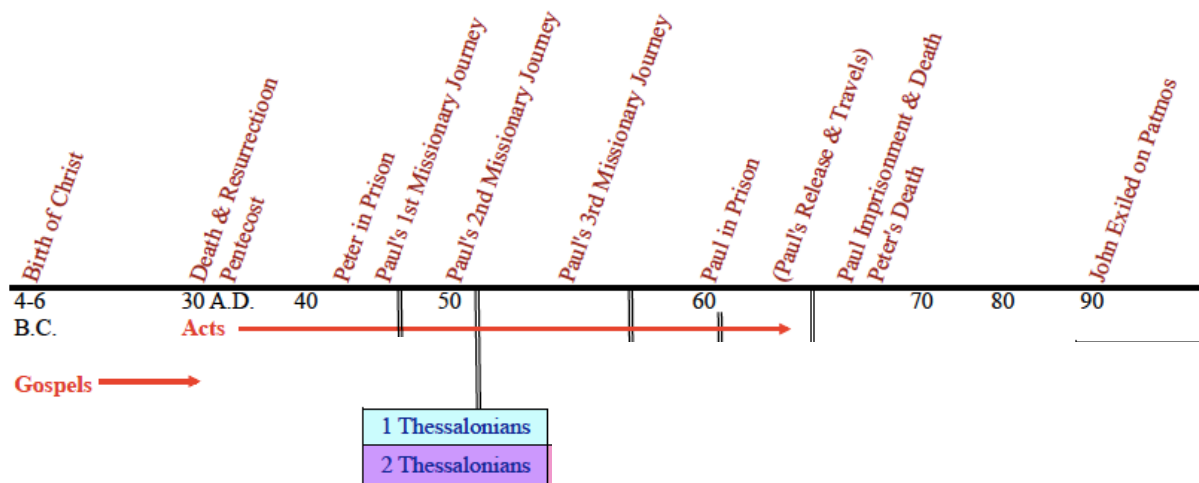


FIRST THESSALONIANS

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New Testament Chronology



I THESSALONIANS

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- * Book Title

- * First of two letters written from Corinth
ca. AD 51

- * Author (1:1)

Apostle Paul, Silvanus and Timothy

- * Silvanus = Silas — a key leader of Jerusalem church (Ac 15:22)
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I THESSALONIANS

