

First Thessalonians Introduction

Author and Date: On his Second Missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9), Paul and his companions came to Thessalonica. They went to the synagogue for three Sabbaths and reasoned with them from the Scriptures. Paul's stay at Thessalonica was at the most only for a few months. Paul was forced to leave the city prematurely because of Jewish persecution, Acts 17:1-10. From there he went to Berea, Athens and then to Corinth.

From Athens, Paul sent Timothy to encourage the Thessalonians. When Timothy returned to Paul at Corinth, the apostle was overjoyed at the news of the strong faith of the Thessalonians. However, it appears that they may have had some misunderstanding about the Second Coming of Christ. From Corinth Paul wrote First Thessalonians in AD 50. The second letter was written several months later.

First Thessalonians is Paul's first recorded letter and among the earliest of the New Testament books to be written. From earliest times, the church has acknowledged the authenticity of this letter and the early Christian writers quoted from this book often.

Background: Thessalonica is now known as Salonika or Thessaloniki in northern Greece. In ancient times it was the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia. By Paul's time it was a free city governed by seven city officials. These men then answered to the Roman proconsul. Paul evidently found work there (1 Thessalonians 2:9) which corresponds to the fact that one of the major products made in the city was a fabric of goat hair used to make tents.

Paul began his ministry there in the synagogue but the church consisted not only of Jews but also Greeks and many leading women. Many Jews of Thessalonica did not become believers and the synagogue rulers eventually rejected Paul and drove him from the town (Acts 17:1-10).

Purpose: The majority of the people in the Thessalonian church had been converted from idolatry (1:9) and lives of gross immorality. From this past they had turned to Christ. Paul had not had time in Thessalonica to instruct his converts as thoroughly as he would have liked. Thus, in this letter he wanted to express his joy at their steadfastness, encourage them in the midst of their sufferings, instruct them in the way of holiness and correct their misconceptions about the Lord's return.

Theme Verse: 1 Thessalonians 4:13 *But I do not want you to be ignorant brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.*

Outline:	Salutation	1:1
	Thanksgiving	1:2-10
	For their threefold graces	
	For their conversion	
	For their imitation and influence	
	Reflection	2:1-3:13
	On Paul's ministry in Thessalonica	
	On Paul's desire to see them again	
	On Paul's prayers for them	
	Exhortation	4:1-12
	To remain pure personally	
	To maintain good relationships	
	Instruction	4:13-5:11
	What the Second Coming will look like	
	How to be ready for the Second Coming	
	Conclusion	5:12-28

First Thessalonians One

Paul's Thanksgiving

In this Chapter:

Paul's Salutation, v. 1

Paul's Thankfulness, v. 2-5

The Thessalonian's Faith, v. 6-10

Paul's Salutation, v.1

To the Church of the Thessalonians in God—In the Old Testament, the assembly (“congregation”) of Israel was the church (Deut. 23:2). In the New Testament church may mean the whole body of Christians (Matthew 16:18, Ephesians 1:22-23) or, as here, an individual assembly gathering together for worship (1 Corinthians 11:18, 14:4).

God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ—The deity of Christ is equal to the deity of the Father. Each title has significance: Lord—deity and sovereignty, Jesus—humanity and savior hood, Christ—Messiah promised by God.

Grace and peace—Grace was the common salutation in Greek while peace was the common salutation in Hebrew. Both are a wish of divine well being.

Paul's Thankfulness, v. 2-5

Work, labor and faith—This is the triad of Christian living. The work of faith represents Christian obedience while the labor of love represents continued Christian living. The patience of hope represents our looking to the Second Coming of Christ.

Election by God—God is not a respecter of persons. Those elected for eternal life are those who have chosen to obey the gospel. Since the foundation of the world God has prepared a place for those who chose to be faithful to him. The church in this city was mainly Gentile, yet now they were God's special people just as the Jews of the Old Testament had been.

