



**KEEP
CALM
AND
CARRY
ON**

1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

LOTVLAYTON.ORG

Thessalonica, Paul, and a Church

2300 - 150 BC

- ❖ **2300** - Prehistoric settlement on the site of Thessalonica.
- ❖ **600** - Founding of Therme at the head of the Thermaic Gulf.
- ❖ **316** - Cassander, king of Macedon, establishes Thessalonica at the site where Therme had existed, naming the new city in honor of his wife.
- ❖ **168** - The Romans gain control of Thessalonica when Perseus, king of Macedonia, is defeated at Pydna. Soon after the first Jewish community in Thessalonica is formed by emigrants from Alexandria.

149 - 42 BC

- ❖ **147-120** - Construction of the Macedonian leg of the Egnatian Way, a Roman military road connecting Thessalonica with the Adriatic Sea in the west and with Neapolis in the east.
- ❖ **146** - Thessalonica becomes the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia and is referred to as "the Mother of Macedonia."
- ❖ **58** - The Roman statesman Cicero spends six months of his self-imposed exile in Thessalonica.
- ❖ **49-48** - Many Roman officials flee Rome and take up residence in Thessalonica during the Roman civil war.
- ❖ **42** - Augustus declares Thessalonica a free city following the battle of Philippi.

5 BC - AD 30

- ❖ **5-4 BC** - Jesus' birth.
- ❖ **AD 5** - Paul born in Tarsus of Cilicia.
- ❖ **AD 15-20** - Paul studies with Gamaliel in Jerusalem.
- ❖ **AD 15** - Tiberius takes away Thessalonica's status as a free city when opposition to increased taxation is expressed.
- ❖ **AD 30** - Jesus' trials, death, and resurrection. Outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Jesus' disciples in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost.

AD 30 – 56

- ❖ **AD 36** - Conversion of Saul (Paul).
- ❖ **AD 50** - Paul, Timothy, and Silas minister in Thessalonica, one of the earliest churches planted in Europe on his second missionary journey.
- ❖ **AD 51** - Paul writes 1 Thessalonians a few months after being forced to leave Thessalonica. Paul soon follows up with a second letter to the Thessalonian believers. Weighty support for this date was found in an inscription discovered at Delphi, Greece, that dates Gallio's proconsulship to c. 51–52 and thus places Paul there at the same time (see **Acts 18:12–17**). This makes these letters some of the first, if not the very first, of Paul's letters. Only Galatians may have been written earlier.
- ❖ **AD 56** - Paul likely revisits the Thessalonian Christians as he visits the churches planted in Macedonia.



Current remains of the amphitheater in Thessalonica where Paul would have preached.

Thessalonica

In Paul's day, Thessalonica was large and important city of the Roman Empire. It was built by the Romans for military purposes to move troops quickly from one part of their empire to another, thus making it a crossroad city for them. In addition to being an important land route city, it was also a major sea trade center of the Roman Empire. The population was close to 200,000 with many Roman officials living there. A majority of the Thessalonians (native Macedonians) worshipped the Greek gods since they were supposedly located near Mount Olympus.



The Author: Paul

The author of this epistle is Paul, originally known as Saul of Tarsus. Trained at the feet of Gamaliel, an eminent teacher in Jerusalem, Saul was a Pharisee and an avowed enemy of Christianity (**Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-2,13-14,19-21**). In his zeal for traditional Judaism he persecuted Christians in Jerusalem and even in outlying regions. In the course of a raid on Christians in Damascus, Saul was confronted in blinding light by the risen Christ, who demanded of him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (**Acts 9:4**). He was converted and baptized and then immediately began teaching and proving that Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior (**Acts 9:17-22**). In approximately 25 years of ministry, Paul would write nearly half of all the New Testament books of the Bible, bring the Gospel to countless people, and suffer greatly to do so. (**2 Corinthians 11:22-33**)



Outline of 1 Thessalonians

Theme: Keep Calm

- I. The Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians (ch. 1)**
 - A. The Grounds for the Thanksgiving (1:1–4)
 - B. The Genuineness of the Grounds (1:5–10)
- II. The Defense of the Apostolic Actions and Absence (chs. 2–3)**
 - A. The Defense of the Apostolic Actions (2:1–16)
 - B. The Defense of the Apostolic Absence (2:17–3:10)
 - C. The Prayer (3:11–13)
- III. The Exhortations to the Thessalonians (4:1–5:22)**
 - A. Primarily concerning Personal Life (4:1–12)
 - B. Concerning the Coming of Christ (4:13–5:11)
 - C. Primarily concerning Church Life (5:12–22)
- IV. The Concluding Prayer, Greetings and Benediction (5:23–28)**

