

## Through the Bible in One Year

### I and II Thessalonians

Author: Saul of Tarsus (Paul)

Recipient: Thessalonica, modern Salonica – capital of ancient Macedonia – founded by Alexander the Great – population of 200,000 when Paul visited on Via Egnatia, Roman road from Rome to East – church founded on second missionary journey – stayed only 3 weeks (Acts 17:1-10) – visited again (Acts 20:1-6)

Date: both epistles written 50-51AD from Corinth (I Thess. 3:16; Acts 18:5) – earliest NT writing we have – only epistles we have written during Paul’s second missionary journey

Occasion: (1) I Thessalonians – Timothy has returned to Paul bringing good news about the church in Thessalonica (I Thess. 3:6-7) – the church there requested information about some questions they have been having (I Thess. 4:13; 5:1) (2) II Thessalonians – Paul seeks to clear up questions about the Anti-Christ

Theme: The second coming of Christ – 20 references in these epistles

A mini-course in end-times theology

- OT concept of “The Day of the Lord” (I Thess. 5:2)  
 Jewish understanding included: (1) Restoration of Israel as a world power, reigning over the territory God promised them in Genesis 15:18b-21) (2) Day of judgment (3) World peace  
 Did Jesus fulfill all these at his first coming? No – Difference in “D-Day” (Determined Day) on June 6, 1944 and “VE Day” (Victory in Europe) on May 8, 1945/“VJ Day” (Victory in Japan) on August 15, 1945 – we are living in the era between “D-Day” and “V-Day”
- NT concept of “Second Coming of Christ”
  - (1) Pre-Millennialism
    - A. Rapture of the church (I Thess. 4:13-18; Matt. 24:40-41; Lk. 17:34-37) – stealth coming/half coming – Jesus will return to the clouds but not to the earth; a trumpet will sound and the angels will shout; all true believers, living and dead, will be gathered up to meet Jesus in the air; Jesus will take them to heaven
    - B. Great Tribulation (Rev. 4:1-19:21, though the only specific references to “tribulation” are 1:9; 2:9, 10, 22; 7:14) – it will last for 7 years (Dan. 9:27), “70 weeks” – it will include
      - Revelation of the Anti-Christ (II Thess. 2:3-3) who will rule 3½ years and will seek to annihilate Israel
      - The Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:12-16; 19:11-21) where the armies of the returning Christ will defeat the armies of the Anti-Christ
      - The Conversion of Israel (Zech. 12:10; 13: 8-9; Rom. 11:25-27)
    - C. The visible return of Christ to earth (Rev. 19:14; Matt. 24:31)
    - D. Millennial reign of Christ (Rev. 20:1-6)
  - (2) Post-Millennialism
    - A. Great Tribulation (Matt. 24-29; Rev. 7:14)
    - B. Simultaneous return of Christ and rapture of the church (Matt. 24:29-44; Lk. 17:20-37; 21:25-28) – I Thess. 4:13-18 as the same thing
    - C. Millennial reign of Christ
  - (3) Amillennialism
 

Treats the material as symbolic, figurative not literal
- History of Interpretation of “Second Coming”
  - (1) Patristic Period (100-400 AD)  
 Universally held post-millennial view
  - (2) Medieval Period (400-1300 AD)  
 Great theologians from St. Augustine to St. Thomas Aquinas held Amillennial view
  - (3) Renaissance Period (1300-1500 AD)

Continuation of Amillennial view

(4) Reformation Period (1500-1800 AD)

Reformers were post-Mellinéal; Roman Catholics were Amillennial

(5) Modern Period (1800-present AD)

Increasingly Pre-Millennial – originated by Edward Irvin in 1832; picked up by James N. Darby (Darbyism); popularized by Cyrus Ingerson Scofield (Scofield Reference Bible, 1909)

• “Second Coming” According to Jim

(1) One not two second comings – two comings requires believing that I Thess. 4:13-17 and Matt. 24:29-31 to be referring to two separate events – historically trumpets were used to summon the people of God to assemblies (Ex. 19:16-17; Num. 10:1-10; Is. 27:13)

(2) Rapture but not pretribulation rapture – Jesus talks about the same day (Lk. 7:28-30), the same hour (Jn. 5:28-29), the same moment (I Cor. 15:51-52) – Matt. 25:1, 6 the virgins hurry to meet the approaching bridegroom and escort him back to where the bride is waiting

(3) Jesus will come like a “thief in the night” (Matt. 24:43-44; I Thess. 5:24; II Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15) – sudden, unannounced, unexpected – yet “every eye will see him” (Rev. 1:7; Lk. 17:24)

