

## Introduction to Galatians

### Author, Date and Recipients

The apostle Paul wrote this letter in the late 40s AD. The Galatians were probably members of the churches of the southern region of the Roman province of Galatia. Paul is more critical of his audience here than in any of his other letters, because they are allowing false teachers to obscure the gospel itself.

### The Gospel in Galatians

Grace permeates [Galatians](#). The letter is about protecting the truth of the gospel, which declares what God has done in Christ for sinners. The gospel cannot be supplemented by human effort or obedience. If human obedience is “dialed in” to any degree, salvation is impossible. Rescue from sin must be all of grace. And this is what God has done in Jesus.

Paul wrote the letter to a group of Christians whom false teachers had infiltrated. Among these newly established congregations, the false teachers (or “Judaizers”) were teaching “a different gospel” ([1:6](#)) that required Gentiles to adopt Jewish works of the law in order to be justified before God. Paul reminds these congregations of the sufficiency of the gospel he preached among them. Any attempt to add to the gospel by human effort becomes a denial of grace and renders Christ’s death pointless ([2:21](#)).

The Christian life from beginning to end is the result of God’s grace and is empowered by the work of the Holy Spirit. We begin by grace and move on by grace ([3:1-5](#)). The supreme demonstration of God’s provision for sinful humanity is seen in the death and resurrection of Jesus. When people try to *cooperate* with God for their salvation, with works of the law being “their part” and the cross being “God’s part,” the cross is emptied of its significance. There is nothing a Christian can do to add to what Christ has done to rescue us from the eternal consequences of sin, and any effort to supplement his saving work demonstrates a lack of understanding of the gospel. Human effort will not transform the heart of the sinner. Such internal transformation through the work of the Holy Spirit results in a new life conforming to Christ’s character. The Spirit is given by God to indwell and enable the Christian to reflect more closely the moral character of our Savior ([5:22-23](#)).

[Galatians](#) is a declaration of freedom from the condemnation of sin and from a performance mind-set. Looking to Christ, the culmination of all the promises of the Old Testament, sinners can be freely counted righteous in him. Perhaps nowhere in the Bible is this clearer than in Paul’s letter to the Galatians.

### Outline

- Opening ([1:1-10](#))
- Indirect Appeal: Paul's Ministry and the Gospel ([1:11-2:21](#))
- Direct Appeals to the Galatians ([3:1-5:15](#))
- Life in the Spirit and Love ([5:16-6:10](#))
- Final Warning ([6:11-18](#))

## Introduction to 1 Thessalonians

### Author, Date & Recipients

Paul wrote this letter to the church in Thessalonica. He probably wrote in AD 49–51 from Corinth, during his second missionary journey ([Acts 18:1–18](#)).

### The Gospel in 1 Thessalonians

Paul's letters to the Thessalonians bear witness to the glorious reality that the gospel is "the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (see [Rom. 1:16](#)). In [1 Thessalonians](#), Paul cannot stop rejoicing that the gospel came to the Thessalonians in word, in power, and with full conviction by the Holy Spirit ([1 Thess. 1:5](#)). Paul and his companions labored diligently among the Thessalonians ([Acts 17](#)), and by God's grace they could glorify God as they witnessed the steadfast faithfulness of the body of Christ in Thessalonica. The Thessalonians were a congregation who genuinely loved one another as they followed the example of Christ and his apostles, and they lived each day in light of the promised return of Jesus Christ.

As the Thessalonian believers waited, Paul urged them to be steadfast in their faith in Christ, to continue to grow in love for one another, and to remain sexually pure according to God's holy calling. Such living, Paul explained, must be grounded in the daily heart-application of the gospel itself. In this way the Thessalonians would continue to manifest their genuine faith in the resurrected and returning Jesus Christ—living gratefully, prayerfully, and expectantly. The gospel promise is that we who are saved by God's grace alone through faith alone in the sinless life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection of Jesus Christ can eagerly look forward to his return that will come "like a thief in the night" to rescue us and unite us with his loved ones from all the world and from all ages ([1 Thess. 4:13–5:11](#)).

### Outline

- Opening ([1:1](#))
- Thanksgiving and Encouragement ([1:2–3:13](#))
- Instruction and Exhortation ([4:1–5:28](#))

## Introduction to 2 Thessalonians

### Author, Date & Recipients

Shortly after writing [1 Thessalonians](#), the apostle Paul received a report ([2 Thess. 3:11](#)) that the Thessalonian church had accepted the strange claim that “the day of the Lord has come” ([2:1-2](#)). Paul sent them this second letter in AD 49–51. He was probably in Corinth at the time.

### The Gospel in 2 Thessalonians

Paul’s second letter to the Thessalonians is a letter of comfort to those eagerly awaiting the promised return of Jesus Christ. Since receiving Paul’s first letter, the Thessalonians’ faith in Christ and their love for one another had continued to grow abundantly while they endured affliction for the sake of the gospel. Paul writes to encourage them to remain steadfast in their commitment to the gospel and the doctrine they had learned from the apostles. False prophets had been spreading rumors suggesting that the “day of the Lord” ([2:2](#); cf. [1:10](#)) had already come, and Paul writes to set the record straight by providing further details about the events surrounding the second coming of Christ.

Paul also deals with misbehavior that has been a consequence of the Thessalonians’ misunderstanding. While awaiting the coming day of the Lord, some of the believers at Thessalonica had become unwilling to work. Paul urges the believers to continue to work and not to grow weary in doing good while waiting in hope for God’s impending vengeance against the wicked and his salvation of his chosen people. Just as God called us through the gospel, so he is faithful to his promise to guard us and establish us in every good work until Jesus returns.

### Outline

- Opening ([1:1-2](#))
- Thanksgiving and Comfort for the Persecuted Thessalonians ([1:3-12](#))
- Disproving the False Claim about the Day of the Lord ([2:1-17](#))
- Transition ([3:1-5](#))
- The Problem of Lazy Christians ([3:6-15](#))
- Conclusion ([3:16-18](#))