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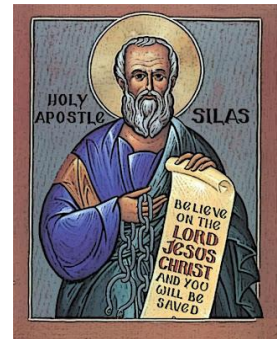


1 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER ONE

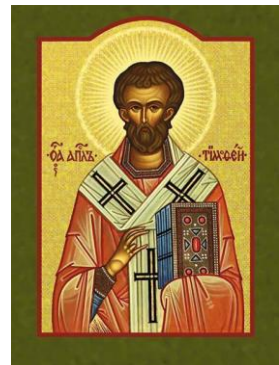
1 Thessalonians 1:1

Paul, Silas, and Timothy are listed as the authors. We already reviewed a bit about Paul. What do we know about...?

Silas (C.f. **Acts 15:36-41**)



Timothy (C.f. **Acts 16:1-5**)



The Mission Work in Thessalonica (C.f. **Acts 17:1-9**)



What is the significance of the addressees and greeting: "To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you"?

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

What prayer practices do you have involving people? How could you do more?



Prayer Challenge

Below are enough spaces to write in every member family of Light of the Valley (plus a few more). Use your church directory or the photo board in the fellowship hall to list all our members so that you can imitate Paul and “thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers.”

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
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1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

Whenever we speak the Word of God, what also comes with it? How do we see it operate? How does this affect us personally?

1 Thessalonians 1:6-10

The Thessalonians became imitators of Paul, Timothy, and Silas. How so?



Self-Reflection: How can I be an imitator of faithful Christians and of the Lord when I visit another WELS congregation?

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1 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

1 Thessalonians 2:1-5

What makes Gospel proclamation a success? A failure?

How do you think that people would share God's Word springing from error? With impure motives?

When interacting with an adherent of another faith, what suspicions would you / do you have? How can you deal with those suspicions?

1 Thessalonians 2:6-9

In **verse 8**, what does it mean “we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well?”

In **verse 9**, the three authors write that they “worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.” Compare that with **1 Corinthians 9:1-18**. How does a modern Christian pastor live this out?

Agree or disagree. A faithful pastor is one whose whole life is wrapped up in sharing the gospel with his congregation. Explain your answer.

1 Thessalonians 2:10-12

How should a preacher of the Gospel act towards you?

How does a preacher of the Gospel...

Encourage you to live a life worthy of God?

Comfort you to live a life worthy of God?

Urge you to live a life worthy of God?

1 Thessalonians 2:13-16

How does **verse 13** play out in your life?

How did the Thessalonian Christians become imitators of God's churches?

What's up with **verse 16**? How should we understand it in context and apply it to our lives?

1 Thessalonians 2:17-19

How did Satan stop Paul from seeing the Thessalonians?

How are the Thessalonians the hope, joy, and crown in which Paul, Silas, and Timothy will glory in the presence of the Lord Jesus when he comes?

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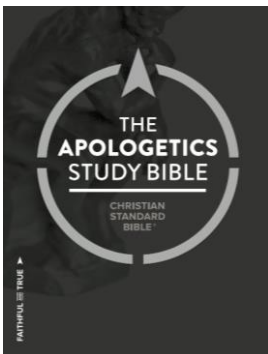
1 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER THREE

1 Thessalonians 3:1-5

How might **verse 2** serve as a good passage to use with a congregation when their pastor takes a call away from them?

Persecution of Christians is promised here and is promised by Jesus himself (**John 15:20**). How do you experience persecution?

CSB APOLOGETICS STUDY BIBLE: Bible History Lines Up



The remarkable correlation between **2:17–3:6** and **Acts 17:1–16** with **18:1–5** confirms the historical value of Acts, which adds detail to Paul's comments. Paul and his companions came to Thessalonica from Philippi (**Acts 17:1**; see **1 Thessalonians 2:2**). Forced out of Thessalonica (**Acts 17:5–10**; see **1 Thessalonians 2:17–18**), they went to Berea (**Acts 17:10**). From there Paul went on alone to Athens (**Acts 17:14–16**; see **1 Thessalonians 3:1**), leaving instructions for Silas and Timothy (**Acts 17:16**; see **1 Thessalonians 3:2–3**), and eventually traveled to Corinth (**Acts 18:1**), where his companions rejoined him (**Acts 18:5**; see **1 Thessalonians 3:6**).

