

Structure

The overall structure (like 1 Thess) is ABCCBA:

1:1-2 Address, grace and peace blessings

1:3-12 Thanksgiving, God's justice, and prayer

2:1-17 Encouragement and prayer for strength and endurance in the face of the lawless one

3:1-5 Prayer for deliverance from the evil one

3:6-15 Commands to work helpfully, and to shun brothers who don't

3:16-18 Greeting, peace and grace blessings

Background

See the Introduction for 1 Thessalonians.

Relationships with other letters of Paul

If 2 Thessalonians was written while both Silvanus and Timothy were with Paul, and therefore not more than eighteen months after 1 Thessalonians, there would have been only one surviving letter of Paul's before 2 Thessalonians. But 3:17 presumes the existence of many letters before 2 Thessalonians. In addition to very many similarities to 1 Thessalonians, there are also many similarities to 1 Corinthians and Romans. For example, the first part of the autograph in 3:17 is identical to 1 Cor 16:21. So it may have been written after 1 Corinthians and Romans, and after a collection of Paul's letters was available.

If the second thanksgiving in 1 Th 2:13-16 was inserted after 1 Thessalonians was originally written, 2 Thessalonians, which also has a second thanksgiving in 2 Th 2:13-17, was written after that insertion. 1 and 2 Thessalonians are the only letters of Paul that begin with double thanksgivings.

2 Thessalonians is the only Pauline letter that does not use the uniquely Pauline phrase, "Anointed Jesus." The Pauline letters use that phrase 83 times, more frequently than "Jesus Anointed" which appears 78 times, nine of which are in 2 Thessalonians. The only other Pauline letters that have nine or more instances of "Jesus Anointed" are Romans and 1 Corinthians.

Theme

While 1 and 2 Thessalonians have a similar outline and similar openings, closings, and double thanksgivings (1 Th 1:2; 2:13; 2 Th 1:3; 2:13), their main sections are very different. 1 Thessalonians relates Paul's coming and closeness to the Thessalonians in a positive way to the Lord's coming, and gives encouragement regarding those who have died, that they will not be forgotten or left behind at the Lord's coming. 2 Thessalonians warns about the "lawless one" and the "evil one" who will come before the Lord's coming, and reverses the thrust of 1 Thessalonians that the Lord's coming was expected at any time and soon (1 Th 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:2-10,23) and that "the Day of the Lord is coming like a thief at night" (1 Th 5:2). 2 Thessalonians reflects an apocalyptic view similar to Revelation, which was probably written near the end of the first century, long after Paul's death. It is the only Pauline letter that says something that has not yet happened must happen before the Anointed's return.

2 Thessalonians

Text in *italics* is omitted in the Greek source

Address, grace and peace blessings¹

1 Paul and Silvanus and Timothy,
To the *assembly* called out from²
the Thessalonians
in God our Father
and *the* Lord Jesus

Anointed:

² Grace to you and peace from God *the* Father and *the* Lord Jesus Anointed.

Thanksgiving, God's justice, and prayer³

³ We are obligated to give thanks to God always for you, brothers,
as is fitting,
because your faith is growing abundantly and the love of every one of you for one another
is increasing.

⁴ So that we ourselves boast of you among God's churches
for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and afflictions that you endure—
⁵ evidence of God's just judgment
that you are counted worthy of God's kingdom for which you are suffering.

⁶ For *it is* just with God to pay back:
to those who trouble you, trouble,
⁷ and to you who are being troubled, relief with us,
at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his mighty angels ⁸ in flaming fire,
rendering vengeance to those who do not acknowledge God and to those who do not
obey the good news of our Lord Jesus.

⁹ These will suffer *the* justice of eternal ruin away from the Lord's presence and away
from the glory of his power,

¹⁰ when he comes
to be glorified among his holy *ones*
and to be marveled at among all who have believed (because our testimony to you was
believed)
on that day.

¹¹ To this end we pray always for you,
that our God may make you worthy of the call,
and may fulfill every resolve of goodness and work of faith with power,
¹² that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him,
through the grace of our God and *the* Lord Jesus Anointed.

¹ 1:1-2 ABCDCBA. The first of seven divisions. Parallel with 3:16-18.

² 1:1. Literally, *ekklesia* = "called out from" (usually translated "church"), equivalent here to "Anointed."

³ 1:3-12 ABA. Second of six divisions. Parallel with 3:6-15. A's: thanks and prayer; B: God's justice.

