



1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

APRIL 2019

Read on your own or with others,
which ever you prefer.

This leaflet is just a brief overview of the 'big picture' of these books. If you have been reading the Bible for some time you will be aware there is much more to them than you'll find here.

If you are new to reading the Bible don't worry too much if there are details you do not quite get at the moment - focus on the 'big picture'.

INTRODUCTION

Paul visited the city of Thessalonica on his second missionary journey. While he was there a large number put their faith in Jesus (Acts 17:4). It wasn't long before Paul had to move on because of the growing violence against the Christians.

Both of these letters were written a short time after Paul left Thessalonica. The first after Timothy, who had been in Thessalonica to encourage the believers (Acts 18:5), joined Paul in Corinth. The second letter was sent about 6 months later.

1 THESSALONIANS

The church in Thessalonica is still a very young church. Paul writes to encourage them and build them up in their new faith.

1 THESSALONIANS 1:1–2:16 : KEEP GOING

In the first chapter Paul thanks God for the conversion of the Thessalonian Christians. He writes about the saving work of the Holy Spirit and the obvious fruit of their faith in Jesus.

Next, Paul reminds the Thessalonians of the example that he and his fellow travelers set them in endurance (2:1-2), ministry (2:6-9) and holiness (2:10).

The purpose here is more than a recap of what happened, it is an encouragement to the church to keep on following their example (2:12).

1 THESSALONIANS 2:17–3:13 : PASTORAL CONCERN

These words are dripping with pastoral care and concern for the believers. Paul had to leave the church in its infancy and was clearly concerned for them. Here he shares his heart and prayer for them.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:1–5:28 : LIVE IT OUT

The book ends with two chapters of instruction explaining how we should live as those who trust in Jesus. They cover a wide variety of areas of life.

The center of this section focuses on the return of Jesus and the future resurrection of his people and how this should change the way we grieve and live.

2 THESSALONIANS

Not long after first letter from Paul, the church in Thessalonica receive another one. Here there is a greater emphasis on the teaching of the 'last things'.

2 THESSALONIANS 1: A DAY OF VINDICATION

The Thessalonian believers were experiencing persecution. They were having a hard time and the persecutors appeared to be winning. Why didn't God do anything about it?

Paul encouraged them by pointing them to the day of judgement. A day where those who deny the Gospel will be judged and those who trust in Jesus will be welcomed into the glory of Christ.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-12 : DON'T BE DECEIVED

A false teaching had started to take root in the church at Thessalonica. They were being told that the day of the Lord – the day of his return – has already taken place. Paul writes to tell them not to listen. His reason is that the 'man of lawlessness' (the antichrist) who will precede the return of Jesus has not yet come.¹

2 THESSALONIANS 2:13-3:18 : STAND FIRM

Paul ends this letter with the same message that he began the first: keep on going. He urges them to keep going in the faith, in prayer and in living obedient lives.

¹ An antichrist is an opponent of Jesus. 1 John 2:18 tells us that there will be many 'antichrists' in the days between the cross of Jesus and his return. Yet, there will be one final one, 'the antichrist'. This is who Paul is referring to in 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

ASKING THE QUESTIONS THE BIBLE WANTS YOU TO ASK

What does this book teach you about Jesus? (Luke 24:45-47)

What does this book teach you about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you encouraged? (2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you corrected? (Romans 15:4)

What difference do the truths of this book make in your life? (Matthew 7:24-27)