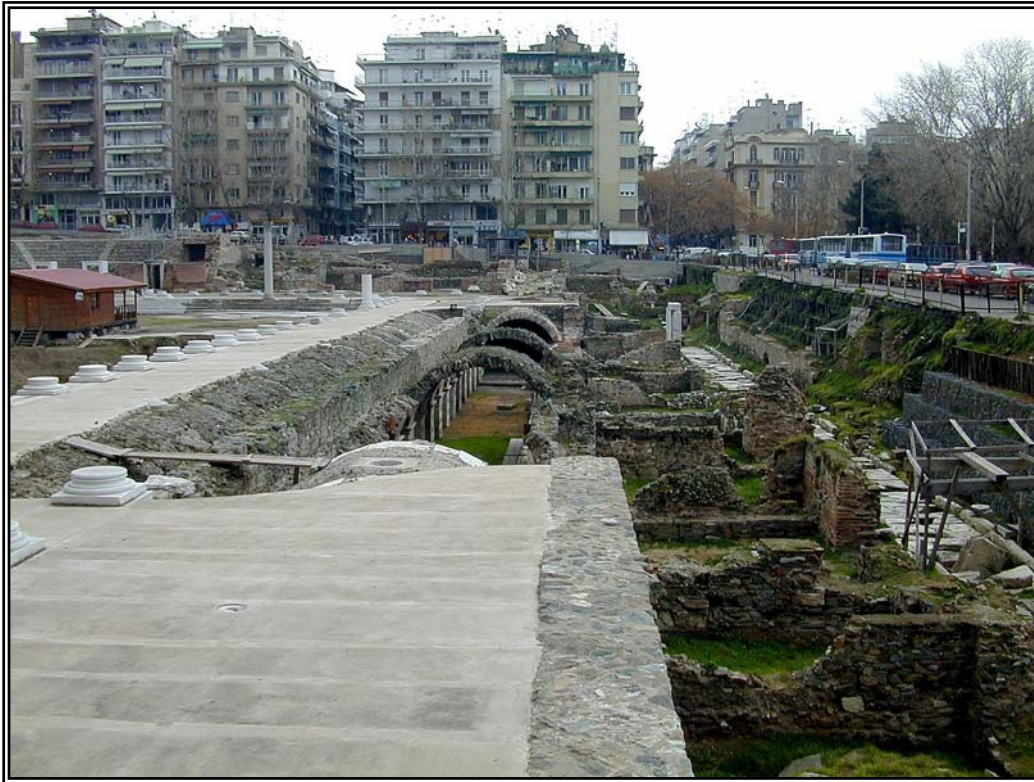


1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

Introductions and Outlines



Ancient Ruins of Thessalonica in Midst of Modern Salonika
(See page 32 for Map)

Charles R. Williams

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THE CITY OF THESSALONICA

Introduction:

Background, the city of Thessalonica:

1. Thessalonica was the capital city of the Roman province of Macedonia and was visited by the apostle Paul on at least three occasions; (1) Acts 17:1-4; (2) 20:1; (3) 20:2-3.
2. The modern city of Salonika has over the centuries been built on top of the ancient ruins of Thessalonica.
 - a. Because of this, it would be hard to find any footsteps of Paul there today.
 - b. This fact has prevented any extensive archeological exploration.
 - c. The few archeological sites are surrounded by city sprawl.
 - d. On the other hand there are a number of museums displaying artifacts of the ancient city.
3. Thessalonica was the site of many cults, reflecting the cosmopolitan mix of the population.
 - a. Archeology has uncovered places for worship of the Greek Pantheon, the Emperor, and cults such as those of Isis, Serapis, Osiris and Mithra.
 - b. Adherence to the belief systems and ritual practices of these cults gave people identity, meaning and value.
 - c. Shifting their allegiance “to serve a living and true God” meant refusing to participate in the intricate web of local cults that gave sacred legitimization to the empire.
4. Thessalonica was built near a natural and safe harbor and was located in a strategic area.
 - a. **Typography:**
 - (1) The city was strategically located on the Thermaic Gulf to the West of the Chalcidice River.
 - (2) The Via Egnatia, the main highway connecting Europe and Asia, passed through the city and linked it with all the important cities of Macedonia.
 - (3) It was the only city on the Via Egnatia which had a port open to the sea.
 - (4) Many times it outstripped Athens in commerce, and even today is the second largest city in Greece after Athens.
 - (5) When Paul arrived, he found a walled city of about 65,000 people, the largest city and capital of Macedonia, and one of the largest cities in the Roman Empire.
 - (6) Paul would have entered the city through a gate on the Via Egnatia.

(7) Cicero described it as a city “situated in the bosom of our domain.”

b. History:

(1) It is believed that the city was founded by Cassander (a general of Alexander the Great) in 315 B.C. and named for his wife (Alexander’s step-sister) who was the daughter of Philip II, the father of Alexander the Great.

(2) It was the chief port of Macedonia.

(3) It surrendered to the Romans after the battle of Pydna and became the capital of the second of four districts of Macedonia in 167 B.C.

NOTE: The arena you see on the right in the picture on the cover page was built during this period by the Romans.

NOTE: The agora (market place), pictured near the bottom of the cover page picture existed during the time of Paul.

(4) Later, Macedonia was made a single province and Thessalonica, the capital.

(5) During the Roman civil war, it was the headquarters for Pompey’s army.

(a) In the campaign against Cassius and Brutus, the city sided with Antony and Octavian and was declared a free city because of its loyalty.

(b) It enjoyed freedom of local autonomy during the period of the Roman Empire and became the most prosperous of the Macedonian cities.

5. Paul first visited Thessalonica after Philippi on his **second missionary journey**.

a. Because of its location, it became an invaluable center for the spread of the Gospel.

(1) Paul was later to say, “...the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere,” 1 Thess. 1:8.

(2) The church in Thessalonica became an example in spreading the good news and in sacrificial giving (1 Thess. 1:8; 2 Cor. 8:1-5).

(3) They became known as the people who “first gave of themselves,” 2 Cor. 8:5

b. Paul first appeared and preached at the local synagogue, and as a result some Jews and proselytes believed, including a number of prominent women (Acts 17:2-4).

(1) However, this prompted the Jews who refused the gospel to stir up the Gentile population to persecute Paul and Silas.

(2) A flourishing church was founded there during three weeks of ministry, which ended when the mob attacked the house of Jason where Paul was staying.

(3) Paul and Silas were forced to flee to Berea (Acts 17:5-10).

c. Paul no doubt returned to the city on his **third missionary journey**, though only a general ministry in Macedonia is specifically mentioned (Acts 20: 1).

- d. It is also mentioned that he returned through the same territory, thus bringing him back through or in the vicinity of Thessalonica on his **third missionary journey** (Acts 20:2-3).
6. Later, while in prison at Rome, Paul entertained a hope of visiting Macedonia again (Phil. 1:25-26; 2:24).
- a. After his release from his first imprisonment in Rome, he ministered in the vicinity of Thessalonica and may well have revisited the city (1 Tim. 1:3, Macedonia; 2 Tim. 4:13, Troas; Titus 3:12, Nicopolis).
 - b. The churches of Thessalonica and Philippi were congregations that gave Paul much encouragement in his work in the kingdom.