Encouragement and prayer for strength and endurance in the face of the lawless one⁴

2 We urge you, brothers,
 regarding the coming of our Lord Jesus Anointed and our gathering together to him,
² that you not be quickly unsettled in mind nor be alarmed,
 neither by spirit nor by word nor by letter as though from us,
 to the effect that the Day of the Lord has come.

³ Let no one deceive you in any way.

For unless the apostasy comes first and revealed is the man of lawlessness, the son of destruction,
⁴ who opposes and exalts himself over everything called god or object of worship,
 so that he seats himself in God's temple,
 proclaiming himself that he is God—

⁵ don't you remember that when I was still with you I told you these *things*?

⁶ And now the restrainer⁵ you know so that he may be revealed at his time.

⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work,
 until the restrainer for the present only is taken out of the way.

⁸ And then will be revealed the lawless *one*,
 whom the Lord will do away with
 by the spirit of his mouth
 and render powerless
 by the appearing of his coming,
⁹ *the one* whose coming is
 by the Adversary's working with all power and signs and wonders of lying,
¹⁰ and with all deception of injustice
 for those being destroyed,
 because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved.

¹¹ Therefore God sends them a strong delusion,
 so that they believe the lie,
¹² so that all may be condemned
 who have not believed the truth
 but delighted in injustice.

¹³ We are obligated to give thanks to God always for you, brothers loved by *the* Lord,
 because God chose you *as* first fruit to salvation in holiness of spirit and belief of truth,
¹⁴ to which he called you through our good news to possession of *the* glory of our Lord Jesus
 Anointed.

¹⁵ So then, brothers, stand firm and hold fast the traditions you were taught whether by
 word or by letter of ours.

¹⁶ Himself our Lord Jesus Anointed and God our Father who loved us
 and gave *us* eternal encouragement and good hope through grace,
¹⁷ may he encourage your hearts and strengthen *you* in every good deed and word.

⁴ 2:1-17 ABCCBA. Parallel with 3:1-5. A's: encouragement to stand firm. B's: apostasy and delusion. C's: now and then.

⁵ 2:6-7 The "restrainer," "possessor" or "occupier," (*katechon*) is mentioned nowhere else in the NT.

Prayer for deliverance from the evil one

- 3** Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the Lord's word may speed forward and be honored,
just as among you,
² and that we may be delivered from perverse and evil people,
for not all *have* the faith.
³ Faithful however is the Lord,
who will strengthen and guard you from the evil *one*.
⁴ We depend in *the* Lord on you, that what we command, you are doing and will do.
⁵ May the Lord guide your hearts to God's love and to the Anointed's steadfastness.

Commands to work helpfully, and to shun brothers who don't

- ⁶ We command you, brothers,
in *the* name of the Lord Jesus Anointed,
that you keep away from every brother walking irresponsibly
and not according to the tradition
that they received from us.
- ⁷ For you yourselves know how one must follow us.
For we were not out of order among you,
⁸ nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying,
but with labor and toil
night and day working
so as not to burden any of you.
⁹ Not that we have not *that* right,
but to make ourselves an example for you to follow us.
- ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we commanded you, that if anyone would not work
neither should he eat.
¹¹ For we hear some are walking among you out of order,
not being busy,
but being busybodies.
- ¹² Such *persons* we command and urge in *the* Lord Jesus Anointed, that working in quietness
they should eat their own bread.
- ¹³ But you, brothers, do not tire of doing good.
¹⁴ If anyone does not obey our word in this letter,
take note of that *one*
not to associate with him,
that he may be ashamed.
- ¹⁵ And do not regard *him* as an enemy,
but warn *him* as a brother.

Greeting, peace and grace blessings

- ¹⁶ Himself the Lord of peace, may he give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord *be* with you all.
¹⁷ The greeting by my own hand, Paul, which is a mark in every letter, so I write.
¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Anointed *be* with you all.

