

1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

STUDY GUIDE

AUTHOR

Paul identifies himself, along with Silas (Silvanus) and Timothy, in both books. However, in 2 Thess. 3:17, Paul writes in a distinctive manner so the Thessalonians will know its authenticity and be able to discern any false letters they might receive. This indicates the possibility of forged letters circulating at the time, claiming to be from Paul.

DATE

1 & 2 Thessalonians make up some of the earliest writings of both Paul and the New Testament. Yes, this means these letters were written before some of the Gospels were completed! We know from Acts 18:11 that Paul spent about 18 months in Corinth and was later brought to trial before Gallio (Acts 18:12-17). Discovered historical records show that Gallio ruled in Corinth from May AD 51 – April AD 52. Based on the text of 1 Thessalonians, Paul wrote shortly after leaving Thessalonica, and 2 Thessalonians was most likely written about 4-6 months after the initial letter. This puts the dating of the letters as late AD 50 or early AD 51.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Paul's interaction with the Thessalonians occurred during his 2nd missionary journey. To understand the historical background of 1 & 2 Thessalonians, **read Acts 17:1-15**. **Seriously, read it!**



LITERARY STRUCTURE

1 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians
Paul's Reflections on the Thessalonians (1:1-3:13) Instructions to the Thessalonians (4:1-5:28)	Encouragement in Persecution (1:1-12) The Day of the Lord (2:1-17) Instructions to the Church (3:1-18)

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OBSERVATION WORDS

Take note of what you learn about each of these. For God, Jesus, & the Holy Spirit, note what you learn & also specific references to how Jesus & the Spirit are represented.

- **God, Jesus, Holy Spirit**
- **Persecution/Trials/Afflictions, etc.**
- **Christ's return** (*look for different ways it's referenced, not just the words themselves*)
- **Gospel/Word**
- _____ (word of your choosing)

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

- What did the Lord teach YOU through these books?

- What did you learn about God the Father?

- What were some ways Jesus & the Holy Spirit were represented? What are some things you learned about each of them?

- How does Paul display both a missionary zeal and pastoral heart? Why are each important? What does this mean for you as a believer in your local church?

- What are the Thessalonians doing well and what can you learn from them?

- What concerns & instructions does Paul communicate to the Thessalonian church? What similarities do you find in your own life, and how can you apply Paul's instructions to your situation?

- What do you learn about Christ's return through these books? What takes place before, during, & after for both the believer and the unbeliever? What encourages you about Christ's return? What gives you pause?

- What do you think Paul means when he speaks about the disciplined life? Does your life reflect necessary discipline & furtherance of the Kingdom, or are you just waiting for Jesus to return? What is your comfort level in saying, "Follow my example" (1 Thess. 1:6; 2 Thess. 3:7)?

- When you do good things which go unnoticed or aren't appreciated, what is your inner response? What does this speak of your motivations? Do you seek to persevere in doing good? Similarly, what is your response amidst persecution & trials? Do people see your faith or "flesh flash?"

Key Word, Verse, & Chapter – How do you summarize each book?

- **1 Thessalonians**
 - Key Word
 - Key Verse
 - Key Chapter

- **2 Thessalonians**
 - Key Word
 - Key Verse
 - Key Chapter