

The background image shows the ruins of an ancient temple, likely the Temple of Apollo in Side, Turkey. In the foreground, there are low stone walls and a path. To the right, a well-preserved section of the temple stands with four tall, fluted columns supporting a fragment of the entablature. The temple is situated on a hillside overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. In the distance, a coastline with a small peninsula and mountains is visible under a clear blue sky with some light clouds.

Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians

CHAPTER TWO

OUTLINE OF THE LETTER

- **Chapter One**

- Greeting (1:1)
- Paul's Gratitude (1:2-4)
- Their Conversion (1:5-10)

- **Chapter Two**

- Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)
- The Thessalonians' Faith (2:13-16)
- Paul's Desire to See Them (2:17-20)

- **Chapter Three**

- Paul's Concern (3:1-5)
- Timothy's Good News (3:6-8)
- Paul's Prayer (3:9-13)

- **Chapter Four**

- Paul's Plea for Purity (4:1-8)
- A Loving & Laboring Life (4:9-12)
- Christ is Coming (4:13-5:11)

- **Chapter Five**

- Christ is Coming (4:13-5:11)
- Various Exhortations (5:12-22)
- Closing Remarks (5:23-28)

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)

¹ For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. Brothers and sisters, you know our visit to you was not a failure (NCV).

- This section is likely a defense of Paul's ministry. Notice how he defended himself:
 - "You know" is repeated multiple times (**1 Thess. 2:1, 2, 10, 11**).
 - Paul appealed to firsthand knowledge rather than unverifiable assertions about themselves (**2 Cor. 1:12; Acts 20:18, 34; Phil. 2:19-22**).
 - He spoke about his character in preaching (**1 Thess. 2:3-7**).
 - He spoke about his personal conduct (**1 Thess. 2:8-12**).
- Paul's first visit to the city was "not in vain."
 - They faced opposition (**Acts 17:4**), but the gospel was preached (**Isa. 55:10-11**), souls obeyed the gospel, a church was founded, and brethren remained faithful (**1 Thess. 1:7-8, 2:14**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)

² But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict.

- The Thessalonians had become aware that Paul et al. suffered greatly in Philippi.
 - They were falsely accused (**Acts 16:37**).
 - They were beaten with rods and received many stripes (**Acts 16:22-23**).
 - They were imprisoned (**Acts 16:23-24**).
- Despite persecution, they remained “bold in our God “to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict” (**Acts 17:5-10**).
 - “Bold” – to speak openly and frankly (BDAG).
 - Their boldness was not rooted in self-confidence but in their confidence in God (**Psalms 27:1-3; Jer. 1:7-9; 2 Tim. 1:7-8**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)

³ Our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit.

- Paul's preaching consisted of "exhortation."

"Paul here uses paraklēsis to speak in broad terms about his preaching of the gospel, in which he urges or appeals to people to respond to God's salvation (cf. the verb form parakalountos in 2 Cor 5:20)" (NET Footnotes).

- His preaching did not come:
 - "From error" – they preached the truth (**Tit. 2:1; 2 Tim. 4:2-4**).
 - "From uncleanness" – they were not motivated by impure desires (**1 Thess. 4:7; 2 Cor. 4:2; 2 Pet. 2:14, 18**).
 - "In deceit" – they did not use dishonest methods (**2 Cor. 2:17, 4:2; Eph. 4:14; 2 Pet. 2:1-3**).
- The gospel does not need manipulation to be effective (**Rom. 1:16; Heb. 4:12**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)

⁴ But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.

- Rather than speaking from error or deceit, Paul spoke as one “approved by God.”
 - They had been tested and found trustworthy for the work entrusted to them (**1 Tim. 1:11-16; Tit. 1:3**).
 - The gospel is a sacred trust, not a message given to man to change as he wishes (**1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Cor. 4:1-2**).
- Paul spoke “not as pleasing men, but God.”
 - They did not preach for social acceptance (**Acts 5:29; Gal. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:2-4**).
- God continually “tests our hearts.”
 - He evaluates not only what we teach but why we teach it (**Jer. 17:10; etc.**).
 - God sees the motives hidden from everyone else (**1 Cor. 4:3-5; Heb. 4:12-13**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)

⁵ For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness.