1 Thessalonians 3:6-9

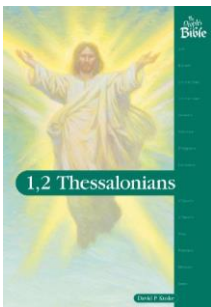
What news did Timothy bring back to Paul? When might we do something similar?

1 Thessalonians 3:10-13



Self-Reflection: What things are lacking in my faith that I will pray for? What things are lacking in the faith of people I know that I will pray for? How can the words of this section give me specificity to those prayers?

PEOPLE'S BIBLE COMMENTARY: Who are the Holy Ones?



It is often debated whether Jesus' coming "with all his holy ones" (**verse 13**) means with the angels or with believers. The expression "holy ones" is an expression that Paul uses elsewhere in his letters only to refer to believers. Here Paul has just finished speaking of believers being blameless in holiness. When Paul speaks of Christ coming "with all his holy ones," this simply refers to all those believers who have died and whose souls are with Christ in paradise. Later, in **4:15**, Paul will speak of how these believers will return with Christ and share a glorious reunion with the living believers.

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1 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER FOUR

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

What instructions does Paul give to the Thessalonians for living their Christian life? What's their motivation for living in these ways? How do these apply to us?

What is a holy and honorable way of acquiring a spouse?

Conquerors Through Christ are Here to Help



The problem of pornography is widespread in our society, and both members and called workers in our church are certainly not immune.

Conquerors Through Christ exists to help people **Reject, Resist, and Recover** from the wreckage of porn and to rejoice either in our singleness or in our married sex life.

The men and women of the Conquerors Through Christ team are members of a subcommittee of the Committee on Mental Health Needs under the Commission on Special Ministries, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS).

We have pastors, staff ministers, and laypeople serving on the subcommittee. We are pursuing this fight against internet pornography because we have seen the devastation it wreaks on the families and individuals in our churches and realize the danger to souls. We want to equip as many as possible to fight this battle with the proper motivation and preparation.

We are not trained mental health professionals and urge anyone seeking to conquer this sin also to seek professional Christian counseling.

The advice we give on this website is intended for teens and adults caught in an addictive cycle of viewing adult pornography. Though much of the spiritual advice contained herein may apply, we are not equipped to and cannot advise those struggling with child pornography or depictions of other forms of deviancy forbidden by God.

Learn more at conquerorsthroughchrist.net.

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

Thinking of **verse 9**, how have you been taught to love your brothers and sisters in Christ?

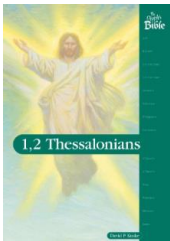
What does God command of the Thessalonians and of us here?

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

What is the hope that the Thessalonians have that Paul is referring to in this context?

What will happen when Jesus returns? (For more information about the resurrection of the dead, see **1 Corinthians 15**.)

PEOPLE'S BIBLE COMMENTARY: The Dead in Christ will Rise First



Some have misunderstood the expression “the dead in Christ will rise first” to mean that the resurrection of the unbelievers will not take place until sometime after the believers have risen. But remember Paul’s main point in all this—one group of believers will not precede another group. And in the very next words, Paul emphasizes that it is only after the sleeping believers have been raised that the living believers will join them in meeting with the Lord.

How would you use this section to encourage other believers?

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1 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER FIVE

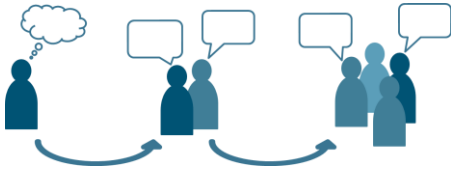
1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Helpful Notes:

- Verse 5 “*Sons of*”—This expression reflects an Old Testament way of speaking. It means something is closely connected to something else. For example, **Mark 2:19** says “guests of the bridegroom.” The Greek says “sons of the bridegroom.”
- Verse 6 “*Asleep*”—The Greek word for “asleep” here is not the same word Paul used in **4:14** (“those who have fallen asleep”). There Paul was talking about Christians who had died. Here he’s talking about Christians who do not take their faith seriously.

When will Jesus return? (For more on the topic of Jesus’ return, read **Matthew 24-25**.)

How do we live as children of the light and of the day?



Think, Pair, & Share: Take a minute and think about the following questions. Then, pair up with someone else in the room and discuss your answers.

How do you encourage your brother and sisters in Christ?

How do you build them up?

What specific thing will you do to encourage and build them up?

When will you do it?

1 Thessalonians 5:12-15

What are ways that the congregation can help and correct each other?



