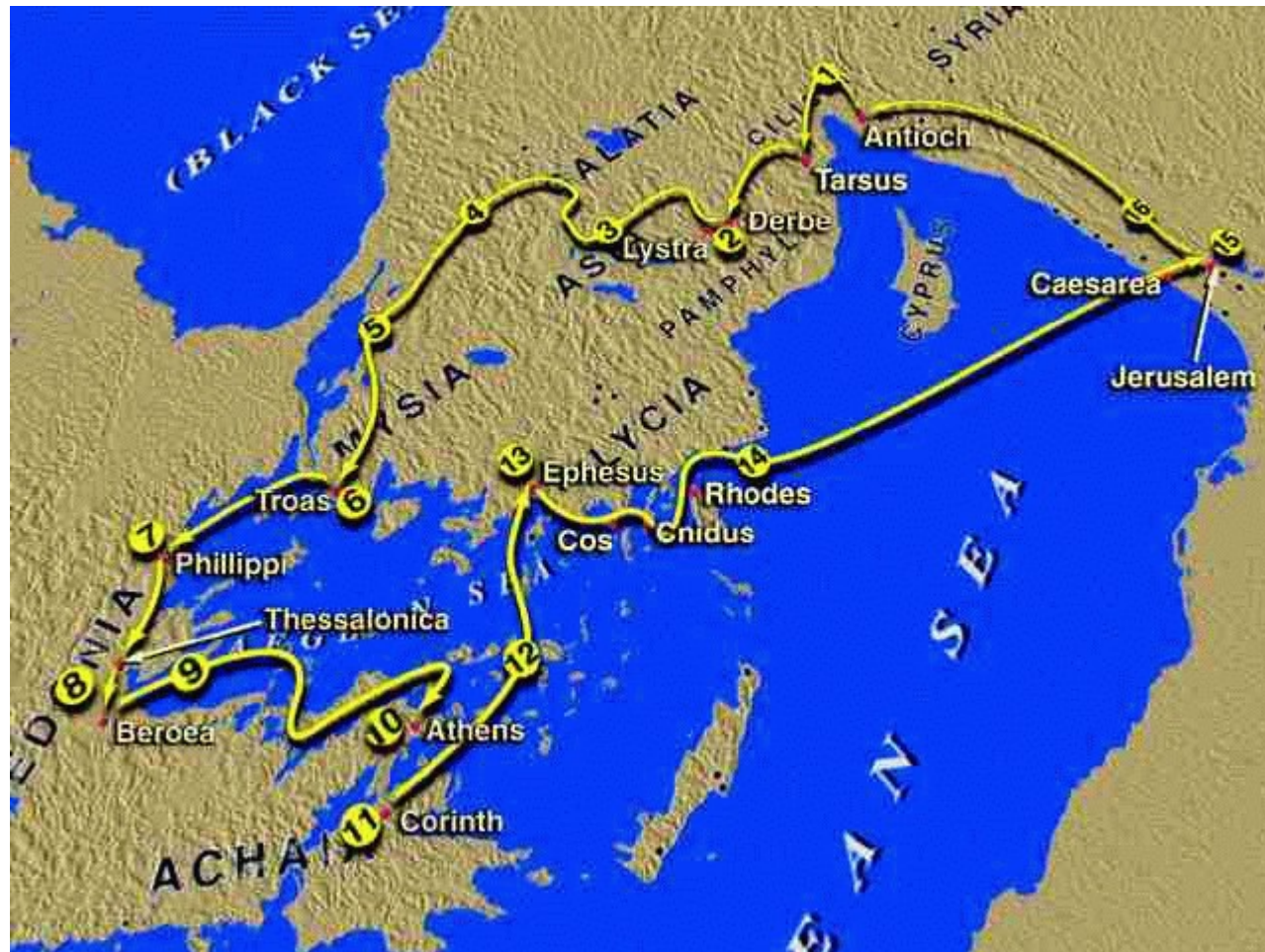


What does pastoral followup look like?

Introduction to 2 Thessalonians



Taking up homework

- *Assignment was:*
- *Pretend you were Timothy and were writing your missionary report to Paul and Silas from your visit to the Thessalonian church*
- *Why?*

- Why?

- *Hermeneutical*

- *Understanding context*

- *Close observation*

- *Interpreting the letter*

- *General doctrine alongside application*

- *Spiritual applications*

- *Lessons from the writers example*

- *Lessons from their teaching, encouragement, and exhortation*

To Paul and Silas

Report on my missionary visit to the Thessalonian church

Thank you for the opportunity to visit our brothers and sisters at Thessalonika. As I travelled I was somewhat apprehensive of what the folks would think of my visit, so my travel there was not only bathed in prayer for God's guidance and wisdom, but also with my efforts to find out from other Christians along the way what they had heard about the church's progress. Throughout Macedonia and Achaia, I was told that the church had become a model for others to follow. Its new found faith was reported to be clear and articulate - how the Christians there had turned to God from their idols, and were trying to serve Him. It was also known what kind of reception our team had when we were there. What we taught about future events was talked about by those I interviewed as well.

