etc. On the gift of the Spirit to the spirit of each believer, cf. Rm 5:5+.

f. The converts in Thessalonika had obviously been worried about this and uncertain what the Christian position was. Replying to their questions Paul affirms the fundamental doctrine of the resurrection so as to strengthen the faith and hope of all the converts.

g. Lit. 'we do not wish you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning the sleeping'. The euphemism was common in the O.T., the N.T., and in Greek literature: the natural concomitant was to call the resurrection (to new life or from death) an 'awakening'.

h. No precise reference in the written gospels can be given for this saying of Jesus, but cf. Mt 24 with vv. 15-17. Perhaps Paul is relying here on the authority he had been given by the vision on the Damascus road.

cf. Dn 7:1,13,16.

i. 'us'; Paul includes himself among those who will be present at the *parousia*: more by aspiration, however, than by conviction, cf. 5:1+.

j. The trumpet, voice and clouds were traditional signs that accompanied manifestations of God, cf. Ex 13:32+; 19:16+, and they were adopted as conventional elements of apocalyptic literature, cf. Mt 24:30f+; 2 Th 1:8+.

k. Om. '(we) who are still alive'.

l. Of all the details given here: that the dead will answer the summons by returning to life, that they and the living will be taken to meet the Lord, and that they will accompany him to the judgement with which the eternal kingdom begins, the essential one is the last: eternal life with Christ, cf. 5:10; 2 Th 2:1. That is to be the 'salvation', the 'glory', the 'kingdom' that Jesus shares among his chosen followers.

5 a. Paul asserts that he has no idea when the Last Day will come, and he merely repeats what the Lord said, Mt 24:36p; Ac 1:7, about having to stay awake till it comes, Mt 24:42p,50; 25:13. The Day of the Lord, 1 Co 1:8+, will come like a thief, cf. Mt 24:43p, so it is necessary to stay awake, v.6, cf. Rm 13:11; 1 Co 16:13; Col 4:2; 1 P 1:13; 5:8; Rv 3:2f; 16:15. It will come soon, 2 Co 6:2+. At first Paul expected he would live to see the Last Day, 1 Th 4:17; cf. 1 Co 15:51; he later realised he might die before it, 2 Co 5:3; Ph 1:23, and he warns people it will not come as soon as they thought, 2 Th 2:1f. More than anything, the prospect of how long it would take to convert the pagans, Rm 11:25, made it certain that the Last Day would not come for a very long time, cf. Mt 25:19; Lk 20:9; 2 P 3:4.

b. 'about times and seasons': a cliché, cf. Ac 1:7+, underlying which is the idea of God as outside time and yet as controlling it and its divisions, Ac 17:26.

c. Mention of 'the Day' without further qualification, 1 Co 1:8+, helps Paul to introduce the mention of light and day and contrast 'wakefulness' with the dark, night and sleep (in a different sense from 4:13f), and also make the contrast between Christians (sons of the light) and others (sons of darkness), cf. Jn 8:12+.

d. Lit. 'awake or asleep' in same sense as 4:14-17: all the faithful will share in the final salvation.

<sup>1 Co 12:1+</sup> Never try to suppress the Spirit •or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; <sup>19</sup>  
<sup>1 Co 12:10+</sup> think before you do anything—hold on to what is good •and *avoid every form of* <sup>20</sup>  
<sup>Jb 1:1,8; 2:3</sup> *evil.* <sup>21</sup>  
<sup>22</sup>

### Closing prayer and farewell

<sup>Is 11:6+</sup> May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept <sup>23</sup>  
<sup>2 Th 3:16</sup> safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body,<sup>e</sup> for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
<sup>3:13+</sup>  
<sup>1 Co 1:9+</sup> God has called you and he will not fail you. <sup>24</sup>  
<sup>2 Th 3:3</sup> Pray for us, my brothers. <sup>25</sup>  
<sup>2 Th 3:1</sup>  
<sup>Rm 15:30+</sup> Greet all the brothers with the holy kiss. •My orders, in the Lord's name, <sup>26</sup>  
<sup>2 Co 13:12+</sup> are that this letter is to be read to all the<sup>f</sup> brothers. <sup>27</sup>  
<sup>Col 4:16</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.<sup>g</sup> <sup>28</sup>

**5** e. Paul seems to have developed no coherent system of anthropology: this is the only place he mentions a tripartite division of body (cf. Rm 7:24+), soul (cf. 1 Co 15:44+) and spirit (which can be taken in two ways: as the divine presence in a human being,

giving him new life in union with Christ, Rm 5:5+, or more probably as the innermost depths of the human being, open and awake to the Spirit, cf. Rm 1:9+).

<sup>f</sup>. Vulg. inserts 'holy'.

<sup>g</sup>. Add. (Vulg.) 'Amen'.

# 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,<sup>a</sup> when the Lord  
8 Jesus appears from heaven with the angels of his power. •He will come in *flaming  
fire<sup>b</sup>* to impose the penalty on *all who do not acknowledge God and refuse to accept*  
9 the Good News of our Lord Jesus.<sup>c</sup> •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;<sup>d</sup> and you are believers, through our witness.<sup>e</sup>

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<sup>f</sup> 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<sup>a</sup>

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.