Power of the Holy Spirit—the preaching of Paul came with the miraculous proof of Paul's Apostleship. The Holy Spirit speaks to us today through the word of God: the Bible, 2 Peter 1:16-21

The Thessalonian's Faith, v. 6-10

Followers of us and of the Lord—Christians have a big responsibility; people follow Christ by following us. That does not mean that Christians are the standard by which the world will be judged but that we are shining lights in this dark world.

They themselves declare—often new Christians are the most fervent evangelists. The effect of the Thessalonian's faith had reached as far away as Macedonia and Achaia. These new Christians had left the extremes of paganism (idolatry) and were now children of God.

To wait for his son from heaven—each chapter of 1 Thessalonians ends with a reference to the Second Coming of Christ. The Thessalonians were living in anticipation of Christ's return.

First Thessalonians Chapter Two

Paul's Defense

In This Chapter:

Paul's Conduct Among the Thessalonians, v. 1-12

Their Conversion, v. 13-16

Paul's Affection for Them, v. 17-20

Paul's Conduct Among the Thessalonians, v. 1-12

v. 2—"suffered before in Philippi"—Paul and Silas had been beaten with rods, cast into prison and had their feet put in stocks, yet they had remained faithful in their task of preaching the gospel, Acts 16:22-24

v. 3—"error, uncleanness, impure"—The Jews tried to enforce their religion by adding (creating error) to the message from God, the pagans of Greek society practiced gross immorality (uncleanness) to attract the masses and many false teachers were impure in their motives. Paul reminded the Thessalonians that none of these characteristics describe his ministry.

v. 7—"nursing mother cherishes her own children"—this beautiful picture represents the evangelist's care for the new Christians. While Paul was always anxious to find new places for the gospel to be preached, he was aware of the need as well to encourage growth in congregations he had already established.

v. 10—"devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved...you who believe"—Paul knew that his actions influenced the power of his message. Because of this he often did not do things that may have been lawful for him but were not profitable.

v. 11—"Father does his own children"—Paul recalls his actions to these Christian children as a father would do to his own children: he exhorted (using persuasive words to cause one to change his course of action), he encouraged (finding things that praise and lift up and embolden) and he charged (giving responsibilities that one can handle as they mature—such as living the Christian life).

Their Conversion, v. 13-16

v. 13—"You received from us the word of the message"—Paul focuses in this passage on the Thessalonian Christians who believed while the Book of Acts focuses on those Jews who rejected the message, Acts 17:11

v. 15-16 Why were the Jews against Christianity?

- Although Judaism was a legal religion, its insistence on monotheism (one God) made the polytheistic (many gods) Romans very nervous.
- The Jewish leaders saw Jesus as a false prophet and did not want Christianity to spread.
- As Jews became Christians, the political power and social clout of the Jewish leaders diminished.
- The Jews were proud of their status as God's elect and resented the Gentiles inclusion in the faith.

Paul's Affection for Them, v. 17-20

v. 17—"...endeavored to see your face..."—the true basis for evangelism is through relationships. Paul expressed his pain in not being with those whom he loved in Colossians 2:5, "Though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit."

v. 19-20—"hope, joy or crown of rejoicing...you...at his coming?"—As Paul once again looks to the Second Coming, he realized that the things of this world—money, fame, prestige—do not compare in worth to the souls who will enter heaven due to our work.

First Thessalonians Three

Paul's Prayers

In This Chapters:

Paul's recent history, v. 1-5

Paul's joy at their faith, v. 6-10

Paul's prayer for the church, v. 11-13

Paul's Recent History, v. 1-5

v. 1—"...left in Athens alone..."—Athens was a pagan environment that Paul obviously felt uncomfortable to be alone in. Yet he was willing to endure his loneliness in order to find out about the Thessalonian's condition.

A General Timeline of Recent Events in Paul's Life

- Paul left Silas and Timothy at Berea, and then went to Athens (Acts 17:14-15)
- On arriving at Athens, he urgently summoned Silas and Timothy to join him.
- When Silas and Timothy arrived, Timothy was sent back to Thessalonica, 1 Thess. 3:1-12
- Silas was sent back to Berea, Acts 18:5
- Paul left Athens and went to Corinth, Acts 18:1
- Both Silas and Timothy joined Paul at Corinth, Acts 18:5, 1 Thess. 3:6
- 1 Thessalonians was written shortly after Paul was reunited with his companions.

v. 3—"...appointed to this"—Christians must face trials (2 Timothy 3:12), God does not promise us a life of comfort, but rather strength to overcome our trials.

