

1 & 2 THESSALONIANS - OVERVIEW

WHO WERE THE BOOKS WRITTEN TO?

- The books are addressed to the church in Thessalonica, in Macedonia (part of modern-day Greece), located on the bay of Therme at the northwest corner of the Aegean Sea.
- During Paul's time Thessalonica was capital of the Roman second district of Macedonia, * with an estimated population as high as 200,000. The majority of the inhabitants were Greeks, with a mixture of other ethnic groups, including Jews (Acts 17:1-10).

* Livy, Histories, 45.29



WHERE DID THE BOOKS GET THEIR NAMES FROM?

- The books are named after the Thessalonians – the inhabitants of Thessalonica.
 - Thessaloniki (the Greek name for the city) was founded in 315 BC by Cassander of Macedon. It was named after his wife Thessalonike, the half-sister of Alexander the Great.
 - It remained in Greek hands until 168 BC, when the Romans took possession of it. It was made the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia in 148 BC. It was the second largest and wealthiest city of the Byzantine Empire (after Constantinople). When conquered by the Ottoman Turks in 1430, about one-fifth of the city's population was enslaved.
 - Passed to Greece in 1912, modern Thessaloniki is currently the second-largest city in the country (over 1 million inhabitants) and the capital of the region of Macedonia.

AUTHOR, LANGUAGE

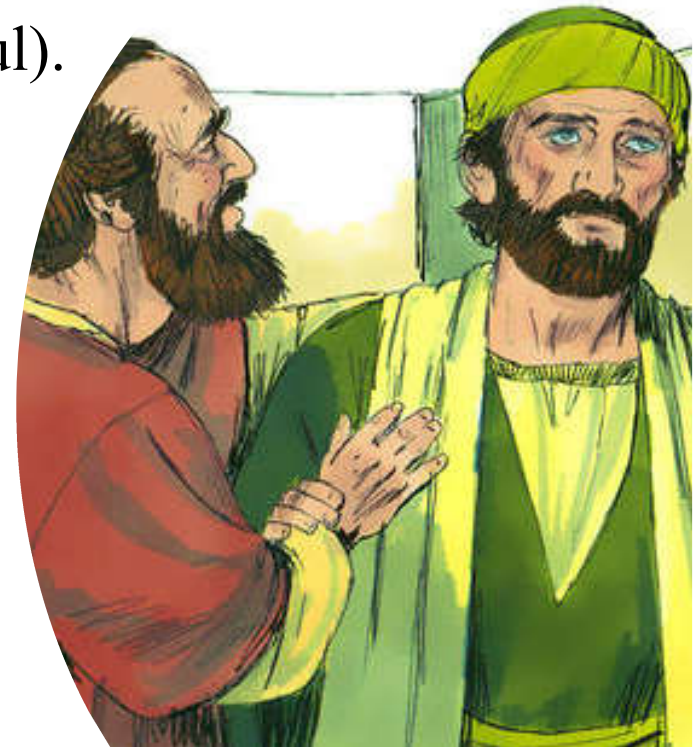
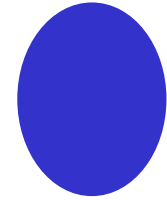
- AUTHOR: 1 and 2 Thessalonians was written by the apostle Paul, possibly along with Timothy and Silvanus (aka “Silas”).
 - 1 Thess 1:1 (ESV) Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians ...
 - 2 Thess 1:1 (ESV) Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians ...
- The opening verse of the salutation also names Silas and Timothy alongside Paul. This, however, does not necessarily mean that they were co-authors. Paul regularly mentions others in the address if they have a particular connection with the recipient.

AUTHOR, LANGUAGE

- **LANGUAGE:** They are both written in Koine Greek. Paul is clearly fluent in the language as the style of the Greek is impeccable.
- **WHERE DO THEY FIT INTO THE BIBLE:** They are the eighth and ninth books in the Pauline Epistles section of the Christian New Testament canon.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

- Saul of Tarsus was educated in Jerusalem by Gamaliel, one of the most noted teachers of Jewish law in history. Being a Roman citizen, he also bore the Latin name of “Paulus” (Koine Greek: Paulos, English: Paul).
- Prior to his conversion Paul persecuted the disciples of Jesus. While on the road from Jerusalem to Damascus on a mission to arrest believers, the ascended Christ appeared to him. He was struck blind, but after three days his sight was restored by a Christian called Ananias. Thereafter Paul began to preach that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God.