For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. (ESV)

- They did not use “flattering words” (**Prov. 26:28; Rom. 16:17-18**).
- They did not use the gospel as “a cloak for covetousness.”
 - The gospel was never used as a disguise for enriching themselves financially (**Acts 20:33-35; 2 Cor. 12:14-17**).
- Paul appealed to two witnesses to affirm his defense:
 - “As you know”—the Thessalonians observed their conduct (**1 Thess. 2:1-2, 10**).
 - “God is witness”—God knew their motives (**Jer. 17:10; 1 Sam. 16:7**).
 - Both are necessary for a sound defense (**Acts 24:16; 2 Cor. 8:21**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)

⁶ Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.

- “Seek” – to devote serious effort to realize one’s desire or objective; seek, strive for, aim at, try to obtain (BDAG).
- “Glory” – splendor, brightness, honor, praise, glory (Thayer).
- “Made demands” – asserted authority as apostles (NASB); imposed weight (NET); been burdensome (KJV).

“The expression literally means ‘to be in weight’ and may signify either ‘to throw one’s weight about’ by asserting apostolic authority or ‘to be burdensome’ by claiming financial support” (Leon Morris, p.58).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)

⁶ Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.

- Consider some practical lessons from this verse:
 - Rather than exalting themselves, they humbled themselves for others' benefit (**Matt. 20:25-28; Luke 22:24-27; Phil. 2:3-8**).
 - We may need to voluntarily surrender legitimate rights for the sake of the gospel and the spiritual welfare of others (**1 Cor. 9:19-23; Rom. 14, 15:1-3**).
 - Our motives for preaching the gospel must be pure.

“Many professed preachers ... wear titles that elevate them above their hearers. And like the Pharisees of Jesus' day they love the positions of honor and praise, Matt. 23:5-12 ... Servants of God need the humility of Peter, who said to Cornelius, 'Stand up, I myself am also a man,' Acts 10:26” (Robert Harkrider, p.70).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)

⁷ But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.

But we proved to be gentle among you. As a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. (NASB)

- Notice the striking imagery.
 - This implies nourishment, protection, comfort, patiently caring for their needs (**Isa. 49:15, 66:13; Deut. 32:11-12; Matt. 23:37**).
- Instead of asserting authority, Paul preached with gentleness and affection.
 - Truth should always be spoken with love, gentleness, and compassion (**Eph. 4:15; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Gal. 6:1**).
 - Spiritual maturity is demonstrated not only by defending sound doctrine but also by patiently caring for God's people (**Col. 3:12-14; 1 Cor. 4:21**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)

⁸ Affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.

- “Affectionately longing” – a strong affection for someone, with the implication of a desire to be closely associated with that person (BDAG).
 - They longed to be with the Thessalonians (**1 Thess. 2:17-18, 3:6-10**).
- Paul considered them dear brethren (**1 Thess. 1:4, 2:13; Phil. 4:1; etc.**).
 - They were not merely a box to checked off a spiritual checklist (**1 Cor. 13:1-3**).
- They longed not just to impart the gospel but also their lives (**1 John 3:16; John 15:13**).
 - Their love was demonstrated by sacrifice, not by mere words (**1 John 3:18**).
 - Genuine love for brethren is measured by what we are willing to give up for their spiritual good (**Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 2:10**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)

⁹ You remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. ... We labored night and day while we preached to you God's good news. We didn't want to cause you any expense. (NIRV)

- Paul again appealed to the Thessalonians' firsthand knowledge ("you remember").
- They worked "night and day" to not be financially burdensome (**2 Thess. 3:8-9**).
 - Paul had the right to receive financial support for preaching, but he often chose to forgo that right (**1 Cor. 9:14, 16-18; Acts 18:3**).
 - Faithful gospel preaching often requires a willingness to put the spiritual welfare of others above one's own comfort (**2 Cor. 11:23-28, 12:15**).
- We should be known for our strong work ethic (**Col. 3:23-24; 2 Thess. 3:10-12; Rom. 12:11**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)

¹⁰ You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe;

- Notice the progression of Paul's defense:
 - His message was pure (**1 Thess. 2:3**).
 - His motives were pure (**1 Thess. 2:4-6**).
 - His treatment of others was loving and sacrificial (**1 Thess. 2:7-9**).
 - His personal conduct was holy, righteous, and above reproach (**1 Thess. 2:10**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)

¹⁰ You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe;