All of this was confirmed as I was welcomed into their homes and church fellowship. Their faith and love was evident from the beginning, and clear that they have pleasant memories of our first visit. They long to see us all again. **The opposition to the gospel we faced when we were there remains a significant challenge for them.** The same critics are telling them that we were in error about all we taught, and that we were there with impure motives just trying to flatter and trick them for monetary gain-worse still, that we used fear tactics to force them to believe our made up messages, and that we didn't really care about them at all. The critics were also saying that if we really did care for them, we would have returned rather than moving on to other cities to repeat our ruse. **They remembered we warned them of persecution that could come quickly, and want us to know how severely and costly it is continuing for them. In spite of it, they are standing firm through it all-PTL!**

On the dimensions of sanctification progress, as young Christians, there are issues of interpersonal favoritism in their expression of God's love. There are some who have not yet left their pagan ways of sexual immorality, impure living, and these exhibit disregard for the effect of these on others. More on this later.

Many were very keen to have more information about the future return of Christ to earth that we had taught. Specifically there has been a death of a loved one in the church, and they are all talking about whether or not she will miss out on the benefits of the coming of the Lord. There is also a great deal of discussion about the timing of the Lord's return. I tried to help them with these two areas, but not as ably as I would have liked.

There were many discussions about how to live in such a way to please the Lord which is so new to them. **The list of their many challenges to holy living included** drunkenness, quarrels over church leadership capabilities, inadequate care of families, impatient behaviours, allowance of infiltration of new ideas being taught, lack of consensus on how often to gather and pray, and misunderstandings over the role of the Holy Spirit. I didn't want to use particular names associated with these in writing. **It is my opinion that general additional instruction be somehow provided so that all learn together is the recommended approach.**

I look forward to learning from you both as a response action is formulated, and will help wherever I can!

Who wrote it?

- Internal support

- *Authorship directly claimed*

- 1:1 *Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:*

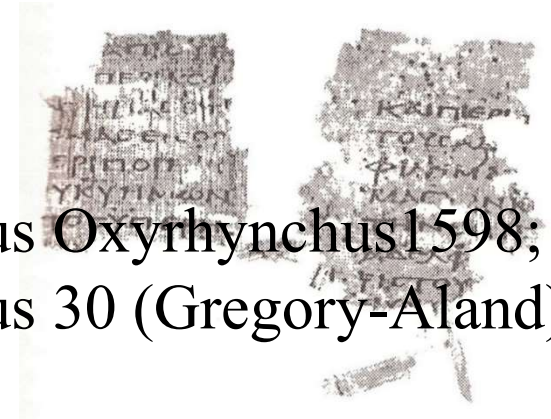
- 3:17 *I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write.*

Who wrote it?

- *External support*
 - *Similar to 1 Thessalonians*
 - *Early church quotations are in harmony with internal claims*
 - *Origen, Tertullian, Clement, Ireneus*

Blessing of God's Providential Care!

- ***Where are letters you wrote?***
- ***Homer's the Illiad (647)***
- ***New Testament***
 - ***Greek (5800)***
 - ***Latin (10,000)***
- ***Ray Vander Laan series***
 - ***Temple to Apollo in Didyma***
 - ***The very words of God***

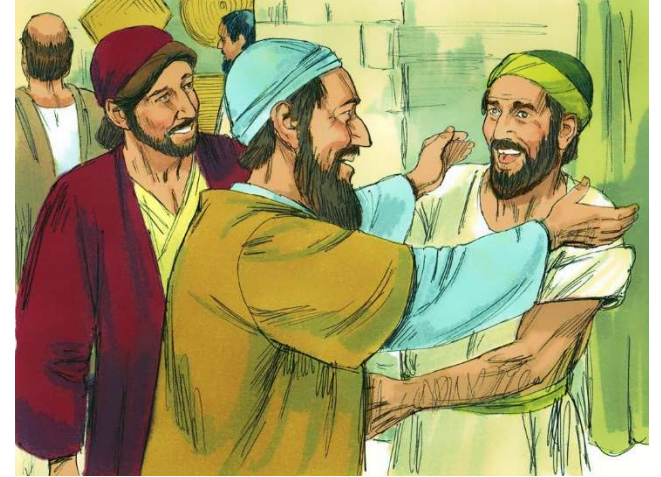


Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1598;
Papyrus 30 (Gregory-Aland)



Historical context?

- *52-53 AD*
 - *External evidence*
 - *with 2nd missionary journey*
- *Timothy dispatched by Paul from Athens*
- *His visit report to Paul and Silas in Corinth (Acts 18:5)*
- *1 Thessalonians written and sent*
- *Conjecture via Silas and Timothy*
- *How new information came to Paul that prompted second letter....*



Why the letter?