(4) The church will be saved from the final wrath of God, poured out at the end of the great tribulation (Lk. 17:26-37; Rev. 5:9; I Thess. 1:10; 2:16; 5:9) – However, the church will go through the tribulation (Jn. 16:13; 17:15, 20; Acts 14:22; Rom. 5:3; 8:14; II Cor. 4:16-18; I Thess. 3:3-4; Jas. 1:2)

(5) Explanation of I Thess. 4:13-18 as a Roman military image

(6) Explanation of II Thess. 2:1-12

Pre-Mellinnial view is that the church must be taken away from the earth in order for “the man of sin” (v.3), “the son of perdition” (v.3), “the mystery of lawlessness” (v.7), “the lawless one” (v.8) to be revealed – but this passage equates “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him” (v.1), and it says this event will not take place until “the falling away” (tribulation) and revealing of the Anti-Christ (v.3)

(7) Terminologies for the second coming

A. Parousia – translated “coming,” meaning the personal presence of Jesus (Matt. 24:3, 27, 37, 39; I Cor. 15:23; I Thess. 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; II Thess. 2:1, 8; Jas. 5:7, 8; II Pet. 1:6; 3:4, 16; I Jn. 2:28)

B. Apokalypsis (English word, “Apocalypse”) – translated “appearing,” “revelation,” “manifestism,” “unveiling,” “uncovering,” “appearing” (Rom. 8:19; I Cor. 1:7; I Pet. 1:7; 4:13; II Thess. 2:3, 8)

C. Epiphareia (English word, “Epiphany”) – translated “brightness,” “appearing,” “a shining forth,” “displaying” (Matt. 24:27; II Thess. 2:8; I Tim. 6:14; II Tim. 4:1, 8; Tit. 2:13)

D. Phaneroo – translated “manifest,” “appear,” “to make known,” “to reveal the true identity” (I Pet. 5:4; I Jn. 2:28; 3:2)

## I Thessalonians

1:1 Salutation

1:2-10 Commendation to the church for their good example – 1:3 “faith ... love ... hope” (I Cor. 13:13)

2:1-3:13 Paul’s relationship with the church

2:3-6 Paul’s opponents accused him of heresy, immorality, trickery, greed

2:7, 11 Paul is like a “nursing mother” to the church

2:9 Paul supported himself by working at his trade (Acts 18:3)

2:14-16 The church in Thessalonica is being persecuted by the Judaisers

3:2 Timothy was sent by Paul to be their pastor

4:1-12 Exhortation to a life of moral purity

4:3, 7 God’s will: our sanctification – especially sexual purity (4:4-5)

4:11 Our goal in life “aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands”

4:13-18 What happens to those who die before Christ returns?

4:13 “asleep” – metaphor for death (Mk. 5:39) – not “soul sleep” waiting for resurrection – grieve as those who have “hope” – future orientation -

4:16-18 One second coming or tow (Matt. 24:29-31)? God translates the believers, living and dead, to be with him in heaven

5:1-11 When will Christ return?

5:2 “like a thief” (Mk. 13:32-37)

5:8 “hope of salvation” – future reality

5:12-28 Concluding exhortations

5:12-22 Living for Christ involves practiced behaviors toward one another – 5:18 “in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” – 5:19 “Do not quench the Spirit”

5:23-28 Blessings and admonitions – “sanctify you completely”: “spirit, soul, body” (5:23)

## II Thessalonians

1:1-2 Salutation

1:3-12 The coming judgment

1:4 The Thessalonian church is suffering persecution and affliction

1:5-10 A reckoning is coming

2:1-12 The coming “Day of the Lord”

2:3-12 Coming of the Anti-Christ: “Man of Sin” (v.3),

“Son of perdition” (v.3), “mystery of lawlessness” (v.7), “the lawless one” (v.8)

- 2:4 he will be worshipped

- 2:9 he will do signs and wonders

- One of the reasons believers were to be law abiding citizens was to demonstrate that they were not connected to the Anti-Christ

2:13-17 Exhortation to hold fast

2:13-14 We are chosen, called, and in the process of sanctification

3:1-5 Paul asks for prayer

3:6-15 Warnings against idleness – 3:6 Keep away from idle people; 3:10 If people do not work, do not feed them; 3:12 everyone should earn his/her own living

3:16-18 Benediction

Next week: I and II Timothy, Titus, Philemon

Schedule of Daily readings:

	<u>Option One</u>	<u>Option Two</u>
Monday	I Timothy 1-3	1
Tuesday	I Timothy 4-6	6
Wednesday	II Timothy 1-2	2
Thursday	II Timothy 3-4	4
Friday	Titus 1:1-2:8	1
Saturday	Titus 2:9-3:15	3
Sunday	Philemon	Philemon