- Paul appealed not only to what he taught but also his personal conduct (**Phil. 4:9**).
 - “Devoutly” emphasizes reverence toward God in all aspects (**Tit. 2:11-12**).
 - “Justly” describes and fair conduct toward others (**Mic. 6:8; Rom. 13:7**).
 - “Blameless” means no legitimate accusation could be made against them (**Phil. 2:15; 2 Cor. 6:3, 8:21; 1 Tim. 3:2**).
 - Our lives should reinforce the message we proclaim (**1 Tim. 4:12, 16**).
“No one is perfect, but if one lives ‘unblameably’ his character is above reproach. It will be evident he is no hypocrite” (Harkrider, p.71).
- The Thessalonians bore witness to their conduct, but God was the ultimate witness (**2 Cor. 1:12; Gal. 1:20**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)

¹¹ as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children,

- Notice the shift in imagery from a nursing mother (**1 Thess. 2:7**) to a father.
 - Whereas a nursing mother connotes tenderness, affection, and care, a father connotes instruction, encouragement, discipline, and preparation for maturity (**Prov. 3:11-12; Eph. 6:4**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)

¹¹ as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children,

- Notice the shift in imagery from a nursing mother (**1 Thess. 2:7**) to a father.
- Three forms of teaching were employed.
 - “Exhorted” – to urge strongly, appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage (BDAG).
 - “Comforted” – to speak kindly to, soothe, console, encourage (Thayer).
 - “Charged” – to insist, affirm, exhort, or warn (BDAG).
- Spiritual teaching requires more than instruction; it also requires encouragement and loving accountability (**Col. 1:28; Acts 20:31**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)

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- Notice the shift in imagery from a nursing mother (**1 Thess. 2:7**) to a father.
- Three forms of teaching were employed.
- Spiritual teaching requires more than instruction; it also requires encouragement and loving accountability (**Col. 1:28; Acts 20:31**).

“A father does more than merely tell his children their duty. He adds to that regular encouragement with loving gentleness. And certainly there also are times when he may need to solemnly charge his children with a warning of the consequences of disobedience. Together these attributes form a proper pattern in the development of a child. So like a loving father deals with his children, the Thessalonians knew that Paul and his companions had dealt with them” (Harkrider, p.71).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)

¹² that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

- This gives the purpose for Paul's exhorting, comforting, and charging.
- To "walk" refers to one's daily manner of life or conduct. To walk "worthy of God" means living in a manner that is fitting for those who belong to Him (**Col. 1:10; Eph. 4:1; Phil. 1:27**).

"To walk in a manner worthy of God should be our highest aim as Christians"
(Mark Mayberry, p.16).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)

¹² that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

• To walk worthy demands walking in:

- Holiness (**1 Pet. 1:15-16; 2 Cor. 7:1**).
- Obedience (**John 14:15; 1 John 2:3-6**).
- Love (**Eph. 5:1-2**).
- Humility (**Eph. 4:1-3**).
- Good works (**Col. 1:10**).
- Faith (**2 Cor. 5:7**).
- The Spirit (**Gal. 5:25**).
- Truth (**3 John 3-4**).
- The Light (**1 John 1:7; Eph. 5:8**).
- Wisdom (**Col. 4:5**).
- A way that pleases God (**Col. 1:10**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Ministry (2:1-12)

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- This gives the purpose for Paul's exhorting, comforting, and charging.
- To "walk" refers to one's daily manner of life or conduct. To walk "worthy of God" means living in a manner that is fitting for those who belong to Him (**Col. 1:10; Eph. 4:1; Phil. 1:27**).
- God calls people "into His own kingdom and glory."
 - The initial call comes through the gospel (**2 Thess. 2:14; Rom. 1:16**), qualifying people to become members of Christ's kingdom (**Col. 1:12-13; Rev. 1:9; etc.**).
 - The called look forward to being glorified with Him (**Rom. 8:28-30**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

The Faith of the Thessalonians (2:13-16)

¹³ For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

- “Received” – they heard and accepted the message that was preached (**Acts 2:41**).
- “Welcomed” – they fully embraced the message (**Acts 2:41-47, 17:11-12; 1 Thess. 5:21**).
- The Thessalonians “received” and “welcomed” Paul’s message because:
 - They recognized the source was God and not men (**1 Cor. 2:4-5**).
 - They recognized it to be “the truth, the word of God” (**John 3:33, 7:16-17**).
- As a result of receiving, welcoming , and believing Paul’s message, the Thessalonians allowed God’s word to work “effectively” in them (**Luke 8:15; Col. 1:5-6; Acts 20:32**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

The Faith of the Thessalonians (2:13-16)

14a For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus.