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

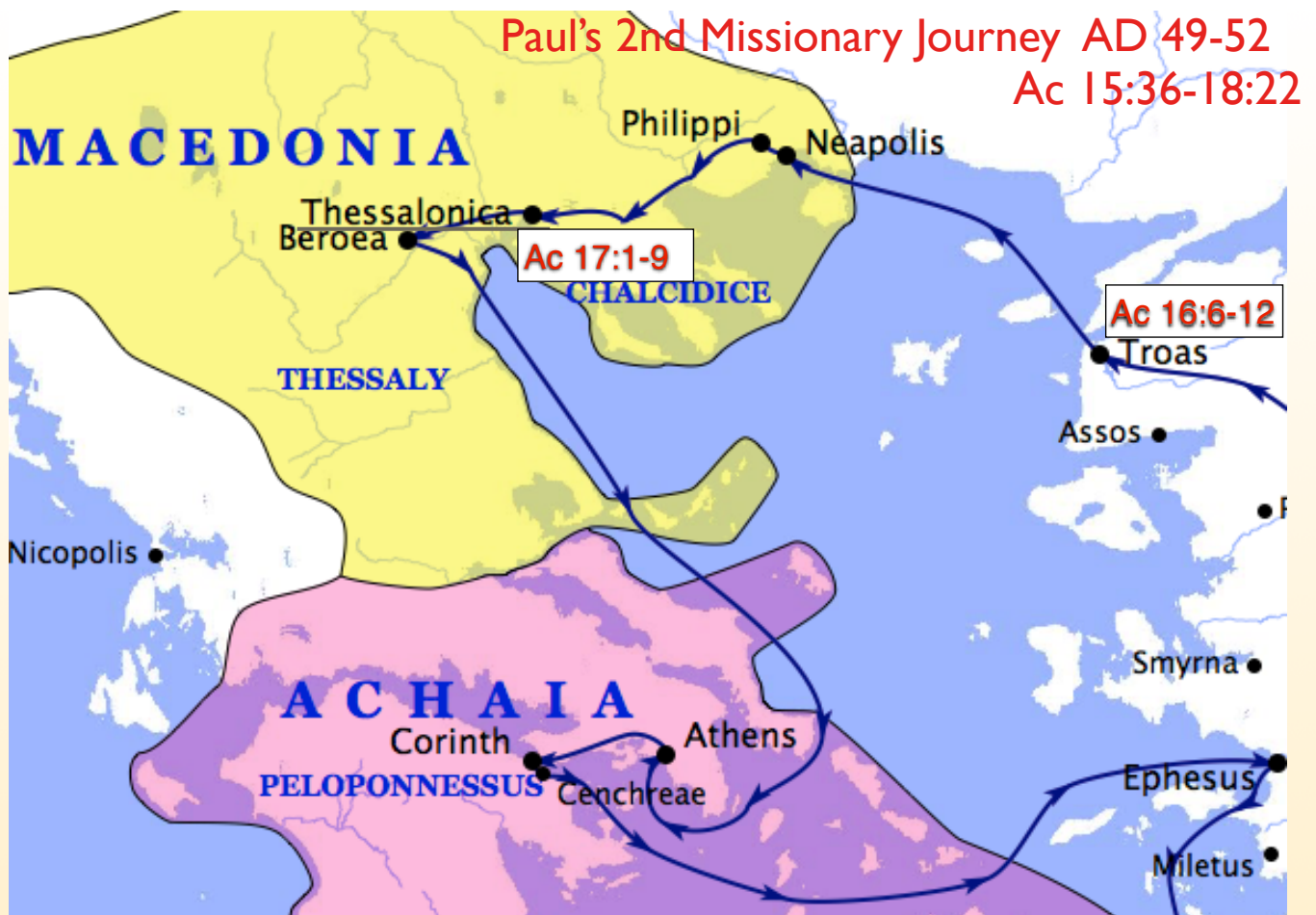
- * Recipient (1:1)

Thessalonians — Church at Thessalonica (modern: Thessaloniki aka Salonica in Greece)

- * Conversion: Ac 17:1-4 (Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey)

- * Church Composition:

Jews + Greeks (pagan background);
mostly Gentiles (1:9)



I THESSALONIANS HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

* Recipient Setting

- * City was founded by Macedonian king Cassander, who named it after his wife Thessaloniki
- * Conquered by Romans in BC 168
- * Largest city in Macedonia, commercially important on the Via Egnatia;
- * Paganistic society, Greco-Roman culture



I THESSALONIANS HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

* Situation

The conversion of many Jews and Greek proselytes angered the unbelieving Jews to the extent that they incited a mob to attack the house of Jason, Paul's host. Not finding the missionaries, the mob dragged Jason and other believers to the magistrates who subsequently released them. Convinced of the danger to the missionaries, the Thessalonian believers sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea (Ac 17:5-10a).

A. Unbelieving Jews chased Paul from Thessalonica to Berea. From there Paul travelled down to Athens (Ac 17:14-15).



C. Timothy reported to Paul in Corinth (1 Thes 3:6-13).

B. From Athens, Timothy was sent back to Thessalonica to check on the church-situation (1 Thes 3:1-5).

I THESSALONIANS PURPOSE

- * To remind and endorse the witness of the missionaries among them (1 Thes 1-3)
- * To affirm the Thessalonians' faith, and encourage them to excel in continuing testimony despite persecutions (4:1-12);
- * To comfort and render hope by instructing on the return of Jesus Christ (4:13-5:11).

