

1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

The From Dust to Destiny
NT Epistles

THESSALONIANS

- 1 Thessalonians: Christ, the *promise* of God to us.
- 1 Thessalonians: The Gospel and the *Church's future*.
- 1 Thessalonians: In Christ—*translation*.

- 2 Thessalonians: Christ, the *reward* of God to us.
- 2 Thessalonians: The Gospel and the *Antichrist*.
- 2 Thessalonians: In Christ—*compensation*.

THESSALONIANS

THE THEME(S)

Readiness for Christ's Return

- Jesus is coming again (1 Thess.)
- Jesus has not yet come (2 Thess.)

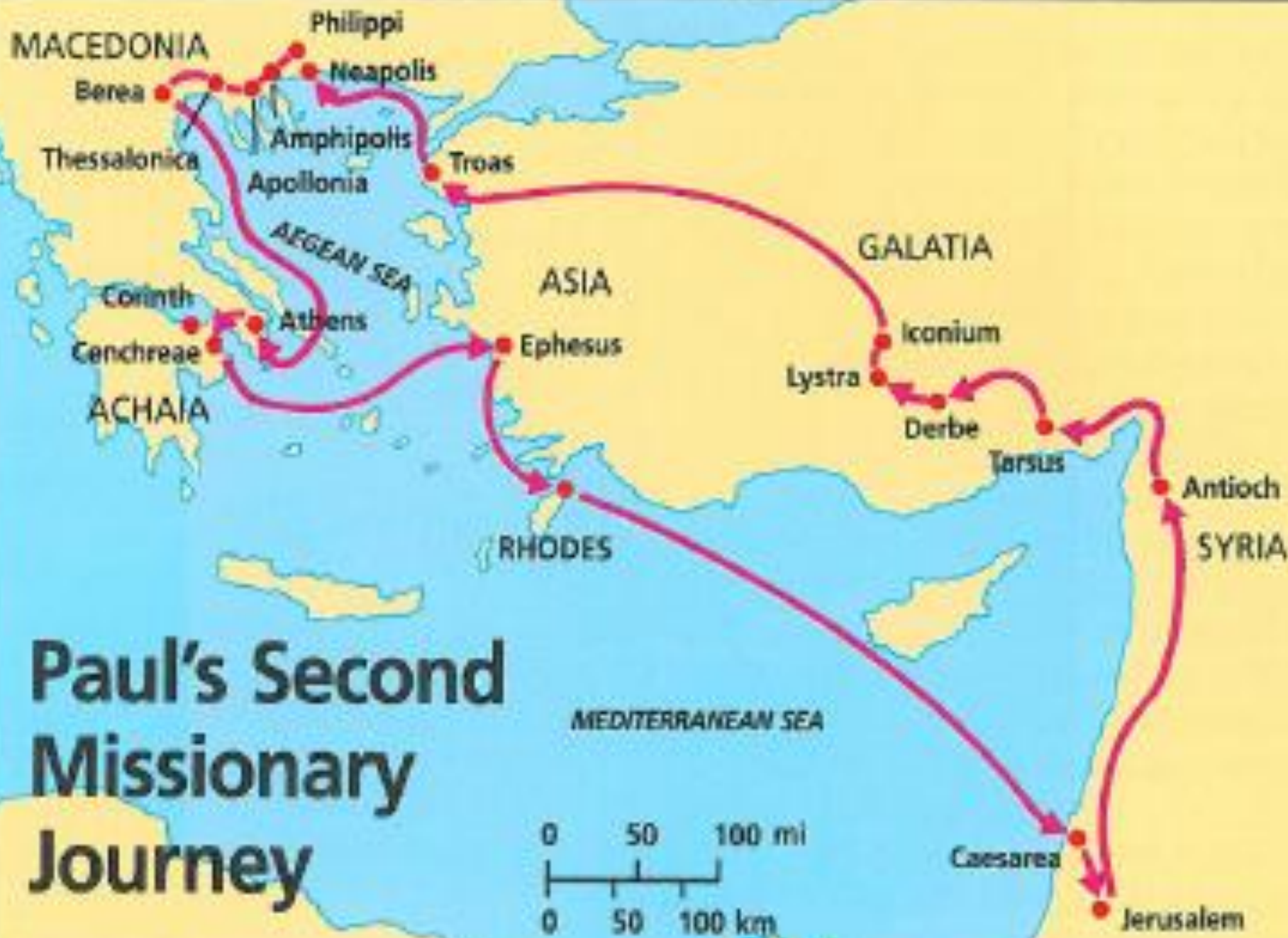
- 1 Thessalonians: Return of Christ (translation)
 - Second Coming Described