THE FIRST LETTER TO THE THESSALONIANS

Introduction:

A. Background:

1. On his second missionary journey (A.D. 49) Paul and his companions, Silas and Timothy, came from Philippi to Thessalonica and founded the church there (1 Thess. 1:1; Phil 4:16; Acts 17:1-10; 18:5).
 - a. The congregation was largely Gentile (1 Thess. 1:9; 2:14; Acts 17:4) although Aristarchus, a Jewish Christian, is specifically mentioned in Acts 20:4; Col. 4:10ff).
 - b. The account of Acts (17:2) may indicate that Paul worked in Thessalonica three to four weeks, although some scholars believe that the phrase “three sabbaths” was a reference only to his ministry in the synagogue, and thus Paul might have been there as long as six months.
 - c. The church grew swiftly both numerically and spiritually.
 - d. The work, however, had not been easy.
 - (1) The Jews stirred up the rabble of the city against Paul and Silas so that they had to flee by night to Berea (Acts 17:5ff).
 - (2) After Paul and Silas arrived in Berea, the Jews in Thessalonica, hearing about their success there, came to Berea in order to stir up a riot against God’s servants (Acts 17:13).
 - (3) The result was that Silas and Timothy were left in Berea while Paul was escorted to Athens (Acts 17:14-15).
 - (4) Paul then sent word that Silas and Timothy join him in Athens (Acts 17:15) and thus the two departed from Berea to meet Paul.
 - (5) Paul was so concerned about the work in Thessalonica, however, that once they arrived in Athens, he sent Timothy back to the church in Thessalonica “to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, that no one should be shaken by these afflictions...,” 1 Thess. 3:1-5.

- (6) There were a number of occasions during this time when Paul wanted to return to Thessalonica, but Satan hindered him (1 Thess. 2:17).
 - (7) Timothy caught up with Paul in Corinth and gave him a report about the church in Thessalonica, thus presenting the occasion for the writing of 1 Thessalonians to the church in Thessalonica (1 Thess. 3:6; Acts 17:16; 18:1, 5).
2. The church at Thessalonica became a glowing example of work, patience, mission mindedness and sacrifice (1 Thess. 1:3, 7-8; 2 Cor. 8:1-7).

B. Authorship:

1. The epistle presents itself as being from Paul (1:1).
2. The companions mentioned were known to have accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey (1:1; 3:3, 6; Acts 15:40; 16:1-3, 19; 17:4, 10, 14; 18:5).
3. Its form is identical with Romans, 2 Corinthians, and Galatians.
4. Concerning extra-Biblical sources, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Marcion, and Ireneus, all testify to the authenticity of 1 Thessalonians.

C. Place and Date of Origin:

1. It is generally agreed that it was written in the early fifties (A.D. 50-51, no later than A.D. 53) in the city of Corinth where he received a report from Timothy who had just revisited the church in Thessalonica.
2. Many believe that this was Paul's oldest preserved epistle (others believe that Galatians was written first).

D. Occasion and Purpose:

1. Paul received his inducement to write 1 Thessalonians from the reports which Timothy brought him from Thessalonica to Paul who was in Corinth (Acts 18:5; 1 Thess. 3:6).
2. There is some hint that the Thessalonians might have written Paul a letter with questions in reference to the subjects of "brotherly love" and "the day of the Lord," 1 Thess. 4:9; 5:5:1-2 and thus answers their questions in this letter.
 - a. Similar phraseology is used elsewhere by Paul to denote written replies made concerning specific inquires (1 Cor. 5:9, 11).
 - b. It is clear, however, that Paul mentions a letter sent to him in 1 Corinthians, but he does not mention a specific letter in 1 Thessalonians.

3. Timothy's report led Paul to counsel them in the following:
 - a. He commended them for their steadfastness under trial and encouraged them for whatever future conflicts they might experience (2:14; 3:1-4).
 - b. He defended his conduct and motives against those who had been seeking to malign him (2:1-12).
 - c. He reiterated the Christian standard of holiness for those new converts who were still tempted by the prevailing immorality of the time (4:1-8).
 - d. He clarified certain features of the doctrine of Christ's Return for the sake of those members of the congregation who had become concerned over the welfare of departed loved ones (4:13-18).
 - e. He rebuked those in the congregation who had become lax in tending to their daily tasks in light of what they considered to be the immediately impending return of Christ (4:11).
 - f. He urged his readers to respect their leaders (5:12).
 - g. He attempted to correct erroneous attitudes toward spiritual gifts which some apparently were endeavoring to repress (5:19-20).

E. Doctrine:

1. Paul teaches about the doctrine of God:
 - a. There is one true God as in contrast to all pagan deities (1 Thess 1:9).
 - b. The gospel has been derived from this one true God (1 Thess. 2:2).
 - c. It was to this same God they ultimately were to submit themselves for approval of their labor (1 Thess. 2:4, 10).
 - d. This God providentially directed their lives (1 Thess. 3:11).
 - e. He was the One who would perfect the Thessalonians at the coming of Christ (1 Thess. 5:23).
 - f. He is now calling them unto His own kingdom and glory (1 Thess. 2:12).
 - g. God is faithful to accomplish the work He had begun (1 Thess. 5:24).
2. Paul teaches about the doctrine of Christ:
 - a. The Son is united with the Father as One.
 - b. Christ is described as the "Lord Jesus Christ," and "Lord" was the term commonly used by the Jews of that day to describe God.
 - c. Christ will return again to gather the saved and take them to the Father.
3. Paul teaches about the Holy Spirit:
 - a. The word Paul preached did not come in word only, but was demonstrated by the power of the Holy Spirit to be from God (1 Thess. 1:5; see also Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4; Acts 2:22, 43; 2 Cor. 12:12; 1 Cor. 12:4, 7, 11; Eph. 4:7).

- b. Though they suffered much affliction, the word they received from God by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul gave them joy (1 Thess. 1:6).
 - c. They were not to quench the Holy Spirit's power in the gifts that were given to them by Paul nor to despise the prophecies that came from those who had the gift of prophecy (1 Thess. 5:19-20).
 - d. He who would reject the commandment Paul gave them through the Lord regarding sexual purity and instead commits sexual immorality, rejects not man, but God, who has given us the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 4:1-8; see also Acts 5:32; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:18-20).
4. Paul teaches about salvation:
- a. We should live together with Christ; for it is through Him that we receive salvation (1 Thess. 5:9-10).
 - b. They were saved after they heard the word, believed the truth, and obeyed the gospel, not as if the word he preached were from men, but as it is in truth, the word of God (1 Thess. 2:13 see also 2 Thess. 1:8; 2:13, 15).
 - c. They knew that their hope is in Christ because of His resurrection, His return, and our resurrection by His power (1 Thess. 1:10; 4:14).
5. Paul teaches about eschatology (the return or second appearance or second revelation and coming) of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- a. We wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, and who will deliver us from the wrath to come (1 Thess. 1:10).
 - b. Our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoicing will be in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming (1 Thess. 2:19).
 - c. We need to be established and our hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 3:13).
 - d. Paul gave lessons and a description about the Second Coming of Christ:
 - (1) Those who have died in Christ have hope, but those who have died out of Christ have no hope (1 Thess 4:13-18).
 - (2) God will bring with Him those who are dead in Jesus.
 - (3) Those who are alive when Jesus comes again will not arise and meet Jesus before the dead in Christ do, but they will arise together and meet Jesus in the air.
 - (4) The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise from the dead first.
 - (5) Afterwards, those that are alive in Christ will be caught up "together" in the clouds with those who were dead in Christ and made to live again, to meet the Lord in the air.
 - (6) After the resurrection and ascension to Christ, the saints will always be with the Lord, which is a great comfort to them.