Paul's Joy at Their Faith, v. 6-10

v. 7—"We were comforted by your faith"—Paul was able to find comfort in the faith of the Gentiles despite his physical circumstances. This shows the priorities of Paul. What gives us more joy today: the faith of a young Christian or the score on the latest football game?

v. 10—"night and day"—Paul and his companions obviously had a high concept of prayer (James 5:16). Paul urgently desired to return to fill in the gaps that were lacking in their faith (doctrine as in Jude 3).

Paul's Prayer for the Church, v. 11-13

v. 13 "saints" or "holy ones"—HAGOI literally means holy ones. Does this word refer to Christians who have gone on to be with Jesus or does this word refer to the angels of Jesus? The word HAGOI is translated either way in Scripture depending on the context. We are told clearly that there will be angels (ANGELOI) who will return with Christ at his Second Coming (Mt. 25:31, Mk. 8:38, 2 Thess. 1:7). Also Paul seems to be making a distinction between his readers (the saints) and the ones who will return with Christ. If they are the same (HAGOI and saints) why would Paul bring this up to the Thessalonians as a word of comfort? Regardless of interpretation, this passage does not give validity to the erroneous doctrine of the Rapture.

First Thessalonians Four

Living to Please God

In This Chapter:

Paul's exhortations for Christian living, v. 1-2

The Christian's holiness in body, v. 3-8

The Christian's holiness in brotherly love, v. 9-12

The Second Coming of Christ, v. 13-18

Paul's Exhortations for Christian Living, v. 1-2

4:1-2 "how you ought to walk"—Paul was dealing with people who had just come out of heathendom. For them there was an entirely new life-style. They were not to please themselves, but to please God. Furthermore the commandments of this new way of life were not from the apostle, but from the Lord Jesus Christ. This new walk was marked by purity (v. 3-8) and brotherly love (v. 9-12).

The Christian's Holiness in Body, v. 3-8

4:3 "your sanctification"—God calls all believers to holiness (Ephesians 1:4). To fall short of sanctification is to miss the will of God. Immorality was common in pagan religion. The gods and goddesses of Greece were grossly immoral. Priestesses provided sexual services for men who attended the temples. But the Thessalonians now served "the living and true God" (1 Thessalonians 1:9). This sanctification required them to continually abstain from sexual immorality. The sex life of a Christian can and should be an expression of holiness, Hebrews 13:4. God demands the sanctification of manhood and womanhood, the purification of all human affections and the restoration of both men and women to the holy status which the originally planned for humanity.

4:4 "possess his own vessel"—control his own body. Sexual relationships are holy within, and only within, marriage. 'In sanctification' means in full consecration of body and spirit. In honor suggests the resulting reverence for the body, 1 Corinthians 6:15-20.

4:5 "passion of lust"—to live in passion of lust is to live merely for self gratification.

4:6-8 "Take advantage of and defraud his brother"--sexual immorality is sin against both God and people. It takes advantage of (1) the unmarried person by causing the loss of virginity that should be saved for marriage, and of (2) the married person along with his or her spouse by violating their marriage vows. The Lord punishes this sin because it is rejection of God and is incompatible with his Holy Spirit.

The Christian's Holiness in Brotherly Love, v. 9-12

4:9-10 "Love one another"—Christians are taught by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit to love one another. But such love is never automatic. We are admonished to increase in it more and more.

4:11-12 "Walk properly"—this brotherly love is practical. The goal of a Christian should be to live a quiet (peaceful) and productive life. To work with your own hands is to provide for your own needs and those of your dependants. Christianity gives dignity to labor.