I THESSALONIANS

CONTENT

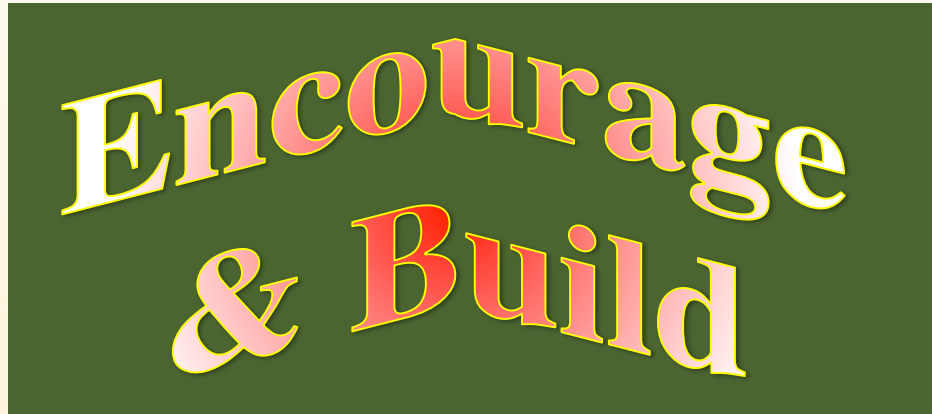
- * Exhortation to excel further in what the church is doing well
 - * Practice of love, encouragement, giving thanks, steadfast testimony
- * Key teachings on Eschatology (End-times / 2nd Coming):
 - * Rapture of the Church (4:13-18)
 - * Day of the Lord (5:2-11)
- * Other Themes
 - * Gospel Witness & Trials
 - * Discipleship

1 THESSALONIANS

Time: 51 AD from Corinth

| Salutation | Response & Witness Commended | Missionaries' Witness | Joy over the Thessalonians | Relationships & Lifestyle | The Rapture | The Day of the Lord | Church Life |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|---|-------------|---------------------|-------------|
| 1:1 | 1:2-10 | 2:1-12 | 2:13-3:13 | 4:1-12 | 4:13-18 | 5:1-11 | 5:12-28 |
| Witness & Conduct: <u>Reflections</u> | | | | Witness & Conduct: <u>Exhortations</u> | | | |

I THESSALONIANS



I Thes 5:11 (NRSV)

“Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, just as you are in fact doing.”

I THESSALONIANS STUDY



I THESSALONIANS *STUDY*

I. Paul's Reflections (1:1-3:13)

* Response & Witness Commended (1:2-10)

Paul thanked God for the Thessalonian believers.

* work of faith & labor of love (1:6-9)

* steadfastness of hope (1:10)

(*NRSV*) 1:2 ¶ We always give thanks to God for all of you
and mention you in our prayers, constantly
1:3 remembering before our God and Father
your work of faith
and labor of love
and steadfastness of hope
in our Lord Jesus Christ.

(cf. 1:6-9)

(cf. 1:10)

APPLICATION *REFLECTION*



- To what extent / depth are the elements of faith, hope and love being cultivated and evidenced in our lives?

I THESSALONIANS STUDY

I. Paul's Reflections (1:1-3:13)

* Missionaries' Witness (2:1-12)

- * Identify the words or phrases that describe how the missionaries related to the Thessalonians.

(NRSV)

2:1 ¶ You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain,
2:2 but though we had already suffered
→ and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know,
→ we had courage in our God
→ to declare to you the gospel of God
→ in spite of great opposition. ¶
→ 2:3 For our appeal does not spring from deceit
→ or impure motives
→ or trickery, ¶
→ 2:4 but just as we have been approved by God
→ to be entrusted with the message of the gospel,
→ even so we speak, not to please mortals,
→ but to please God who tests our hearts. ¶

I THESSALONIANS STUDY

I. Paul's Reflections (1:1-3:13)

* Missionaries' Witness (2:1-12)

- * Identify the words or phrases that describe how the missionaries related to the Thessalonians.

2:5 As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery
→ or with a pretext for greed;
→ 2:6 nor did we seek praise from mortals,
→ whether from you or from others, ¶
→ 2:7 though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.
→ But we were gentle among you,
→ like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. ¶
→ 2:8 So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you
→ not only the gospel of God
→ but also our own selves,
→ because you have become very dear to us. ¶

I THESSALONIANS *STUDY*

I. Paul's Reflections (1:1-3:13)

* Missionaries' Witness (2:1-12)

- * Identify the words or phrases that describe how the missionaries related to the Thessalonians.

2:9 ¶ You remember our labor and toil, brothers and sisters; ¶

- we worked night and day, ¶
- so that we might not burden any of you ¶
- → while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. ¶

2:10 You are witnesses, and God also, ¶

- how pure, upright, and blameless our conduct was toward you believers. ¶

2:11 As you know, we dealt with each one of you like a father with his children, ¶

- 2:12 urging ¶
 - → and encouraging you ¶
 - → and pleading that you lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.
-

I THESSALONIANS *STUDY*

I. Paul's Reflections (1:1-3:13)

* Joy over the Thessalonians (2:13-3:13)

2:19 (ESV) For what is our hope or joy
or crown of boasting
before our Lord Jesus at his coming?
Is it not you?
20 For you are our glory and joy.