MAJOR OUTLINE OF THE FIRST LETTER TO THE THESSALONIANS

Introduction:

1. This letter was written to urge the Thessalonians to worthwhile conduct and work in the light of the return of Christ.
2. It was also written to comfort them concerning those who had died in the Lord.
3. Finally, it was written to instruct them in the elementary truths of the gospel.

Part One: Paul Gives Five Characteristics of the Church in Thessalonica (1:1-9).

I. The Church In Thessalonica Is An Energetic Church (1:1-3).

- A. Paul makes mention of his associates, Silvanus (Silas), and Timothy.
- B. Paul gives his usual salutation of grace and peace to them from the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- C. Paul gives thanks to God for them and mentions them in his prayers on a regular basis.
 1. He remembers in his prayers their **work of faith** (work produced by faith).
 - a. Faith is active, not passive.
 - (1) It is a work of God, John 6:29.
 - (2) It is a commandment of God, 1 John 3:23.
 - b. Faith comes because of hearing and/or study, 1 Thess. 2:13; Romans 10:17; Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:19-29; John 20:30-31; Eph. 3:3-4.
 - c. Faith demonstrates its worth by works, James 2:24; Hebrews 11:7-19; Romans 1:5; 2:8; 6:17; 16:26.
 2. He remembers in his prayers their **labor of love** (labor which arose out of love).
 - a. “Love” is a verb as well a noun or (predicate) adjective; John 3:16; John 14:15; 1 Cor. 13:14; 1 John 4:8.
 - b. “Love” is the operative word in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

3. He remembers in his prayers their **patience of hope** (steadfastness spurred on by hope) in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - a. Hope in Christ produces patience.
 - b. Hope is the anchor in the storms, Hebrews 6:19.

II. The Church In Thessalonica Is An Elect Church (1:4).

- A. Paul knew they had been chosen by God.
 1. They were chosen from the beginning by the Lord, 2 Thess. 2:13.
 2. They were chosen for salvation, 2 Thess. 2:13-15.
 - a. How? "...through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth."
 - b. How? "to which He called you by our gospel..."
 - c. Why? "for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - d. Result? "Therefore, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word (*hearing*) or our epistle (*reading*)."
- B. Paul knew the evidences which demonstrated their election by God (See III).

III. The Church In Thessalonica Is An Exemplary Church (1:5-7).

- A. The word of God came not to them in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit (1:5).
 1. They had heard from Paul the inspired message of Jesus Christ by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John 16:13-15; Acts 22:14, 18, 26:15-18.
 2. They had seen the power of the Holy Spirit and received gifts by the power of the Holy Spirit, 1 Thess. 5:19-20 (See Hebrews 2:3-4).
- B. The word of God was preached to them by exemplary men (1:5).
- C. The word of God was received in much affliction (1:6).
- D. The word of God was received with joy of the Holy Spirit (1:6).
- E. The word of God, having free course in their hearts, caused them to become examples to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia (1:7; 2 Cor. 8:1-5).

IV. The Church In Thessalonica Is An Evangelistic Church (1:8).

- A. They sounded forth the word of God, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place (1:8).

B. Their faith toward God had gone out and was known by many.

V. The Church In Thessalonica Is An Expectant Church (1:9-10).

A. They had turned from idols to serve the living and true God.

B. They wait for His Son from heaven, whom God raised from the dead.

C. They wait for Jesus who will deliver them from the wrath to come.

Part Two: Paul Gives A Description of His Trip To Thessalonica (2:1-16).

I. Paul Describes The Circumstances In Thessalonica (2:1-16).

A. Their coming to Thessalonica was not in vain (2:1).

1. He had already mentioned that they had turned from idols to a living God (1:9).
2. He had already mentioned their faith, love, patience, and evangelistic fervor (1:3, 8).

B. Their experience of opposition brought much conflict and suffering (2:2).

C. Their message was the gospel of God for which they were bold to speak (2:2).

D. Their motives in preaching to them the word of God were pure (2:3-4).

1. The message did not come from error or uncleanness.
2. The message did not come in deceit, but in truth (See 2 Thess. 2:13).
3. The message had been entrusted to them by God who had approved of them (2:4).
4. The message did not come from a motive of pleasing men, but God who tests their hearts (2:4).

E. Their manner of approach was gentle and genuine (2:5-9).

1. They did not use flattering words (2:5).
2. They did not covet anything from them.
3. They did not seek glory from men even though they were apostles (2:6).
4. They did act gently, as a nursing mother cherishes her own children (2:7).
5. They were willing to impart their own lives to them, because they had become so dear (2:8).
6. They were willing to labor night and day, and not be a burden to any of them as they preached the word of God (2:9).

- F. Their behavior was unblameable (2:10)
 - 1. They were devout and just in all of their dealing with the Thessalonians.
 - 2. They behaved themselves among all the believers.

- G. Their methods were preaching, counseling, and exhortation (2:11).

- H. Their goal was a worthy walk of God who has called us into His own kingdom and glory (2:12).

- I. Their results in preaching in Thessalonica brought thanksgiving (2:13-16).
 - 1. The Thessalonians received the word of God, which they had heard from them.
 - 2. The Thessalonians welcomed what Paul preached as in truth the word of God, and not as the word of me
 - 3. The Thessalonians allowed the word to work in their lives as God had intended.
 - 4. The Thessalonians became imitators of the churches of God in Judea, for they also suffered the same things from their own countrymen (2:14-16).
 - a. These persecutors killed Jesus and their own prophets (2:15).
 - b. These persecutors have persecuted Paul, Silas, Timothy, and the Thessalonians.
 - c. These persecutors do not please God and are contrary to all men.
 - d. These persecutors forbade Paul to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, thus piling up their sins to the limit, but the wrath [of God] has overtaken them [the Jews] to destroy them (2:16); (See Matthew 24:15-28; Luke 19:41-44; 21:6, 20-24, 32).

II. Paul Plans A Trip To Thessalonica (2:17-19).

- A. He explains why he is anxious to revisit them (2:17, 19-20).
 - 1. They are his reward and crown (2:17, 19b).
 - 2. They are his glory and joy (2:19b, 20).

- B. He explains why he has been unable to visit them (2:18).
 - 1. Satan has hindered him.
 - 2. [Compare this with Romans 1:13; 15:22]

Part Three: Paul Gives A Description of the Most Recent News He Received About The Thessalonians (3:1-13).

I. Paul Describes How Concerned He Was About Them (3:1-5).

- A. He calls to remembrance events both during and after his visit to Thessalonica.
 - 1. Paul remained in Athens alone while Timothy was sent to Thessalonica to see how things were going (3:1-4).
 - a. Timothy went to establish them further in their faith.
 - b. Timothy went to encourage them in their faith that no one should be shaken by the afflictions they were suffering.
 - (1) When Paul was with them, he told them they would suffer.
 - (2) When Paul was with them, he told them that God had already informed them that they (Paul, etc.) were appointed for suffering, Acts 9:16.
 - 2. Paul did not want them to be discouraged by the tempter (Satan), and thus his labor among them be in vain (3:5).
- B. He calls to remembrance his concerned feelings about their spiritual welfare.

