

12/19/99

Intro To 2Thessalonians

As our practice is, we want to begin our study of Second Thessalonians with an introduction, before we embark on our exposition of the entire letter.

For those of you who were with us for our introduction of First Thessalonians, the background of the city and the church will be familiar but for the sake of those who were not and those who will acquire the studies of the book, the introduction is necessary.

An introduction helps to put into perspective the letter in its historical and cultural background to enable a person to better understand the content of the entire epistle before examining its parts.

Keep in mind that the central theme of First Thessalonians is the coming of Christ **for** His saints to meet the Lord in the air, every chapter mentions it. 2Thess. 1:10, 2:19, 3:13, 4:17, 5:23

Now in Second Thessalonians we have the return of Christ with His saints, to set up the Kingdom on earth. 2Thess. 1:9-10, 2:2

Second Thessalonians is the second letter sent to the church.

* Second Thessalonians has only three chapters, a total of 47 verses, about half as long as First Thessalonians, which contains 89 verses.

1. Personal: comfort in persecution. Ch.1
2. Doctrinal: Great Tribulation & man of sin. Ch.2
3. Practical: Insight and instructions for life. Ch.3

I. The City.

A. The location of the city.

1. The city was a large and very prosperous sea-port, situated on the north most point of the Thermaic Gulf, a short distance from the mouth of the Axios River, modern day Turkey.
 - a. It was famous for its harbor in the Gulf of Therma, being the largest and most prosperous.
 - b. In Paul's days, it was the most important cities of the Roman province of Macedonia.
 - c. It had been one of the chief cities of Macedonia from Hellenistic times down to our days.
 - d. Xerxes the Persian had a naval base there when he invaded Europe.
2. On the western horizon the height of Mount Olympus could be seen, the fabled home of the Greek gods.
3. Thessalonica was 100 miles from Philippi and 50 miles from Athens.

4. Xerxes the Persian had a naval base there when he invaded Europe.

B. The name of the city.

1. The original town was called Therma, meaning “Hot Springs” from its natural springs in the vicinity
2. In 315 B.C. the location came to prominence as Casander, the son-in-law of Philip of Macedon, one of the four generals of Alexander the Great rebuilt the city and named it after his wife, the daughter of Philip Alexander and half sister of Alexander the Great and named it Thessalonica.
3. The shorten form “Salonika” it still in use today, the Turks call is “Salonichi”.

C. The prominence of the city.

1. The city was prominent for it’s seat of commerce.
 - a. Due to the cities location and port it became wealthy.
 - b. The city’s importance was also in it’s geographical setting, it straddled the Via Egnatia, the great Roman road that stretched to Asia Minor and the East.
 - c. Therefore trade poured in from both sides, enhancing it’s power.
2. The city had a political status.

- a. In 168 B.C. after the battle of Pydna, when Rome divided the conquered Kingdom of Macedonia into four republics, Thessalonica was made the capital of the second division.
 - b. Then in 146 B.C. the territory of Macedonia was organized into one single province, Thessalonica became the residence of the Roman governor and capital of the entire province.
 - c. In the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, Thessalonica took the senatorial side and formed one of Pompey’s chief bases in 40-48 B.C.
 - d. In it’s final struggles of the Roman Republic, in 47 B.C., it stood on the side of Anthony and Octavian.
3. The Emperor Augustus rewarded the city by making it a free city.
 - a. A free city governed itself internally, it had no garrison, could hold assembly and appoint it’s own magistrates.
 - b. These magistrates were called “politarchs”, meaning rulers of the city, there were about five or six, which Luke used to describe the rulers of the city. Acts 17:8
 - c. The city earned the description “the mother of all Macedon”.

D. The population of the city.

1. The city of Thessalonica had a population of 200,000.
- 2 They were for the most part native Greeks.
3. Some Romans and Orientals were present.
4. A large Jewish colony was present due to it's attractive commerce.
5. The number of Gentile who had become dissatisfied with their pagan religions became God-fearers and attended the synagogue.
6. Today it has million people, largest next to Athens.

This was the city of Thessalonica!