The Second Coming of Christ, v. 13-18

4:13-18 “As others who have no hope”—the Thessalonians were concerned about what would happen to Christians who died before Jesus’ return. Paul assures them that these Christians will not be left out.

4:14 “For if we believe”—this is the “if” of reality. Paul assumes their belief in Jesus’ death and resurrection. His resurrection guarantees ours, even if we died before he returns. Those who sleep in Jesus is a figurative expression for Christians who have died.

4:15 “by no means precede”—Christians who die before the Lord’s coming will not be overlooked in the day of resurrection. This forceful assurance is guaranteed by the word of God.

4:16 “The Lord himself”—it is the Lord himself who will return. Shout is a military term used for ordering troops to assemble. This shout calls the dead to life. The voice of the archangel and the trumpet emphasize the divine authority and the victory of this command. Christians already dead will rise before those still alive.

4:17 “We who are alive and remain”—These will join Christ and the angels. ‘We’ may be a general term meaning those Christians who are alive during the return. It does not necessarily mean that Paul thought he would still be alive at the Lord’s return.

“Shall be caught up” the word “rapture” comes from the Latin translation of this phrase. The modern idea of pre-millennialism, that is, that believers will be caught up to heaven before the coming of Christ in Judgment is not found in Scripture. Throughout scripture clouds are representative of the presence of the Lord.

“We shall always be there with the Lord” the ultimate promise of the Bible.

4:18 The inclusion in the resurrection of Christians who have died is of special comfort to us in the hour of bereavement.

First Thessalonians Five *Christian Living*

This Chapter Contains:

Watching for Christ's Coming, v. 1-11

A Checklist for Christian Living, v. 12-22

Conclusion of the Book, 23-28

Watching for Christ's Coming, v. 1-11

5:1 "The times and the seasons"—this phrase refers to the time and manner of Christ's return.

5:2 "you yourselves know perfectly"—their knowledge was probably based on the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:44.

"The day of the Lord"—refers to Jesus' return and the judgment. It is not a twenty-four hour day as we tend to think but the 'event' of his coming.

"A thief in the night"—there will be no preceding signs or warnings of Christ's return. It will be immediate and unexpected to those who are not watching.

5:3 "They"—refers to unchristian men and women of the world.

"Destruction"—this word does not mean annihilation but it means an inability to perform the task for which an item is created for. The judgment for the non-Christian will be an event of eternal separation from God and the church.

"They shall not escape"—this is put in an emphatic form in the Greek, literally, "They shall in no way escape."

5:4-5 Paul contrasts the darkness as a symbol of sinfulness with light as a symbol of godliness. Christians are sons of light and sons of the day. On us the light has shone in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Corinthians 4:4-6

5:6-7 Unbelievers are described figuratively as living in the night. They are spiritually asleep, as irresponsible as if drunk. Drunkenness was probably common among the Thessalonians before their conversion.

5:8 "Sober"—Ready for the return of Jesus as a good soldier ready for battle—armed with faith, love and the hope of salvation. The Christian's life is not one of idle relaxation, but of aggressive spiritual warfare.

5:9-11 "Died for us"—of no heathen god could this be said. Christ alone is our Savior. When he comes, whether we are among those who are alive and ready, or among those who have died in Jesus, we will live together with him.

A Checklist for Christian Living, v. 12-22

v. 12-13 "recognize...those who labor...esteem them very highly"--two basics of a healthy church are esteem for worthy leaders and peace among Christians

“Be at peace among yourselves”—it is wonderful when people can dwell together in unity, John 17

5:14 “Warn the unruly”—Christians must discipline the lazy and gainsayer

“Comfort the fainthearted”—they need encouragement to live the Christian life

“Uphold the weak”—the weak in the faith needed to be strengthened

“Be patient will all”—Patience is always necessary. It springs from love (1 Corinthians 13:4).

5:15 “Don’t render evil for evil”—otherwise you are just like the world. Returning good for evil is hard, but it is Christ like.

“Pursue what is good”—living like Jesus is good: good for us, and good for all who see his spirit and actions reflected in us.