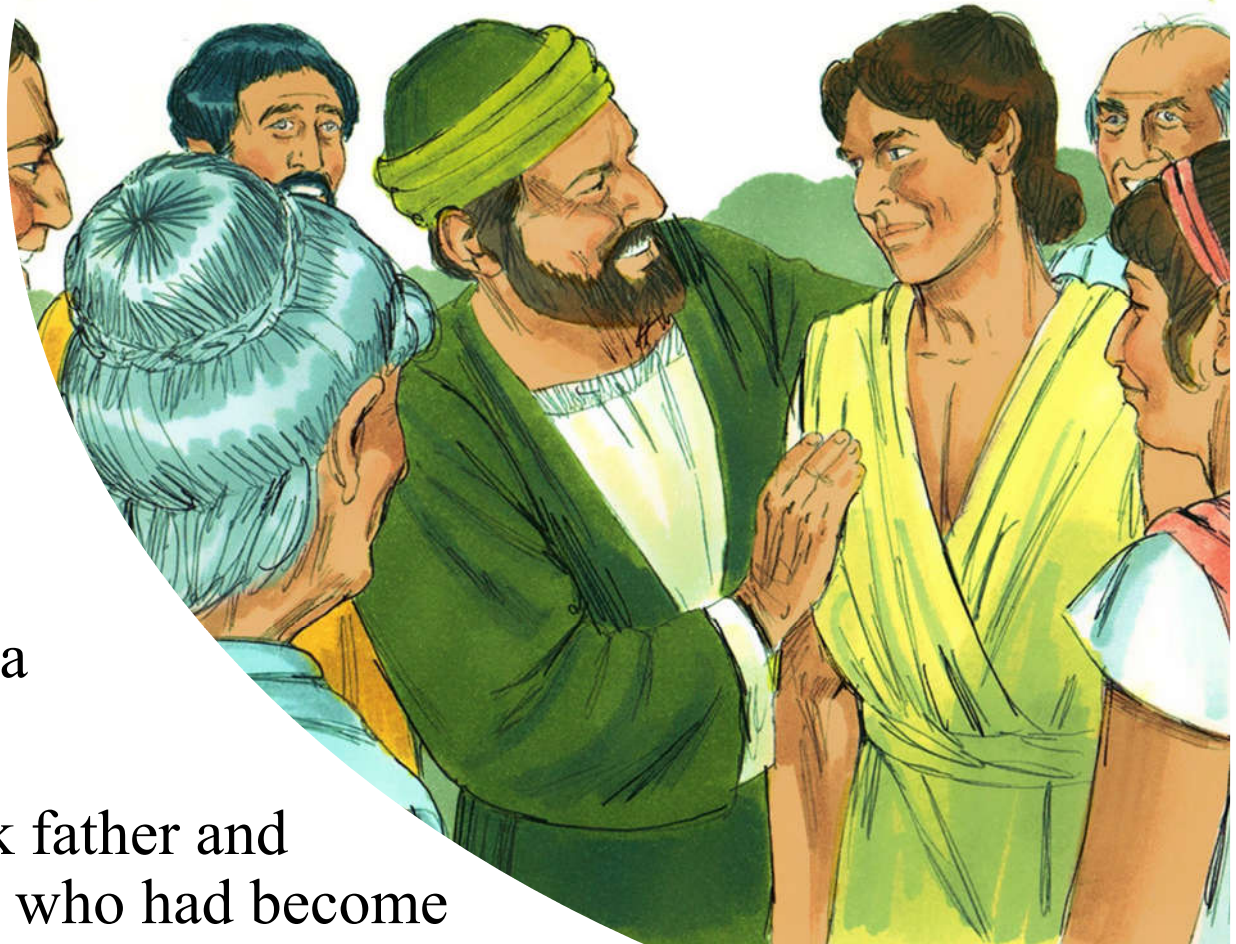
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

- Although not one of the Twelve, he was appointed by Christ as an apostle and is regarded as one of the most important figures of the Apostolic Age. Approximately half of the Book of Acts deals with his life.
- Traditionally 14 of the 27 books in the New Testament are attributed to Paul, with some questioning his authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews.
- Paul's influence on Christian thought and practice has been characterized as being as “profound as it is pervasive”, among that of many other apostles and missionaries involved in the spread of the Christian faith. *
- Paul undertook at least 3 missionary journeys, planting several Christian churches in Asia Minor and Europe.

* [https:// en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/ Paul_the_Apostle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_the_Apostle)