Self-Reflection: Which of the encouragements and instructions in these verses did I need to hear the most? How will I apply them to my life?

1 Thessalonians 5:16-22

Explain the eight commands that Paul gives for a Christian life in **verses 16-22**?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

How can we be joyful always?

How can we pray continually?

1 Thessalonians 5:23-28

Why can we be certain that God will sanctify us through and through?

How can we apply Paul's command to pray for him and his fellow workers?



Self-Reflection: What do I want to add to my prayers from this section?



1-3 A CELEBRATION OF FAITHFULNESS

2:13-16 THEIR COMMON PERSECUTION



SALONIANS

Love Future Hope

FOLLOWING JESUS PRODUCES A COUNTER-CULTURAL **HOLY** WAY OF LIFE...

...THAT RESPONDS TO HOSTILITY WITH **LOVE** & GENEROSITY.

...THAT IS MOTIVATED BY **HOPE** IN THE COMING KINGDOM OF JESUS.

4-5 A CHALLENGE TO GROW

7:1-6 HOLINESS & SEXUAL PURITY

FOLLOWING JESUS' TEACHINGS ON SEX & MARRIAGE (MATTHEW 5:27-32, 19:1-12)

APHRODITE

7:9-12 COMMITMENT TO LOVE & SERVICE

WORKING HARD SO THAT YOU CAN BE GENEROUS TO OTHERS (SEE 2 THESSALONIANS 3:11-15)

PRAYER FOR ENDURANCE

TO INCREASE OUR LOVE, HOLINESS, & HOPE!

PRAYER OF HOPE

MAY GOD KEEP YOU HOLY AS YOU AWAIT THE ARRIVAL OF JESUS.

7:13-16 FUTURE HOPE OF JESUS' RETURN

WHAT'S THEIR FATE WHEN JESUS RETURNS?

THOSE WHO HAVE DIED IN THE MESSIAH WILL RISE. (4:16)

COMPARED WITH

CAESAR'S ARRIVAL MET BY HIS DELEGATES

JESUS' ARRIVAL MET BY HIS PEOPLE. (4:17)

PEACE & SECURITY!

5:1-11 THIS HOPE SHOULD MOTIVATE BROTHERHOODNESS

THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL BRING THEIR SUDDEN RUIN... (5:2-3)

...SO LIVE IN THE PRESENT AS IF THAT DAY IS ALREADY HERE. (5:4)

created by the Bible Project



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1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

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Outline of 2 Thessalonians

Theme: Carry On

I. Introduction (ch. 1)

- A. Salutation (1:1–2)
- B. Thanksgiving for Their Faith, Love and Perseverance (1:3–10)
- C. Intercession for Their Spiritual Progress (1:11–12)

II. Instruction (ch. 2)

- A. Prophecy Regarding the Day of the Lord (2:1–12)
- B. Thanksgiving for Their Election and Calling (2:13–15)
- C. Prayer for Their Service and Testimony (2:16–17)

III. Injunctions (ch. 3)

- A. Call to Prayer (3:1–3)
- B. Charge to Discipline for the Disorderly and Lazy (3:4–15)
- C. Conclusion, Greeting and Benediction (3:16–18)

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2 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER ONE

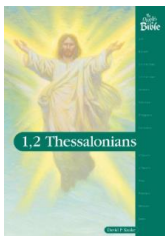
2 Thessalonians 1:1-2

Compare **1 Thessalonians 1:1** & **2 Thessalonians 1:1-2**. What's the same? What's different? What's the significance of the things that are the same? What's the significance of the things that are different?

1 Thessalonians 1:1 (NIV) ¹ Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you.

2 Thessalonians 1:1-2 (NIV) ¹ Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: ² Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

PEOPLE'S BIBLE COMMENTARY: How Much Time has Passed?



It seems Paul was still in Corinth when he composed **2 Thessalonians** because Silas and Timothy were with him, just as when he had written the first letter. It would be difficult to find a time after Paul left Corinth and completed his second mission journey when we could say with certainty that these two companions were together with Paul again... The fact that Paul most likely wrote from Corinth also suggests that he wrote **2 Thessalonians** only a matter of months after the first letter. After Paul had sent that first letter, news came from Thessalonica about several matters that required a follow-up letter. How the news came we don't know. But since Thessalonica and Corinth were both important crossroads cities, it is not hard to understand that news traveled from one city to the other and back again within a few weeks' time

2 Thessalonians 1:3-12

What is the evidence that God's judgment is right?

What comfort does Paul give believers undergoing persecution?



*What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry Ev'rything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit, Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry Ev'rything to God in prayer!*
(Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal 411:1)

How can we boast rightly in the work other congregations are doing today?