5:16-18 “Rejoice...pray...give thanks”—three exhortations for nurturing the inner spiritual life. Joy dies when communion with God ceases and complaining replaces thankfulness. Even in hard circumstances (1:6, 2:14, 3:2) life can be a joyous experience, nurtured by an unbroken spirit of prayer accompanied by a grateful attitude. God is always available to his own through prayer. Such a life is the will of God made possible for us in Christ Jesus.

5:19 “Quench not the Spirit”—A metaphor taken from the picture of the Holy Spirit as a fire. What Paul is saying is “Don’t tread lightly the things of the Spirit.”

5:20 “Despise prophecies”—to prophesy does not necessarily mean to tell the future. Rather it means to tell forth the word of God. There is always a danger of prideful people who reach a point of being contemptuous of hearing the word of God.

5:21-22 “Test all things”—we are not to naively accept every prophecy that claims divine authority. We must work to recognize Christian truth and distinguish false doctrine (Acts 17:11).

“Hold what is good”—having seen the truth, we must hold fast every good teaching and abstain from every hint of false teaching or disobedience.

Conclusion of the Book, 23-28

5:23 “May the God of peace”—God is the author of peace between himself and those who are his. He has, through Jesus, made a way for us to once again be called his children.

5:24 “He who calls you is faithful”—God not only has called us to faithfulness, but he will continue to keep us faithful.

5:26 “Holy kiss”—A practice of the early church mentioned in most of Paul’s letters. More significant than our handshake, it signified a spiritual brotherhood.

5:27 “Epistle be ready by all the holy brethren”—while the letters of the Bible were written to a specific congregation with specific needs, all brethren throughout the ages have profited by studying and applying Paul’s inspired words.

Second Thessalonians Introduction

Author and Date: On his Second Missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9), Paul and his companions came to Thessalonica. They went to the synagogue for three Sabbaths and reasoned with them from the Scriptures. Paul's stay at Thessalonica was at the most only for a few months. Paul was forced to leave the city prematurely because of Jewish persecution, Acts 17:1-10. From there he went to Berea, Athens and then to Corinth.

From Athens, Paul sent Timothy to encourage the Thessalonians. When Timothy returned to Paul at Corinth, the apostle was overjoyed at the news of the strong faith of the Thessalonians. However, it appears that they may have had some misunderstanding about the Second Coming of Christ. From Corinth Paul wrote First Thessalonians in AD 50. The second letter was written several months later.

Background: Thessalonica is now known as Salonika or Thessaloniki in northern Greece. In ancient times it was the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia. By Paul's time it was a free city governed by seven city officials. These men then answered to the Roman proconsul. Paul evidently found work there (1 Thessalonians 2:9) which corresponds to the fact that one of the major products made in the city was a fabric of goat hair used to make tents.

Paul began his ministry there in the synagogue but the church consisted not only of Jews but also Greeks and many leading women. Many Jews of Thessalonica did not become believers and the synagogue rulers eventually rejected Paul and drove him from the town (Acts 17:1-10).

Purpose: Apparently some Christians in Thessalonica interpreted Paul's first letter to mean that Christ would return so soon that there was no use in working or planning of their future. Paul writes this 'follow-up note' to correct such misunderstandings and to teach further on the subject of the Second Coming.

Theme Verse: 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

Key Thoughts:

- The gospel is not just good news to be believed, but to be obeyed as well, 2 Thessalonians 2:18
- Despite unknown players delaying the Second Coming, God's in control, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-8
- Idleness should not be rewarded, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12

Outline:	Salutation	1:1-2
	Judgment At Christ's Coming	1:3-12
	Thanks to God for their endurance	
	Assurance of vindication at Christ's return	
	Prayer for God to complete his work in them	
	Rebellion Before Christ's Coming	2:1-12
	The coming of the lawless one	
	The restraining power that keeps him back	
	Christ will overcome all things	
	Instruction for the Present Time	2:13-3:15
	Obey the teaching you have received	
	Pray for the spread of the gospel	
	Live responsibly and industriously	
	Final Remarks	3:7-15

Second Thessalonians One

Preparing For That Day

This Chapter Includes:

Introduction and commendation, v. 1-4

The profit of enduring persecution, v. 5-10

Prayer for holiness and preparation, v. 11-12

Introduction and Commendation, v. 1-4

1:1 “Paul, Silas, Timothy”—Paul once again includes Silas and Timothy as co-authors of this letter. Their presence with Paul reminded the Thessalonians that Paul was aware of the situation in their city and congregation.