- Notice the three references to imitation so far:
 - They became imitators of Paul and the Lord (**1 Thess. 1:6**).
 - They became examples (worthy of imitation) to others (**1 Thess. 1:7**).
 - They became imitators of the churches in Judea (**1 Thess. 2:14**).
 - Faithful congregations should resemble each other since we follow the same Lord, gospel, and pattern (**1 Cor. 4:17, 7:17; Eph. 4:4-6**).
 - These congregations belonged to God and not men (**Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2**).
 - The churches existed “in Christ” (**Rom. 16:16**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

The Faith of the Thessalonians (2:13-16)

14^b For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans,

- The Thessalonians suffered persecution from their “own countrymen” (**Acts 17:5-9**).
 - Persecution often comes from those close by (**Luke 12:51-53**).
 - Persecution has always accompanied faithful service to Christ (**John 15:18-20; 2 Tim. 3:12**).
- They endured the same kind of suffering as the churches in Judea.
 - The early church regularly endured persecution from unbelieving Jews (**Acts 8:1-4, 12:1-4**).
 - Their shared suffering signified their unity in Christ (**Phil. 1:27-30; 1 Pet. 5:9**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

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“In almost every case, the Jews were the leaders of all persecutions against the apostles and the infant Church. And what they could not do themselves, they instigated others to do; and, by gathering together lewd fellows of the baser sort from among the Gentiles, they made frequent uproars, and especially at Thessalonica” (Clarke, 544).

- Their shared suffering signified their unity in Christ (**Phil. 1:27-30; 1 Pet. 5:9**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

The Faith of the Thessalonians (2:13-16)

¹⁵ who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men,

- The opposition of the Judeans (Jews) was nothing new.
 - They killed “their own prophets” (**Matt. 23:29-37; Acts 7:51-52**).
 - They rejected and killed “the Lord Jesus” (**Acts 2:22-23, 3:13-15**).
 - They persecuted the apostles and others (**Acts 5:40, 13:50, 17:5-13**).
- Due to their persecution against the gospel, the opposing Jews were “contrary to all men” (**1 Thess. 2:16; Rom. 10:14-15; Ezek. 3:17**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

The Faith of the Thessalonians (2:13-16)

¹⁶ forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

- The opposing Jews tried to forbid Paul et al. from speaking “to the Gentiles that they may be saved.”
 - Paul’s primary mission from the Lord was to preach to the Gentiles (**Acts 9:15**).
- As result, they filled up “the measure of their sins” (**Rom. 2:4-5; Rev. 18:4-5**).
- God sometimes permits people to build sin to a certain point before executing judgment (**Gen. 15:16; Dan. 8:21-23; Matt. 23:31-32**).

“God permits men to go far in wickedness because he is long-suffering and gives time for repentance” (David Lipscomb, p.34) [**2 Pet. 3:9**].

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

The Faith of the Thessalonians (2:13-16)

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- “Wrath has come upon them to the uttermost” may refer to:
 - God’s future and final wrath (**1 Thess. 1:10, 5:9; Rom. 2:4-10; 2 Pet. 3:9-10**).
 - This seems unlikely given the verb tense (**consider Matt. 12:28**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

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- “Wrath has come upon them to the uttermost” may refer to:
 - God’s future and final wrath (**1 Thess. 1:10, 5:9; Rom. 2:4-10; 2 Pet. 3:9-10**).
 - The destruction of the temple in 70 AD (**Matt 23:31-36, 24:1-32**).
 - This seems unlikely given the verb tense and the fact that this letter was likely written nearly 20 years prior to the destruction of the temple.

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

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 - The Jews no longer being God’s chosen people (**Rom. 9-11**).
 - This could be what Paul has in mind in this verse.

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

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 - God’s future and final wrath (**1 Thess. 1:10, 5:9; Rom. 2:4-10; 2 Pet. 3:9-10**).
 - The destruction of the temple in 70 AD (**Matt 23:31-36, 24:1-32**).
 - The Jews no longer being God’s chosen people (**Rom. 9-11**).
 - Any number of troubles the Jews experienced as a nation at that time.
 - This could be what Paul has in mind in this verse.
 - This could be seen as God’s present wrath (**consider Rom. 1:18**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

The Faith of the Thessalonians (2:13-16)