II. Paul Describes Timothy's News Regarding The Spiritual Welfare of the Thessalonians (3:6-9).

- A. There was the return of Timothy (3:6):
 - 1. Timothy brought Paul good news of their faith and love.
 - 2. Timothy told Paul that they longed to see him again, just as he longed to see them.
- B. There was the rejoicing of Paul (3:7-9):
 - 1. Paul is comforted by the good news (3:7).
 - 2. Paul is given strength to live if they stand fast in the Lord (3:8).
 - 3. Paul is thankful to God for them and the joy that they give him (3:9).
- C. There is the request of Paul (3:10-13).
 - 1. Paul makes a request for himself; that he may see them face to face and perfect what is lacking in their faith (3:10).
 - a. How would Paul accomplish this?

- b. Since faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God, would it not be by teaching them more about Christ, the kingdom, and the Lord's will? (See Eph. 3:1-6; 4:11-16; Heb. 6:1)
2. Paul makes requests for and of the church (3:11-13).
 - a. He asks that God will allow him to see them again (3:11).
 - b. He asks that they will increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as they did to them (3:12).
 - c. He asks that God may establish their hearts blameless in holiness, and that it be found so at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints (3:13).

Part Four: Paul Gives Practical Exhortation and Instruction (4:1-17).

I. Paul Informs Them About The Challenges To Living A Holy Life (4:1-2).

- A. He tells them what they are to do (4:1-2).
 1. They need to abound more and more.
 - a. This means they are to follow Paul's example (4:1).
 - b. This means they are to obey the commandments he gave to them (4:2).
 2. They need to walk as Paul did and please God.
- B. He tells them how they are to do it (4:3-12).
 1. They are to abstain from sexual immorality; for, this is the will of God (4:3).
 2. They are to use their bodies in sanctification and honor rather than in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God (4:4-5).
 - a. Not to do so is to cheat their fellow man (4:6).
 - b. Not to do so is to bring upon themselves God's vengeance.
 - c. Not to do so is to live in uncleanness rather than holiness (4:7).
 - d. Not to do so is to reject God who gave them the Holy Spirit in order that they might teach the truth about these matters (4:8).
 - (a) To reject Paul's word was not to reject Paul, but to reject God; for, Paul's word came by inspiration from God.
 - (b) The words of Paul were the words of Christ.
 3. They are to love one another (4:9-10).
 - a. This is done because we are taught by God to love one another (4:9).

- b. This is done by them, but Paul exhorts them to increase in this more and more (4:10).
- 4. They are to take care of their own business (4:11).
 - a. This is done by aspiring to lead a quiet life.
 - b. This is done by minding our own business and working with our own hands to provide for ourselves and our families (See 2 Thess. 3:10-11).
- 5. They are to walk properly towards those who are not Christians (4:12).

II. Paul Informs Them About The Second Coming of Christ (4:13-18).

- A. He tells them the purpose of this information about the Second Coming (4:13, 18).
 - 1. His teaching on this subject is **to clarify** the future of those who have died in Christ (4:13).
 - a. Paul does not want them to be ignorant of God's plan.
 - b. Paul does not want them to sorrow in the same sense as the rest of the world who have no hope
 - 2. His teaching on this subject is **to comfort** those who have lost loved ones who are in Christ (4:18).
- B. He tells them the particulars of this information about the Second Coming (4:14-17).
 - 1. When the Lord returns, He will bring with him those who sleep in Jesus (those who have died) (4:14).
 - a. Where are these saints coming from that Jesus will bring with Him? (See Luke 16:19-31; 23:43).
 - b. Why is Jesus bringing them with Him? (See 1 Cor. 15:35-58).
 - 2. When the Lord returns, those who are alive in Christ will have no advantage over those who are dead in Christ, and they will not precede into His presence any sooner than those who are dead in Christ (4:15).
 - 3. When the Lord Himself returns, He will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God (4:16).
 - 4. When the Lord returns, the dead in Christ shall rise first.
 - 5. When the Lord returns, those who are alive in Christ shall be caught up together in the clouds with those who were dead in Christ to meet the Lord in the air (4:17).

6. After the saints are gathered together in the air with Christ, they will always be with the Lord.
- C. He tells them to comfort one another with this information about the future of the dead in Christ and the Second Coming of Christ (4:18).

Part Five: Paul Gives Rules For The Church In Light of the Second Coming of Christ (5:1-28).

I. Paul Informs Them of the Rules That Should Govern Their Lives (5:1-22).

A. They are to be **watchful** (5:1-10).

1. There will be no signs concerning the times or the seasons regarding the Second Appearance of Christ (5:1); (See Matthew 24:3, 36-44).
 - a. The day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night (5:2).
 - b. The day of the Lord will be like any other day (See Matthew 24:3, 36-44).
 - (1) The world will be saying, "Peace and safety!" (5:3).
 - (2) The world will end suddenly and destruction will come upon them as labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they shall not escape (See 2 Peter 3:1-13).
 - c. The day of the Lord will not overtake Christians as a thief (5:4-5).
 - (1) That is because they are not in darkness (5:4).
 - (2) That is because they are sons of light and sons of the day (5:5).
 - (3) That is because they are not of the night nor of the darkness.
2. There will be no signs; therefore, they should not sleep as others do, but watch and be sober (5:6-8).
 - a. Those who sleep, sleep at night (5:7).
 - b. Those who get drunk, get drunk at night.
 - c. Those who are of the day (Christians) are sober (5:8).
 - (1) They put on the breastplate of faith and love.
 - (2) They put on a helmet, the hope of salvation.
 - (3) They were not appointed to wrath by God, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ (5:9).
 - (4) They were appointed to live together with Him (5:10).

B. They are to be **helpful** (5:11, 14).

1. This means to comfort each other (5:11).

2. This means to edify one another.
 3. This means to warn those who are unruly (5:14).
 4. This means to comfort the fainthearted.
 5. This means to uphold the weak.
 6. This means to be patient with all.
- C. They are to be **respectful** (5:12-13).
1. This means to recognize those who labor among you (5:12).
 2. This means to recognize those who are over you in the Lord and who instruct, counsel, and warn you (“maintain discipline,” “keep order among you.”).
 - a. They are to be highly esteemed for their work’s sake (5:13).
 - b. They deserve peace among the members of the congregation.
- D. They are to be **merciful** (5:15).
1. This means not render evil for evil to anyone.
 2. This means to always pursue what is good both for themselves and for all.
- E. They are to be **joyful** at all times (5:16).
- F. They are to be **prayerful** (5:17).
- G. They are to be **thankful** in all things for this is the will of Christ for them (5:18).
- H. They are to be **careful** (5:19-22).
1. This means there are things they are not to do.
 - a. They are not to quench the Spirit (5:19).
 - b. They are not to despise those who prophesy nor their utterances (5:20).
(See 1 Cor. 12 & 14).
 2. This means there are things they are to do (5:21-22).
 - a. They are to test all things (5:21).
 - b. They are to hold fast to what is good.
 - c. They are to abstain from every form of evil.

II. Paul Informs Them of the Reassurances That Will Give Them Encouragement (5:23-24).

- A. This is what God will do: (5:23).

1. At the present He will sanctify us completely (23a).
 2. In the future He will present us blameless at Christ's coming (23b).
- B. This is why God will do it: The God that calls us is faithful (5:24).