1:3-4 “We are bound to thank God...as is fitting”—It is always our duty to thank God, especially when we see other Christians growing. Paul had been thankful in 1 Thessalonians 1:3 for their faith, love and hope. Now their faith is growing exceedingly. Their love abounds in answer to Paul’s prayer (1 Thessalonians 3:12).

“Every one of you”—an emphatic statement. All were making spiritual progress; they are singled out among the churches for their patience in tribulations.

The Profit of Enduring Persecution, v. 5-10

1:5-6 “the righteous judgment of God”—We sometimes question God’s justice when we must patiently endure persecution from the ungodly. But Paul says that such persecutions, seen in the light of the Lord’s return, are a mark of God’s justice.

“Repay with tribulation”—God has promised that when Christ returns, those who persecute Christians will pay for their deeds. Then he will give us rest (v. 7). When we suffer patiently for Christ’s sake, we know we are on the right side (1 Peter 2:21-23).

1:7-10 “When the Lord is revealed”—These verses describe what will happen at Christ’s return. The truth about Jesus will be clear to all, as will the blessedness of believers and the tragedy of nonbelievers.

1:8 “fire”—fire is often associated with God’s coming in judgment.

“vengeance”—God will act in justice, giving to the unrighteous what is the appropriate return for their conduct.

“those who do not know God”—this term is used for the heathen world (1 Thessalonians 4:5). Here it refers to all who have refused to know God because they have refused to obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no saving knowledge of God for those who reject Christ.

1:9 “everlasting destruction”—the opposite of everlasting life is being barred from the presence of the Lord. This is not annihilation, but a final and irrevocable separation from God.

1:10 “to be glorified in his saints”—Paul tells us we are children of God if “we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together” (Romans 8:17). Christ’s saving of believers is a work to be admired and praised. There is great contrast in the final destiny of those who obey God and those who do not.

Prayer of Holiness and Preparation, v. 11-12

v. 11-12 Paul always prayed that those who follow Jesus will remain faithful so that they may be glorified on the Last Day.

Second Thessalonians Two

The Man of Lawlessness

This Chapter Contains:

The Coming of the Lawless One, v. 1-12

Paul's Thankfulness of these Christians, v. 13-17

The Coming of the Lawless One, v. 1-12

v. 1-2 “as though the Day of Christ had come”—For some reason, the Thessalonians believed the day of Christ had already come. They were shaken either because it had not been what they had expected or because they had been left out. Paul reassures them by describing events that must take place before Christ's return.

Who Is This Man of Lawlessness?

	Strengths	Weaknesses	The Restrainer
An Anti-Christ?	Revelation 20:10	2 Thessalonians 2:9	Christ at his Coming
The Pope?	2 Thessalonians 2:2-3	Who would care?	The Restoration
A Roman Emperor?	Matthew 24:5	2 Thessalonians 2:8-10	The fall of the Empire
Lawlessness in General?	2 Timothy 4:2-3	Very Vague	Romans 13:1-7

v. 3 “Falling away...man of sin”—Two events must precede Christ's coming: the falling away and the appearance of the man of sin. This falling away appears to be a general world-wide rebellion against God led by the man of sin.

v. 4 “Sits as God in the Temple of God”—This man will claim the worship owed to God alone. He will demand total religious and political loyalty of his followers.

v. 6 “restraining”—This restraining power is not identified. Perhaps it is the civil order established by God to curb the power of evil (Romans 13:1-7). What ever this restraining power may be, the lesson is clear: God is ultimately in charge.

