1-2 Thessalonians
An Introduction to Paul’s Letters

Ancient Letter Openings
2 Maccabees
The Jews in Jerusalem and those in the land of Judaea,
To their Jewish kin in Egypt,
Greetings and true peace.
May God do good to you, and may he remember his covenant with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, his faithful servants. May he hear your prayers and be reconciled to you, and may he not forsake you in time of evil. We are now praying for you here.

1 Thessalonians
Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,
To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
Grace to you and peace.
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.

Paul’s Letter Closings
2 Corinthians
Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell.
... Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Philippians
Greetings every saint in Christ Jesus. The friends who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, especially those of the emperor’s household.
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Paul and Ancient Letter-Writing
• The function of a letter
• Letter structure
  – Letter opening
  – Letter body
  – Letter closing
• Secretaries and carriers
  – amanuensis
The Thessalonian Community

- Letters as "occasional" documents
- The city of Thessalonica
- The reason for writing 1 Thessalonians
  - Gentile converts
  - Worried about the dead
- The reason for writing 2 Thessalonians
  - After receiving 1 Thess
  - Worried they've missed Christ
- The authorship of 2 Thessalonians

Paul's Vision of the Fulfillment

- Traditional Jewish eschatology
  - Liberation of Israel
    - Return of the Diaspora
  - Nation made righteous
  - New hearts
    - Some destroyed?
  - Messiah
  - The Gentiles
    - Destroyed?
    - Subjugated?
    - Converted?
  - Life transformed
    - Resurrection
    - Long/endless life
- Paul's eschatology