

At a Glance: The Letter to the Philippians

Letter Opening – 1:1 - 2

Prayer for the Philippians – 1:3 – 11

“And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless.” (1:9-10)

Paul’s Circumstances – 1:12 – 26

“I want you to know, beloved, that what has happened to me has actually helped to spread the gospel.” (1:12)

Living Like Christ – 1:27 – 2:18

Standing firm – 1:27-30

Christ’s humility – 2:1-11

Working out salvation – 2:12-18

“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.” (2:5-7)

Timothy and Epaphroditus – 2:19 – 30

Encouragement to Press On – 3:1 – 4:9

Leaving the past behind – 3:1-16

Imitation and transformation – 3:17-4:1

Exhortations – 4:2-9

“Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.” (4:1-3)

Letter Closing – 4:10 - 23

Thanks for gift the Philippians sent – 4:10-20

Final Greetings – 4:21-23

At a Glance: The First Letter to the Corinthians

Letter Opening – 1:1 - 9

Reports Received by Paul – 1:10 – 6:20

Church divisions – 1:10-17

Christ as true wisdom – 1:18-2:16

Corrections on division and ministry – 3:1-4:21

Sexual immorality in the church – 5:1-5:13

Lawsuits in the church – 6:1-20

“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not found even among the pagans; for a man is living with his father’s wife. And you are arrogant! Should you not rather have mourned, so that he who has done this would have been removed from among you?” (5:1-2)

In Response to Their Letter – 7:1 – 16:12

Marriage – 7:1-39

Food offered to idols – 8:1-11:1

Propriety in worship – 11:2-34

Spiritual gifts – 12:1-14:40

Resurrection – 15:1-58

“Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end.” (13:8-10)

Letter Closing – 16:1 - 24

The Jerusalem offering – 16:1-4

Travel plans – 16:5-12

Final greetings – 16:13-24

“Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.” (16:13)

At a Glance: The Second Letter to the Corinthians

Traditionally, Second Corinthians has been understood as a composite of several different letters, with divisions between chs. 1-9 and 10-13, based on theme, lexical analysis, and redaction criticism. This approach has a long history in theology (18th c. to present) but has been challenged by the results of rhetorical criticism, which examines the letter using ancient speech patterns. Using this lens, the letter appears as a unified whole, with its sections given specific roles to play in the overall composition. These literary segments re-affirm the aims of Paul in the letter to the Corinthians with their structural emphasis on the disputed issues.

Passage	Rhetorical Mode	Function	Key Text
1:1 – 2	Prescript	Introduces author and recipient	“To the church of God that is in Corinth, including all the saints throughout Achaia” (1:1)
1:3 – 7	Thanksgiving and exordium	Aims to make the audience open to the argument	“Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation.” (1:7)
1:8 – 2:16	Narratio	Explains facts of the situation and reason for writing the letter, with additional thanksgiving	“We do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, of the affliction we experienced in Asia; for we were so utterly, unbearably crushed that we despaired of life itself.” (1:8)
2:17	Propositio	Basic thesis statement of the entire letter	“For we are not peddlers of God’s word like so many; but in Christ we speak as persons of sincerity, as persons sent from God and standing in his presence.” (2:17)
3:1 – 13:4	Probatio and refutatio	Main argument section covering: Paul’s approach to ministry (3:1 – 6:13) Deliberative digression on pagan feasts (6:14 – 7:1) Defense of the Severe Letter (7:2 – 16) Jerusalem collection (8:2 – 9:15) Rhetorical <i>synkrisis</i> comparing Paul and his opponents (10:1 – 13:4)	“For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake.” (4:5) “Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and of spirit, making holiness perfect in the fear of God.” (7:1) “For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it (though I did regret it, for I see that I grieved you with that letter, though only briefly).” (7:8) “So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for this bountiful gift that you have promised, so that it may be ready as a voluntary gift and not as an extortion.” (9:5) “I think that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles. I may be untrained in speech, but not in knowledge; certainly in every way and in all things we have made this evident to you.” (11:5-6)
13:5 – 10	Peroratio	An emotional appeal for change to the audience	“Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless, indeed, you fail to meet the test!” (13:5)
13:11 - 13	Closing	Final greetings	“Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.” (13:11-12)

At a Glance: The First Letter to the Thessalonians

Letter Opening – 1:1 - 10

Greeting – 1:1

Thanks for the Thessalonians – 1:2-10

“We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1:2)

Paul’s Ministry in Thessalonica – 2:1 – 16

Paul dealings with them – 2:1-12

Their faithfulness to the gospel – 2:13-16

“You remember our labor and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.” (2:9)

Paul’s Desire to Return – 2:17 – 3:13

Living with Purity and Love – 3:14 – 4:12

“Finally, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus that, as you learned from us how you ought to love and to please God (as, in fact, you are doing), you should do so more and more.” (4:1)

The Coming of Christ – 4:13 – 5:11

Welcoming Christ back from heaven – 4:13-18

Stay prepared – 5:1-11

“For we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.” (4:13)

Letter Closing – 5:12 - 28

Final exhortations – 5:12-22

Benediction – 5:23-28

“Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.” (5:19-22)

At a Glance: The Second Letter to the Thessalonians

Letter Opening – 1:1 - 4

The Judgment of God – 1:5 – 12

“For it is indeed just of God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to the afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.” (1:6-9)

The Man of Lawlessness – 2:1 – 12

“Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the lawless one is revealed, the one destined for destruction.” (2:3)

Standing Firm in Salvation – 2:13 – 17

“So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter.” (2:15)

Prayer for Paul and Them – 3:1 – 5

“Finally, brothers and sisters, pray for us, so that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified everywhere, just as it is among you, and that we may be rescued from wicked and evil people, for not all have faith.” (3:1-2)

Warning Against Not Working – 3:6 – 15

“Anyone unwilling to work should not eat.” (3:10)

Letter Closing – 3:16 - 18