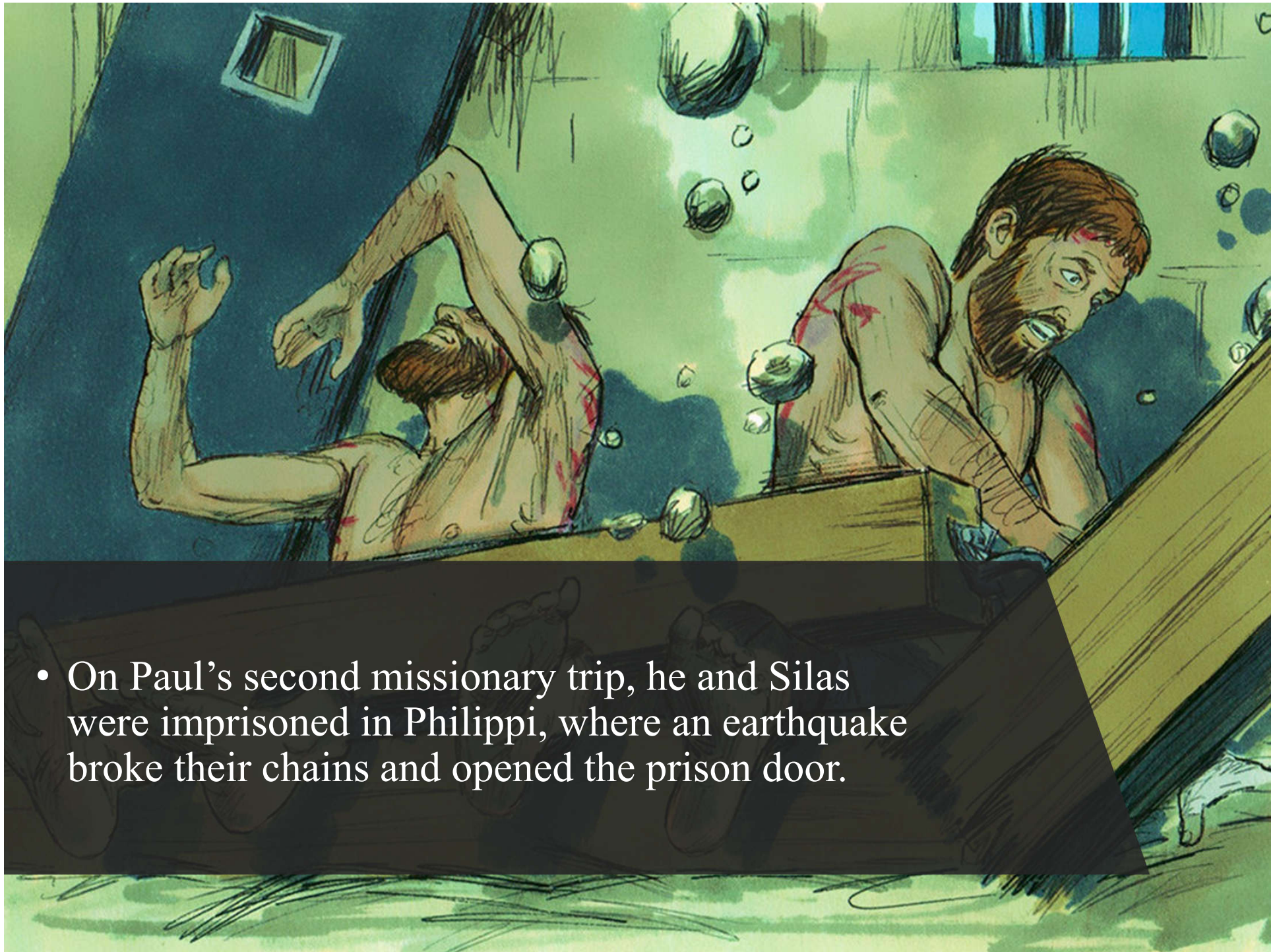
ABOUT THE POSSIBLE CO-AUTHORS

- Timothy was from the Lycaonian city of Lystra (present-day Turkey).
- He was born of a Greek father and Jewish mother, Eunice, who had become a Christian. His grandmother Lois was also a believer and as a result Timothy was acquainted with the Scriptures since childhood.
- Paul met him in AD 52 during his second missionary journey and he joined Paul and Silas on their journey to Macedonia. Paul became his mentor and later wrote 2 letters to him (1 & 2 Timothy).





- Silas (the abbreviated form of “Silvanus”) has a Latin name making it likely that he was a Hellenistic Jew, and - like Paul - a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37). He is first mentioned in Acts 15, where - following the Jerusalem Council - he and Judas Barsabbas were selected by the church elders to return with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch. He is mentioned as being a leader at the Antioch church and accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey. Peter later describes him as a “faithful brother” (1 Pet 5:12).