- 2 Thessalonians: Wrath of Christ (compensation)
 - Second Coming Clarified

THESSALONIANS

THE CITY

- Paul, with Silas and Timothy, first went to Thessalonica on the 2nd MJ (Acts 17:1-14).
- Thessalonica was a prominent seaport and the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia.
- Located on the Via Egnatia—main road from Rome to the East.
- Its strategic location assured it of commercial—population of 200K in the 1st century.
- This was the second place the gospel was preached in Europe (Philippi being the 1st).



THESSALONIANS

THE DEMOGRAPHIC

- Thessalonica had a sizable Jewish population, unlike Philippi to the East.
- The ethical monotheism of Judaism attracted many Gentiles who were disenchanted with Greek paganism and polytheism and its immorality.
- Jews known as 'God-fearers'.

THESSALONIANS

THE RESPONSE (2MJ)

- Paul preached in power in the synagogue and these 'God-fearers' quickly responded to Paul's reasoning, which ultimately depleted most the synagogue and birthed the church here
- Those Jews remaining unconverted became jealous of Paul's success and organized a mob to oppose the Christian missionaries. Not finding Paul and Silas, this mob drags Jason, their host, before the politarchs (city rulers) and accuses him of harboring traitors of Rome.

THESSALONIANS

THE DEPARTURE (2MJ)

- The rulers of the city took Jason as a security (like a peace bond) and let the missionaries leave. Paul departed for Athens, leaving orders for Silas and Timothy to join him there (Acts 17:11-16)
- When Silas and Timothy arrive in Athens, Paul sends Timothy back to Thessalonica (3:1-2, 5) to encourage the believers and then to report back on the condition of the church.

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THE REPORT (2MJ)

- Timothy rejoined Paul in Corinth (3:6), where the two Thessalonian letters were written (51 AD), and reported the healthy state of the church there.
- Paul had been concerned about his departing under pressure and having to leave the church without experienced leadership. He is relieved and grateful for their stability.

THESSALONIANS

THE PURPOSE

- 1st Thessalonians is a letter from a relieved and grateful pastor to his growing flock:
 - To express his thankfulness for their growth and stability
 - To defend himself against the campaign to slander his ministry which asserted that it was done only for profit (2:9-10)
 - To encourage the new converts to stand against: 1) persecution; 2) pressure to revert to their former pagan standards (3:2-3; 4:1-12)
 - To answer what happens to Christians who die before the return of the Lord (4:13-18)
 - To discuss some problems in their church life which needed to be dealt with (5:12-13, 19-20)

THESSALONIANS

THE THEME

- The Coming of the Lord:
 - The believer's hope, both now and in the future
 - When Christ comes He will...
 - deliver us from wrath (1:10; 5:4-11),
 - give rewards (2:19),
 - perfect us (3:13),
 - resurrect us (4:13-18),
 - sanctify all those who have trusted in Him (5:23)

THESSALONIANS

THE OUTLINE

PERSONAL–PAUL LOOKS BACK (1-3)

- Paul's Commendation: Declaration of Their Faith (1)
 - Their conversion to Christ (1a)
 - Their imitation of Christ (1b)
 - Their propagation of Christ (1c)
- Paul's Character: Defense of His Ministry (2a)
 - His motives explained
 - His manner explained
- Paul's Concern: Desire for Their Growth (2b-3)
 - For their sufferings (2b)
 - For their testings (3a)
 - For their growth (3b)

THESSALONIANS

THE OUTLINE

PRACTICAL—PAUL LOOKS FORWARD (4-5)