II. The Church.

- A.** The establishment of the church came about through a second missionary journey that had the intent of Paul to see how the brethren were doing from the first missionary journey. Acts 15:36
1. A strong contention between Paul and Barnabas caused them to divide up and Paul took Silas a Barnabas took John Mark. Acts 15:39-40
 2. Paul went to Derbe a Lystra, took Timothy as a disciple a delivered the

decree written for the gentiles at Jerusalem. Acts 16:1-5

3. Paul was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach in Asia and Bythinia. Acts 16:6-10
4. Paul receives a vision of a man from Macedonia to come and help them. Acts 16:9
5. Paul immediately went with Silas and Timothy and perhaps even Luke joined them here, notice the word we. Acts 16.10-16
6. They left Troas, went through some cities and arrive at Philippi where Paul met Lydia, bringing the gospel to Europe for the first time.
7. Lydia accepted the Lord, a demon possessed girl was delivered and Paul and Silas were thrown in prison and beat. Acts 16:14-34
8. Paul and Silas left Philippi along the Ignatian Way, traveling one-hundred miles and arrived at Thessolonica, which was the second city to receive the gospel in Macedonia.
 - * Paul knowing the importance of the city as well as the size wanted to preach the gospel.

B. The arrival of Paul at Thessalonica.

- 1 Paul went to the synagogue as his custom was and reasoned with them out of the scriptures. Acts 17:1-3
 - a. The word “explaining”, means to open up thoroughly. vs. 3
 - b. The word “demonstrating” means to set alongside.
 - c. In other words, Paul was opening up the Scriptures completely, so as to place Christ along side and reveal Him as Messiah.
2. The response to Paul’s preaching is recorded. Acts 17:4-9
 - a) Some believed, a great multitude of devout Greeks and a few leading women a great multitude, “God fearers”, dissatisfied with pagan morality. vs. 4
 - * Aristarchus appears to of been one of these men. Acts 20:4; 27:2; Col. 4:10-11
 - b) But the Jews who were not persuaded moved with envy and took evil men from the marketplace and gathered a mob, started a riot , seeking to bring them out to the people, finding Jason and others, they declared that these men were those who had turned the world upside down. vs. 5-6
 - c) They accused Jason of harboring the men, who were acting contrary to the

decree of Caesar, saying there is another king--Jesus, troubling the crowd and the rulers, finally releasing them. vs. 7-9

* About the same time Claudius had expel the Jews from Home. Acts 18:2

- d. They sent Paul and Silas by night to Berea, about fifty miles, Paul preached many believed, prominent women and men. Acts 17:10-12
 - * The Berean principal to follow always. Acts 17:11
- e. Paul was escorted to Athens, a 300 hundred miles journey overland when Jews from Thessalonica heard he was preaching the gospel at Berea and came a stirred up the people. Acts 17:13-15
 - * Paul requested that Silas and Timothy be told to join him. at Athens. vs. 15

C. The duration of the stay.

1. The Scriptures tell us that Paul was there for three weeks. Acts 17:1
2. The objections are many.
 - a. Paul and the others worked with their own hands.
 - b. Paul left a thriving church.

- c. The number of Gentiles seems to be to large for a short time.
- d. Paul had received two gifts from Philippi. Phil. 4:13
- 3. Remember they were escorted to Berea and Paul was concerned about the young converts so he sent Timothy from Athens to establish and encourage them in their faith and remind them not to be shaken by afflictions because we are appointed to them. 1Thess. 3:1-3; Acts 14:22
- 4. Luke tells us Paul waited for them at Athens but doesn't record their arrival. Acts 18:15-16
- 5. Paul had tried to return two times. 1Thess. 2:17-18
- 6. Timothy and Silas returned with good news at Corinth and Paul rejoiced. 1Thess. 3:6-9; Acts 18:5
 - a. Paul had come to Corinth in weakness and fear. 1Cor. 2:3; Acts 18:9-10
 - b. Paul confirmed their faith and commended them as examples of the believer. 1Thess. 1:6-9
 - c. Paul cleared up some false accusations regarding himself and his motives. 1Thess. 1:5; 2:1-2; 4-7, 17; 3:6
 - d. Paul comforted them in their suffering. 1Thess. 2:14; 3:3-5