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Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος

τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ

Θεσσαλονικέων

ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ ἡμῶν

καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ

Χριστῷ,

² Χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς [ἡμῶν] καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

³ Εὐχαριστεῖν ὀφείλομεν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί,

καθὼς ἄξιόν ἐστιν,

ὅτι ὑπεραυξάνει ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν καὶ πλεονάζει ἡ ἀγάπη ἐνὸς ἐκάστου πάντων ὑμῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους,

⁴ ὥστε αὐτοὺς ἡμᾶς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐγκαυχᾶσθαι ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τοῦ θεοῦ

ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑπομονῆς ὑμῶν καὶ πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς διωγμοῖς ὑμῶν καὶ ταῖς θλίψεσιν αἷς ἀνέχεσθε,

⁵ ἔνδειγμα τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ

εἰς τὸ καταξιωθῆναι ὑμᾶς τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ, ὑπὲρ ἧς καὶ πάσχετε,

⁶ εἶπερ δίκαιον παρὰ θεῷ ἀνταποδοῦναι

τοῖς θλίβουσιν ὑμᾶς θλίψιν

⁷ καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς θλιβομένοις ἄνεσιν μεθ' ἡμῶν,

ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ μετ' ἀγγέλων δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ ⁸ ἐν πυρὶ φλογός,

διδόντος ἐκδίκησιν τοῖς μὴ εἰδόσιν θεὸν καὶ τοῖς μὴ ὑπακούουσιν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ,

⁹ οἵτινες δίκην τίσουσιν ὄλεθρον αἰώνιον ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ κυρίου καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ,

¹⁰ ὅταν ἔλθῃ

ἐνδοξασθῆναι ἐν τοῖς ἀγίοις αὐτοῦ

καὶ θαυμασθῆναι ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύσασιν, ὅτι ἐπιστεύθη τὸ μαρτύριον ἡμῶν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς,

ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ.

¹¹ Εἰς ὃ καὶ προσευχόμεθα πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν,

ἵνα ὑμᾶς ἀξιώσῃ τῆς κλήσεως ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν

καὶ πληρώσῃ πᾶσαν εὐδοκίαν ἀγαθωσύνης καὶ ἔργον πίστεως ἐν δυνάμει,

¹² ὅπως ἐνδοξασθῇ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν αὐτῷ, κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

2 Ἐρωτῶμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί,

ὑπὲρ τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡμῶν ἐπισυναγωγῆς ἐπ' αὐτὸν
² εἰς τὸ μὴ ταχέως σαλευθῆναι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ νοῦς μηδὲ θροεῖσθαι,
 μήτε διὰ πνεύματος μήτε διὰ λόγου μήτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ὡς δι' ἡμῶν,
 ὡς ὅτι ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου·

³ Μὴ τις ὑμᾶς ἐξαπατήσῃ κατὰ μηδένα τρόπον.

ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ ἔλθῃ ἡ ἀποστασία πρῶτον καὶ ἀποκαλυφθῇ ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας, ὁ
 υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας,

⁴ ὁ ἀντικείμενος καὶ ὑπεραιρόμενος ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον θεὸν ἢ σέβασμα,
 ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσει
 ἀποδεικνύοντα ἑαυτὸν ὅτι ἔστιν θεός.

⁵ Οὐ μνημονεύετε ὅτι ἔτι ὦν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ταῦτα ἔλεγον ὑμῖν;

⁶ καὶ νῦν τὸ κατέχον οἴδατε εἰς τὸ ἀποκαλυφθῆναι αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ καιρῷ.

⁷ τὸ γὰρ μυστήριον ἤδη ἐνεργεῖται τῆς ἀνομίας·
 μόνον ὁ κατέχων ἄρτι ἕως ἐκ μέσου γένηται.

⁸ καὶ τότε ἀποκαλυφθήσεται ὁ ἄνομος,

ὃν ὁ κύριος [Ἰησοῦς] ἀνελεῖ

τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ

καὶ καταργήσει

τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ,

⁹ οὗ ἔστιν ἡ παρουσία

κατ' ἐνέργειαν τοῦ σατανᾶ ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει καὶ σημείοις καὶ τέρασιν
 ψεύδους

¹⁰ καὶ ἐν πάσῃ ἀπάτῃ ἀδικίας

τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις,

ἀνθ' ὧν τὴν ἀγάπην τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἐδέξαντο εἰς τὸ σωθῆναι αὐτούς.

¹¹ καὶ διὰ τοῦτο πέμπει αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς ἐνέργειαν πλάνης

εἰς τὸ πιστεῦσαι αὐτούς τῷ ψεύδει,

¹² ἵνα κριθῶσιν πάντες

οἱ μὴ πιστεύσαντες τῇ ἀληθείᾳ

ἀλλὰ εὐδοκήσαντες τῇ ἀδικίᾳ.