What picture does Paul give here of Jesus' return? What does this add to what we read in **1 Thessalonians 4:16**? To other parts in the Bible?

In **verse 8**, what does it mean to “obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus?” (C.f. **Acts 16:29-34; Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 1:16-17; 10:17; 1 Corinthians 12:3**)

For reference, here is the Greek word that is translated as “obey”: ὑπακούω – meaning to follow instructions, obey, be subject to, be in full compliance to, embrace in full surrender.

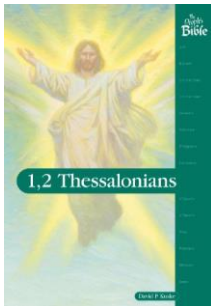
EHV STUDY BIBLE: Obey the Gospel



The Evangelical
Heritage Version
Study Bible

The gospel proclaims the truth that everything has already been done for our salvation. Anyone who refuses to believe this truth or who tries to add something to what Christ has done is guilty of not obeying the gospel.

PEOPLE’S BIBLE COMMENTARY: Obey the Gospel

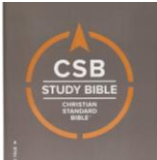


Paul writes to two groups in this section. One group is those who, although they knew the true God not only as the God of creation but also as the Savior-God, refused to believe that it was by Christ’s redeeming work alone that they are righteous. In various ways they insisted on adding something they did to what Christ had already completed for them, and so they denied Christ. This is what Paul means when he says that they “do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.” The gospel tells us that everything is done for our salvation and, therefore, we are not to try to add anything, otherwise “grace would no longer be grace” (**Romans 11:6**). The Thessalonians undoubtedly caught the fact that the Jews who were persecuting them fit into this second group. It was the particular sin of the unbelieving Jews that although they were God’s chosen people, they disregarded the righteousness that God provided them in Christ. Instead they sought to establish their own righteousness. In this they were guilty of not submitting to, or not obeying, the gospel. Since Paul is speaking in broad terms here of God’s final judgment, he is referring not only to those persecuting Jews in Thessalonica but to all who follow their fatal self-righteous error.



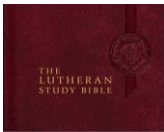
CONCORDIA SELF-STUDY BIBLE: Obey the Gospel

The gospel invites acceptance, and rejection is disobedience to a royal invitation.



CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE STUDY BIBLE: Obey the Gospel

The phrase those who don't know God is a reference to unbelieving Gentiles (**1 Thessalonians 4:5**). Those who don't obey the gospel is probably a reference to many Jews who had rejected the witness of the apostles to Jesus as Messiah and Lord.



THE LUTHERAN STUDY BIBLE: Obey the Gospel

Faith obeys; obedience is faithful. Rejection of the Gospel is disobedience to the divine invitation to faith and life.

How is hell described in **verse 9**?

Why did Paul pray for the Thessalonians that God by his power would fulfill "every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith?"

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2 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

A report, letter, or prophecy that asserts that the day of the Lord had already come had unsettled the Thessalonian Christians. Do we experience this today? How?

What two things does Paul say will happen before the "day of the Lord?" (C.f. **Matthew 24:9-12; 1 John 2:18-23; 4:1-1-3; Daniel 7:20-27**)

What details does Paul give us to identify this "man of lawlessness?" Who could fit this description?

The “man of lawlessness” is the “Antichrist.” What is the “Antichrist?” Where else does the Bible talk about this?

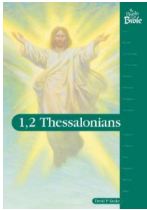
The Greek preposition “anti” means either “against” or “in place of.” In the term antichrist, both meanings make sense: an agent of Satan who opposes Christ and is trying to replace Christ. Antichrist is one of a number of metaphors that the Scripture uses to teach Christians about Satan’s human partners who do his work of trying to destroy people’s relationship with their Savior.

The term antichrist occurs only in John’s epistles, **1 John 2:18–23; 4:3;** and **2 John 7. Daniel 7:8, 20–26** prophesies of a little horn that will persecute the saints of God. **Daniel 11:36–39** speaks of an evil king who will say unheard-of things against God. In **Matthew 24:24** Jesus warns against false Christs and false prophets. John refers to the false prophet in **Revelation 16:13. Revelation** is rich in these metaphors: John sees also the beast of the earth in **13:11–18**, the great prostitute in **chapter 17**, and Babylon in **chapter 18. 2 Thessalonians 2:3–12** describes the terrible man of lawlessness. These nine metaphors, although very different in imagery, overlap considerably in meaning.