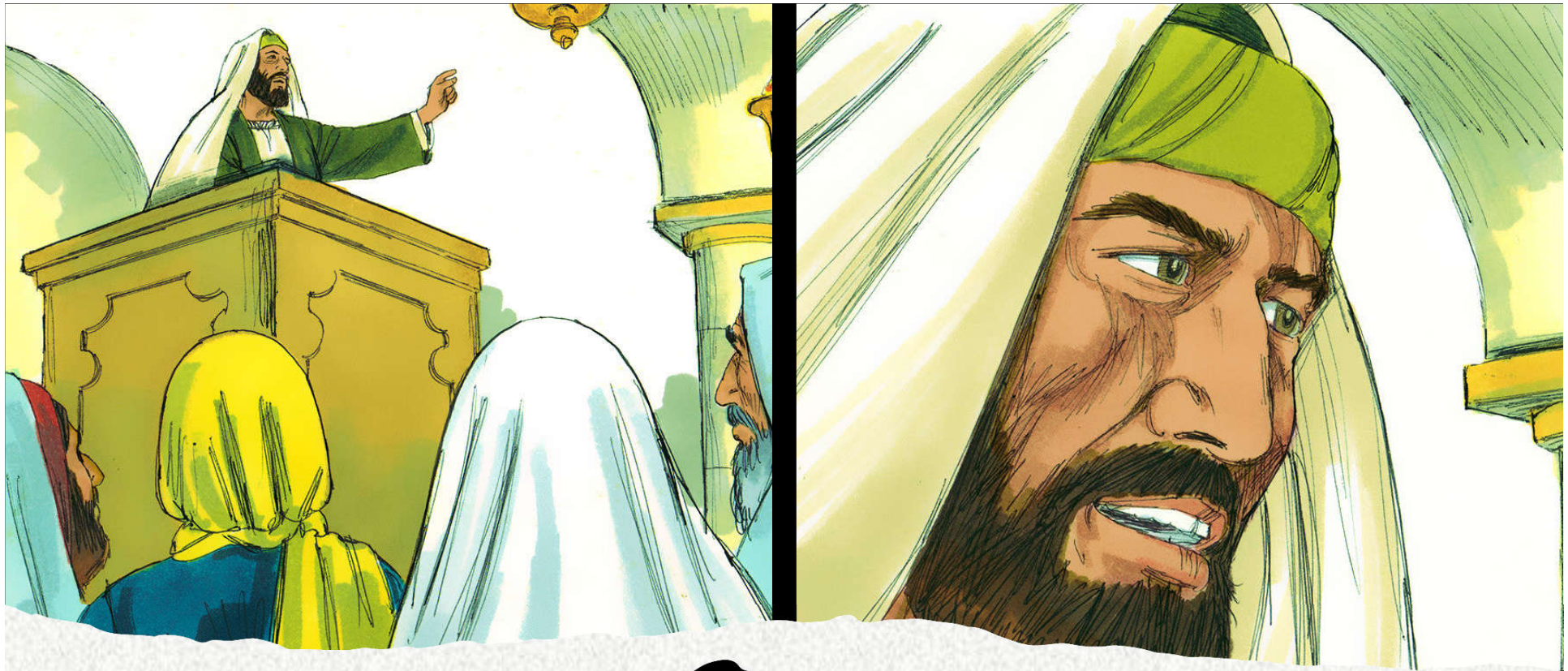


- On Paul's second missionary trip, he and Silas were imprisoned in Philippi, where an earthquake broke their chains and opened the prison door.