- e. Paul reminded them of the walk of holiness. 1Thess. 4:1-8
- f. Paul relieved their anxiousness about their dead loved ones & the return of Christ. 1Thess. 4:13-18
- g. Paul advised them of the nature of the Day of The Lord and their practical walk. 1Thess. 5:1-22
- h. Paul five years later returned to Macedonia. Acts 19:21; 20:1-2; 1Cor. 16:5; 2Cor. 1:15-2:13

This was the church of Thessalonica!

III. The Occasion and Purpose for the epistle.

- A. Paul wrote to comfort and exhort them in their sufferings, reminding them of God's faithfulness and vengeance of the evil persecutors. 2Thess. 1:3-12
 - 1. As they loved on another. vs. 3
 - 2. As they patiently persevered in their sufferings, evidence of God's choosing them. vs. 4-5
 - 3. As they would be avenged by God, regarding their persecutors. vs. 6-8
 - 4. As they would see it for themselves, returning with Christ. vs. 9-10
 - 5. As they continued to please God and glorify Him, through grace. vs. 11-12

- B.** Paul wrote to correct false doctrine at Thessalonica, that they were in the Great-Tribulation and The Day of The Lord had begun. 2Thess. 2:2
1. He declares our gathering to Christ must come first so don't be shaken in mind or troubled. 2Thess. 2:1
 2. He declared it had come either by prophecy, teaching or letter. vs. 2
 3. He declares that "The Day of The Lord" cannot come or be present without two things. 2Thess. 2:3
 - a) An Apostasy from the faith.
 - b) The man of sin to be present.
 4. He declares he had told them about this when he was with them. 2Thess. 2:5
 5. He declares that they knew what was restraining the appearance of the man of sin, the lawless one, it was the presence of the church on earth. 2Thess. 2:6-8
 - a. The increased persecution and the false rumors caused them to disregard the truth of God's word which they knew!
 - b. The first twelve versus of chapter two identify a key section for the end times, which shed much light as both a complement and supplement to the Old Testament. Dan. 9; Ezk. 38-39; Matt. 24:15; Rev. 11:1-6

6. Paul had written to them regarding "The Day of The Lord" and how it would not involve them because they were sons of the light and day. 1Thess. 5:1
 - a. The Lord would bring back with Him all who had died before His coming for the church. 1Thess. 4:14
 - b. Then the believers who are alive would be "harpazo", snatched up violently in the clouds to be with the Lord. 1Thess. 4:17
- C.** Paul also wrote to correct the disorderly conduct of some who perhaps were thinking the Lord's return was so soon, had become increasingly irresponsible to their walk. 3:6-15
1. They had not received the first admonition, in fact spurned it. 1Thess. 5:14-15
 2. They were being disobedient to the word. 3:6
 2. They were desisting from work and living off others. 2Thess. 3:7-10
 3. They were darting about not working being busybodies and were commanded to work. 2Thess. 3:11-12
 4. They were not to reject those who had a legitimate need and disciplining those who were disobedient. 2Thess. 3:13-15

This was the Occasion and Purpose for the epistle!

IV. The date and Authenticity of the epistle.

- A.** The date is just months from the writing of the first epistle which has been dated 51-53 A.D.
1. We stated in our introduction of the First letter that Paul probably wrote it in late 50 A. D. or the spring of 51 A. D.
 2. We know that Gallio took office in the spring of 51-52 A.D.
 3. Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy to return from Thessalonica to inform him on their situation. Acts 18:5
 4. Then we are told that the Jews had rejected Paul in the synagogue and Jesus had appeared to Paul, commanding him to stop being afraid, to take courage and continue to speak the gospel, for He would protect him. Acts 18:9-10
* Perhaps Paul's reference to the unreasonable and wicked men were these Jews at Corinth but certainly it is not limited to them. 2Thess. 3:2
 5. The Scriptures then tell us that Paul continued for a year and six months at Corinth, establishing a very prominent church. Acts 18:11