What are the marks of an antichrist in **1 John 2:18-23; 4:3; & 2 John 7**?

- It was happening already in the first century (“even now”).
- There were many of them (note plural—“antichrists”).
- These false teachers had left the fellowship (“they went out from us”).
- They were now apostate, fallen away from the faith and no longer part of God’s family (“they did not really belong to us”).
- Whoever denied Jesus as the Christ was a liar and the antichrist (in **1 John 2:22** there is a definite article). Denying Jesus as the Christ meant denying the Father as well. The spirit of antichrist denies that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. That spirit is already in the world. Anyone who does not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh is a deceiver and the antichrist (here again 2 John 7 has the definite article).
- John is most likely referring to the early Gnostics.
- Knowing your Scriptures will help you identify the false teachers. A supervisor once gave his staff the following definition of a problem: “A problem is a deviation from standard.” Our Lutheran Confessions describe “justification by faith” as our standard, the doctrine by which the church rises and falls. Anything that deviates from that norm is a problem. Antichrists will attack the teachings that Jesus is God from all eternity and that we are saved by faith *alone* in the merits of Christ.

PEOPLE'S BIBLE COMMENTARY: Who is the Man of Lawlessness?



Numerous misinterpretations and speculations have arisen from this prophecy. Many people contend that we cannot know for sure what the fulfillment of this prophecy is. Yet if we take everything that Paul says, neither leaving any of it out nor ignoring or altering the meaning of words, the fulfillment does become clear. This prophecy is fulfilled in the line of men who have served and will serve in the papacy of the Roman Catholic Church...

There are nine points to keep in mind about the apostasy and the Antichrist:

1. The falling away from the truth of salvation would be accompanied by the revelation of the Antichrist, the man of sin.
2. The Antichrist would exalt himself so that he would become the equal of God in the hearts of men.
3. The opposition to Christ was already at work when Paul wrote these words, but God was holding it back from working openly.
4. Eventually God would let it work openly, and this would result in the Antichrist being clearly revealed as an opponent of God.
5. With his Word, Jesus would overthrow the power of the Antichrist.
6. At his second coming, Jesus would completely destroy the Antichrist.
7. The Antichrist would be successful in bringing about the apostasy, because Satan would support him with miracles to mislead many.
8. Satan would also use his power to lead the Antichrist's followers to join the man of sin in denying the truth of salvation.
9. Because of their denial of the truth, God would harden the Antichrist's followers in the delusion that they were on the way to salvation when really they were perishing.

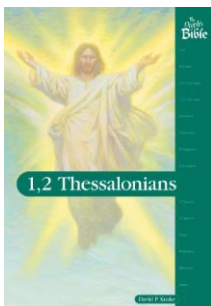
Note in particular two key facts included in all nine points. First, the Antichrist is clearly a religious teacher. He claims to be doing Christ's work, while in fact he is one of the worst opponents Christ would ever have. Second, the span of time of the Antichrist stretches from Paul's time to the end of the world. This includes the Antichrist's rise, time of glory, and the time of continued, though broken, power...

The major result of the Antichrist's exaltation, then, would be that in the Christian church he would tyrannize the hearts of believers by demanding to be recognized as God's equal. The clearest fulfillment of this in the Roman Catholic papacy is the consistent upholding of the principle that the "tradition" (the official teachings of popes and councils) be given equal place with, and in some cases greater authority than, the Word of God. Moreover, the exaltation of the papacy over every one of God's earthly representatives in the family, state, and church was proclaimed by Pope Boniface VIII (1294–1303): "It is altogether necessary to salvation for every human being to be subject to the Roman Pontiff." This proclamation still stands as the official position of the papacy.

More important than identifying the "man of lawlessness," what is his fate?

What is the meaning of **verse 7**? The secret power of lawlessness already at work? The one who holds it back and will continue to do so until he is taken out of the way?

PEOPLE'S BIBLE COMMENTARY: 2 Thessalonians 2:7



In **verse 7** we will come to the statement by Paul that it was a person who was holding the Antichrist back. But here Paul says it was a thing (neuter) holding back the Antichrist. That "thing," which was a matter of common knowledge to the Thessalonians, was the Word of God and the believers' love for that Word. By his Word, Christ maintains his place in the hearts of believers against anyone who would try to displace him. As Paul counsels in **Colossians 3:16**, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." By believing and sharing that Word, Paul and the Thessalonians were using the "thing" by which the man of sin would be held back. When

in later years the love for God's Word would grow cold in the church, then God would allow the Antichrist to come into full bloom and exalt himself in the hearts of people.