The aorist tense in the indicative mood generally denotes past time . . . In Lenski's view God had shown His wrath against the Jews for their rebellion against God and His people over and over again throughout her history. After each act of rebellion He had punished her, and in this way His wrath had come. But it also had now come with finality. Now she was rejected as a nation, "the one outcast nation of the world, without country, capital, ruler, scattered over all the world, yet never absorbed — they constitute a sign of the wrath that is visible before the eyes of all the ages until time shall cease" (270) . . . Some have said the passage refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and since the letter was written in A.D. 50 or 51 they have concluded that these verses are a later interpolation. Not willing to go so far as to deny Pauline authorship of this passage, other commentators believe that Paul actually has the desolation of Jerusalem in mind. Lunemann thought that Paul had "foreseen the impending catastrophe of the Jewish people, and by means of this foresight had expressed the concluding words of this verse" (73) . . .

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

The Faith of the Thessalonians (2:13-16)

Lipscomb, while not applying the statement specifically to this disaster, saw the fulfillment in “the final ruin and dispersion of the nation” which he said was “at hand” at the time Paul penned these words (34), and McGarvey saw it as descriptive of “a punishment which began just before the siege of Jerusalem, and continues to this day” (10) . . . Events prior to the writing of this letter have also been cited: (1) The crucifixion of Jesus; (2) the famine of A.D. 46 (Acts 11:27-30); (3) the decree issued by Claudius in A.D. 49 that expelled the Jewish people from Rome (Acts 18:2); (4) the massacre in A.D. 49 reported by Josephus of twenty to thirty thousand Jews in the courts of the temple during the Passover feast. Bruce notes that “at the time when 1 Thessalonians was written, the coincidence of troubles for the Jews in so many parts of the world might have been thought to presage the end-time judgment, but the language of 16c implies rather that the end-time judgment has come upon them ahead of time” (Bruce 49). Green calls these events “an inauguration of the wrath that will find its culmination at the time of Christ’s coming” (149).

(Walton Weaver, p.177-179).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Desire to See the Thessalonians (2:17-20)

¹⁷ We, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire.

- Paul et al. were forcibly separated from the Thessalonians (**Acts 17:5-10**).
 - “Taken away” – literally, to make an orphan (Mounce).
 - This continues the family-oriented language (**1 Thess. 2:7, 11**).
- Though separated “for a short time in presence,” they were “not [separated] in heart” (**Col. 2:5**).

“This is an elegant and touching expression . . . to denote affection for absent friends. Paul’s absence . . . gave him a greater yearning for their presence” (Lipscomb, p.35).

- Physical distance should not diminish our love and concern for brethren (**Phil. 1:7-8**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Desire to See the Thessalonians (2:17-20)

¹⁸ Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us.

- Paul's desire was demonstrated by effort. He didn't merely miss the Thessalonians; he tried to see them "time and again," i.e. more than once (**see Phil. 4:16**).
- Satan "hindered" Paul et al. from returning (**Rom. 15:22; Gal. 5:7; 1 Pet. 3:7**).
 - Paul's inability to return contributed to him writing this letter (**1 Thess. 3:1-2**).
 - Satan hindered Paul's work, but he did not end Paul's ministry to them. Timothy was sent, this letter was written and sent, and the brethren were strengthened (**1 Thess. 3:1-6**).

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Desire to See the Thessalonians (2:17-20)

¹⁹ For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? ²⁰ You are our glory and joy.

- This explains why Paul was so eager to return.
 - Their continued faithfulness brought him “joy” at the time of writing and would especially do so when Christ returned (**1 Thess. 3:5-9; Phil. 3:20-4:1**).
 - They were Paul’s “crown of rejoicing” (**1 Cor. 9:24-25**).

“When Jesus comes again, they will shine as the fruit of his labors. They were the objects of his highest hopes, the source of his deepest joy, and a crown to his labors for which he rejoiced more than any champion of some athletic event” (Harkrider, p.77).

- This was not joy in personal achievement but joy in what God accomplished (**1 Cor. 3:5-7**).

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 - Their continued faithfulness brought him “joy” at the time of writing and would especially do so when Christ returned (**1 Thess. 3:5-9; Phil. 3:20-4:1**).
 - They were Paul’s “crown of rejoicing” (**1 Cor. 9:24-25**).
 - The greatest joy of a teacher is not just seeing someone obey the gospel but also seeing that person remain faithful until Christ returns (**Phil. 2:16; 3 John 4**).
 - What a beautiful picture to envision – faithful teacher and faithful student standing together in Christ’s presence on the day of judgment (**2 Cor. 1:14**).