

1 - The date of the Thessalonian letters.

12th year of Claudias

These early letters of Paul can be fixed fairly accurately. Falling within the period of Paul's stay in Corinth, and agreeing with the proconsulate of Gallio, before whom Paul was arraigned, due to an attack brought against him by the Jews in Corinth.

[1] According to an inscription at Delphi, Gallio was proconsul during the twelfth year of Claudius being tribune and after his 26th proclamation as Emperor. The inscription mentions that he referred some questions to the Emperor.

[a] the 27th proclamation of Claudius as Emperor had already taken place in August 52, so it must have been before that date.

[b] Proconsuls normally took office in mid Summer. So it is supposed that mid Summer of AD 52 is the date of Paul's Corinthian stay.

[c] However, some think that to allow for the time of the questions he sent to the Emperor, we have to think of the previous year, AD 51.

[2] When did Paul appear before Gallio?

[a] Acts 18.12-18 suggests that it happened shortly after Gallio took office and probably towards the end of Paul's 18 month stay in the town.

[b] If this is so then the letters to the Thessalonians must have been written fairly early in that 18 month stay of Paul. Indeed 1 Thessalonians 3.6 implies that the letter was written shortly after Timothy's return.

This would give us a date, at least for the 1 Thessalonians, of early in AD 51 or AD 50 if the supposition of 1[c] above is to be preferred.

**Early AD 51 or AD
50**

[3] Was there a short interval between the dispatch of 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians?

Short period

In favour of a short period we can point to:

[i] Paul's strong desire to return to them, but being hindered. There is no indication that the hindrance was for a long time [1 Thess 2.17]

[ii] Paul sent Timothy back to them fairly quickly after he left Thessalonica and now writes directly after Timothy's arrival in Corinth [1 Thess 3.1-6]

[iii] Not much has happened in Thessalonica since their conversion, there is no statement of their continued faith.

[iv] There is no mention of the churches in Asia Minor.

[v] Repeated appeals by Paul to his oral instruction implies that the teaching is still fresh in their recollection [1 Thess 3.4, 4.2 2 Thess 2.5, 3.10]