Paul warns the Thessalonians that “the secret power of lawlessness is already at work.” There were attacks on the truth of the gospel already at this early date. Either shortly before he wrote his letters to the Thessalonians or about the same time, Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians. There he condemned a “gospel” that pretended to be genuine but was not. Soon Paul and the other apostles would have to write many other letters warning against men who were trying to tyrannize the hearts of believers by imposing their own doctrines as the equal of God’s Word. Elsewhere Paul warns about “false prophets, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ” (**2 Corinthians 11:13**). Peter issues a similar warning: “There were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you” (**2 Peter 2:1**). And John even calls one of them by name: “Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us” (**3 John 9**).

Why would God send people a powerful delusion so that they believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness? (C.f. **Romans 1:24-25**)

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

How is someone saved from the great rebellion and the man of lawlessness? (C.f. **1 Thessalonians 1:4-5**)

KEEP
CALM
AND
CARRY
ON



2 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER THREE

2 Thessalonians 3:1-5

In what ways do Christians honor the message of the gospel?

How will these verses help in face of the great rebellion and the man of lawlessness?



Self-Reflection: What of these petitions will I add to my daily prayers?

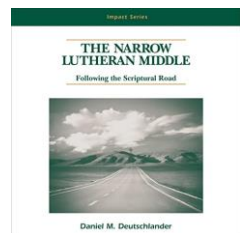
2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

What is Paul's command here? Why couldn't the idle members of the congregation in Thessalonica plead ignorance regarding this command?

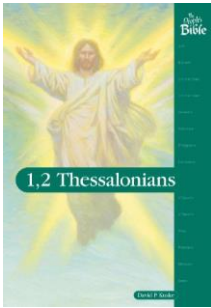
What is Paul's primary concern in giving this command?

What two things did Paul urge the idle to do to show their repentance?

Thinking of the narrow Lutheran middle road, how should we apply these verses to our lives?



PEOPLE'S BIBLE COMMENTARY: No Work, No Eating?



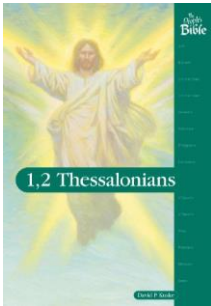
Much has been made of this “rule” stated by Paul. Some have used it to attack the system of labor unions we have in our country. Others have used it to say that the United States’ welfare system is wrong. We must be careful, however, to read the rule carefully. It does not say, “If a man doesn’t work,” but, “If a man will not work.” The Greek word for “will not” points to an attitude in the person. If this point is clear, we can apply the rule properly. Labor unions and the welfare system were not established to foster a sinful attitude of idleness and living off others. It is true that they have been abused by some who have this attitude. As Christian

citizens we will speak out against such abuses and try to change them. Labor unions and the welfare system do serve God-pleasing purposes. They prevent the fleecing of workers by greedy employers. They correct working conditions harmful to the human body, which is God’s creation. They assist people who cannot work because there is none available or because they are too disabled or ill.

Your teenage son has been sitting around all summer, doing nothing. His parents threaten him with Paul’s rule: “If a man will not work, he shall not eat.” Are they right or wrong to do this? Explain your answer?

Explain how a Christian can refuse to associate with someone and make him or her feel ashamed and yet treat that person as a brother or sister and not as an enemy. (C.f. **1 Corinthians 5:11-13**)

PEOPLE'S BIBLE COMMENTARY: Brother/Sister or Enemy?



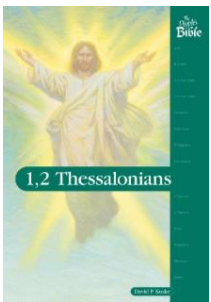
2 Thessalonians 3:14-15 is an important section for explaining the purpose of church discipline and how to carry it out in love. It also establishes a number of truths about the disassociation or denial of fellowship we must practice over against a persistent sinner: (1) This is done not only when someone denies basic truths of our Christian faith, such as the person or work of Christ, but also when he denies our Savior's will in any way. This includes what might seem to some to be such an insignificant matter as loafing. (2) Every member of the congregation is to take care in any daily contact with a person under discipline that he

does not undermine the congregation's purpose. Members dare not soften the church's law message to the unrepentant sinner. (3) The first step in dealing with such a person is not to disassociate from him. Rather, as Paul did, we will patiently instruct (his visit to Thessalonica), warn (**1 Thessalonians**), and warn again (**2 Thessalonians**). Then if a person does not repent, we will disassociate. Even this will be done in the frame of mind that we are dealing with a brother, not an enemy.