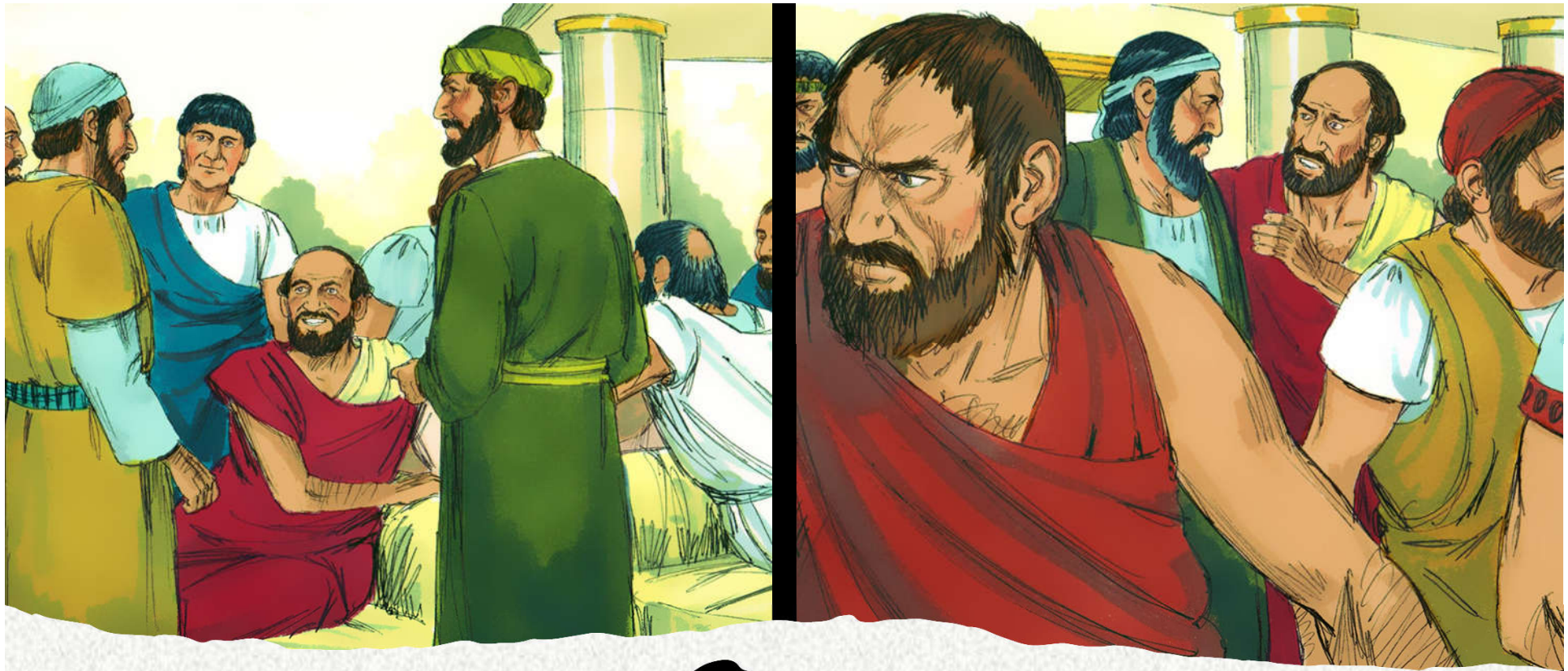
THE THESSALONIAN CHURCH



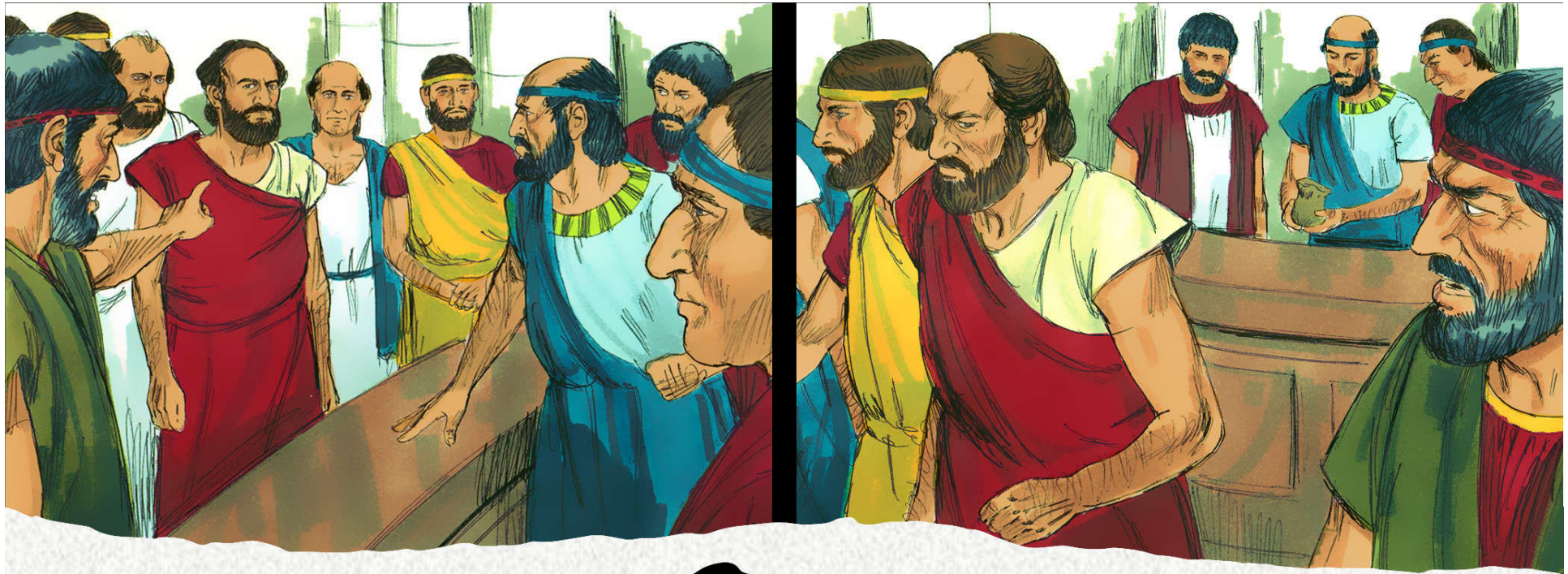
- About 50 AD, while on his second missionary journey, Paul visited Thessalonica's synagogue and planted the seeds for the first church. Silas and Timothy accompanied Paul. (Acts 17:1) Thus the trio were all known personally to the Thessalonian church.