III. Paul Informs Them of the Requests He Has of Them and For Them (5:25-28).

- A. He wants them to pray for him (5:25).
- B. He wants them to greet everyone for him with a holy kiss (5:26).
- C. He wants this letter to be read to all the brethren (5:27).
- D. He wants the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to be with them (5:28).

THE SECOND LETTER TO THE THESSALONIANS

An Introduction

A. Background:

1. See background material for 1 Thessalonians.
2. Since Paul's first letter, the seeds of false doctrine had been sown among the Thessalonians, causing them to waver in their faith.
3. Someone came to Paul to inform him of this false doctrine.
4. This second letter was written to give them continual encouragement in the good things they were doing and to correct the false teaching and misunderstandings about the coming day of the Lord that had been sown in the church at Thessalonica.

B. Authorship:

1. The epistle presents itself as being from Paul (1:1; 3:17).
2. As with 1 Thessalonians, the companions mentioned were known to have accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey (1:1; Acts 15:40; 16:1-3; 17:4, 10, 14:18:5).
3. What is written in the second letter is tied in with what Paul had written in his first letter to the church at Thessalonica.
4. Its authorship by Paul was confirmed by early church historians (See introduction to 1 Thessalonians under "Authorship").
 - a. The evidence for this Epistle is earlier and more extensive than that of the first Epistle.
 - b. Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria of the second and third centuries quote from this Epistle.

C. Place and Date of Origin:

1. The date of 2 Thessalonians is dependent upon knowing the time lapse between the writing of the first letter and the second.
2. Some hold that it was only a few days and others up to a year before the second letter was written.

3. Some time would need to elapse for the sowing of false doctrine in the church at Thessalonica and for Paul to be informed about it, perhaps two to three months.
4. This would require a date in the fall or early winter of either A.D. 50 or 51.
5. If this is true, the second letter was written in Corinth on Paul's second missionary journey.
 - a. This is where 1 Thessalonians was written.
 - b. According to the Acts narrative Paul, Silas, and Timothy do not appear together again after their stay in Corinth.

D. Occasion and Purpose:

1. The apostle comforts the Thessalonians in their sufferings.
 - a. He thanks them for their spiritual growth (1:3, 4).
 - b. He urges them to continue in their steadfastness under persecution (1:5).
 - c. Those who persecute them will be punished by God (1:6-10).
2. Paul's central concern is the correction of their mistaken view regarding the day of the Lord and to rebuke those who are idle and cause trouble in the church (2:1-3:15).
 - a. The day of the Lord is not imminent.
 - b. There must first be an apostasy.
 - c. They must be busy until Christ does return.
 - d. They must withdraw from the disorderly and those who do not teach according to his epistles.

E. Doctrine:

1. Paul teaches about the doctrine of God:
 - a. God is the true author of grace and peace (1:2; 2:16; 3:16).
 - b. God will repay with retribution those who do not obey the gospel (1:6-9).
 - c. God chooses who will be saved and who will be lost (2:13-17).
 - (1) The saved are called by the gospel.
 - (2) He has chosen to save those who hear, believe and obey His word.
 - e. God sets forth the highest hopes for man, and those hopes are brought about by His power (2:16-17; 3:3, 4).
2. Paul teaches about the doctrine of Christ:
 - a. Christ is united with the Father leaving no doubt concerning His essential equality and hence true deity (1:1, 2).

- b. Christ is coming again with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance, settling accounts (1:6-10).
 - c. Christ gives us comfort and strength through it all (2:16-17).
3. Paul teaches about the Holy Spirit: Those who are saved are sanctified (“set apart”) by the Holy Spirit.

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF 2 THESSALONIANS

Introduction (1:1, 2)

Main Discussion (1:3, 4)

I. Personal (1:3-12)

- A. Thanksgiving (1:3, 4)
- B. Glorification (1:4-10)
- C. Prayer (1:11, 12)

II. Doctrinal (2:1-12)

- A. An entreaty relative to the Second Coming (2:1, 2)
- B. Events before the Second Coming (2:3-12).
 - 1. The falling away (2:3b)
 - 2. The revealing of the man of sin (lawlessness) (2:3b-12)
- C. Thanksgiving and exhortation (2:13-17)

III. Practical (3:1-15)

- A. Request for prayer (3:1, 2)
- B. Prayer for the Thessalonians (3:3-5)
- C. Commands to the Thessalonians (3:6-15)

Conclusion:

- A. The prayer (3:16)
- B. The salutation (3:17, 18).

MAJOR OUTLINE OF THE SECOND LETTER TO THE THESSALONIANS

Introduction:

1. Paul comforts the Christians at Thessalonica by praising them for their faith in Christ and love for others.
2. Paul is grateful for their spiritual growth and steadfastness while under the pressures of persecution.
3. Paul's central concern is that false doctrine about the Second Coming of Christ has been spread among the members there.
4. Paul instructs the members to withdraw from those who teach differently from his epistles and those who are disorderly.
5. Paul closes with words of encouragement.

Part One: Paul Writes To Praise The Thessalonians For Their Faith In Christ and Encourage Them During Persecution (1:1-17).

I. Paul Praises The Church At Thessalonica (1:1-3).

A. The church's character is described.

1. Their faith in the Savior and has grown more and more (1:1-3a).
2. Their love for the saints has grown more and more (1:3b).
3. Their patience has grown and has been strengthened (1:4).

B. The church's trials are described.

1. They have grown spiritually in spite of troubles and trials (1:4).
2. They have endured troublesome times.

II. Paul Promises The Church At Thessalonica (1:5-10).

A. Paul promises that the hardships of those who are persecuted will be used by God to prepare the believers for future events in the kingdom of God (1:5).

1. Difficult times in life can prepare us for times that might be even more difficult in the future.
2. Difficult times can make us stronger in the Lord to be better equipped to serve in the kingdom (2 Cor. 12:1-10).

- B. Paul promises that those who persecute Christians will suffer judgment and punishment from God (1:6).
1. God is a God of mercy, but He is also a God of justice.
 2. God will repay with tribulation (affliction) those who had been troubling the Thessalonians.
- C. Paul promises that this will be accomplished when Christ makes His second appearance (1:7-10).
1. When Christ comes He will give the faithful rest.
 2. When Christ comes He will be revealed with His mighty angels.
 3. When Christ comes He will be revealed in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of Christ.
 - a. All men will be judged by the gospel (Romans 2:16).
 - b. All men will be judged according to their knowledge of God's will (Luke 12:42-48).
 - (1) Those who knew His will but didn't obey, will be beaten with many stripes.
 - (2) Those who did not know His will and didn't obey, will be beaten with few stripes.
 - c. All men will be judged in fairness and without partiality, "To whom much is given, from him much will be required," Luke 12:48.
 4. When Christ comes He will punish the disobedient (1:9).
 - a. The disobedient will be punished with everlasting destruction.
 - (1) The punishment will last forever.
 - (2) The punishment will be destructive.
 - (a) The Greek word from which the word "destruction" is translated is *apoleia*; "destruction, lose, to be lost or damned."
 - (b) This word is translated "damnation" in 2 Peter 2:3.
 - (c) This word is translated "destruction" in Matt. 7:13; Rom. 9:22; Phil. 3:19; and 2 Peter 2:1; 3:16.
 - (d) This word is translated "perdition" in John 17:12; Phil. 1:28; 2 Thess. 2:3; 1 Tim. 6:9; Heb. 10:39; 2 Peter 3:7; Rev. 17:8, 11.
 - (e) This word is translated "pernicious way" in 2 Peter 2:2.
 - (f) This word is translated "waste" in Matthew 26:8 and Mark 14:4.
 - (g) This word is translated "damnable" in 2 Peter 2:1.