4. Therefore without doubt this second epistle was also written from Corinth around and anywhere from six months, perhaps even up to a year.
 - a. If Paul did write the first letter in late 50 A. D., it would put the second about spring of 51 A. D.
 - b. If Paul wrote the first in the spring of 51 A. D, then the second was probably written in the fall or early winter of 51 A. D.
- B.** The external evidence.
1. The Second epistle to the Thessalonians has stronger evidence the first by the quotation of the church fathers.
 2. Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Tertillian.
 3. The Didache attests to it, the teaching of the apostles.
 4. The letter is found on the Muratorium Canon, Old Latin, Syriac version etc.
 5. The letter is recognized in every test of New Testament books
 6. No one questioned it's authority.
- C.** The internal evidence.
1. The greeting is from Paul, Silvanus and Timothy. 2Thess. 1:1
 2. Paul's admiration and boasting of their

persecution in faith is mentioned. 2Thess. 1:3-4; 1Thess. 1:2-10; 2:13-14

3. Paul mentioned issues he had discussed with them in the initial three weeks at Thessalonica and also in the first epistle, regarding the “parousia”. 2Thess. 2:1-6
4. Paul as his custom, asked for prayer. 2Thess. 3:1; 1Thess. 5:25.
5. Many of the similar problems and situations are addressed. 2Thess. 3:6-15
6. Paul’s own handwriting was to be a witness of authorship. 2Thess. 3:17
* The resemblance of content, style and vocabulary is unmistakable of being Pauline.

D. The objections against authenticity.

1. Argument based on doctrinal content and literary relationship between First and Second Thessalonian have been presented, declaring a seeming contradiction of the imminent parousia and the fact that it would not happen till the “man of sin” and “apostasy” took place. 1Thess. 4:14-5:3; 2Thess. 2:1-12
 - a. Yet Jesus spoke about the “man of sin” in and the “apostasy”. Matt 24:15; Lk 18:8.
 - b. Paul’s explanation in First Thessalonians is regarding the return of Christ for His church, while

Second Thessalonians his explanation is about the return of Christ with His church.

- 1) The first letter dealt with the comfort and encouragement of Christ’s saints, and the second comforts the saints of coming judgment on Christ’s foes.
 - 2) The first relates to the Church, and the second, to the world.
 - 3) The first speaks of the “Parousia”, the presence and the second, of the “apocalupsis”, the unveiling. 1Thess. 4:15; 2Thess. 1.7
 - 4) The first reveals that Christ will come in the air, and the second, that He will come to the earth:
 - 5) The first points to “the Day of Christ” and the second to “the Day of the Lord”. Phil 1:10; 2Thess. 2:2
* Failure to distinguish these viewpoints will result in much confusion, declares the scholar “Scroggie”.
2. Arguments based on contrast, declaring that First Thessalonians is warm and friendly while Second Thessalonians is serious, cold and formal.

- a. Based on this argument one would have to reject much of what Jesus said!
 - b. The attacks are few.
 - 1) The first attack was in 1798-1804 by J.E.C. Schmidt.
 - 2) Then later in 1839 by Karn, popularized by Baur and a full scale attack came in 1903 by Wrede.
 - 3) And in 1922 E. Best influenced a majority to doubt the authenticity of Second Thessalonians.
 - c. Some of their arguments.
 - 1) They declared Paul corrected the imminent “parousia” to a delayed coming.
 - 2) They said the two epistles are written to two different groups, a divided church of Jew and one of Gentile, but no internal evidence proves that.
 - 3) There is the theory that Second Thessalonians was written before First Thessalonians, reversing their order.
- E. Paul used key words, phrases and verses.
1. Key words.
 - a. Faith . 2Thess. 1:3, 4, 11; 2:13; 3:2

