

We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. Because our gospel came to you not simply with words but with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. We were not looking for praise from

people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. Instead, we were like young children among you, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom

and strengthen that you will and holy in the presence of our God when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality. And to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life. You should mind your own business and your hands, you. Brothers do not want

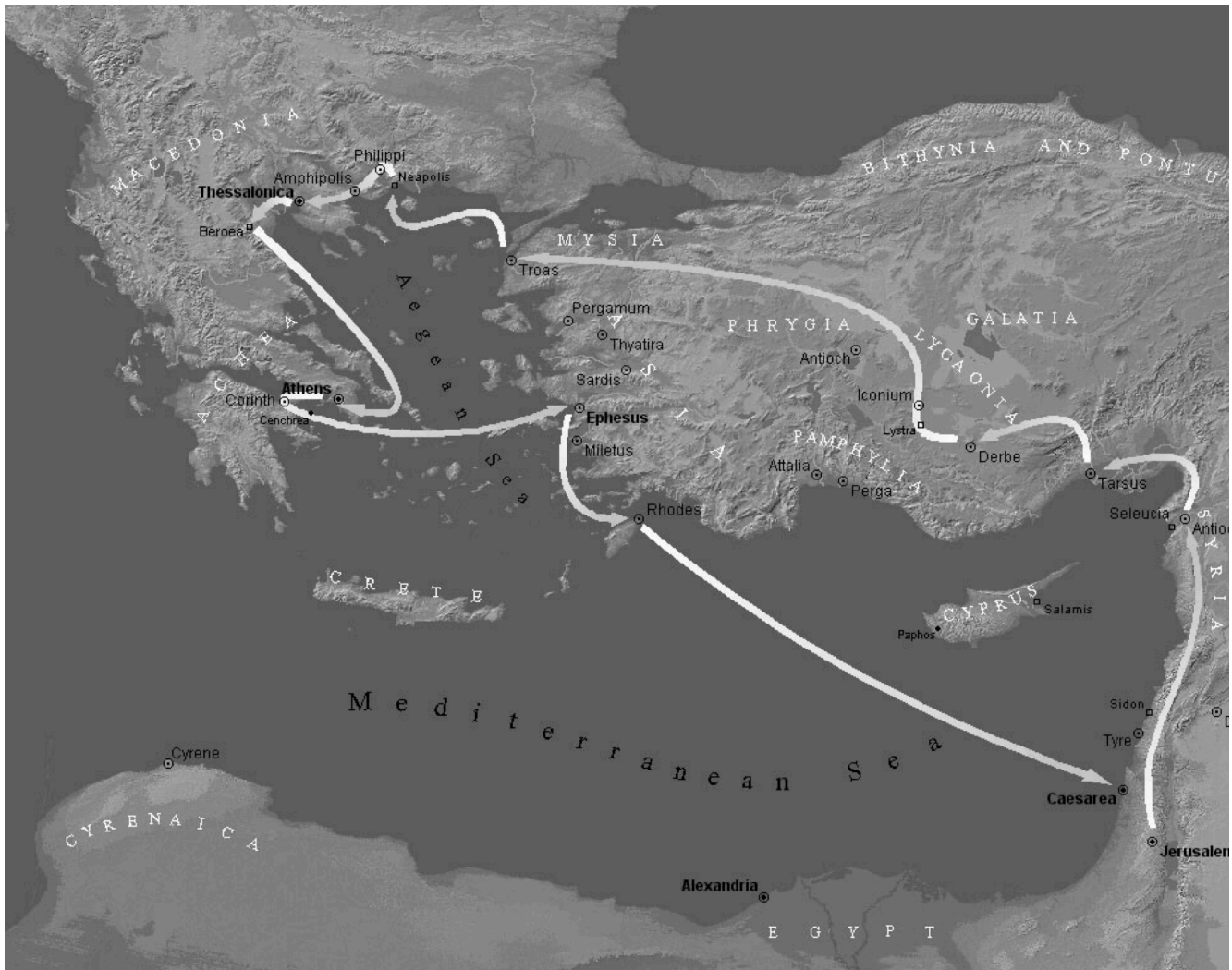
ry. May he your hears so be blameless the presence and Father Lord Jesus all his holy ones. It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality. And to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life. You should mind your own business and your hands, you. Brothers do not want

are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still

be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words. Pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. For God did not appoint us

## Appendix

# Paul's Second Missionary Journey



# Introduction to 1 Thessalonians

from John Stott's "Living in the End Times"

"There is a kind of unmingled sweetness in this epistle," wrote Johann Albrecht Bengel about 1 Thessalonians in the eighteenth century (*Gnomon of the New Testament*). Indeed I have found much sweetness in both letters as, for many years now, I have reflected on their meaning and message.

These letters reveal the authentic Paul. Not that he is ever inauthentic, but sometimes the human Paul is obscured by his apostolic office and authority. To be sure, in the Thessalonian letters he issues commands and demands obedience. More often, however, he writes like the pastor he is, indeed like the Thessalonians' mother and father, which is what he claims to be (1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11.) He loves them, gives himself for them is anxiously concerned for their welfare, teaches and admonishes them, begs them to stand firm, and prays for them constantly, urgently and personally.

## About the Thessalonians

When Paul and his companions visited Thessalonica in A.D. 49 or 50, it was already a well-established city with a long history. It occupied a strategic position, for it boasted a good natural harbor at the head of the Thermaic Gulf.

Acts 17 tells the story of how Thessalonica was evangelized on Paul's second missionary journey. Due to opposition Paul and Silas had to be smuggled out of town. It was in Corinth that Paul wrote his first letter to the Thessalonian church.

The apostle responded in this letter to the information he had received from Timothy. Timothy brought good news of the Thessalonians' "faith and love" (1 Thessalonians 3:6-8). On the other hand, he had reported that Paul was being criticized (2:2-6; 2:17-3:5). In addition the Thessalonians needed correction and instruction in the areas of sexual morality, earning their own living, preparing for the second coming of Jesus and tensions in the fellowship.

It seems certain that Paul, Silas and Timothy were still in Corinth when the Thessalonians' response to Paul's first letter arrived. The news they received was mixed, as is clear from the second letter it prompted.

## A Message for Us

Like all of Paul's other letters, 1 and 2 Thessalonians are ad hoc documents, called forth by special, local circumstances to which he was responding. At the same time they contain some of the most important New Testament passages about eschatology, the culmination of all things. They set forth the Christian view of history, showing that history is linear rather than circular or cyclical, and that history will come to a planned end, a grand finale, consisting of the parousia or second coming of Christ, the resurrection, the judgment and the kingdom. We, too, are part of God's great plan in history.