¹³ ἡμεῖς δὲ ὀφείλομεν εὐχαριστεῖν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί ἡγαπημένοι ὑπὸ
 κυρίου,

ὅτι εἴλατο ὑμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἀπαρχὴν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος καὶ πίστει
 ἀληθείας,

¹⁴ εἰς ὃ [καὶ] ἐκάλεσεν ὑμᾶς διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἡμῶν εἰς περιποίησιν δόξης τοῦ
 κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

¹⁵ Ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί, στήκετε καὶ κρατεῖτε τὰς παραδόσεις ἃς ἐδιδάχθητε εἴτε
 διὰ λόγου εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν.

¹⁶ Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς καὶ [ὁ] θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν ὁ ἀγαπήσας
 ἡμᾶς

καὶ δοὺς παράκλησιν αἰωνίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα ἀγαθὴν ἐν χάριτι,

¹⁷ παρακαλέσαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας καὶ στηρίζαι ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ ἀγαθῷ.

3 Τὸ λοιπὸν προσεύχεσθε, ἀδελφοί, περὶ ἡμῶν, ἵνα ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου τρέχη καὶ δοξάζεται

καθὼς καὶ πρὸς ὑμᾶς,

² καὶ ἵνα ῥυσθῶμεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀτόπων καὶ ποιηρῶν ἀνθρώπων·
οὐ γὰρ πάντων ἡ πίστις.

³ Πιστὸς δέ ἐστιν ὁ κύριος,

ὃς στηρίζει ὑμᾶς καὶ φυλάξει ἀπὸ τοῦ ποιηροῦ.

⁴ πεποιθᾶμεν δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ ἐφ' ὑμᾶς, ὅτι ἂ παραγγέλλομεν [καὶ] ποιεῖτε καὶ ποιήσετε.

⁵ Ὁ δὲ κύριος κατευθύνει ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας εἰς τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ εἰς τὴν ὑπομονὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

⁶ Παραγγέλλομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί,

ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν] Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

στέλλεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ παντὸς ἀδελφοῦ ἀτάκτως περιπατοῦντος

καὶ μὴ κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν

ἣν παρελάβοσαν παρ' ἡμῶν.

⁷ Αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἶδατε πῶς δεῖ μιμεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς,

ὅτι οὐκ ἠτακτήσαμεν ἐν ὑμῖν

⁸ οὐδὲ δωρεὰν ἄρτον ἐφάγομεν παρά τινος,

ἀλλ' ἐν κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ

νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι

πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαί τινα ὑμῶν·

⁹ οὐχ ὅτι οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν,

ἀλλ' ἵνα ἑαυτοὺς τύπον δώμεν ὑμῖν εἰς τὸ μιμεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς.

¹⁰ καὶ γὰρ ὅτε ἦμεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, τοῦτο παρηγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν, ὅτι εἴ τις οὐ θέλει ἐργάζεσθαι μηδὲ ἐσθιέτω.

¹¹ Ἀκούομεν γὰρ τινὰς περιπατοῦντας ἐν ὑμῖν ἀτάκτως

μηδὲν ἐργαζομένους

ἀλλὰ περιεργαζομένους·

¹² τοῖς δὲ τοιοῦτοις παραγγέλλομεν καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ, ἵνα μετὰ ἡσυχίας ἐργαζόμενοι τὸν ἑαυτῶν ἄρτον ἐσθίωσιν.

¹³ ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, μὴ ἐγκακήσητε καλοποιοῦντες.

¹⁴ Εἰ δέ τις οὐχ ὑπακούει τῷ λόγῳ ἡμῶν διὰ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς,

τοῦτον σημειοῦσθε

μὴ συναιναμίγνυσθαι αὐτῷ,

ἵνα ἐντραπή·

¹⁵ καὶ μὴ ὡς ἐχθρὸν ἠγεῖσθε,

ἀλλὰ νουθετεῖτε ὡς ἀδελφόν.

¹⁶ Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ κύριος τῆς εἰρήνης δώη ὑμῖν τὴν εἰρήνην διὰ παντὸς ἐν παντὶ τρόπῳ. ὁ κύριος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.

¹⁷ Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῆ ἐμῆ χειρὶ Παύλου, ὃ ἐστιν σημεῖον ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ· οὕτως γράφω.

¹⁸ Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.