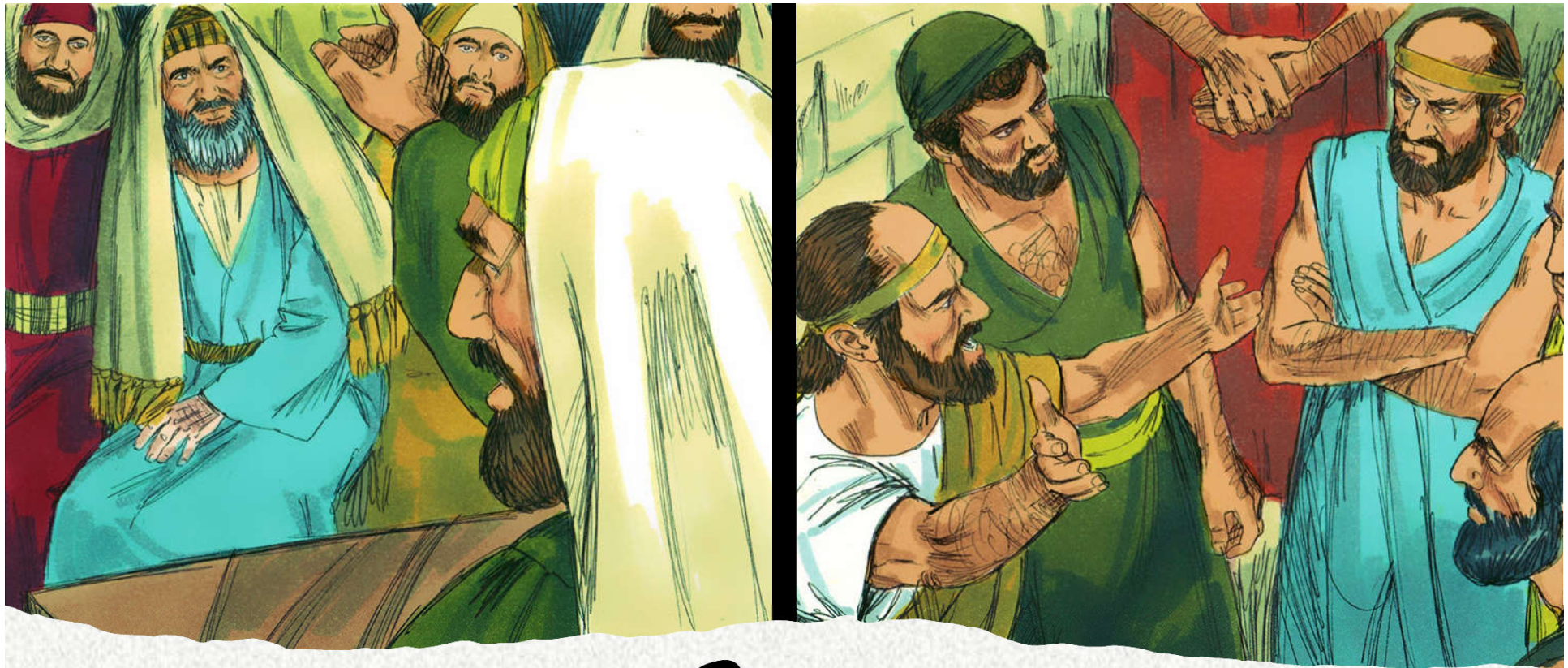
- Acts 17:2-3 (NIV) As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah,” he said.



- Acts 17:4-5 (NIV) Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women. But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd.



- Acts 17:6-9 (NIV) But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: “These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus.” When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.



- Acts 17:10-12 (NIV) As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue... many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.
- But the trouble-makers followed the group to Berea, causing Paul to leave and travel to Athens alone. Silas and Timothy later joined him in Corinth where they all preached together (2 Cor 1:19).



1 THESSALONIANS

1 THESSALONIANS - OVERVIEW

DATE

- Acts 18:12-17 mentions Gallio, toward the end of Paul's stay in Corinth. The Delphi Inscription dates Gallio's proconsulship of Achaia to 51-52 AD. *
- Hence as the majority of modern New Testament scholars believe 1 Thessalonians was written during Paul's 18-month stay in Corinth (on his second missionary journey) they date it from between 49 to 51 AD.
- This was probably Paul's second epistle (some believe it was his first) - written 2 years after the letter to the Galatians.

* [https:// en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/ First_Epistle_to_the_Thessalonians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Epistle_to_the_Thessalonians)

DATING NT BOOKS

- These are the approximate dates when each NT book was written, in chronological order.

James: 44-49

Galatians: 49-50

Mark: 50-60

Matthew: 50-60

1 Thessalonians: 51

2 Thessalonians: 51-52

1 Corinthians: 55

2 Corinthians: 55-56

Romans: 56

Luke: 60-61

Ephesians: 60-62

Philippians: 60-62

Philemon: 60-62

Colossians: 60-62

Acts: 62

Hebrews: 62-63

1 Timothy: 62-64

Titus: 62-64

1 Peter: 64-65

2 Timothy: 66-67

2 Peter: 67-68

Jude: 68-70

Revelation: 94-96

John: 80-100

1 John: 95-100

2 John: 95-100

3 John: 95-100

AUTHENTICITY

- First Thessalonians is accepted by virtually all NT scholars. The radical criticism of the Tübingen and Dutch schools of last century is now considered passé. *
- Not only is 1 Thessalonians found in Marcion's canon and the Muratorian canon, but it is also quoted by name by Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian. ** Perhaps even Polycarp alludes to it when he speaks of Paul's letters to the Philippians. Further, it is found in the most ancient MSS (including the old Latin, old Syriac, and ,46), suggesting its full acceptance from a very early period. *

* [https:// bible.org/ seriespage/ 13-1-thessalonians-introduction-outline-and-argument](https://bible.org/seriespage/13-1-thessalonians-introduction-outline-and-argument)

**Irenaeus quotes 1Th 5:23[Against Heresies, 5.6.1], Clement of Alexandria [The Instructor, 1.88], quotes 1Th 2:7; Tertullian [On the Resurrection of the Flesh, 24], quotes 1Th 5:1; Caius in Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History [6.20]; Origen [Against Celsus, 3]