2 Thessalonians 3:16-18

What peace do you have from **1 & 2 Thessalonians**?

PEOPLE'S BIBLE COMMENTARY: Greeting in My Own Hand



Paul emphasizes that he is writing the greeting here at the end of this letter in his own handwriting. Does this imply that someone else wrote the rest of the letter and Paul dictated it? Most likely. The Thessalonians had been unsettled by a rumor started by a letter that Paul supposedly wrote. Consequently, he assures them this letter was not forged but genuine. He adds that this was his regular practice, by which they could easily distinguish any forged letters from those really written by him. They could compare any other supposed letters from him with the genuine handwriting they had in this one, because he says, "This is how I write."



**KEEP
CALM
AND
CARRY
ON**

1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

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2 THESSA

1-3
1 HOPE DESPITE PERSECUTION
1-7-12

THANKSGIVING PRAYER

I THANK GOD FOR YOUR **FAITH, Love, and ENDURANCE.**

PERSECUTION HAS INTENSIFIED

SUFFERING = PARTICIPATION IN GOD'S KINGDOM

JESUS' FOLLOWERS SHOW THEIR **VICTORY** THROUGH NON-VIOLENCE & ENDURANCE

THE ULTIMATE TRAGEDY

"THEY WILL BE BANISHED AWAY FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD & FROM THE GLORY OF HIS POWER" (1-9)

JESUS' RETURN = FINAL JUSTICE

1-11-12

MAY THE LORD JESUS BE HONORED THROUGH YOU.

2
THE DAY OF THE LORD

PAUL SAYS: THE DAY OF THE LORD IS **ALREADY** UPON US!!

GOD'S FINAL JUSTICE ON EVIL

DID JESUS COME A THIEF IN THE NIGHT? (SEE THESSALONIANS)

REMEMBER WHAT I TAUGHT YOU...

...THE WORLD WILL KEEP PRODUCING RULERS WHO REBEL & EXALT THEMSELVES ABOVE GOD...

A WITNESS PAUL EXPECTS TO BE REPEATED

ROMAN EMPERORS

SEE ISAIAH 13:19

SEE DANIEL 7:12

BUT NO FOREVER

THE POINT:

- IS NOT TO FUEL APOCALYPTIC SPEC
- IS TO COMFORT THE THESSALON
- RECALL JESUS' TEACHINGS (SEE P

THE EVENTS LEADING TO JESUS' RETURN WILL BE **OBVIOUS!** YOU DON'T NEED TO BE SCARED.

LONIANANS

BELIEF IN JESUS' RETURN & HOPE FOR FINAL JUSTICE

• NOT SPECULATION ABOUT TIMELINES



• INSPIRED HOPE & FAITHFULNESS FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR SHAPE WHAT YOU LIVE FOR.

OF THE LORD

"I NEVER SAID THAT!"

"JESUS HAS ABANDONED US!!!!"

"I'M LIKE 'TIGHT?' (5:2)"

"WILL I BREAK VIOLENCE & HAVOC ON GOD'S WORLD..."

"JESUS WILL CONFRONT THE REBEL... & DELIVER HIS PEOPLE."

"...MAY THE LORD GIVE YOU COMFORT & STRENGTH"

"2:16-17"

"HEW!"

"...MAY THE LORD OF PEACE GRANT YOU PEACE"

"...MAY THE LORD OF PEACE GRANT YOU PEACE"

3 CHALLENGE TO THE "IDLE"

NOT LAZY, BUT IRRESPONSIBLE & REFUSING TO WORK (SEE 1 THESSALONIANS 4:10-12, 5:14)

POSSIBLE: "JESUS COULD RETURN AT ANY MOMENT!" "WHY WORK? I QUIT!"

MORE LIKELY: "ROMAN PATRONAGE" "CLIENTS (like personal assistants)" "FETCH ME SIX EGGS." "FETCH ME SIX PROSTITUTES. !?" "SOME OF YOU ARE LEADING A DISORDERED LIFE, NOT WORKING, BUT MEDDLING IN THE BUSINESS OF OTHERS." (5:11)

PAUL'S EXAMPLE: "IMITATING JESUS' SELF-GIVING LOVE" "PROVIDING FOR HIMSELF TO SERVE OTHERS FREE OF CHARGE"

THE IDEAL: "WORKING HARD SO THEIR LIVES CAN BENEFIT OTHERS"

"3:16-18" "MAY THE LORD OF PEACE GRANT YOU PEACE"

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Graphic Design was done by Wendy Klein

Call, text, or e-mail with any question.

Mobile: 385-319-1026

E-mail: pastorklein@lotvlayton.org