- b. Brethren. 2Thess. 1:3; 2:1, 13, 15; 3:1, 6, 13, 15
 - c. Coming. 2Thess. 2:1, 8, 9
 - d. Disorderly. 2Thess. 3:6, 11
2. Key phrases.
 - a. That Day. 2Thess. 1:10; 2:3
 - b. The Day of Christ. 2Thess. 2:2
 - c. The son perdition. 2Thess. 2:3
 - d. The Lawless one. 2Thess. 2:8
 - e. Working of Satan. 2Thess. 2:9
 3. Key verses.
 - a. 2Thess. 1:6
 - b. 2Thess. 2:3
 - c. 2Thess. 2:9
 - d. 2Thess. 2:11
 - e. 2Thess. 3:6
 - f. 2Thess. 3:14
 - * The heart of the epistle. 2Thess. 2:1-12

This is the date and Authenticity of the epistle!

V. The outline of the epistle.

I. Personal: Consolation. 2Thess. 1:1-12

- A. The greeting and salutation. 1:1-2
 1. The concerned greeters. vs. 1a-c
 2. The consecrated church. vs. 1d
 3. The common greeting. vs. 2

- B** The comfort in persecution. 2Thess. 1:3-4
1. Thanksgiving for their love. vs. 3
 2. Their boasting for their perseverance in persecution. vs. 4
- C.** The condemnation of the wicked. 2Thess. 1:5-10
1. The judgment of God is righteous. vs. 5
 2. The vengeance of God on behalf of His children. vs. 6
 3. The reward of the believer is rest at the Lord's coming. vs. 7
 4. The vengeance of God is on the ungodly. vs. 8
 5. The result is everlasting separation from God. vs. 9
 6. The time is at His return with His church. vs. 10
- D.** The consecration of the saint. 2Thess. 1:11-12
1. The petition to fulfill the pleasure of God. vs. 11
 2. The petition to do it to the glory of God and grace. vs. 12
- II.** Doctrinal: Correction. 2Thess. 2:1-17
- A.** The "man of sin". 2Thess. 2:1-12

1. The comfort over false letter. vs. 1-2
 2. The commentary on the "man of sin". vs. 3-4
 3. The correct information they possessed. vs. 5-7
 4. The corrupt work of the "man of sin". vs. 8-10
 5. The consequences of rejecting the love of the truth. vs. 11-12
- B.** The saint of God. 2Thess. 2:13-17
1. The chosen to salvation. vs. 13-14
 2. The commitment & comfort. vs. 15-17
- III.** Practical: Caution. 2Thess. 3:1-15
- A.** Prayer requested and confidence. 2Thess. 3:1-5
1. Prayer for the word. vs. 1
 2. Prayer for deliverance for unbelievers. vs. 2-
 3. Personal and full confidence in the Lord is expressed for the Thessalonians. vs. 3
 4. Personal and full confidence is expressed in the Thessalonians obedience. vs. 4
 5. Prayer for the Thessalonians. vs. 5

B. Practical advise for disorderly saints.2Thess. 3:6-12

1. To depart from Christians who walk disorderly. vs. 6
2. To understand the command in view of their example. vs. 7
3. To remember their example of working. vs. 8-12
 - a. They were a burden to no one. vs. 8
 - b. They had authority to not work but chose to be an example. vs. 9
 - c. They taught that if one does not work, they should not eat. vs. 10
 - d. They were responding to those taking advantage of the body. vs. 11
 - e. They commanded to exhort to obey. vs. 12

C. Practical steps for restoration. 2Thess.3:13-15

1. To not grow weary in doing good. vs. 13
2. To excommunicate the disobedient. vs. 14
3. To not count them as enemies but brothers. vs. 15

IV. Conclusion. 2Thess. 3:16-18**A. Closing prayer. 2Thess. 3:16**

1. The benediction of peace. vs. 16a
2. The benediction of Jesus' presence. vs. 16b

B. Closing salutation. 2Thess. 3:17

1. By the hand of Paul. vs. 17a
2. By the custom of his epistles. vs. 17b
3. By the deed of Paul. vs. 17c

C. Closing benediction. 2Thess. 3:18

1. The grace of Jesus. vs. 18a
2. The affirmation. vs. 18b

This is the outline of the epistle!