PURPOSE OF WRITING & BROAD OUTLINE

- PURPOSE OF WRITING

- In the church of Thessalonica there were some misunderstandings about the return of Christ. Paul desired to clear them up in his letter. He also writes it as an instruction in holy living. *

- BROAD OUTLINE

- Opening (1:1)
- Thanksgiving and Encouragement (1:2–3:13)
- Instruction and Exhortation (4:1–5:28) **

* [https:// www.gotquestions.org/ Book-of-1-Thessalonians.html](https://www.gotquestions.org/Book-of-1-Thessalonians.html)

** [https:// www.esv.org/ resources/ esv-global-study-bible/ introduction-to-1-thessalonians/](https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/introduction-to-1-thessalonians/)

DETAILED OUTLINE

- The first three chapters are about Paul longing to visit the church in Thessalonica but not being able to because Satan stopped them (2:18), and how Paul cared for them and was encouraged to hear how they had been. Paul then prays for them (3:11-13). *
- The main theme is Jesus' Second Coming. When he returns, the dead who have believed in Christ will rise and will join the living to meet the Lord in the air (4:15–17). Unbelievers will experience God's wrath, while believers will inherit salvation (1:10; 5:2–4, 9–10). In preparation for that great day, Christians are called to be holy and blameless (3:11–4:8; 5:23). God, who is faithful, will produce in them the holiness he requires (5:24). **

* [https:// www.gotquestions.org/ Book-of-1-Thessalonians.html](https://www.gotquestions.org/Book-of-1-Thessalonians.html)

** [https:// www.esv.org/ resources/ esv-global-study-bible/ introduction-to-1-thessalonians/](https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/introduction-to-1-thessalonians/)

DETAILED OUTLINE

- God's wrath comes on those who reject the gospel (2:16; 5:3). Jesus' death and resurrection are the basis for the Christian's hope (4:14; 5:10). Christians are destined not for wrath but for salvation when Christ returns (1:10; 5:4, 9). *
- In chapter 4, Paul is instructing the believers in Thessalonica on how to live, in Christ Jesus, a holy life (4:1-12). **
- Paul goes on to instruct them of a misconception they had. He tells them that the people who have died in Christ Jesus will also go to heaven when He comes back (4:13-18, 5:1-11). **
- The book ends with final instructions of living the Christian life. **

* [https:// www.esv.org/ resources/ esv-global-study-bible/ introduction-to-1-thessalonians/](https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/introduction-to-1-thessalonians/)

** [https:// www.gotquestions.org/ Book-of-1-Thessalonians.html](https://www.gotquestions.org/Book-of-1-Thessalonians.html)

KEY VERSES

- 1 Thess 4:14-17 (NIV) For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.
- 1 Thess 5:16-18 (NIV) Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

- This book can be applied to many life situations. It gives us the confidence as Christians that dead or alive when Christ comes back we will be together with Him (4:13-18). It assures us as Christians that we won't receive God's wrath (5:8-9). It instructs us how to walk the Christian life daily (4-5). *
- Joy, especially in suffering, is a mark of the Christian (1:6; 5:16). Christians should live lives of complete holiness (3:13; 4:3-8; 5:23). Faith, hope and love are essential traits of the Christian (1:2-3; 5:8). **
- Christians must never ignore their responsibility to work (4:9-12; 5:14). **

* [https:// www.gotquestions.org/ Book-of-1-Thessalonians.html](https://www.gotquestions.org/Book-of-1-Thessalonians.html)

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2 THESSALONIANS

2 THESSALONIANS - OVERVIEW

PURPOSE OF WRITING & DATE

- **PURPOSE OF WRITING:** The church in Thessalonica still had some misconceptions about the Day of the Lord. They thought it had come already ... They were being persecuted badly. Paul wrote to clear up misconceptions and to comfort them. *
- **DATE:** The Book of 2 Thessalonians was likely written in AD 51-52, shortly after the First Epistle.
- As is common practice, some modern liberal scholars question whether Paul really wrote the book and attempt to late-date it.

* [https:// www.gotquestions.org/ Book-of-2-Thessalonians.html](https://www.gotquestions.org/Book-of-2-Thessalonians.html)

AUTHENTICITY

- Not only is 2 Thessalonians found in Marcion's canon and the Muratorian canon, but it is also quoted by name by Irenaeus, and was apparently known to Ignatius, Justin Martyr, and Polycarp. Further, it is found in the most ancient MSS (including the old Latin, old Syriac, and ,46), suggesting its full acceptance from a very early period. *
- Paul drew attention to the letter's authenticity by signing it himself: "I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, which is how I write in every letter." We find a parallel phrase in Galatians 6:11.

