

Writer: (Vs. 1) The Apostle Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheous.

Written to: (Vs. 1) The church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Date of Writing: AD 51, shortly after sending 1st Thessalonians.

2 Thessalonians 1:1-2 | Paul's Greeting to the Church

Verses 1,2–

Paul, Silvanus (Silas), and **Timotheus** (Timothy) were most likely all together in Corinth ([Acts 18:5](#)) when this letter was written to the church in Thessalonica. Timothy had returned from Thessalonica to Corinth and delivered a good report about what was happening among the Thessalonians (See [1 Thessalonians 3:6](#)).

Paul. In nine of Paul's thirteen letters, he refers to himself as an "apostle." In the four letters where he does not (1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philippians, and Philemon). Was he held in greater affection in Thessalonica and Phillipi? In Philemon, he is writing a letter to a friend, his beloved Apphia. The reason for omitting his credentials as an apostle: Perhaps writing to two churches that loved him and to his friend, he had no need to assert his authority?

Unto the church. The Greek word for church is **ἐκκλησία** (*ekklesia*) which is a generic term for an *assembly of people*. It is a gathering of *called-out ones*. In this case, the *assembly* is identified as, **in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ**.

When Paul uses the word **church** throughout his writings, his meaning is primarily the body of Christ. This would be the true definition and identifying mark of a Christian church today.

Yet when we read the word **church** in the New Testament, we should not always think of it as the church as we know it. For example, when reading [Matthew 16:18](#); [18:17](#), our tendency is to apply those passages to us in the 21st century. When Jesus spoke those words, however, the church as we know it was still a mystery and did not even exist.

Paul says the mystery of the church which is Christ's body, where the distinction between Jew and Gentile disappears, was not made known until it was revealed by God to Paul (Ephesians 3: 1-3,[6,9,10](#)).

What did Jesus mean in [Matthew 16:18](#)? Could Jesus have been speaking of the gathering of the remnant assembly of Israel and the future Kingdom where His assembly will be built in Zion ([Joel 2:16](#); [Romans 9:25-27](#))?

Grace be unto you. Grace is the Greek word **χάρις** (*charis*), and it is translated throughout the New Testament as *grace, favor, thank, pleasure, benefit*, and a few other synonyms. In this case, it could mean favor, as in *may God's favor be upon you*.

Peace. When Paul was suddenly sent away from Thessalonica because of Jewish opposition ([Acts 17:10](#)), the city was in a state of uproar ([Acts 17:5](#)). Paul was wishing an end to the chaos, and peace upon them, which can only come from **God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ**.

Verse 3–

We are bound to thank God always for you. The “We” here refers to Paul, Silas, and Timothy. He means, *it’s our duty*. And their thanks to God for the Thessalonians was **meet** (*worthy*) **because** of their **faith** that had *grown exceedingly*. Here was a church that was not stagnant.

Along with **faith** is *love* or **charity**. **Everyone** of them in the church of Thessalonica were **abounding** in love. Faith and love determine the strength of a church and are the key things that are commendable before God. In other passages Paul adds *hope* to the mix (1 Thess. 1:3: 1 Corinthians 13:3). Notice it doesn’t say their numbers were growing, or that their church was growing, but that your faith growth exceedingly. The mark of a healthy church is not size, it is always faith.

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Verse 4–

Paul says they **glory in you in the churches of God**. Paul boasted about this church everywhere he went. He used them as an example to the other churches. And the boasting was how they had **patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure**. Persecution and tribulations can have the effect of making a church stronger.

Verse 5–

A manifest token is the Greek word *ἐνδειγμα* *endeigma* which sounds like our English word *indicia* and indeed means the same thing, that is, *a distinguishing mark or evidence* of something. They wore their faith on their sleeve and didn’t hide it!

This tribulation they endured would exhibit the **righteous judgment of God**, they would be judged, **counted worthy**, one day in the **kingdom of God**. This may be another indication that this was a church made up of saved Jews. What Paul means exactly by **for which ye also suffer** is difficult to interpret. How would they *suffer for the kingdom*? Regardless, they would hear the words, “well done good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21,23).

Verse 6–

Paul describes what is going to happen to those who trouble them. **Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you**. Who are they that trouble the Thessalonians? The unbelieving Jews. Those Jews who did not accept the message of salvation by grace through faith. Those Jews who denied the message from Christ by the apostle Paul (Acts 17:5). God is a righteous God. He will one day pay back those who trouble Christian with a tribulation of their own. This will be the reason for the seven year Tribulation, to break the stubborn will of the Jewish people (Daniel 12:5-7).

Verse 7–

One day all earthly trouble will end and we will **rest with** Paul and the others. There will come a time of cleansing for unbelieving Israel (Zechariah 12:10). That day will be when **the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels** (Matthew 16:27; 25:31; Mark 8:38) He is speaking here of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Verse 8–

In flaming fire. Hebrews 12:29 says “our God is a consuming fire.” Second Peter 3:7, “But the heavens and the earth...reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” And, Revelation 21:8 “...in the lake of fire which burneth with fire and brimstone...”

Make no mistake, God will take **vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ** (The Tribulation is referred to often in the Old Testament as *the day of vengeance*) Persecutors of the Church will have their day of judgment and it will be horrendous.

Verse 9–

Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction. Not annihilation. This is destruction that lasts forever and they will be cast **from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.** Imagine what everlasting separation would be like?

Verse 10–

But Christians have no fear of this everlasting destruction. When Jesus Christ returns two things will happen:

1. **He will be glorified in his saints.** In other words, glorified *in what they are by his grace.*
2. And **to be admired** (to be wondered at) **in all them that believe.**

Is Paul referring to two groups here? Saints could be referring only to the saved Jews, and all that believe would be Gentile believers. How did they both come to believe? **Because our testimony among you was believed.** Simply put, they believed the Gospel of grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8,9; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4), that is the gospel that saves **in that day.**

Verse 11, 12–

-Wherefore also we pray always for you. Paul’s formula for prayer is rather simple: Pray for others. Here he gives a comforting prayer for all who believe.

1. **Count you worth of this calling.** This is not a **calling** for salvation, it is a calling to *wonder at his coming.* We who believe will be counted worthy to see him! It is our faith in the completed work of Christ which causes us to be counted worthy.

2. **Fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness.** And we will be counted worthy of his kindness that he will bestow on all believers.

3. **Fulfill...the work of faith with power.** Upon his return the power of our faith will be fulfilled. We will no longer walk by faith, but by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).

4. **That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you.** Paul prays we will be adorned with the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

5. **And ye in him.** And that he might be adorned with our name.

6. **According to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.** All this is because of grace through faith.

The first twelve verse were a long introduction to one of the main reasons Paul wrote, and that is the coming of our Lord Jesus—had it already begun? The church is confused.