



# Bible reading

1 Thessalonians 2:17–3:5

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17 But, brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you.

18 For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan blocked our way.

19 For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you?

20 Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

# 1 Thessalonians 2:17–3:5

3 So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens.

2 We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith,

3 so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. For you know quite well that we are destined for them.

4 In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know.

5 For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter had tempted you and that our labors might have been in vain.



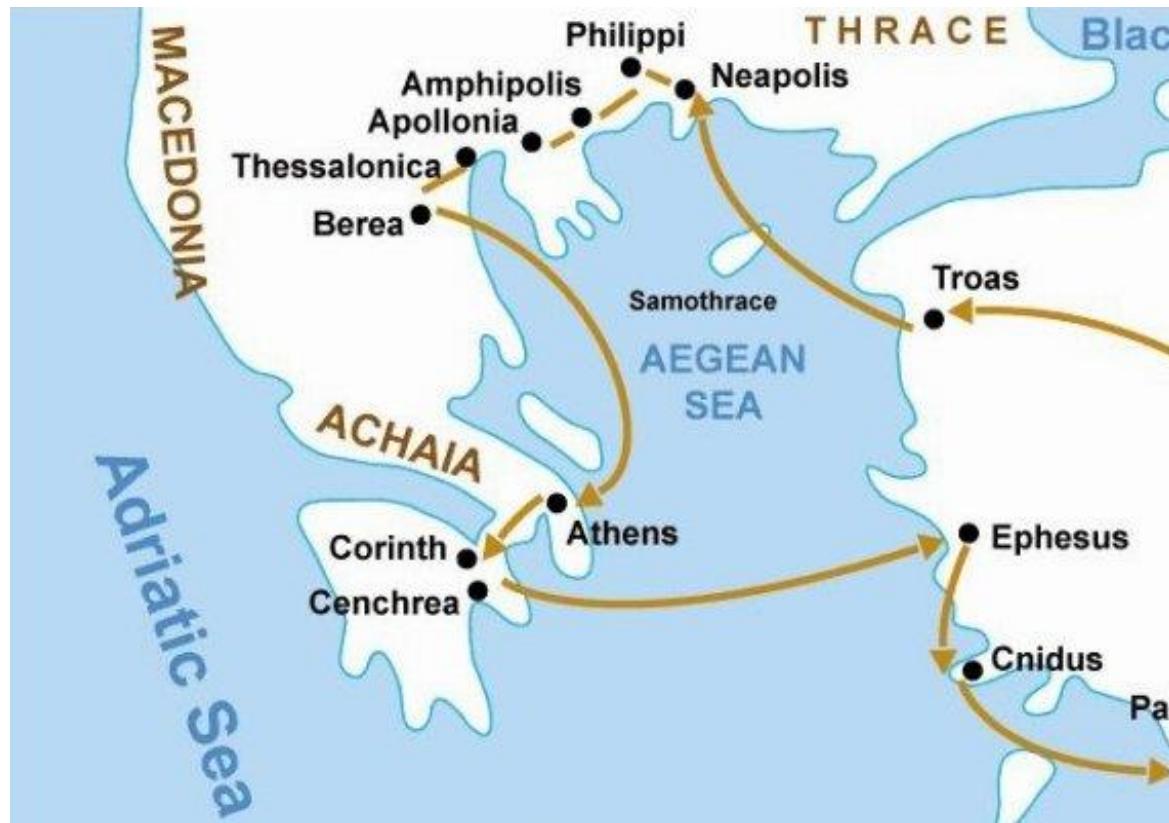
# 'Let God's future shape your present' #4

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# The story behind the story

## ► Acts 17



# A feeling of miss

*17 But, brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. 18 For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again*

## ▶ Separation and longing

- John 14:2: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. <sup>4</sup> You know the way to the place where I am going.”

# Blocked

*18 For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan blocked our way.*

- ▶ Satan blocked their return
  - Because of persecution?
  - Because of circumstances?
  - Because of roadblocks?

Ephesians 6:12: For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

# Another way

*3:1 So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens.*

*2 We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith,*

- ▶ God always provides ways to comfort us!
- ▶ Matthew 11:28–30: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

# Trials and temptations

*3 so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. For you know quite well that we are destined for them. 4 In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know. 5 For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter had tempted you and that our labors might have been in vain.*

## ► Trials and temptations

1 Corinthians 10:13: No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

# Temptation

- ▶ Temptation (peirasmon): 2 meanings
- ▶ Trial/test from God
  - Hebrews 11:17: By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son,
- ▶ Temptation from the enemy
  - Luke 4:1–2: Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,<sup>2</sup> where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.

# Trials

James 1:12 Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

- ▶ Trials used by God
  - Difficult circumstances
  - To reveal the magnificent works He started in us
  - To make us grow
  - Results in life!

# Temptations

James 1:13–15 When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

- ▶ Temptations from evil
  - Tempting circumstances
  - To reveal our old self, to make us fall
  - Result in death!

# **Deliver us from evil**

- ▶ **Temptation requires deliverance**

Psalm 50:15: Call upon Me in the day of trouble;  
I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me."

- ▶ **We need God's intervention and protection**

Nahum 1:7 (NKJV): The LORD *is* good,  
A stronghold in the day of trouble;  
And He knows those who trust in Him.

- ▶ **Let God guard our hearts**

Philippians 4:7: And the peace of God, which transcends all  
understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in  
Christ Jesus.

# Crown, glory and joy

*19 For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? 20 Indeed, you are our glory and joy.*

- ▶ God's work through us is our crown, glory and joy!

Matthew 6:19–21: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

# Crown, glory and joy

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## ► And we lay them down at Jesus' feet

Revelation 4:9–11: Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

11 “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”