* [https:// bible.org/ seriespage/ 2-thessalonians-introduction-argument-outline](https://bible.org/seriespage/2-thessalonians-introduction-argument-outline)

BROAD OUTLINE

- Opening (1:1–2)
- Thanksgiving and Comfort for the Persecuted Thessalonians (1:3–12)
- Disproving the False Claim about the Day of the Lord (2:1–17)
- Transition (3:1–5)
- The Problem of Lazy Christians (3:6–15)
- Conclusion (3:16–18) *

* [https:// www.esv.org/ resources/ esv-global-study-bible/ introduction-to-2-thessalonians/](https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/introduction-to-2-thessalonians/)

DETAILED OUTLINE

- Paul opens the letter praising this church for their faithfulness and perseverance in the face of persecution (1:3–5).
- The Thessalonians were faced with a false teaching originating from a message or letter purporting to be from Paul, “to the effect that the day of the Lord has come” (2:2). Paul reminds the Thessalonian church that “it will not come unless **the apostasy comes first**, and **the man of lawlessness is revealed**, the son of destruction” (2:3)
- The man of lawlessness will deceive all those who have rejected the gospel. Jesus will judge them when he returns (2:3, 6–12). God’s righteous judgment will be completed when Jesus returns. Unbelievers will be condemned and believers will be saved (1:5–10; 2:9–14). Christians will share Christ’s glory (1:10, 12; 2:14). *

* [https:// www.esv.org/ resources/ esv-global-study-bible/ introduction-to-2-thessalonians/](https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/introduction-to-2-thessalonians/)

DETAILED OUTLINE

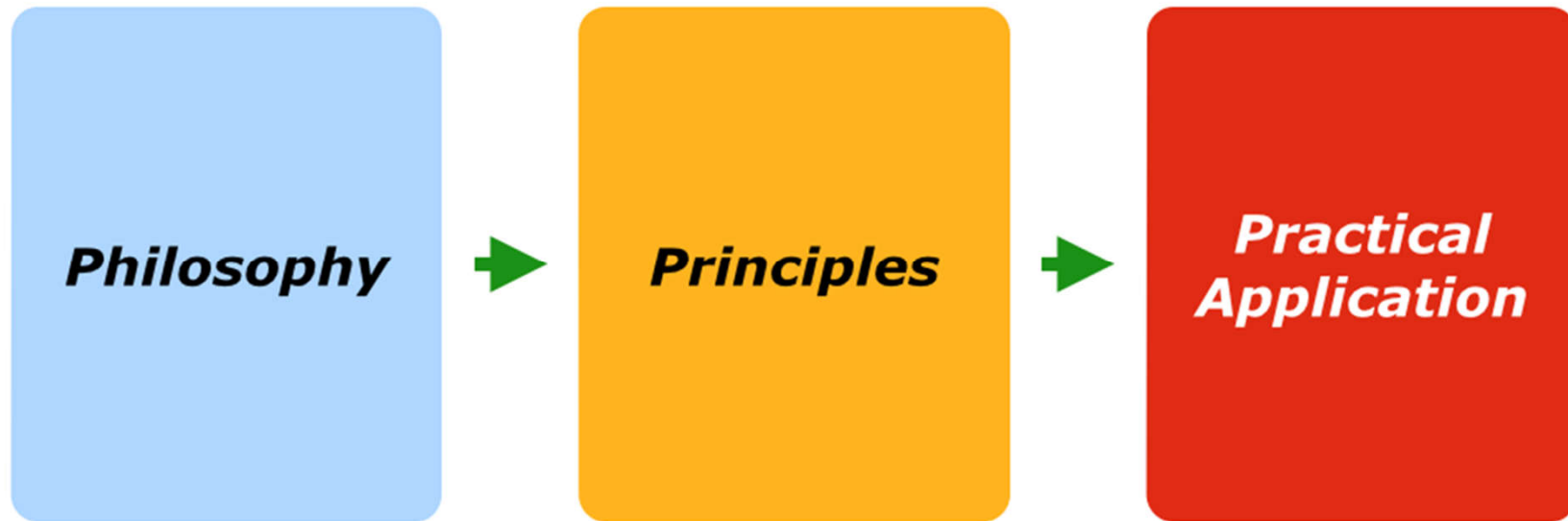
- Some of the Thessalonians may have stopped working to await and proclaim the second coming. More likely, lazy Christians may have been exploiting the generosity of wealthier Christians in order to avoid work. Christians must not take advantage of the charity of fellow Christians (3:6–15). *
- In contrast to the warm emotional tone of 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians includes some blunt commands as Paul addresses bad behavior and bad thinking. Further, this letter is noteworthy for Paul's tough-mindedness in predicting judgment on the ungodly and in rebuking church members who behave and think incorrectly. Still, there is a regular swing back and forth between reproof and warm encouragement. *

* [https:// www.esv.org/ resources/ esv-global-study-bible/ introduction-to-2-thessalonians/](https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/introduction-to-2-thessalonians/)

KEY VERSES

- 2 Thess 1:6-7 (NIV) God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.
- 2 Thess 2:13 (NIV) But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.
- 2 Thess 3:3 (NIV) But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.
- 2 Thess 3:10 (NIV) For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.”

PRACTICAL APPLICATION



- The Book of 2 Thessalonians is filled with information that explains the end times. It also exhorts us not to be idle and to work for what we have. There are also some great prayers in 2 Thessalonians that can be an example for us on how to pray for other believers today. *

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Gavin Paynter

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