(3) From the use of this word it is evident that the word “destruction” does not mean to be eradicated, evaporated, or to become non-existent.

(a) It essentially means to be damned or condemned forever, “everlasting destruction” (2 Thess. 1:9).

(b) It is the idea of total condemnation from the presence of God forever.

(4) This word has been translated in various ways:

(a) It is translated “everlasting ruin” (*The Twentieth Century New Testament*); “eternal ruin” (*An American Translation*; Goodspeed); “in everlasting hell” (*Living Letters*; Taylor).

(b) It is the idea of eternal condemnation in a place of collective ruin.

b. The disobedient will be taken from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power.

III. Paul Prayed For The Church At Thessalonica (1:11-12).

A. Paul prayed concerning God’s power and purpose (1:11).

1. He prays that God will count them worthy of their calling.
2. He prays they will fulfill all the good pleasure of God’s goodness.
3. He prays they will fulfill the work of their faith.

B. Paul prayed concerning God’s Person (1:12).

1. He prays that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified in them.
2. He prays that this will be done according to the grace of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Part Two: Paul Writes About The Second Coming of Christ and Gives Thanks For The Faithfulness of The Thessalonians (2:1-17).

I. Paul Writes About The Day of the Lord (2:1-12).

A. There is the coming of the Lord and instructions to the church at Thessalonica (2:1-3).

1. The church at Thessalonica is confused about when Christ will come.
 - a. They have been falsely taught that Christ has already come (2:2).

- b. They have been falsely taught that if He has not already come, he will be coming soon.
 - c. They are encouraged to not be shaken in mind or troubled in spirit by such false teaching.
 - d. They are exhorted to not allow themselves to be deceived by any means.
2. The church at Thessalonica is given clarification about the coming of Christ.
- a. There must first come a falling away (an apostasy).
 - b. There must be the revealing of the “man of sin,” the “son of perdition.”
- B. There is the coming of the Lord and the man of sin.
1. The man of sin opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped.
 2. The man of sin sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.
 3. The man of sin is being restrained by a power greater than himself.
 - a. The secret power of lawlessness is already at work (2:7).
 - b. The power of lawlessness is held in check until the one who restrains it is taken out of the way (2:7).
 - c. The lawless one (the embodiment of disobedience) will be revealed (2:8)
 - (1) He will be consumed with the breath of the Lord’s mouth.
 - (2) He will be destroyed with the brightness of His coming.
 - (3) He comes according to the working of Satan (2:9-12).
 - (a) He comes with power.
 - (b) He works signs and lying wonders (deceptive miracles).
 - (c) He deceives with all unrighteousness.
 - (d) He is among those who perish.
 - (e) He and they will perish because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.
 - (f) He and they will receive a strong delusion (a working of error) sent by God, that they might believe the lie (2:11).
 - (g) He and they will be condemned because they did not believe the truth, but instead had pleasure in unrighteousness (2:12).

ASIDE DISCUSSION: (See Chart, page 34)

WHO IS “THE MAN OF SIN”?

Let's look first at what we do know. (1) Paul's subject is “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,” 2 Thess 2:1. At times in scripture the phrase “coming of the Lord” can simply mean God's judgment upon an evil generation or nation at any time in history, but Paul is very specific in this context when he said, “...our gathering together to Him.” This of course has reference to Christ's final coming which he described to the Thessalonians in 1 Thess. 4 where Paul speaks of our being gathered together to meet the Lord in the air. (2) The day of Christ has not come (2:2). (3) The Second Coming will not occur before there is a falling away (2:3). (4) After the falling away the man of sin (lawlessness) will appear (2:3). (5) Lawlessness was already at work when Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians (2:7). (6) The lawless one will be destroyed with the brightness of Christ's coming. (7) The lawless one will be allowed to deceive people with false teaching and false miracles (2:9-10). (8) God will assist those who were determined to reject the truth, by sending them a strong delusion (2:11).

Down through the centuries there has been much discussion on what Paul meant by the phrases “the man of sin,” “the son of perdition,” “the mystery of lawlessness and iniquity,” “the lawless one,” and “the lie” in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 7-8, 11. I will attempt to summarize the suggestions that have been given.

There has been some disagreement over whether Paul is talking about one specific person or simply a situation or movement which brings about apostasy and deception when people no longer respect or receive the truth of God's law. In some respects Paul seems to be talking about a specific person who “opposes (authority and truth) and exalts **himself** above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that **he** sits as God...” 2 Thess. 2:4. Sometimes the masculine gender is used to identify movements, giving them personification. If this is the case, the “man of sin” is simply a period(s) of time when many will be deceived by false teachings and false miracles (“wonders,” 2 Thess. 2:9-12). Paul tells us the spirit (the mystery, the hidden truth) of lawlessness was already at work during his time (2:7). Several questions arise from these verses.

- (1) Is the man of perdition or the lawless one a person or a situation?
- (2) Is this person or situation to arise just before the second coming of Christ,
- (3) Or does Paul simply mean that the falling away and the “the man of sin” must come before Jesus will return, and much time could transpire between the appearance of “the man of sin” and Jesus second coming?
- (4) Did the “man of sin” (falling away, lawlessness, rejection of truth, teaching and believing lies, etc.) begin to come in Paul's day and now continues to our day?
- (5) If the “the man of sin” is someone or something that must come just before the second coming of Christ, would not this be a sign of Christ's Second Coming and would therefore be in contradiction to what Jesus said, “But of that day and hour no one knows...as in the days before the flood...(they) did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be...Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming...you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect,” Matthew 24:36, 38, 42, 44.
- (6) If someone were to arise in our day and meet the description given in 2 Thess. 2:3-12, would not some say, “See, there he is. Now we know that Christ is about to come.”

- (a) But if this happens would it not be a contradiction to the words of Jesus in Matthew 24 as listed above?
- (b) There are those today who believe that there are signs all around which point to the nearness of the coming of Jesus and that “the man of sin” has already been born and is growing up in our midst.

Some have attempted to link “the man of sin” to the term “antichrist” which is found only in the epistles of John (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7). In these verses John intimates that **whatever or whoever** the antichrist is, the time is near; “Children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come; therefore we know it is the last hour,” 1 John 2:18. In 1 John 2:22, he defines antichrist as one who “denies that Jesus is the Christ” and “denies the Father and the Son.” John also speaks of the “spirit” of antichrist which “now it is in the world already.” This is similar language to Paul’s statement in 2 Thessalonians when he said that the “mystery of lawlessness (or iniquity) is already at work,” 2 Thess. 2:7. John goes on to say that one who denies the deity of Christ is an antichrist. Notice that John says that the Antichrist was in his future, but some antichrists had already come. A more specific reference is given in 2 John 7 where he speaks of the antichrists as those who reject the reality of the Incarnation of Christ. Not long after the writing of John’s epistles, a heretical view called **docetism** began to be taught which said that Jesus merely *appeared* to be in the flesh and was not actually incarnate. If this is the case, then the antichrist appeared in different ways during John’s lifetime and appeared with even greater definition not long after he wrote these letters. Therefore, the antichrist or the spirit of the antichrist can appear at any time when people are led to believe that Jesus was not deity or if he was, he did not appear in the reality of flesh. John’s references raises several questions:

- (1) Is the “antichrist” that John speaks of, the same **person** or **situation** that Paul spoke of in the phrase “the lawless one” in 2 Thessalonians?
- (2) Is the “antichrist” and/or “the lawless one” to appear soon after Paul and John wrote, or is he/it to appear just before the Second Coming of Christ?
- (3) If the “the man of sin” or “the lawless one” and the “antichrist” are one in the same, then why are they given different definitions?