v. 8 “the lawless one”—The same as “the man of sin” in verse three. A person will appear who has completely thrown off all moral restraints. He will claim the place rightly belonging to Christ. But when the Lord appears, we will consume and destroy the lawless one.

v. 9-10 “power, signs and wonders”—The lawless one will be empowered by Satan to counterfeit the miracles of Jesus (Acts 2:22) with power, signs and wonders. But these counterfeits will be lying wonders because they will lead people away from God. This deception will mislead not believers, but only those who perish, who are on their way to hell. They chose not to love the truth and thus opened up to themselves the deception.

v. 11-12 “God will send them strong delusion”—God is not the author of deception, but he allows those who reject the truth to be misled by falsehood. Following such falsehood, they are eternally condemned. We are lost when we chose unrighteousness and it becomes our source of pleasure.

Paul's Thankfulness of these Christians, v. 13-17

v. 13-14 “thanks...from the beginning...chose you for salvation”—Paul returns to expressing his thankfulness to the Thessalonians faith. He reminds them that the gospel plan of salvation has been planned by God since the very beginning.

v. 15 “traditions you were taught”—Paul reminds these Christians to hold fast to the practices that were well established. Traditions can be good if they are in accordance to the gospel message.

v. 16-17 “loved us...everlasting consolation...good hope by grace...comfort your hearts...establish every good work”—Paul says a prayer reminding the Thessalonians of their faith and of God's gifts to them.

2 Thessalonians Chapter Three

Warnings Against Idleness

This chapter contains:

Paul's Request for Prayers, v. 1-5

Warnings Against Idleness, v. 6-15

Closing of the Letter, v. 16-18

Paul's Request for Prayers, v. 1-5

v. 1-2 Spiritual leaders need the prayers of other Christians. The burden of our prayers should be for the word of God.

v. 3 "the Lord is faithful"—in contrast to those men without faith mentioned in the previous verse, God is absolutely trustworthy.

v. 5 "love of God" "patience of Christ"—Paul's prayer is that the Lord will enable us to participate in both the love of God and the patience of Christ. This love of God is seen through Christ Jesus. Jesus also has shown us what endurance is by his actions upon the cross.

Warnings Against Idleness, v. 6-15

v. 6 "withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly"—Christians have a responsibility to not associate with those who could negatively influence their relationship to Christ (11 Corinthians 15:33). The term disorderly is a military term referring to one who constantly 'marches out of step' or causes dissension in the ranks.

v. 7-8 "follow us"—Christian teachers have a responsibility to back up their words with their life style. This is very important for all Christians to remember.

v. 9 "authority"—As an apostle, Paul had a right to demand financial support from the churches. (1 Corinthians 9:1-4). Yet he was willing to give up this right because of his concern for the spiritual welfare of the Thessalonians. He set them an example of self-support, perhaps to counter act the influence of those there who were lazy.

v. 11 "busy bodies"—There were not busy making a living. They were busy meddling in other people's affairs.

v. 12 "quietness"—An industrious life of responsibility and helpfulness is the opposite of the disruptive busybody who produces nothing and interferes in the business of others.

v. 13 "Do not grow weary"—good done in the past is not good enough, we must keep on doing it. We must go about doing good. Doing good is to see a brother in need and to help him in an unobtrusive way.

v. 14-15 "Do not keep company with him"—do not have close fellowship with the disobedient lest you become involved with his disobedience. Do not associate with him in any way that will cause him or others to think that you approve of his conduct.

Closing of the Letter, v. 16-18

v. 16-18 "with my own hand"—Paul showed his care and concern personally for these brethren by this letter.

A Summary of Paul's Teaching on the Second Coming in 1st and 2nd Thessalonians

Christians who have died will certainly share in the return of Christ, 1 Thess. 4:13-18

Christians who are alive should not be surprised at the Second Coming, 1 Thess. 5:1-11

Christians should not think the Second Coming has already occurred and they were left out, 2 Thess. 2:21-2

Although Christ is said to be 'coming soon' there will arise a man of lawlessness, 2 Thess. 2:3-12