I THESSALONIANS STUDY

I. Paul's Reflections (1:1-3:13)

- * Joy over the Thessalonians (2:13-3:13)
Paul's joy over
 - * How they received the message as the Word of God (2:13)
 - * How they persevered despite persecutions, following the example of ('imitated') the Judean believers (2:14-16).

I THESSALONIANS STUDY

I. Paul's Reflections (1:1-3:13)

- * An example of pastoral care & concern;
- * An example of the stewardship of encouragement & affirmation.

1 THESSALONIANS

Time: 51 AD from Corinth

| Salutation | Response & Witness Commended | Missionaries' Witness | Joy over the Thessalonians | Relationships & Lifestyle | The Rapture | The Day of the Lord | Church Life |
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| Witness & Conduct: <u>Reflections</u> | | | | Witness & Conduct: <u>Exhortations</u> | | | |

I THESSALONIANS *STUDY*

2. Paul's Exhortations (4:1-5:28)

4:1 (ESV) Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you
in the Lord Jesus,
that as you received from us
how you ought to walk
and to please God, just as you are doing,
that you do so more and more.
2 For you know what instructions we gave you
through the Lord Jesus.

I THESSALONIANS *STUDY*

2. Paul's Exhortations (4:1-5:28)

2.1 Relationships & Lifestyle (4:1-12)

2.2 The *Rapture* (4:13-18)

2.3 The *Day of the Lord* (5:1-11)

2.4 Church Life (5:12-28)

I THESSALONIANS *STUDY*

2. Paul's Exhortations

2.1 Relationships & Lifestyle (4:1-12)

Three areas that the Thessalonians were taught, had continued to do well, and now Paul exhorts them to do so more and more:-

- * Sexual Purity (4:3-8)
 - * Love other believers (4:9-10)
 - * Diligence and live in peace (4:11-12)
-

I THESSALONIANS *STUDY*

2. Paul's Exhortations (4:1-5:28)

2.1 Relationships & Lifestyle (4:1-12)

2.2 The *Rapture* (4:13-18)

2.3 The *Day of the Lord* (5:1-11)

2.4 Church Life (5:12-28) — relating to:-

- * Leaders (5:12-13a)
 - * Each other (5:13b-15)
 - * Personal priorities & disciplines (5:16-25)
-

I THESSALONIANS *STUDY*

2.2 The Rapture (4:13-18)

- * Context: Church's concern over believers who had died before the Lord's Return (4:13)
"those who have fallen asleep" (e.g. ESV, NIV) ~ euphemism
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I THESSALONIANS *STUDY*

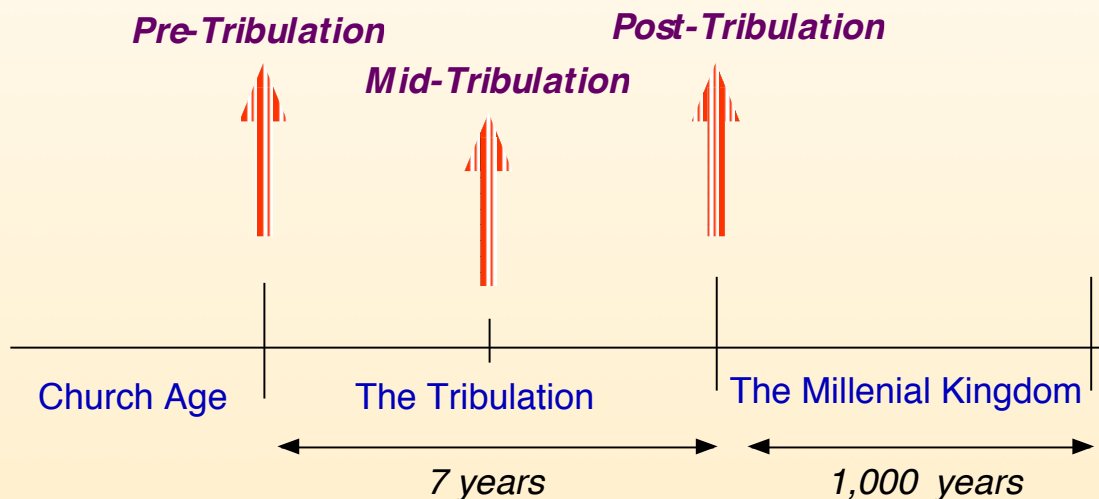
2.2 The Rapture (4:13-18)

