

*1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.*

Here, Paul reveals the probable purpose for this correspondence with the Thessalonian Church. Paul met with great opposition when he first preached to this region with Silas on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-13). After three weeks (Acts 17:2) he was driven from the city by the Jewish leaders because of their jealousy (Acts 17:5), though *some* Jews from the synagogue believed (Acts 17:4); Indeed, there was such opposition, that when the Jews of Thessalonica heard that Paul was preaching in Berea after leaving their region, they pursued him there (Acts 17:13) and caused him to cut his ministry short in Berea, though Paul did leave Silas and Timothy in the region (Acts 17:14). Paul's mention of a counterfeit letter feigning to be from him, which claimed that the day of the Lord had already come, may have been an attack from these Jewish leaders in an attempt to thwart the growth of the early Church in Thessalonica. Dan Wallace proposes this speculative historical reconstruction:

“The enemies of Paul, probably from the synagogue in Thessalonica, infiltrate the church and take note of Paul’s modus operandi—viz., sending someone unknown to check on the church periodically. They take note of the contents of the letter... They forge a letter as though from Paul which includes a message which subtly discredits Paul’s eschatology, hoping to dislodge the faith of the Thessalonians (and thus, perhaps, bring them back to the synagogue). They send the letter by someone unknown by sight to the believers. Paul sends someone to check up on the Thessalonians and he finds out the present despair. Paul writes the second letter.”

*3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?*

Paul assures his audience that Christ has indeed not yet returned, and that they should remember the prerequisites that Paul, himself told them when he was with them.

Paul then goes into what we can only guess is a brief recounting of what he told the Thessalonian while present with them:

*6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8*

*Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;*

Continuing with “that is...” Paul seems to elaborate on his eschatology...

*9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.*

Paul seems to take this occasion of eschatological correction and use it to pastorally assure his congregation that these ones who did not accept the love of the truth so as to be saved (and presumably those who are attempting to deceive them by impersonating Paul, viz. The Jewish leaders who drove Paul from the city) will receive their due punishment. Even if these are not the ones who impersonated Paul, it would still be fair to say these Jewish leaders who did not receive Paul's message are primary antecedents of those who “did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.”

So that we are not unclear, the word used here for 'receive', does not mean to passively be given something, as we use the word 'receive' in today's vernacular— we 'receive' packages, email, invitations (which we might or might not accept), but rather, the word used here means that something was offered and these people actively **did not accept** what was offered to them (see word study on ἐδέξατο, below).

*11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.*

Paul continues to describe the fate of those who do not accept the preaching of the Gospel— apparently still condemning his attackers and those who did not accept his preaching in Thessalonica. With “for this reason,” Paul stresses the cause of God's wrath toward these people: their active rejection of the Gospel. Paul consigns their end to judgment, all “who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.”

Paul then turns to positive affirmation of his audience, and their acceptance of the message presented to them:

*13 But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.*

*14 It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The contrast is stark, here in verse 13,

*“you, brothers beloved by the Lord [whom] God chose... to be saved, through... belief in the truth”,*  
against the previous verses 10:

those who *“perish, because they did not accept the love of the truth so as to be saved.”*

and verse 12:

those who will *“be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.”*

All that Paul previously condemned in his opponents, he praises the opposite in his beloved Church.

### **Supplemental Text, Act 17:1-10:**

*1 Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 2 And according to Paul’s custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.”*

*4 And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women.*

*5 But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and attacking the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people. 6 When they did not find them, they began dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, “These men who have upset the world have come here also; 7 and Jason has welcomed them, and they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.”*

*8 They stirred up the crowd and the city authorities who heard these things. 9 And when they had received a pledge from Jason and the others, they released them.*

### **Paul at Berea**

*10 The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. 12 Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men.*

*13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica found out that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Berea also, they came there as well, agitating and stirring up the crowds.*

*14 Then immediately the brethren sent Paul out to go as far as the sea; and Silas and Timothy remained there.*

### **Word study: ἐδέξαυτο**

Matthew 10:14 And whosoever **shall** not **receive** you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

Matthew 10:40 **He that receiveth** you **receiveth** me, and **he that receiveth** me **receiveth** him that sent me.

Matthew 10:41 **He that receiveth** a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and **he that receiveth** a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

Matthew 11:14 And if ye will **receive** it, this is Elias, which was for to come.

Matthew 18:5 And whoso **shall receive** one such little child in my name **receiveth** me.

Mark 6:11 And whosoever **shall** not **receive** you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

Mark 9:37 Whosoever **shall receive** one of such children in my name, **receiveth** me: and whosoever **shall receive** me, **receiveth** not me, but him that sent me.