DEFINITION:

The Man of Sin: (1) He is called the man of sin; (2) He is called son of perdition, (3) He is called the lawless one, (4) He opposes authority, (5) He exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, (6) He sits as God in the temple of God, (7) He shows himself that he is God, (8) The mystery (hidden truth) of lawlessness was already at work in Paul’s day, (9) When the lawless one is revealed, he will be destroyed with the breath of God’s mouth with the brightness of His coming, (10) His coming will be according to the working of Satan, (11) He will work false miracles and wonders, (12) He will deceive with all unrighteousness, (13) He will not teach the truth; 2 Thess. 2:3-12.

A prophecy of this kind of personality is found in Daniel 7 regarding the eleventh or little horn of the fourth beast. The fourth beast represented the fourth empire from Babylon which was Rome (Dan. 7:23) and the eleventh horn of the beast represented the eleventh king of the fourth empire (Dan. 7:24---Caesar Domitian). What did Daniel say he would do? (1) He will speak pompous words, (2) He will make war against the saints

and persecute them, (3) He will intend to change times and law, (4) His kingdom will eventually be destroyed, but the kingdom of the saints will survive because it is everlasting.

Another prophecy of this kind of personality is found in Daniel 8 regarding one of the descendents of the kings of Greece (Dan. 8:8-14; 21-27). We know him to be Antiochus Epiphanes IV. What did Daniel say he was like and would do? (1) He conquered Israel, (2) He trampled on other leaders, (3) He exalted himself, (4) By him the daily sacrifices were taken away, (5) The place of God's sanctuary was cast down, (6) He will set about to destroy God's people, (7) He will cause deceit to prosper, (8) He will exalt himself, (9) He will arise against the leader (Prince) of God's people, (10) He will die of a disease without human hand, (11) This was to occur many days in the future; therefore, Daniel was to seal up the vision. Daniel had this vision about 536 B.C. Antiochus IV Epiphanes desecrated the Jewish temple in 167 B.C.; therefore, the vision was fulfilled within 369 years. Since this happened 167 years before the birth of Christ, this could not be the person that Paul or John had in mind.

Another prophecy of this kind of personality is found in Daniel 11:36-45 which is very similar to the prophecy of the little eleventh horn of Daniel 7. (1) He shall do according to his own will, (2) He shall exalt himself above every God, (3) He shall speak blasphemies against God, (4) He will honor another god, (5) He will rule over many, (6) He will enter the "Glorious Land" and overthrow it, (7) He will overthrow other countries, including Egypt, (8) News from the east and north shall trouble him which will cause him to annihilate many, (9) He will come to his end and will receive no help. No one person fits this description. Some believe that it applies to Rome as a whole since these events are to happen after the Grecian kings (Dan. 11:1-4; 30-35). The Roman Empire of course followed the Grecian Empire.

Another prophecy of this kind is found in Revelation chapters 13 and 17 which describe the persecution of the saints by Roman emperors; (1) The people worshiped the sea beast (Roman Emperors), (2) The sea beast spoke blasphemies, (3) The sea beast had much authority over many nations, (4) The sea beast blasphemed against God, His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven, (5) The sea beast made war with the saints, (6) An earth beast (false religion of Rome), who served the sea beast, caused the people to worship the beast out of the sea; for, though he looked like a lamb he spoke like the dragon (Satan), (7) The earth beast (false religion of Rome) performed false miracles and wonders and deceived the people into worshipping an image of the sea, (8) Those who did not worship the sea beast were killed, (9) The number of the sea beast is 666 (the number of man three times), (10) The woman who sat on the beast's head was drunk on the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, (11) The beast sits on seven mounts (Rome), (12) The beast grows worse in the 8th king (Domitian), (13) This king will make war with the Lamb and His people, (14) The Lamb will overcome him, (15) The woman on the beast "is the great city which reigns over the kings of the earth," (Rome) (16) The king and the beast will fall, but God's kingdom will be victorious (Rev. 18-22). Persecution of the saints ended in A.D. 310.

Summary: The description given by Paul in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 has been seen in several persons and historical events before Paul's prophecy about the falling away. Could it be that Paul is talking about the same person as the one described and prophesied

in Daniel 7, who has been identified as Domitian, or the Empire of Rome as described in Daniel 11? Could it be that Paul is talking about the same person as the one described in Revelation 13 and 17 which has also been identified as Domitian and the Roman Empire? Is Paul talking about someone who is in the church (Popes) or someone who is out of the church (Nation Rulers)? Note 2 Thess. 2: 4, "...he sits as God in the temple of God..." Paul usually uses the phrase "temple of God" to refer to the church (1 Cor. 3:16, 17). If this is the case, then Paul is referring to some religious leader(s) in the church who carried or will carry the church into apostasy.

DEFINITION:

The Antichrist and/or antichrists: (1) The Antichrist is coming in John's future, (2) Many antichrists had already come in John's day, (3) The antichrists were with or among the disciples, but they left because they were not in reality "of" them, (3) He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son, (4) The Antichrist denies that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, (5) The Antichrist was coming and was already at work in John's day, (6) An antichrist is one who deceives and does not confess Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh; 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7. Some attempt to apply this to the Popes. The problem with that theory is that the Popes did not deny that Christ was God in the flesh. The first council held in A.D. 325 (Nicene Creed) was to establish if Christ was deity. They decided He was.

In the history of this doctrine, antichrist has been applied more widely than the restricted usage in the epistles of John. Such application first of all proceeds on the idea of a future antichrist based on 1 John 2:18; "You have heard that antichrist is coming." It is concluded from this reference that while there were contemporary opponents of Christ who denied His deity or His true humanity, these forces of opposition would eventually center in one person as seen in futuristic interpretations of prophecy. The term has been applied to all anti-god movements in Scripture, including many references to Belial in the Old Testament, and to any blasphemous persons or movements in either history or prophecy. To make this jump in application, however, is to use the term "antichrist" in a broader meaning than John used it. The application of the term "antichrist" has found an almost unlimited number of identifications; Mohammed, the founder of the Islam faith; Caligula, Nero, and Domitian, Roman emperors who claimed to be God; Napoleon, Mussolini, and Hitler. Regarding this, the five volume *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* states, "The variety of claims leaves the concept of antichrist in considerable confusion," p. 179, Vol. I.