- * Definition: The term Rapture in Eschatology refers to the state or experience of being carried away or snatched away. It is derived from the Latin noun *raptus*.
 - * The Latin verb *rapio* translates the verb in I Thes 4:17 ἁρπάζω *harpazō* meaning to "snatch away"; to be "caught up" or to be "taken by a force".
 - * In Christian eschatology Rapture refers to the carrying away of believers (Church) from earth to heaven. In some theology books it is called the Translation of the Church. This topic is part of the larger topic on the 2nd coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - * Other verses: 2 Thes 2:1; I Cor 15:51 cf. Phil 2:21
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I THESSALONIANS STUDY

2.2 The Rapture (4:13-18)

- * Views: Real-Event vs. Not-Real-Event
- * Real-Event: Differing views as to timing



I THESSALONIANS STUDY

2.2 The Rapture (4:13-18)

- * Sequence of Events (4:16-17)

4:16 For the Lord himself, with a cry of command,
with the archangel's call
and with the sound of God's trumpet,
will descend from heaven,
and the dead in Christ will rise first.

4:17 Then we who are alive, who are left,
will be caught up in the clouds together with them
to meet the Lord in the air;
and so we will be with the Lord forever. (NRSV)

I THESSALONIANS *STUDY*

* 2.2 The Rapture (4:13-18)

- * Closely connected with the Parousia (parousia) ~ coming of the Lord
 - * The word parousia means 'coming' or 'presence'.
In this short letter, Paul refers to the Lord's Coming in every chapter :-
 - * I Thes 1:10 (ESV) "... wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come."
 - * I Thes 2:19 "For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?"
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I THESSALONIANS *STUDY*

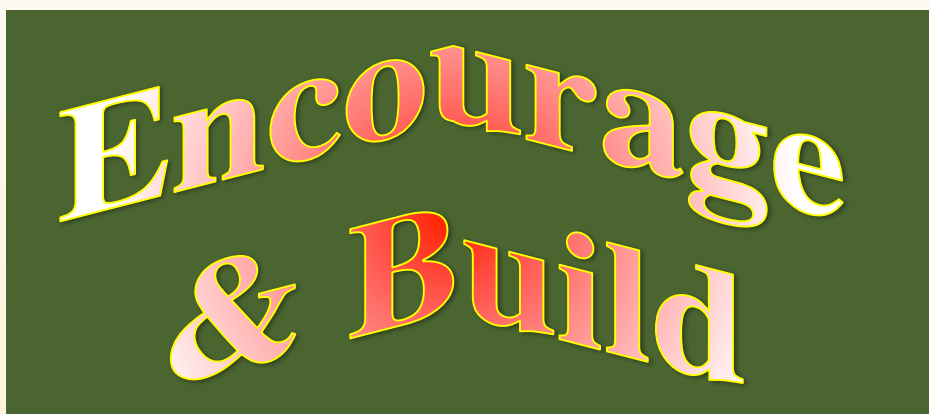
- * I Thes 3:13 "... so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints."
 - * I Thes 4:15 "For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep."
 - * I Thes 5:23 "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."
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I THESSALONIANS STUDY

2.3 The Day of the Lord (5:1-11)

- * This Day typically connotes God's special intervention in human history, whether past or future.
- * It is an intervention that includes elements of terrifying judgment for the wicked or enemies of God, and/or mighty deliverance of the righteous.
- * In 1 Thess 5:1-11 Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to be alert and sober (5:6) in anticipation of the Day of the Lord (cf. notes in 2 Thess).

I THESSALONIANS



1 Thes 5:11 (NRSV)

“Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, just as you are in fact doing.”

APPLICATION *REFLECTION*



- How can we receive encouragement from another?
- How can we be of encouragement to others in their Christian faith?

The affirmation of one's faith is an important source of joy.