- *New information received*
- *Reports*
 - *Persistent persecution*
 - *False critics*
 - *The day of the Lord has already come*
 - *False conclusions about future events*
 - *Idleness waiting for the day of the Lord*
 - *Spiritual fatigue*
 - *Sanctification challenges*

Trip Report on visit to the Thessalonians' church to deliver to them our letter (to Paul from Silas and Timothy)

The church folks welcomed us right away, and were so grateful that we had a letter for them. Their growing faith since the last visit was evident. Even without some of our letter's exhortation about loving one another, we were pleased to see them including everyone in their fellowship.

Persecution is continuing against them as we knew it would. We were so pleased to see that their perseverance remains worthy of our boasting in the Lord. However, some are showing fatigue and not just a little spiritual discouragement with the troubles they face all the time. Some are questioning God's justice. Most are full of church actions of goodness, but discouragement is starting to affect some of these works for Christ.

Some of the persecutors are unsettling and alarming the saints with some teaching that the Lord has already come. These prophecies are being claimed to have originated with us, and were very difficult to refute and deal with in the time we had available. Nevertheless it was good to hear how the gospel of Christ has spread so rapidly within their city and in the countryside. The evil ones are always trying to obstruct its spread. They need our ongoing prayers, as we need theirs.

One difficult issue brought to us was that there are some within their fellowship who are not working in support of themselves and their families. They are claiming that we did not work to support ourselves while we were there, so they don't have to either. Also, their convenient excuse for this behaviour was that the return of the Lord will be at any time, so what is the point of working so hard!

We need to respond with a firm letter of instruction to the whole church again, and urge them to continue to grow in the gospel and the love and peace of our Lord.

Purposes of writing

- *Encouragement*
 - *Amidst continuing persecution*
 - *Strength via hope and judgment day*
 - *Spread of the Gospel*
- *Instruction*
 - *Future events*
 - *Coming of the Lord for believers and unbelievers*
 - *Signs and timing*
- *Exhortation*
 - *Regarding moral behaviours*
 - *About church discipline and laziness*

Theme?

- *2 Thessalonians ch 2*
- *15 So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.*
- *16 May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope,*
- *17 encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.*

Pastoral Commitment

- *Foundations*

- *from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.*

- *Followup*

- *With this in mind, we constantly pray for you,*

- *Future*

- *May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.*

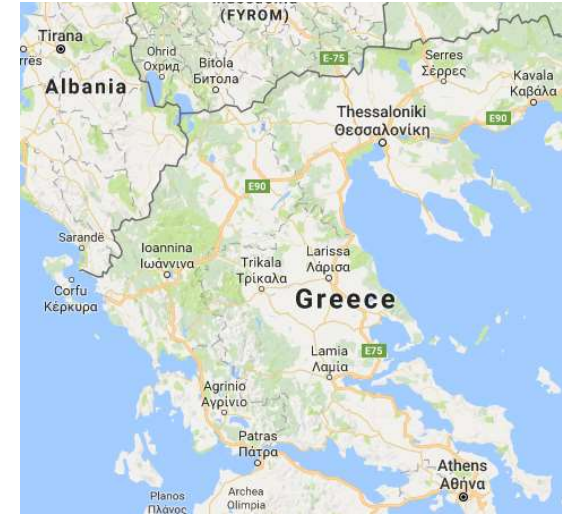
Letter outline

- *Author's greeting (1:1-2)*
- *Perseverance in persecution (1:3-12)*
 - *Spiritual growth*
 - *Strength from the future*
 - *Missionary prayer*
- *The coming of the Lord (ch 2)*
 - *The lawless one*
 - *Steadfastness now*
- *How should we then live? (ch 3)*
 - *Mutual prayer*
 - *Church discipline*
 - *Idleness*

- ***Author's greeting (1:1-2)***
 - *Grace and peace*
- ***Perseverance in persecution (1:3-12)***
 - ***Spiritual growth***
 - *Faith growing more and more*
 - *Love for each other increasing*
 - *Exemplars in faith and perseverance in trials*
 - ***Strength from the future***
 - *Counted worthy by God*
 - *God is just*
 - *Punishment for the persecutors*
 - *His glory in His holy people*
 - *When He comes*
 - ***Missionary prayer***

Themes for us today

- **Leadership**
 - **Teamwork**
 - **Prayer**
 - **Care and concern**
 - **Persistent followup**
- **Foundations**
 - **Growing faith and love**
 - **Living in purpose of hope**
 - **Sanctified living**
 - **Purposeful in hope**
 - **Standing firm**
- **Afflictions**
 - **God's love and the perseverance of Christ**



As we study together..

- *16 ¶) Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.*
- *18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.*