There are other references of Paul which speak of a falling way; 1 Timothy 4:1-5 and 2 Timothy 4:3-5: (1) In latter times some will depart from the faith, (2) They will give heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, (3) They will speak lies in hypocrisy, (4) Their conscience will be seared with a hot iron, (5) They will forbid some to marry, (6) They will command to abstain from foods which is contrary to the truth, (6) They will not endure sound doctrine, (7) They will get teachers who will teach what pleases them, (8) Their ears will be turned away from the truth, (9) They will be turned aside to fables. Historically we know that all of these descriptions can apply to every century one way or the other over the past 2,000 years. Evidently, the term "latter days" means the Christian dispensation. These descriptions could also apply to Paul's time. The false doctrines of "forbidding to marry" and "abstain from foods" would fit the

Roman Catholic Church when the Lord's church went into apostasy in the 4th to 6th centuries.

CONCLUSION:

Who then is the “man of sin” or “son of perdition?” Because of the fact that Paul says these events were “already at work” but not as clearly seen (“mystery [hidden truth] of lawlessness is already at work”) at the time Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians (2:7), and the fact it would be working at the time Christ comes His final time and would at that time be brought to its end (2:1, 8), Paul must be talking about any and all times when any person or persons oppose the authority of God, exalt themselves above God, attempt to take God's place in the church, claim to work miracles but don't, deny the truth, and have pleasure in unrighteousness. If Paul is talking about the same thing in 1 and 2 Timothy, we could add to this the following sins; depart from the faith, give heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines, and speak lies in hypocrisy. Paul's prophecy about “falling away” and “lawlessness already at work” began to be fulfilled in his own day and would ultimately bear fruit over a long period of time.

Daniel's prophecies and John's prophecies in Revelation have more to do with the enemy of God's people who are on the outside: persecution from civil authorities, etc. Paul's prophecies in 2 Thessalonians and 1 & 2 Timothy and John's comments on the Antichrist and antichrists in his epistles have more to do with the enemy of God's people within the church: apostasy, false teachers, false doctrines, etc.

II. Paul Writes About The Disciples of the Lord (2:13-17).

- A. They were chosen by the Lord for salvation from the beginning (2:13-14).
 - 1. This was done through sanctification by the Spirit.
 - 2. This was done by their belief in the truth.
 - 3. This was done by their being called by the gospel.
 - 4. This was done so that they might obtain the glory of Jesus Christ.

- B. They were given exhortations by the apostle (2:15).
 - 1. They were to stand fast.
 - 2. They were to hold the traditions (teachings) which they were taught.
 - a. These teachings had come by way of Paul's personal preaching to them.
 - b. These teachings had come by way of letters to them.

- C. They were given encouragement by the apostle's desire for them (2:16-17).
 - 1. He prayed that their hearts would be comforted.

- a. God has loved them.
 - b. God has given them everlasting consolation (comfort).
 - c. God has given them good hope by His grace.
2. He prayed that they would be established (be strengthened) in every good word and work.

Part Three: Paul Closes With A Request and an Exhortation (3:1-18).

I. Paul Makes A Request of Them (3:1-2).

- A. He requested that they pray for God's message (3:1).
 - 1. His desire is that the message of God run swiftly (spread rapidly).
 - 2. His desire is that the message of God be glorified (received everywhere with honor to win converts) as it did with them.
- B. He requested that the Thessalonians pray for God's messenger (3:2).
 - 1. His desire is that he and the others be delivered from unreasonable men.
 - 2. His desire is that he and the others be delivered from wicked men.

II. Paul Gives Them Reassurance (3:3-5).

- A. He assures them that the Lord is faithful.
- B. He assures them that the Lord will establish (strengthen) them.
- C. He assures them that the Lord will guard (protect) them from the evil one.
- D. He assures them that the Lord can direct their hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

III. Paul Gives Them Warnings (3:6-15).

- A. Paul mentions three kinds of individuals that need to be rebuked.
 - 1. There were those who were lazy: They should work (3:6-10).
 - 2. There were those who were gossipers: They should mind their own business and do good (3:11, 13).

3. There were those who were disobedient: Note that person and stay away from him/her (3:14b).
- B. Paul gives three steps to take in dealing with these individuals (3:12, 14a, 15).
1. Identify them.
 2. Admonish them.
 3. Love them as a brother.

IV. Paul Gives Several Final Remarks (3:16-18).

- A. He prays that they will experience the peace that only God can give in every way.
- B. He prays that the Lord will be with all of them.
- C. He acknowledges that he penned the closing words with his own hand.
- D. He prays that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with them all.

CONCLUSION:

Christians must always be careful about the possibility of being carried away by false teachers and their doctrine. We must not allow tough times to discourage us in doing the work of God. Just keep in mind what Paul went through as he went about teaching the word of God. He remained faithful in spite of the circumstances. By God's grace he received the strength needed.



Map of Thessalonica

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WHO IS "THE MAN OF SIN" "THE LAWLESS ONE" "THE SON OF PERDITION" AND "THE ANTICHRIST"

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7

Daniel and Revelation texts do not fit descriptions found in 2 Thessalonians and 1, 2 John^o

"The man of sin" 2 Thessalonians 2:3 called "the falling away" (3)	"The, an Antichrist(s)" 1 John 2:18-22; 4:3 2 John 7	11 th king of Rome Daniel 7:8,20-27	Grecian King Daniel 8:9-25	Roman Empire Daniel 11:36-45	Roman Empire Rev. 13 & 17
called "the man of sin" (3) called "the son of perdition" called "the lawless one" (9) opposes God's authority (4-12) exalts himself above God sees self above God and truth sits as God in temple of God (the temple is the church) was at work in Paul's day (7) will be destroyed at Christ's last coming, yet in future (8) will be the work of Satan (9) will work false miracles will deceive others (10) no love for the truth	called Antichrist (2:18) called many antichrists called the Antichrist (4:3) called an antichrist denies Son in the flesh denies Father & Son (22) denies truth about Christ were with the disciples but not of the disciples (19) at work in John' day (1 8) to get worse after John deny the Son (22)	[Some have attempted to tie Daniel & Revelation into events just before Christ's return] called a king (24) changes laws (25) against God blasphemed God •not a God believer persecutes saints Roman king (23) •Persecution ended in A.D. 310 (has been fulfilled) changes laws (25) changes laws	called a king (23) transgresses (13) exalts himself (11) stopped sacrifices •not a God believer kills Jews (24) •Grecian king (21) •Antiochus IV died in 163 B.C. (has been fulfilled) sinister schemes (23) transgresses (13)	called a king (36) does own will (36) exalts himself blasphemed (36) •not a God believer attacks saints (41) Kittim (Rome) (30) •Roman Empire ended A.D. 600 (has been fulfilled) pagan (37)	called kings (17:10) Satan's will (13:2) is worshiped (13:4) blasphemed (3-6) •not God believers kills saints (17:6) Rome (17:9, 18) •Persecution ended A.D. 310 (has been fulfilled) Satan Power (13:2) false signs (13:14) deceives (13:14) abominations (17:4)

"FALLING AWAY": 1 Timothy 4:1-5; 2 Timothy 4:3-5; (1) Some will depart from the faith, (2) They will give heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, (3) They will speak lies in hypocrisy, (4) Their conscience will be seared with a hot iron, (5) They will forbid some to marry, (6) They will command to abstain from **foods**, (7) **They will** get teachers that please them, (8) They will turn from the truth, and (9) Turn to fables. **CONCLUSION: Falling away = When any persons or institutions claim to be God's people but deny the truth of God and His authority during the Christian Age. It began to work in the time of Paul and will continue to work until Christ returns. Revised: 07-05-13; C.R.W.**