

2 Thessalonians

AUTHOR: Paul

TIME WRITTEN: A few months after 1 Thessalonians—from Corinth

POSITION IN THE BIBLE:

- 53rd Book in the Bible
- 14th book in the New Testament
- 9th of 21 epistle books
- 2nd of Paul's 13 books
- 52 have preceded it. 13 to follow it.

CHAPTERS: 3

VERSES: 47

WORDS: 1,042

KEY WORD: Understanding the Day of the Lord

TWO KEY PASSAGES:

1. **2 Thessalonians 2:2-3** - “not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.
3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition.”
2. **2 Thessalonians 3:5-6** - “Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.
6 But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.”

KEY CHAPTER: 2 Thessalonians 2

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT 2 THESSALONIANS:

1. Since Paul's first letter, the seeds of false doctrine have been sown among the Thessalonians, causing them to waver in their faith.
 - a. Paul removes these destructive seeds and again plants the seeds of truth.
 - b. He begins by commending the believers on their faithfulness in the midst of persecution and encouraging them that the present suffering will be repaid with future glory.
2. Paul then deals with the central matter of his letter: a misunderstanding spawned by false teachers regarding the coming day of the Lord.
 - a. Despite reports to the contrary, that day has not yet come, and Paul recounts the events that must first take place.
 - b. Laboring for the gospel, rather than lazy resignation, is the proper response.
3. This letter was probably written a few months after 1 Thessalonians, while Paul was still in Corinth with Silas and Timothy. 1:1; Acts 18:5
 - a. The bearer of the first epistle may have brought Paul an update on the new developments, prompting him to write this letter.
 - b. They were still undergoing persecution, and the false teaching about the day of the Lord led some of them to overreact by giving up their jobs.
 - c. The problem of idleness recorded in 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 had become more serious in 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15
 - d. By this time, Paul was beginning to see the opposition he would face in his ministry in Corinth. 3:2; Acts 18:5-10

4. The theme of this epistle is an understanding of the day of the Lord and the resulting life-style changes.
 - a. The doctrinal error of chapter 2 has been causing the practical error that Paul seeks to overcome in chapter 3.
 - b. Some of the brethren had abandoned their work and had begun to live off others, apparently assuming that the end is at hand.
 - c. Paul commands them to follow his example by supporting themselves and instructs the rest of the church to discipline them if they fail to do so.

SUMMARY OF 2 THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION:

- A. This epistle is the theological sequel to 1 Thessalonians, which developed the theme of the coming day of the lord (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11).
 1. However, not long after the Thessalonians receive that letter, they fall prey to false teaching or outright deception, thinking the day of the Lord has already begun.
 2. Paul writes this brief letter to correct the error and also to encourage those brethren whose faith is being tested by the difficulties presented by persecution.
 3. He also reproves those who have decided to cease working because they believe that the second coming of Christ is near.
- B. There are three major sections in the book:
 1. Paul's Encouragement in Persecution. (1)
 2. Paul's Explanation of the day of the Lord. (2)
 3. Paul's Exhortation to the Church at Thessalonica. (3:1-18)

PAUL'S ENCOURAGEMENT IN PERSECUTION. (1)

- A. After his two verse salutation, Paul gives thanks for the growing faith and love of the Thessalonians and assures them of their ultimate deliverance from those who are persecuting them. 1:3-10
 1. They are encouraged to patiently endure their afflictions, knowing that the Lord Jesus will judge their persecutors when He is "revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire" (1:7-8).
 2. Before Paul moves to the next topic, he concludes this section with a prayer for the spiritual of his readers. 1:11-12

PAUL'S EXPLANATION OF THE DAY OF THE LORD. (2)

- A. Because of the severity of their afflictions, the Thessalonians have become susceptible to false teaching (and possibly a fraudulent letter in the name of Paul), claiming that they are already in the day of the Lord. **2:1-2** - "Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come."
 1. This was particularly disturbing because Paul's previous letter had given them the
 2. Paul therefore assures them that the day of the Lord is yet in the future and will not arrive unannounced. 2:3-12

3. Paul then concludes with a word of encouragement and a benedictory prayer of comfort before moving on to his next topic.

PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA. (3:1-18)

- A. Paul requests the Thessalonian church to pray on his behalf and to wait patiently for the Lord. 3:1-5
 1. Having thus commended, corrected, and comforted his readers, the tactful apostle closes his letter with a sharp word of command to those who have been using the truth of Christ's return as an excuse for disorderly conduct. 3:6-15; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12
 2. The doctrine of the Lord's return requires a balance between waiting and working.
 - a. It is a perspective that should encourage holiness, not idleness.
 3. This final section, like the first two, closes on a benedictory note. 3:1-18