Mark 10:15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever **shall** not **receive** the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

Luke 2:28 Then **took** he him **up** in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

Luke 8:13 They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, **receive** the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

Luke 9:5 And whosoever **will** not **receive** you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

Luke 9:11 And the people, when they knew it, followed him: and **he received** them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

Luke 9:48 And said unto them, Whosoever **shall receive** this child in my name **receiveth** me: and whosoever **shall receive** me **receiveth** him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

Luke 9:53 And **they did** not **receive** him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

Luke 10:8 And **into** whatsoever city ye enter, and **they receive** you, eat such things as are set before you:

Luke 10:10 But **into** whatsoever city ye enter, and **they receive** you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

Luke 16:4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, **they may receive** me into their houses.

Luke 16:6 And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, **Take** thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

Luke 16:7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, **Take** thy bill, and write fourscore.

Luke 16:9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, **they may receive** you into everlasting habitations.

Luke 18:17 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever **shall** not **receive** the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

Luke 22:17 And **he took** the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:

John 4:45 Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilæans **received** him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

Acts 3:21 Whom the heaven must **receive** until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

Acts 7:38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who **received** the lively oracles to give unto us:

Acts 7:59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, **receive** my spirit.

Acts 8:14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria **had received** the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

Acts 11:1 And the apostles and brethren that were in Judæa heard that the Gentiles **had** also **received** the word of God.

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that **they received** the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Acts 21:17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren **received** us gladly.

Acts 22:5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also **I received** letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

Acts 28:21 And they said unto him, We neither **received** letters out of Judæa concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.

I Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man **receiveth** not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

II Corinthians 6:1 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye **receive** not the grace of God in vain.

II Corinthians 7:15 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling **ye received** him.

II Corinthians 8:4 Praying us with much intreaty that we **would receive** the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

II Corinthians 8:17 For indeed **he accepted** the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord

he went unto you.

II Corinthians 11:4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive (λαμβάνετε) another spirit, which ye have not received (ἐλάβετε), or another gospel, which ye **have not accepted**, ye might well bear with him.

II Corinthians 11:16 I say again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool **receive** me, that I may boast myself a little.

Galatians 4:14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but **received** me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 6:17 And **take** the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Philippians 4:18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, **having received** of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

Colossians 4:10 Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, **receive** him;)

I Thessalonians 1:6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having **received** the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

I Thessalonians 2:13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, **ye received** it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you hat believe.

II Thessalonians 2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because **they received** not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

Hebrews 11:31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, **when she had received** the spies with peace.

James 1:21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and **receive** with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

### **Dan Wallace notes:**

The need for it arises, most likely, from a letter written by Paul's opponents, though purportedly written by Paul, to the effect that the day of the Lord had dawned and these believers had missed the rapture (2:1-2). Paul then gives two reasons why the Thessalonians should not be anxious about their share in eschatological glory: (1) the signs of the arrival of the day of the Lord had not appeared yet (2:3-5) (hence, the rapture was still future), (2) the antichrist ("man of lawlessness") had not been unveiled yet (2:6-12). Paul then discusses some details about this man of lawlessness: (1) he is presently being restrained (2:6-7); (2) his career will be brief, cut off by Christ himself (2:8-9); and (3) those who follow him will face judgment (2:10-12).

Having repeated the refrain of the destiny of the wicked (1:5-12; 2:10-12), Paul now repeats the refrain of the destiny of the righteous (1:11-12; 2:13-17). His letter thus involves an *inclusio* contrasting the destinies of the wicked to the righteous (and is thus similar to 1 Thessalonians in this respect—a point

which argues for authenticity). This reminder is in the form of a prayer and a benediction: a prayer that they stand firm in light of their destiny (2:13-15), and a benediction invoking God to encourage their hearts to so stand firm (2:16-17).

Then, he rebukes the idle (3:6-15), expanding on a rebuke he initiated in 1 Thess 5:14a. The expansion of the warning is due to Timothy's report that the problem was increasing (3:11). The reason for the increased idleness seems to be an improper attitude toward eschatology: if the rapture will happen soon, why work?

The apostle concludes the letter with a final greeting in which he reminds the Thessabnians of a built-in safeguard: he writes a note in all his letters (3:17; cf. 2:1-3). This note is bracketed by two benedictions, both of which invoke the Lord's presence for the believers as a further comfort to them (3:16, 18).

Acts 17:1-10 reveals that *some* Jews from the synagogue believed;