- Paul's Commandments: Walk in Holiness (4a)
 - In sexual purity
 - In brotherly love
 - In orderly living
- Paul's Consolation: Walk in Hope (4b-5a)
 - The return of Christ (4b)
 - The day of Christ (5a)
- Paul's Correction: Walk in Harmony (5b)
 - Appreciate your leaders
 - Appreciate your love

THESSALONIANS

SECOND LETTER

- Several months after Paul wrote his first letter to the Thessalonians, various circumstances led him to write again (about 51-52 AD – sometime during Paul’s 18-month stay in Corinth).
- In his first letter, Paul instructed the Thessalonians to expect a sudden rapture, when deceased and surviving believers would be caught up to be with Christ forever (4:13-18).
- In the same letter, Paul wrote that the “day of the Lord”—a time of judgment for unbelievers—would come “like a thief in the night” (5:1-3).

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SECOND LETTER

- Not long after their receipt of this 1st letter, word reached Paul that somehow there had been a misunderstanding and misrepresentation of his teaching concerning the coming day of the Lord.
- Some thought that those judgments had already begun; yet they understood that they would be exempt from these judgments.

THESSALONIANS

SECOND LETTER

- Why did the church @ Thessalonica think the “day of the Lord” had come?
 - Possibly a false letter by someone purporting to be Paul (2:2; 3:17)
 - Possibly a false message and false prophecy was circulating that the “day of the Lord” had already come
- At the same time, the Thessalonians continued to be greatly persecuted for their faith, giving the appearance of the tribulation.

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SECOND LETTER

- The result—the church was perplexed.
- This also caused some to overreact, thinking the world was at its end, so they gave up their jobs. Recall, there was already a problem with idleness (1 Thess. 4:11-12), and it was very serious (2 Thess. 3:6-15).

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THE PURPOSE

- To encourage these believers in their faith which was being tested under the first of persecution (2 Thess. 1)
- To correct this error in their understanding regarding the “Day of the Lord” (2 Thess. 2)
- To reprimand those who had decided to cease working because the coming of the Lord was near (2 Thess. 3)

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THE OUTLINE

- ENCOURAGEMENT TO PERSECUTED BELIEVERS (1)
 - The Commendation: Thanks for Their Perseverance (1a)
 - The Comfort: Christ Is Coming to Judge the Ungodly (1b)
 - The Concern: Prayer for Their Spiritual Progress (1c)
- EXPLANATION TO PERPLEXED BELIEVERS (2)
 - The Confusion: The Day of the Lord Has Come (1-2a)
 - The Correction: The Day of the Lord Is Yet Future (2b)
 - The apostasy must come first (3a).
 - The man of lawlessness must be revealed (3b-4, 8).
 - The restrainer must be removed (6-12).
 - The Conclusion: Stand Firm and Hold Fast (13-17)

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THE OUTLINE

- Exhortation to Passive Believers (3)
 - The Confidence: God Is Faithful (3a)
 - The Command: Keep Away from Unruly Brothers (3b)

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THE THEME

- Judgment, Retribution, Destruction
- 18 of 47 verses (38%) deal with this theme at the time of Christ's Second Coming

1 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians
Christ coming for His Church (1 Thess. 4:13-18)	Christ coming with His church (2 Thess. 1:5-10; 2:3, 12)

THESSALONIANS

THE COMPARISON

1 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians
Describes how the Thessalonians received the Word	Mentions their progress in faith, love, and patience
Teaches the imminence of the Lord's return	Corrects misapprehensions about that event
Comforts and encourages the saints	Assures coming judgment on Christ's foes
Concerns the church	Concerns Satan, Antichrist, and the world
Tell about the parousia (coming, presence)—4:15	Tells about the apocalupsis (revelation)—1:7

THESSALONIANS

RAPTURE VS. REVELATION

First Phase (Rapture)	Second Phase (Revelation)
Christ comes to claim His bride, the Church	Christ returns with His bride
Christ comes in the air	Christ returns to the earth
The tribulation begins	The millennial kingdom is established
A message of comfort is given	A message of judgment is given